

clients had a greater awareness of goals and were able to take independent action to attain these goals subsequent to vocational evaluation. Kennedy (1973) found that clients changed their task-specific self-concepts in the direction of increased realism as a result of vocational evaluation. Lastly, a consistent report from Vocational Evaluation Project Forums has been that clients make positive changes as a result of vocational evaluation, although these changes were not specified for the most part.

We can summarize this discussion by indicating that there are two basic dimensions of utility for vocational evaluation services, as shown in Figure 4. One dimension has to do with information gain; it is this dimension

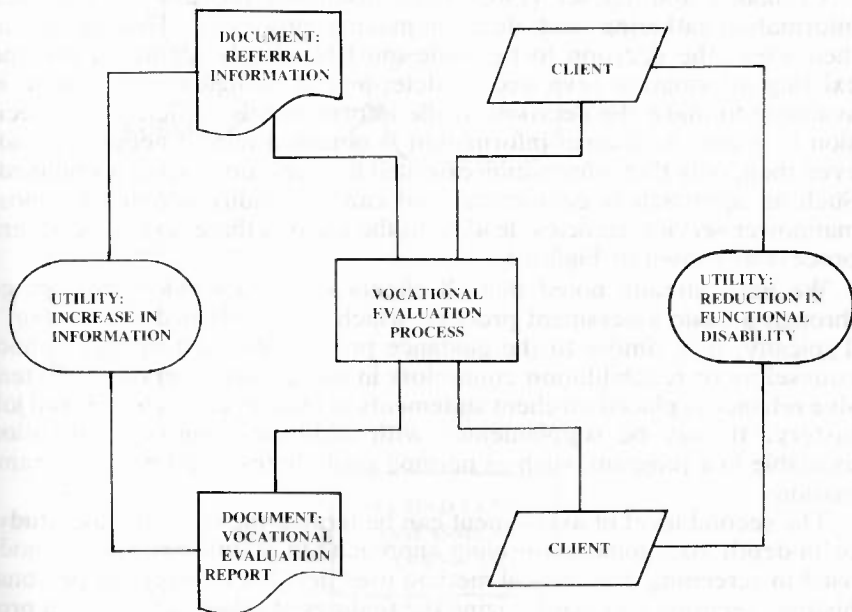


Figure 4. The two dimensions of utility for vocational evaluation.

which has received the most attention in discussions of the utility of vocational evaluation. The second dimension has to do with positive client change and the reduction of functional disability. This dimension has not been accorded much attention, but an increasing amount of research evidence suggests it is an important aspect of utility.

THE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES

Up to this point we have generally considered the function of vocational evaluation within the manpower services delivery system, and the input and output of vocational evaluation services. In this section, we will examine these topics in somewhat more depth, with an emphasis upon caseload, information-gathering, and treatment.

Caseflow

It is reasonably apparent that vocational evaluation is not an appropriate mass screening process for a service program. This is a question which often arises, particularly among administrators of service programs which have not previously used vocational evaluation. The expense of using vocational evaluation with the entire target population of a service program would be staggering and could not be justified, particularly when other, more economical, assessment processes are available. The administrative concern should be with insuring that all of the individuals served by the program receive an adequate assessment conducted at the lowest possible overall cost.

Cronbach and Gleser (1965) have discussed the use of sequential information-gathering and decision-making processes. Essentially, in their view, the decision to be made must be clearly identified and the existing information reviewed to determine if sufficient information is available to make the decision. If the information is sufficient, the decision is made. Additional information is obtained only if necessary and, even then, only that information essential for decision-making is obtained. Such an approach is economical and can be readily adopted by most manpower service agencies, leading to the use of a three-level assessment process as shown in Figure 5.

We have already noted that all clients within a service program go through a basic assessment process, which can be termed "screening." Typically, it is similar to the guidance procedures used by high school counselors or rehabilitation counselors in one or two interviews. Extensive reliance is placed on client statements of choice, competence, and job history. It may be supplemented with additional routine information available in a program, such as normed aptitude tests and medical examinations.

The second level of assessment can be termed the *clinical*, case study, or in-depth vocational counseling approach. In addition to the methods used in screening, the clinical method uses detailed recovery of personal history, securing and synthesizing the findings of other agencies and professional persons, use of clinically interpreted tests, and several hours of interaction between counselor and client.

Vocational evaluation is at the third level of assessment in a sequential strategy. This assessment process involves placing the client into real or simulated work experience within a controlled setting. It typically involves several days of observation and the interpretation of these observations.

The three level sequential assessment process has a number of advantages to it. First, it is *comprehensive*: all of the clients within a particular service program can be accommodated within the process. Second, the strategy is *parsimonious*, or economically conservative: the first procedure used is the most simple, common, and economical; more elaborate, difficult, and expensive assessment processes are used only if necessary. Third, the strategy is *direct*: as soon as a reasonable course of action becomes apparent it is effected at once, instead of being subjected to a

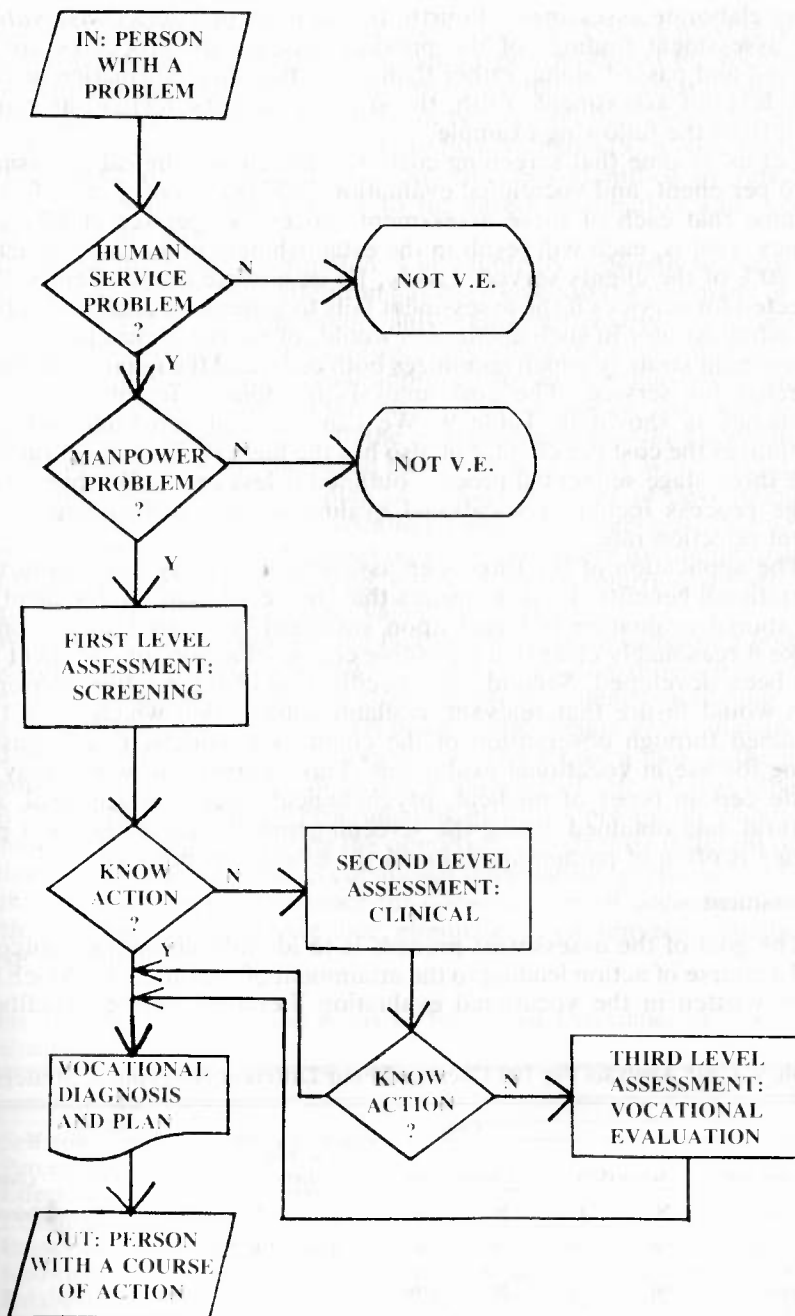


Figure 5. Over all delivery system which includes vocational evaluation as one of three levels of assessment.

more elaborate assessment. Fourth, the strategy practices *conservation*: the assessment findings of the previous assessment processes are retrieved and passed along, rather than recreating this information at each new level of assessment. Fifth, the strategy is *cost-effective*, as can be seen from the following example.

Let us assume that screening costs \$25 per client, clinical assessment \$110 per client, and vocational evaluation \$500 per client. Let us further assume that each of these assessment processes operates at 80% efficiency: that is, each will result in the establishment of a course of action for 80% of the clients served. Lastly, let us assume that a client will be rejected for services if the assessment fails to generate a course of action. An administrator in such a situation would, of course, desire to select an assessment strategy which minimizes both costs and the number of clients rejected for service. The cost analysis for four different assessment strategies is shown in Table 9. We can see that screening not only minimizes the cost per client, but also has the highest client rejection rate. The three-stage sequential process outlined is less expensive than a two-stage process including vocational evaluation and also minimizes the client rejection rate.

The application of the three-step assessment strategy has two further operational benefits. First, it insures that the decision to refer a client for vocational evaluation is based upon sufficient previous information to make it reasonably clear that a positive course of action for the client has not been developed. Second, the specification of information conservation would insure that relevant available information which cannot be obtained through observation of the client in a work setting is passed along for use in vocational evaluation. This information, which may include certain types of medical, psychological, social, educational, and cultural data obtained during the screening and clinical assessment processes is often of paramount value in the evaluation process.

Assessment

The goal of the assessment process is to identify an optimal outcome and a course of action leading to the attainment of the outcome. Much has been written in the vocational evaluation literature on the benefits of

Table 9. Cost Analysis Per 100 Clients of Four Different Assessment Strategies

Assessment Strategy	Costs						Average		Clients Rejected
	Screen (\$25)		Clinical (\$100)		Voc. Eval. (\$500)		Total Cost	Cost/ Client	
	N	\$	N	\$	N	\$	(\$)	(\$)	
Screen only	100	2,500	0	0	0	0	2,500	25	20
Screen + Clinical	100	2,500	20	2,000	0	0	4,500	45	4
Screen + Voc. Eval.	100	2,500	0	0	20	10,000	12,500	125	4
Screen + Clinical + Voc. Eval.	100	2,500	20	2,000	4	2,000	6,500	65	1

vocational evaluation to the referring service agent. For the most part this material has focused upon the information gain produced by vocational evaluation. New, additional, not otherwise available information and recommendations are produced which can be used by the service agent for planning and decision-making. A study by Gwilliam (1970) indicated that of 12 beneficial vocational evaluation outcomes identified by referring counselors, nine related directly to increased information and recommendations for action.

Although increased information is undoubtedly a benefit to the referring agent, relatively little attention has been given to the use made of this information by the referring agent. This seems particularly crucial in light of the belief shared by virtually all agencies within the manpower services delivery system that the optimal approach to service delivery is one in which both the counselor and the client jointly decide on goals and a plan of action. This suggests that both the referring agent *and the client* should directly benefit from the increased information in a way which facilitates their joint development of a plan of action. In terms of developing an efficient operating system for vocational evaluation services, this would imply that there is an effective and on-going procedure for identifying the information and decision-making needs of both referring agents and clients built into the vocational evaluation service.

We have already mentioned the fact that there is an increasing body of research evidence to indicate that vocational evaluation differs from other clinical assessment processes in that it improves client functioning. Yet this remains a neglected area and is often overlooked in program planning and development in vocational evaluation. If we take a look at the most common areas of functional disabilities, shown in Table 10, it is obvious that there are a number of programming elements present in vocational evaluation programs, including the opportunity to explore different occupations, the presentation of occupational information, performance feedback, opportunities to experience the consequences of decisions, and so forth, which would serve to reduce, eliminate, or circumvent a number of these disabilities.

Table 10. The Most Common Areas of Functional Disabilities of Vocational Evaluation

Functional Disability	%
Self confidence, acceptance of self	55.9
Perception of self	52.3
Effective interpersonal relations	51.4
Emotional stability	47.7
Possession of saleable job skill	46.8
Knowledge of job market commensurate with skills and interests	41.4
Establishment of realistic short range and/or long range goals	40.5
Reasonable knowledge of job seeking skills	40.5
Adequate level of basic education skills	39.6
Decision-making skills	37.8
Presentation of self as a worker	37.8

In other words, it should be recognized that vocational evaluation differs from other assessment processes in that there are significant treatment effects. There are some who contend that this benefit alone justifies its use within manpower service agencies for special needs target groups. To ignore this benefit, either by failing to take it into account when providing vocational evaluation services, or by making programming changes which reduce treatment effects, can reduce the usefulness of vocational evaluation services to manpower service agencies.

DEALING WITH THE BARRIERS TO THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES

In this section, we turn our attention to a discussion of some of the barriers which limit the effective delivery of vocational evaluation services by manpower service agencies. There appear to be seven primary areas in which barriers to the effective use of vocational evaluation services occur. These areas may be categorized as: *fiscal, agency structure, professional practice, personnel, philosophical, communications, and referral practices*. We will discuss each briefly, pointing out the specific barriers and, when possible, propose some ways of dealing with or overcoming the barriers. We should point out, however, that a number of the barriers are multifaceted and defy simple solution. It should be recognized that barriers exist and further recognized that they may exist for some time to come.

BARRIERS OF A FISCAL NATURE

In the majority of instances, vocational evaluation is provided by private sector agencies while the funding of this service is from public sector agencies. Even in those instances where vocational evaluation is provided and funded in the public sector exclusively, there tend to be two separate agencies involved in the process, one to provide the service and the other to fund it. Thus there is a need in both instances to develop a fiscal relationship between the two agencies in order for vocational evaluation to operate as a viable part of the comprehensive delivery system.

The current realities surrounding the development of such fiscal relationships include the lack of adequate fiscal resources to meet the need for vocational evaluation services totally, and, in most instances, the absence of any commonly agreed upon system for disbursing those limited resources so as to optimize service delivery. Thus those agencies principally involved in the funding of vocational evaluation services, given the limited fiscal resources, tend to require the best service at the least cost with little attention paid to client flow and the resulting flow of income into the service providing agency. The service providing agency on the other hand, given the problems of fixed expenses, which at times approach sheer survival proportions, tends to reduce the quality of service

and thus expenses, inflate fees, and extend client services to ensure continuous income. Thus it is clear that for the most part there is little common basis for a fiscal relationship between the two agencies.

Other problems spin off directly from this basic fiscal barrier. Even when one of the agencies involved is from the private sector, the provision and funding of vocational evaluation services take place in a bureaucratic environment with all of the usual problems related thereto. In an effort to ensure high quality services, the funding agencies create standards and administrative requirements for the service provider. All too frequently these standards and regulations simply increase administrative costs and further reduce the available fiscal resources needed for improved quality of service. The least complicated method of payment for vocational evaluation services from an accounting point of view is a fee for service approach. Unfortunately such payment systems provide no mechanisms for regulation of income flow necessary to meet agencies fixed costs for service provision and, worse, since this system operates in a bureaucratic environment, payment delays for income already earned may further cripple the service providing agency.

Dealing with the Barrier

In part the fiscal barriers mentioned above are inherent to the free enterprise system and to that extent cannot be removed completely, but rather must be worked with for the foreseeable future. This is not to say that the free enterprise system is the barrier—any economic system will have barriers inherent in it. Nor is this to say that nothing can be done to enhance service provision in this system. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

First, concentrated and consistent efforts must be undertaken to increase the fiscal resources for manpower services in general and for vocational evaluation services more specifically. Such activities as joint lobbying and diversification of funding sources for vocational evaluation services should prove most helpful toward that end.

Second, since vocational evaluation services are expensive and required only for a small special needs population within the manpower system, every effort must be made to utilize the three-stage sequential decision process and thereby ensure that only those clients who require this service receive it. Such an approach has the net effect of making more funds available per case for vocational evaluation and thus providing for quality rather than quantity of service.

Third, considerable operations research is necessary to determine the effects of different methods of funding vocational evaluation services on the service delivery systems and the quality of service provided. It should be noted here, that industry generally allows 20-25% of its budget for this planning task whereas human service agencies seldom budget more than 8%. If vocational evaluation services are to be optimally delivered, we must budget to plan and study that task. Consideration should be given in these operational research efforts to the use of contract-package programs of service funding to ensure adequate and regular income. If fees for

service still prove to be the method of choices then consideration must be given to reduction in the payment-for-service, turn-around time, development of mechanisms for the improvement of client/fee flow, and consideration of the possibility of the use of a sliding fee scale which allows, among other things, for the more rapid recovery of fixed costs and incentive for full agency utilization.

BARRIERS RELATED TO AGENCY STRUCTURE

From the perspective of many agencies, both public and private, there is a lack of realization that specific manpower services do not exist in a vacuum but rather are part of a comprehensive service delivery system. Many agencies give lip service to such a noble perspective but what is lacking is a bona-fide actualization of this fact to the extent that planning activities are mobilized to integrate services into the most effective delivery system possible. Short of that, services will continue to be fragmented and decisions will continue to be made based on agency needs rather than client/system needs. For example, intake decisions in vocational evaluation programs at present tend to be based on agency fiscal needs rather than client service needs and the related optimal delivery methods. Moreover, clients tend not to be meaningfully involved in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the services for which they are the consumer.

Dealing with the Barriers

While fiscal policies which assure more equitable distribution of income will be helpful in the elimination of some agency provincialism, what is needed is a mobilization of multi-agency planning resources for the development of comprehensive service delivery systems on state and local levels which are responsive to client needs from the broadest perspective rather than from the more narrow perspective of agency needs.

The integration of the three-stage sequential decision process is considered essential to that end. In such a system, intake decisions would thus be based on optimal capability criteria rather than short run fiscal considerations.

Further it is essential at this point to ensure adequate planning of this delivery system—planning which meaningfully involves all constituencies. Particular attention must be paid to consumer involvement at this juncture since this is the constituency least likely to impose itself on the planning process. Techniques for accomplishing this end are abundant in the literature and may include, but are certainly not limited to, the use of an "ombudsman," consumer advisory councils, and consumer representation on agency governing boards.

Delivery systems thus developed should include, as a minimum provision, monitoring and evaluation subsystems. Such subsystems must include adequate provision for documentation and necessary feedback loops capable of systems' self-improvement.

BARRIERS RELATED TO PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Given the advanced state of professional ignorance in vocational evaluation it is surprising that the field performs as well as it does. But services do not exist for many of the known special client needs. In many instances newer services are not well known at the practitioner level. For the most part there is considerable disagreement as to who ought to do what to whom in the decision making process. In addition there is an associated lack of understanding and acceptance of the three-stage sequential decision process for manpower services; for example a vocational evaluation project survey, based upon 236 responses, revealed that only 5.5% of evaluators acknowledged the value upon which the model is based while 58% felt vocational evaluation was appropriate for all persons needing vocational guidance.

Compounding this barrier is the current struggle for professional identity amongst vocational evaluators. In this struggle the substantial overlap which vocational evaluation shares with many other human service assessment disciplines has been largely ignored. The result of such selective ignoring on the part of this emerging profession has contributed to the loss of important techniques and concepts to the field, reinvention of the wheel in many instances, and practitioner ignorance of some of the most basically useful approaches. As with most professions, much of the initial thrust toward professionalization has embodied the parochial and limiting qualities of the early guilds.

Dealing with the Barriers

The coming of age of the profession of vocational evaluation must be geared toward professional knowledge rather than parochial guild-like concerns. This professional knowledge should include an appreciation of the availability and usefulness of techniques and concepts created by earlier-developed related professions and must also include *new* knowledge generated as the result of creative, well-designed research by vocational evaluators. Such knowledge must be better communicated in our educational programs designed to prepare new practitioners and also to the in-service training of existent practitioners.

Examples of more innovative techniques for the instruction of such material might include use of: a) multi-agency and profession orientation of new staff members to the manpower service system, b) exchange programs within and between professions amongst agencies to develop appreciation and knowledge of practitioners in a broader range of delivery system services, c) multi-agency and profession in-service training techniques, d) creative casework supervision, e) multi-agency and profession case review and consultation, and f) measurable objectives for evaluating service effectiveness—yet to be developed (Lorenz, 1973).

PERSONNEL BARRIERS

Lorenz (1973) has observed that many of the problems which exist in service integration stem from conflicts between personnel. As he puts it:

"Of particular concern is the fact that problems at the service delivery level stemming from basic personality conflicts frequently get promoted to the level of formal inter-agency issues" (Lorenz, 1973, p. 263).

Lorenz goes on to say that the solution to this problem will be the result of "Continued effort . . . to hire competent personnel with the assurance of their continued professional growth and development, coupled with the creation of a working atmosphere conducive to dignity and self respect" (Lorenz, 1973, p. 265).

The issues of personnel development are beyond the scope of this Task Force. However, there are issues related to the overall working atmosphere within the total delivery system which affect the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational evaluation services. We will deal here with these issues.

We have indicated that vocational evaluation services logically are provided at the tail end of a multi-stage assessment process, in which the client is placed in increasingly individualized assessment processes. However, for this approach to work three conditions must be met: first, information collected during prior assessment processes must be forwarded for use in vocational evaluation; second, those doing vocational evaluation must have the competence to use this information; and, third, those doing vocational evaluation must have the confidence to use this information. Unfortunately, in actual practice these three conditions are sometimes not met because of personnel conflicts. Prior information may not be forwarded because of doubts that those providing vocational evaluation services are competent to handle it. Prior information may not be used because those doing vocational evaluation doubt the credibility of the information or their confidence in using it is challenged.

A second major barrier, closely linked to the information usage barrier, is that vocational evaluation must be capable of specifying a problem-solving course of action if it is to have any utility. Yet those providing vocational evaluation services question whether it is their function to prescribe specific treatments or services which would reduce or eliminate the problems of the client, or whether this function belongs to others within the delivery system. As a result, the outcome of vocational evaluation services is sometimes a mere description or identification of the client's problem: a statement of *what* needs to be changed without any indication of *how* it should be changed.

Personnel Barriers

As we have suggested, hiring competent personnel to provide vocational evaluation services is a necessary, but not sufficient, way of overcoming the existing personnel barriers. Beyond the presence of competent personnel is the existence of working conditions which allow for dignity and self-respect. These working conditions are fundamentally those which will allow for maximal use of the competence and expertise of people within the delivery system. The establishment and maintenance of adequate working conditions is an administrative and managerial prerogative; yet it must be recognized that within a delivery system, working

conditions within one component of a system can have an impact upon those in other components. There are several things which administrators and managers can do to establish adequate working conditions.

First, the roles and functions of personnel within the entire delivery system should be identified in some detail. This should be done in sufficient depth to indicate that some roles and functions may change depending upon the particular circumstances and situation of the client. This series of job descriptions should clarify that it is the role and function of vocational evaluators to specify the means of treating vocational problems as well as describing problems, in those cases where other assessment techniques have not been successful in developing a course of action.

Second, administrative and managerial procedures to insure that the information obtained from prior assessment processes is made available for use in vocational evaluation should be established. This can have two major effects: (1) it will serve to insure that a cost-effective strategy for the delivery of vocational evaluation services (as shown in Figure 5 and Table 9) is being used; and (2) it will serve to identify where any specific barriers to the forwarding of prior information exist. The latter indicate where specific administrative intervention may be required.

Third, administrative and managerial procedures to insure that prior information is used and incorporated in vocational evaluation should be established. This involves establishing some mechanism for determining whether or not the prior assessment information is actually being used in the provision of vocational evaluation services. For example, some simple indicators such as duplicative information gathering or testing practices might be used. It is not too uncommon to find that routine demographic information which duplicates that already available is gathered during vocational evaluation, or that the client is subjected to certain basic tests which only yield already available information. At the same time, administrators and managers must be prepared to handle the problem of a lack of confidence on the part of those providing vocational evaluation services to allow them to deal with available assessment information. This information is sometimes produced by highly degreed and prestigious persons, a significant barrier to use. This can be dealt with by clearly indicating that use of prior assessment information is a legitimate function of vocational evaluation. This use is warranted by the evaluator's expertise in the area of vocations (an expertise which may not be possessed by some of the other persons who have generated assessment information).

Fourth, administrative and managerial procedures to insure accurate feedback and knowledge of results should be established. A working atmosphere based on competence and expertise can be maintained only if the persons working within the system are adequately reinforced for the performance of their roles and functions. This requires both knowledge of results and supervisory reinforcement. Without this the system and the personnel within it lack the capacity for self regulation, an essential characteristic of an adequately functioning system.

PHILOSOPHICAL BARRIERS

A major barrier to the effective delivery of services, is the philosophy of various agencies within a service delivery system regarding the special needs group of that systems' target population. We have noted that the special needs group is small and that meeting the needs of this group is expensive. Consequently there is a temptation to ignore the special needs group. We have found in recent years that a number of programs in the manpower service system have overlooked or ignored certain segments of their total target population: the lack of services to the severely disabled and disadvantaged with educational, vocational rehabilitation, and manpower programs are convenient examples.

Dealing with the Barriers

The major actions taken to overcome this barrier have been primarily legislative. Laws which either mandate or designate a service priority to certain special needs groups have been passed at both the federal and state levels. The political process is, however, only a partially successful solution. The political process is susceptible to pressure; yet there are times when the squeaking wheel which gets the grease is not necessarily the one most in need of lubrication. Secondly, the programs are essentially forced by legislative mandate to provide services to designated special needs groups. This usurps some of the decision-making powers of program administrators, and, as such, can have some negative effects on services. Third, legislative mandate may be given without a corresponding increase in resources necessary to provide adequate services. This gives program administrators a serious resource allocation problem which sometimes only can be solved by taking resources from services for another group within the target group—a solution which results in less than adequate services to both the basic and special needs target groups. Lastly, legislation impacts primarily upon public sector agencies under legislative control. Yet an optimal manpower service system depends heavily upon effective linkages between the public and private sectors. An expansion of services in the public sector may not be effective unless a corresponding increase occurs in the private sector. This last point is of particular relevance when vocational evaluation services are considered—a substantial portion of these services are provided by private sector agencies.

The possible drawbacks to legislative solutions suggest that both public and private sector agencies and programs should become more involved in the legislative process. Program and agency personnel are in a position to convey needs, capabilities, resource requirements, and interagency linkages to legislators and to assist in the development of meaningful and practical legislation. It goes without saying that agencies have been neglectful of the legislative process in the past, although in recent years there has been a trend toward increased political activity. It is our suggestion that this trend be encouraged to continue.

An area of basic need, and one which may be affected by legislative action, is program goals. We have noted that public sector agencies tend

to be oriented toward attaining gainful employment outcomes for clients served. Yet we have also noted that among the special needs groups there is a relatively high proportion of persons for whom gainful employment outcomes are neither realistic nor feasible. We know such people exist and we are capable of identifying increasing numbers of them, but the question of what to do with them remains unresolved. Under current practices, they are not provided with services by public sector agencies, even though such services may increase their functional independence. Private sector agencies have developed some programs and services for this group, but these do not reach all who are in need of them. Additionally, these programs and services are expensive and must be supported by privately raised funds. Succinctly stated, the question is what do we do with the people who fall in between institutionalization and gainful employment? Who provides services to them? Who funds these services? These are questions for political debate and action. They form a core area of concern for service delivery personnel and the public in general.

The obvious need is for increased involvement in the political process on the part of service delivery personnel, from the administrative to the practitioner levels. The input from these individuals can be meaningful in defining target groups, program outcomes and goals, and resource needs. All of these are essential in the development of an effective manpower service delivery system.

A second major philosophical barrier to the effective delivery of vocational evaluation services in manpower programs stems from the operational philosophy held by some who provide the service. A few established authorities in vocational evaluation (e.g., Gellman, 1967) have stated that vocational evaluation is "ahistorical." The literal meaning of this philosophic statement is that vocational evaluation provides a new set of observations which may be different from, or contrary to, information obtained from the past history of the client. In other words, the present behavior of the client can be accurately observed even if its past is unknown. Unfortunately, this philosophic statement is sometimes taken to mean that those who perform vocational evaluation should remain ignorant of the history of the client. In extreme statements, it is sometimes alleged that awareness of client history is prejudicial and biasing.

These over-extensions of the "ahistorical view" are wasteful of valuable sources of information and lead to the destruction of one of the major values of the sequential evaluation strategy, that of conservation of effort. The operational effects are noted when referring agents do not forward available client histories at the time referrals are made, or when vocational evaluators do not read the available history when it has been forwarded. More importantly, this has negative effects on some clients who become bewildered or even hostile when they have to repeat the same history to a new person at each step of the evaluation sequence.

One step toward resolution of this philosophical barrier is to recognize that there is a qualitative difference between "ahistorical" in the sense of being neutral toward past information, and "anti-historical" in the sense of being ignorant or rejecting of past information. A competent vocational

evaluator ought to be able to remain neutral toward historical information and to use it within the vocational evaluation process without being unduly biased by it.

Another step toward resolution of this barrier is to recognize that the effectiveness of the whole vocational assessment system and process is reduced by the anti-historical position. It is unnecessarily wasteful of the resources of both clients and staff. A concern with this would encourage related ways of dealing with the barrier: better cross-agency communication, better design of overall service delivery systems, development of competence and confidence to deal with historical information by vocational evaluation staff, and development of better second-level, clinical assessment capabilities by referring or evaluating agencies.

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Communication is essential to the effective delivery of vocational evaluation. Perhaps because communication is so basic and pervasive, it is difficult to single this area out as a barrier in and of itself. Yet, we recognize that without effective communication there can be no supportive, cooperative atmosphere on which to build. The three broad areas of interagency, intra-agency, and client communication provide a focus on the problems related to communication.

Interagency Communication

In most situations, the use of vocational evaluation services means that both a referring agency (seeker of services) and delivering agency (provider of services) are involved. Thus interagency communication is essential for the system to operate. Interagency communication can be looked at in a variety of ways, ranging from formal communication between agencies to the informal communication of staff personnel within agencies. Barriers can occur at all levels.

The working relationship between the referring agent and the vocational evaluator can be affected by a number of factors besides the quality of services provided. Examples of such factors are personalities, lack of mutual respect, varying expectations from the evaluation process, and failure to present results in the form desired by the referring agency.

Dealing with Interagency Communication

Communication is improved when the referring agency knows what to expect from vocational evaluation and when the service-providing agency communicates the results of vocational evaluation in the form requested and in a manner which enables the referring agent to take action. The use of a common or standard language, which defines terms specific to vocational evaluation, helps to facilitate communication.

Jargon which is unique to either the evaluation agency or the referring agency should be avoided in either formal or informal communication between agencies since it impedes rather than enhances communication.

By reinforcing formal lines of communication, some of the problems resulting from personality are reduced.

Mutual respect between referral and evaluation personnel is critical. This is to say that the counselor respects the expertise of the consultant (evaluator) to whom the client is referred and that the consultant respects the counselor's ability to integrate the information obtained and to follow up on the product of the evaluators work with the client.

On the programmatic level, information is necessary to evaluate the vocational evaluation process. Some agencies have instituted program evaluation procedures, but most have not. At present we lack adequate definitions and means of assessing outcome criteria. Since the relationship between the referring agency and the vocational evaluation program is a reciprocal one, coordination and cooperation between agencies is necessary in program evaluation. Communication breakdowns and lack of cooperation between agencies have impeded progress in this area.

Adequate program evaluation efforts have to begin with a clear statement of the goals and objectives of vocational evaluation programs. The clouding of what vocational evaluation can and cannot do has severely restricted most attempts at program evaluation.

With such a complex issue involving multi-agencies with multi-priorities, it is difficult to arrive at specific proposals. It may be more useful to look at some broad areas for consideration. The first such area is information sharing. We would suggest the creation of a cooperative management information service, the expenses for which could be shared. In this way, information on the needs of an individual along with services provided could be jointly shared. This would give recognition to the fact that what is necessary post-service follow-up information for vocational evaluation is often process information maintained by the referring agency. It commonly can be readily retrieved from case files, computer tapes, and other sources. This information could be communicated to vocational evaluation program administrators on a routine basis by referring agencies.

A second area for consideration is in joint agency planning. This could help improve and further establish lines of communication, along with avoiding unnecessary duplications of service and service gaps.

At the individual staff level, it is extremely important that evaluators receive feedback, which is frequently lacking. There are two results of this deficit. One is that without feedback evaluators have no criteria against which to judge their efforts; hence there is no directed learning through which appropriate hypotheses are generated and improved techniques evolve. The second result is that evaluators who are not aware of successes are more likely to be defensive upon learning of failures. This is a barrier to the use of knowledge of results for program improvement.

More formalized means of communicating results and outcomes back to evaluators from referring sources would be useful both to improve the quality of services provided, and to satisfy evaluators' needs to learn of the effects of their work.

Intra-agency Communication

Vocational evaluation services are most typically provided as a program component within a service providing agency. Consequently, communication channels among staff, administrators, and others within an agency providing vocational evaluation services are necessary. These communication channels are important in the delivery of effective vocational evaluation service to clients. Additionally, they are important in developing and maintaining job satisfaction among those who directly deliver vocational evaluation services.

A critical communications factor has to do with the linkages between administration and those who actually perform the vocational evaluation function. Vocational evaluators often express concern over what they see as a lack of administrative understanding of the vocational evaluation process and the role and function of vocational evaluators. Due to the burdens of scheduling and the provision of services to clients, vocational evaluators sometimes come to feel chained to their work benches, unable to express needs and conflicts to administrators. As a result, they become frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs, leading to a high job turnover rate among vocational evaluators. Dunn, Allen, and Mueller (1973) indicate that job turnover among evaluators is most directly linked to dissatisfaction with the extrinsic aspects of their jobs. These are directly controlled by program administrators.

There obviously have to be effective communication channels between agency administration and direct client service staff to prevent the problems of evaluator dissatisfaction and "burn out." At the same time, communication is not enough; administrators must be prepared to take actions resulting from these communications. In other words communication and responsiveness are the key points in resolving the administrative communication barriers.

A second intra-agency communication barrier stems from the relationship between evaluation personnel and other service delivery staff. The practice of vocational evaluation is relatively new and, as such, contains within it roles and functions which were sometimes previously performed by other staff. These other staff members may tend to be threatened by having a portion of their previous functions usurped, or may tend to perceive vocational evaluation as an adjunct, technical activity. Role conflicts may arise which impede the delivery of effective client services.

Creation of an atmosphere which encourages communication of respect, acceptance, and mutual understanding is necessary to deal with this communication barrier. This requires a high degree of openness on the part of the staff involved as well as a recognition that it may be necessary to modify and adjust existing staff roles to accommodate vocational evaluation services. (A more comprehensive treatment of this topic may be found in the report of Task Force #4—"The Evaluator Team Approach to Vocational Evaluation".—ed.)

An emerging trend is toward an increased emphasis on the entire agency staff participating in the evaluation process. The dynamic relationship that can evolve from this process fosters a working respect for

one another's discipline, as well as a dependency upon the unique contributions made by each staff member. In order to further staff communication, greater emphasis needs to be placed upon behavioral terms, which provide a common language to all disciplines. For example, one no longer needs to decipher "bad attitudes"; rather, it is possible to observe and discuss specific behaviors that demonstrate the attitude. This commonality of language leads to a far greater understanding and possible cooperation among staff members.

The third intra-agency communication barrier stems from what we might call the "staff-other dichotomy." This basically reflects an attitudinal barrier which holds that only the "professionals" can help clients. The actual fact of the matter is that the "others" in an agency, who may include secretaries, receptionists, custodians, and even other clients, are often in a position in which they can make observations of considerable importance and relevance to vocational evaluation.

Dealing with this barrier is reasonably straightforward. Communication channels which will allow for the full exchange of information relevant to a client should be established. Once these communication channels are opened, the vocationally relevant observations of others will be available for use by vocational evaluator staff. At the same time, however, the attitudinal barrier of "professional—non-professional" may remain as a block even though communication channels are opened. This should be given attention by administrators and perhaps dealt with through attitude change and techniques of interpersonal relations.

Client Communication

The client plays an integral role in the vocational evaluation process. Two areas in which communication barriers may occur are first in the types of relationships which exist between client and evaluator and second in the kinds of expectations a client holds with respect to vocational evaluation.

With regard to the evaluator and client relationship, it appears there are at least two schools of thought. One approach encourages the gathering of "objective" data, assumed to be achieved by maintaining a distance between the client and the evaluator. This first approach views the evaluator primarily as a technician or information gatherer. The other approach encourages developing an interpersonal relationship, which supposedly increases the development of client involvement and thus yields more "subjective" data. This latter approach sees the evaluator as a facilitator. Several possible false assumptions are made in the creation of the objective-subjective dichotomy.

Problems arise by taking an either/or approach. Decisions need to be made on objective data; however this does not rule out facilitative interpersonal relationships—that is, there is a distinction between the types of data and types of relationships. Second, in order for vocational evaluation to be effective, that is, to accurately assess a client's potential and to develop realistic action plans, it must be a "process with" rather than a "treatment to" the client. Thus client involvement in the vocational

evaluation process is implied and necessary. One way to insure client participation is through a facilitative relationship. Third, the professional vocational evaluator needs to have both technical and facilitative competencies according to the career ladder within vocational evaluation. The evaluator should also be able to provide coordination and supervision to the aides and technicians. Frequently agencies have not recognized the different levels of skill required for the technician and evaluator positions and have emphasized the technician aspect in their vocational evaluation process. Unfortunately this leads to incomplete assessment.

With respect to expectations, a decided hindrance to the vocational evaluation process occurs when the client's conception of vocational evaluation differs markedly from that of the evaluator. For example, a client who expects to receive training in a specific occupation will quickly become frustrated, angered, and possibly hostile, when the tests, work samples, and behavioral observations of the vocational evaluation process are encountered.

Since expectations play a critical role in how a person responds to any given situation, attention needs to be given to prepare and orient a client to the evaluation process, and to identify the client's chief complaint. This is usually done prior to referral to the evaluation unit, so that the client's understanding of and agreement to the evaluation process is assured.

The orientation and preparation can be done either by the referring or the service providing agency. The important step is for the service providing agency to verify that the orientation has been given and, if not, to provide it. A practical tool in communicating more about the vocational evaluation process could be a brochure or fact sheet, with explanations and alternatives listed. Other media such as slides and tapes might also be used to show the role of the evaluator and of the client. In this way both parties in the process can begin with common understandings and with a common commitment.

REFERRAL BARRIERS

Referral practices have a powerful impact on the effective delivery of vocational evaluation services. Barriers are created if referrals are inappropriate in type of client or in process of referral. The analysis of client characteristic data, a product of the survey mentioned earlier, indicated that 21.6% of all vocational evaluation clients were regarded as "inappropriate referrals" by their evaluators (Bode, 1974). The problem of "inappropriate referrals" does not stand alone, but includes the areas we have discussed above: fiscal, agency structure, professional practices, personnel, and communication.

Referral of a client who is unprepared or who is more appropriate for an existing alternative facility constitutes a referral which is inappropriate in type.

Referral to vocational evaluation without first conducting Level I and Level II assessment, or without effectively using and transmitting the product of that assessment, constitutes a referral which is inappropriate in process.

Referral barriers may be the product of faulty practices by both referring and evaluating agencies. Some barriers which are created by referring agencies include: lack of client orientation, lack of provision of necessary support services (e.g., transportation, lodging, meals, etc.), screening failures (inability to detect significant client information in Level I and II assessments), and time lags in service provision. Barriers created by evaluating agencies include: lack of orientation to programs, fiscal and administrative pressures to accept clients without verifying appropriateness, lack of programming to fully meet client needs, and lack of awareness of referring agencies' needs, policies, and practices.

Dealing with Referral Barriers

The remedies of defects in the referral process can be sought by promoting improvement in the practices of referring agencies and/or by the evaluation program compensating for the deficiencies of the referral.

Each vocational evaluation agency can adopt intake procedures which will gradually shape the referral process. Simultaneous with general communication on the topic of referral, the referral sources can be encouraged case by case to make more appropriate referrals to the evaluation program. This may become formally established as a set of pre-conditions for acceptance of referral.

Internally, the evaluating agency can compensate for the deficiencies of its feeder systems. Explicit early review of a case for that purpose can identify the client who is better served at a specified different facility. A series of "inappropriate" referrals for whom there is no better community alternative is a clear signal that the delivery system should expand or modify its services, or create new ones. For example, if the feeder system does not include a Level II assessment on which to base referral decisions, the vocational evaluation agency can compensate for this by including a Level II assessment with new clients. This provides a short-term solution to the problem which can be used until such time as the comprehensive delivery system makes more permanent modifications in its approach.

The adoption of a client-centered view which recognizes the value of an optimal outcome for all clients, however limited their opportunities might be, enables the vocational evaluation program to deal with referrals for whom no specific referral reasons are stated. In this case, the assumption is that the referring agency has delegated responsibility for identifying an optimal outcome to the evaluation program and that the latter can proceed with the client unimpeded by referring agency outcome requirements.

We have not dealt with all of the barriers to adequate referral practices. The issues discussed earlier all bear upon this topic and, in many ways, these must be resolved before completely acceptable referral practices evolve. Referral is the interface between vocational evaluation and the manpower delivery system. It is most directly affected by existing barriers.

SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion of vocational evaluation has, hopefully, enabled the reader to better understand and appreciate its role within the total spectrum of the human services delivery system. The importance of careful and complete vocational evaluation in this system can hardly be overstated.

The barriers that threaten the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational evaluation are myriad, and need greater attention from the field in order that their impact be diminished.

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