

## J.V.S. RESEARCH AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

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THE function of research is generally included as a fundamental responsibility of the professional social service agency. Examination of its processes as they comply with and contribute to theoretical foundations; analysis and test of methodology and technique; evaluation of outcome; in short, to inquire into, validation and verification of its work is inherent in full professional practice. That Jewish Vocational agencies exercise and attempt to meet the research responsibility is evident in the number and variety of experimental programs carried concurrently with case loads. It is also evident in series of published articles in professional journals, and reports made at regional and national conferences, or distributed through the Jewish Occupational Council. It would appear that Jewish Occupational Service trains a healthy introspective eye, a kind of super-ego surveillance, on what it does, what it should and can do, on how and why it does its job. A significant element in this kind of self-scrutiny is the continuing attempt by the J.V.S. practitioner to organize his thinking, that is to say, the conceptual framework of his aims and methods.

The research and special projects executed reflect diverse problems and objectives, focused within the framework

of services provided, administrative activity, and relationships arising from its kinship with various professions commonly responsible to the voluntary community.

Most reported studies touch on more than one problem, cover more than a single frame of reference. They overlap the functional areas of vocational guidance, psychological examination, employment counseling and job placement. They tie in operational areas of administration, public and community relations. This review limits itself to a sampling of studies and projects, broadly classifiable as contributions to theory, and contributions to methodology, representative of the J.V.S. field during the past year.

### Contributions to Theory

A frequently manifested interest of the vocational agency is in bringing its process and points of view into line with contemporary knowledge of personality. It interprets vocational adjustment in dynamic terms, and orients perspectives, objectives and techniques accordingly. Gellman, in a recent article, adequately articulates the views of many vocational guidance theorists within and outside the J.V.S.'s. Defining vocational adjustment as a resultant of work satisfaction and

the ability to function in a work setting, he proposes that vocational behavior encompasses a pattern of interpersonal relations, use of abilities, derivation of work satisfaction, adaptation to work pressures, and behavior as a worker. A concept of individualized adjustment, based upon ego structure and functioning, leads to the thesis that vocational adjustment may vary indirectly or even independently from total personality adjustment. It permits of adequate functioning in the work situation as apart in some degree from total life adjustment. Prediction of vocational adjustment entails focus on those personality factors which directly affect vocational adjustment, on the assumption that certain aspects have primary significance. The individual's orientation to reality, the meaning and acceptance of work, intensity of conflicts, adequacy of minimal abilities and adequacy of interpersonal relations all determine the extent to which he can integrate his drives and mobilize his energies in a work situation.

While accepting the presence of a general factor in behavior and adjustment, the view is advanced that an individual may interact differentially with different segments of his environment, which accords with empirical evidence bearing upon discrepancies between work and life adjustment, noted by Grumer, Feintuch, Burchard and others. In differentiating personal and vocational adjustment, Gellman suggests that the focus of vocational guidance method is the reality situation. Interviewing must deal with the meaning of work to the individual, his attitudes and the values he seeks, and the psychological limits in which he functions. He proposes the use of situational techniques to provide observations of behavior in a work situation.

Vocational diagnosis, according to Rawley, is dynamically indistinguishable in some points from treatment. Effective diagnosis goes beyond assessing

the clients' comparative standing, by testing his ability to meet reality and aiding him to experience the quality of the helping process and relationship. The psychological involvement of client and counselor argues for an action diagnosis.

In this connection it is of interest that the Chicago Work Adjustment Center, its new Vocational Diagnostic Center and the Montreal and Newark Workshops, along with other similar facilities, operate on the fundamental principle that their concerns are with "individuals on jobs," rather than "jobs for people," as Grumer puts it. According to experimental results obtained by Feintuch, the use of workshops by Jewish Vocational agencies "increased the effectiveness of counseling and casework by providing the subjects with a testing ground for their new feelings and attitudes, with a permissive group experience which reinforced the process of re-education undertaken in counseling . . . it justifies extensive research and experimentation in the use of situational techniques to supplement vocational counseling."

Gluck, in reporting on a joint program between the Jewish Child Care Association of New York and the Federation Employment and Guidance Service to demonstrate the effectiveness of vocational counseling with mentally retarded youngsters, stated that social adjustment is one of the most important areas to deal with in counseling the mentally retarded. The program incorporated a study of both counseling and job placement techniques, and gave evidence that going to the vocational agency enabled the youngsters to better come to grips with themselves.

Gluck's findings have relevance not only for help to the client, but also for the collaborative process between agencies, which together are concerned with the individual as a total person. Gendel

and Gellman, examining the collaboration of medical and vocational disciplines, point out that the counselor's evaluation of the meaning of the handicap to the patient as a worker is one of the focal points for the meaningful use of the collaborative process. Grumer places equal or greater importance on the meaning of the handicap condition, in agreement with Feintuch, Gendel and Gellman that the sheltered workshop is an important tool in observing and manipulating factors which contribute to the dynamically interacting diagnostic treatment process that Rawley describes.

Baxt, Lurie and Miller, after studying the factors of work and employment in 199 patients, discharged from a state mental hospital, insist that more attention should be paid to the psychology and dynamics of these factors in the development and integration of personality, on the grounds that the absence of vocational training, suitable employment and the difficulties in finding employment, or dissatisfaction with the work found, were often noted as significant in precipitating or furthering mental illness. Their evidence, derived in part from an experimental collaborative program between the Federation Employment and Guidance Service of New York and Hillside Hospital, demonstrated that new methods can and must be developed in joining the skills of psychiatrist, caseworker, vocational counselor, occupational therapist and related professionals.

Following the consciousness by vocational counselors of the increasing importance of personality structure and dynamics for vocational adjustment, Levine analyzed the applicability of the Rorschach and TAT to 15 cases at the Cleveland J.V.S. It was generally agreed by the guidance staff that projective techniques enabled them to cut through to the core of problems impeding vocational adjustment, increased awareness

of what kinds of work or school environment were in line with personality needs, and facilitated diagnostic-predictive processes as well as defining limitations to be set on the service offered by the vocational agency. Neff used the Rorschach in attempting to assess the employability of 32 vocationally disabled persons at the Chicago Vocational Adjustment Center. He found the test was not an efficient predictor, but terminally administered could differentiate reliably between rehabilitated and non-rehabilitated cases; that vocational rehabilitation apparently occurs without any alteration of the individual's basic personality structure.

Levine at Cleveland studied the relationship of adolescent vocational interests as revealed by the Kuder Preference Record and occupations engaged in seven to nine years later. She found a positive relationship in the cases of 117 respondents. Levy in St. Louis was able, through intensive counseling and placement service, to move a client from domestic work to work involving artistic ability, on the basis of talents exhibited in her hobby. Burchard, of the Houston J.V.S., urges re-examination of the use of group tests in the psychological appraisal of individuals, and of the use of standardized tests with handicapped individuals. She also proposes situational observation for estimates of work potentiality.

#### Contributions to Technique and Method

It may be observed in the preceding section that conspicuous among developments in the J.V.S. programs are the sheltered workshops. Whether conceived from theory, or born from the exigencies of job placement for the occupationally limited, sheltered employment projects have rapidly emerged as a way of dealing with problems of the competitively unemployable, physically and emotionally disabled, the culturally handicapped, the aged, and the socially, economically and psychologically disad-

vantaged. Since 1950, the number of workshops sponsored or operated by J.V.S.'s has leaped from one to twelve. As surveyed by the J.O.C. in January 1954, sheltered workshops supplement J.V.S. placement and counseling programs through the diagnosis of work impediments; the assessment and restructuring of work potentials; training and retraining in habits, skills and emotional patterns; the provision of income and activity. Counseling or casework, placement, psychological, medical and production supervision is coordinated in advancing the vocational adjustment of the client within the shop and/or toward competitive and stable employment.

Other than previously noted evaluations of workshop programs and processes, J.V.S. projects of this kind appear to serve as important vehicles in the support of community and inter-disciplinary communication, interpretation and cooperation.

The diversity of studies and projects among the J.V.S.'s, aimed at improving, developing and evaluating the methodology of the vocational service, precludes more than brief reference to orientation, objectives and outcomes.

The Detroit Sheltered Workshop emerged from an experimental program of job-finding for older plus hard-to-place clients. Milwaukee is currently operating a three-year program to evaluate vocationally and train mentally retarded cases, ranging in age from 16 to 30 years, in a work adjustment center utilizing industrial materials. Milwaukee also is testing experimentally a method of cooperation of 5 different rehabilitation agencies, by forming a joint executive committee and with each contributing a staff member to a vocational rehabilitation project, using control and experimental client groups. St. Louis is engaged with Washington U's School of Social Work in investigating the vocational adjustment of refugees who reg-

istered with the agency from 1938 to 1945.

Cincinnati mobilized a corps of teenagers desiring part-time and summer employment to canvass job opportunities and learn for themselves the techniques of job-hunting and solicitation, with the result that both teen-age placements were achieved and agency-employer relations were strengthened. New York attacked the problem of parental role and responsibility in vocational guidance by offering a course designed to inform parents of the process of choosing and preparing for a career for their youngsters, and their possible role in the process. It was observed that parents concerned themselves early with their children's career problems, that a course for parents is a valuable addition to the guidance process in that it inexpensively modulated attitudes and afforded insights for parental cooperation.

New York amplified its intensive job solicitation program for pre-parolees by holding an employer conference on the subject, and by arranging a visit of employers to Sing Sing Prison. Many of those attending, already employers of parolees, will be solicited for additional openings and urged to approach other employers known to them for job opportunities.

In attempting to place pensioners in jobs, and help meet economic and psychological needs, New York used field visits, phone solicitation, mailings to employers, newspaper ads, visits to trade associations and succeeded in placing 47 pensioners in 11 months during a period of adverse employment conditions. Similar effort on behalf of Sabbath Observers, working through conservative and orthodox organizations, has been in process for 2 years. Additional New York projects include an integrated program of group guidance, individual counseling and placement for high school "core curriculum" students and an in-service

training course in guidance for high school teachers, with course credit. The cooperative program with the Jewish Child Care Association on behalf of retarded children has incorporated a group guidance series.

Philadelphia, like several other cities, has been using volunteers in its job solicitation program. Compensating in part for limited staff time, and contributing to community relations, volunteer effort is confined to "missionary selling," opening avenues and responsiveness for staff solicitations. Small and informal employer meetings are held in the homes of Board members to enlist cooperation both in direct hiring and in obtaining leads for volunteer and staff contact. Philadelphia also has studied the effect on relations with particular employers of referring non-handicapped workers in short-supply occupations while soliciting openings for handicapped workers, and found significantly greater receptiveness when "leader" applicants were offered. A comparison was made of hard-to-place, social agency referred and refugee clients with a general community or non-limited group, with respect to characteristics and problems presented. Results indicated equivalence sufficient to warrant extension of counseling service to almost half of the general community group and gave support to the notion that relatively few clients who seek help from the agency present no special problem. It was noted also that 74 per cent of self-referred community hard-to-place applicants had previous experience with social agencies, either directly or through members of their families.

Boston has for the past six months been conducting research with cerebral palsy cases, involving comparison of a group going through a workshop setting of an hour-and-a-half three times a month plus field trips, and a group taking various tests but not going through

these experiences. Evaluations will be made to show what changes have taken place by comparing both groups, using the Vocational Service Scale and a cerebral palsy progress chart developed for this purpose.

Pittsburgh devised and used a rating scale to reflect the degree of employability of each applicant registering for service and of those being placed. It was found that present placement procedures were adequate for the average or higher employability groups, that greater emphasis of effort was required for those below average who constitute the bulk of the active file, and that extension of workshop, work evaluation and training programs were needed for effective service to the lowest group.

Houston studied costs for community service to refugees and concluded that a special vocational guidance service is economical for refugees, and that such a service would also be economical for the indigent group who possess characteristics similar to the New Americans.

#### General Observations and Evaluation

It should be noted that this review encompasses neither the numbers nor scope of research and special project activities of the J.V.S. agencies. Collaborative or team programs in rehabilitation, scholarships, business loans, anti-discrimination activity, fee studies, studies and projects with particular problem groups, administrative and procedural analyses and evaluations, and operation changes that flow from dynamic administrations and shifts in labor conditions and community service demands, were carried through, though un-mentioned here.

Several conclusions concerning the research effort of vocational agencies are perhaps obvious. The organization of theory and methodology have kept concurrent pace with, and in some instances have anticipated, advances made in the

general field. The integration of concepts and technical knowledge for vocational adjustment process is congruent with the formulations of related sciences. The energy expenditure in opening questions, developing concepts, orienting and reorienting techniques away from uncertain and toward verified and verifiable areas of endeavor, in itself bespeaks high enterprise and motivations, as well as a necessity to establish and attain clear goals in helping people who want help vocationally.

In the J.V.S.'s there are practitioners of both an art and a science that is as yet immature. As might be expected, much of the research reflects more inspiration than calculation. It receives its impulse from program needs, perhaps more than from the needs of self. In a way, it seems conceived from a sense of having to "do something and see what happens," and it often lacks carefully defined and formulated problems, hypotheses, and safeguards for controlling the observation and evaluation of outcomes. It carries the ring of logic and conviction in the face of insufficient evidence, and its weaknesses arise from its empirical conclusions, but this is hardly

less true of most of the social and even biological sciences.

Many areas warrant investigation, and one comes to mind as a "natural" for the J.V.S. staffs. There has been little attempt made to write dynamic job specifications and relate them to the dynamic personality pattern of the individual. We think in these terms, but it is more intuitive than factual. Vocational guidance and placement that produces adjustment may rely on this type of process.

Criteria and indices are largely absent or unreliable in the fields of vocational guidance and placement. Basic investigations of the origins and causality of what we observe have yet to replace our tendencies to establish truth by association and relationship. It would seem improbable that these lacks could be remedied by the practitioner where theoretical system builders fail. Yet it would not be surprising if the hybrids who fill the J.V.S. ranks produce many fruitful leads, for they seem to follow the thought of Clark Hull that it is vastly preferable to devise and test a half-baked hypothesis than to celebrate toward the ideal and move nowhere.