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A follow-up study of students with learning disabilities and the factors associated with their successful community adjustment

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The Ohio State University, 1993
A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1993

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To my husband Ed, with love and gratitude,
and to my family, especially my brother Bill,
for their faith in and patience with me.
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FIELD OF STUDY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Overview

In 1975, the federal government made a commitment to special needs youth of the United States by passing PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, entitling all to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Since that time, educators have sought to meet the individual needs of special education students, to enable them to become as independent as possible, to appropriately integrate them into mainstream classes and hopefully into mainstream society. To accomplish this task, a variety of approaches and service delivery systems has been implemented. These have included academic remediation models, career education, transition from school to work, quality-of-life, and the Regular Education Initiative.

Although initial program models tended toward primarily academic instruction, programs have been developed which are more career oriented and attempt to help students make a successful adjustment to adult life. This evolution of career oriented programs began in the early 1970s with the career education movement, continued into the 1980s with the focus shifting to transition from school to work, and becoming broader based in the 1990s with the “quality-of-life” concept.
The Eleventh Annual Report to Congress on the Education of Handicapped Children Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1989) provided evidence of the change in priorities toward career orientation. "Many special educators are recommending radical changes in secondary programs for mildly handicapped students away from academics and toward functional, vocational, independent living programs to reduce the large number of mildly handicapped students that drop out of school to enter a work environment of low wages" (p.59).

Employability was one aspect of career education, which began as a regular education movement supported by Sidney Marland, former U.S. Commissioner of Education, and Kenneth Hoyt, first director of the U.S. Office of Career Education. Career education was to be infused into the regular curriculum and provide a more meaningful and practical basis for education, preparing students for the variety of roles they will fill as an adult (Kokoska & Brolin, 1985).

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) made transition from school to work a priority in the mid-1980s. Assistant Secretary Madeline Will's (1983) view on transition was to facilitate successful bridging from school to the workplace with a stronger secondary school program combined with adult agency participation ranging from general to specific, depending on the individual's needs. OSERS funded over 200 pilot programs which were developed and offered as models for educators, with a goal of preparing students to move in a prescribed and supported fashion from the education system to the workplace (Heal, Copher, DeStefano & Rusch 1989; Wehmen, Kregel & Barkus, 1985).

Vocational education has also played an important role in the preparation of students for the workplace, and efforts are being made at the federal and state levels to make vocational and technology education more compatible with the needs of students
and employers. The purpose of the 1990 passage of PL 101-392, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, was to more fully develop the academic and occupational skills of the population in order to make the United States a more competitive force in the world economy (Staff, DCD Network, 1990, December).

State efforts have also been made to improve vocational education programs, one of which is the California Plan for Career-Vocational Education. “The mission of career-vocational education in California is to enhance the personal and economic well-being of individuals and to develop human resources which contribute to the economic development of the state” (California State Department of Education, 1990, p.4).

One impetus for the change in focus from strictly academic to vocational was the outlook for students with disabilities as portrayed by follow-up studies. Unfortunately, many follow-up studies showed that special education students were not working as often or at the same level as their former “regular” education classmates. Research studying persons with mild handicaps yielded troubling results. Some showed that adults who are Learning Disabled (LD) found employment in proportion to age group peers, but it was often in minimum wage or entry level positions, and frequently limited to part-time status (Hagstrum, 1987; Okolo & Sitlington, 1986). Other data showed former learning disabled students working fewer hours or less often than their regular education peers, with Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) students employed at an even lower rate (Fardig, Algozzine, Schwartz, Hensel & Westling, 1985; Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985). For example, Edgar (1985) noted findings showing that only 38% of graduates with mild mental retardation found post-school employment, while 64% of those with Learning or Behavioral Disabilities were employed.

The federal government, in recent amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act, expressed concern over the limited options many former special
education students have, and have more clearly defined the role of public education in the transition process (U.S. Congress, 1990).

Over 200,000 special education students exit our nation's schools on an annual basis. The Committee has heard from many students, parents, and advocacy and provider organizations that many of these individuals leaving school as young adults have no jobs, further training, or programs available to them. Some are forced to linger at home, with literally nothing to do. (p.37)

The amendments, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), addressed students' transition needs in a variety of ways. For example, a statement of needed transition services must be included in each Individualized Education Program (IEP) no later than age 16 -- by age 14 when appropriate. Transition services include coordinated activities based on individual interests, needs, and abilities. Grants were made available to state or local educational agencies, higher education institutions, or other agencies to stimulate and strengthen programs and services which assist special education students in the transition process. One-time grants were also available to states in which the state vocational rehabilitation agency and educational agency collaborated to improve transition services.

Employment, although a major component of adult life and of the transition process, is not the only barometer of success, nor should it be the only goal of education. "Although employment is obviously one very important dimension of community adjustment, it is extremely short-sighted to allow this dimension to dominate entirely the way in which we conceptualize the desired outcomes of a public education for students with disabilities (or any other group of students, for that matter)" (Halpern, 1990, p.19).
Residential status, social and interpersonal network, and other independent living skills are all important aspects of community adjustment. Halpern's (1985) Revised Transition Model shows this in a three-dimensional picture of community adjustment. Pillars labeled Residential Environment, Social and Interpersonal Network, and Employment are the supports of Community Adjustment. "It [three-dimensional portrayal] is meant to imply that if any of the three pillars are inadequate and do not carry their own weight, then the entire structure is in danger of collapse, and a person's ability to live in the community is threatened" (p.481).

The Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. Congress (1990) also supports the multi-faceted approach to transition programming. In the report accompanying the IDEA legislation, it was noted that many individuals who lacked independent living skills had a more difficult transition to work or further education due to their need to concentrate on other aspects of daily independent living.

Researchers have also begun to develop a broader view of successful transition to post-school life through "quality-of-life" definitions, literature, and research. While agreement upon one exact definition of quality-of-life has yet to be reached, one consistent characteristic is that it is more multi-faceted than original transition definitions dealing only with employment. Measurement of quality-of-life must contain, to some degree, some subjective criteria related to the individual's perception of success as well as objective measures of society's standards (Dennis, Williams, Giangreco & Cloninger, 1993; Halpern, 1993). Control over decisions being made, or a sense of personal fulfillment, satisfaction, or general well-being are often put forth as important, albeit subjective, aspects of quality-of-life.
Halpern (1993) proposes a taxonomy which may be used to classify quality-of-life outcomes. An examination of literature and other proposed taxonomies resulted in three basic domains which are broken down into 15 outcomes.

**Physical and Material Well-Being**
- physical and mental health
- food, clothing, and lodging
- financial security
- safety from harm

**Performance of Adult Roles**
- mobility and community access
- vocation, career, employment
- leisure and recreation
- personal relationships and social networks
- educational attainment
- spiritual fulfillment
- citizenship (e.g., voting)
- social responsibility (e.g., doesn’t break laws)

**Personal Fulfillment**
- happiness
- satisfaction
- sense of general well-being

(p.491)

Community adjustment is best described by the eight outcomes in the “performance of adult roles” domain. Quality-of-life is a much broader concept than community adjustment, as it also incorporates outcomes in the areas of “physical and material well-being” and “personal fulfillment”.

Although the philosophy regarding the broadening of goals related to transition is generally agreed upon, the best avenue by which students may reach those goals is still a matter of heated debate. One major area in question is that of inclusion, the extent to which special education students are mainstreamed and educated with the regular school population.

Proponents of the Regular Education Initiative (REI) suggest that the needs of all students can best be met in a unified system in which regular and special education are
merged (Stainback & Stainback, 1984). Such a system would no longer need to differentiate among categories of student disabilities, where students require some stereotyping label to qualify for individual services. Support services would be provided through the cooperation of regular and special educators for any student, in a system which would reduce unnecessary duplication and competition.

While many authors agree on the need to improve both special and regular education, as well as the cooperation between the two, there are many concerns about the REI. Some of the premises of the REI proponents have been questioned by other educators, such as the assertion that students are being over identified, that deficits in student achievement stem from inappropriate instruction, and that regular education teachers would welcome the wider range of students in their classrooms, as well as learn and embrace the techniques needed to teach a widely diverse group (Kauffman, Gerber & Semmel, 1988; Lieberman, 1985).

Concerns about the REI seem to be compounded at the secondary school level. The basic skill deficiencies of many learning disabled students are an even greater problem at the high school, where demands of higher level skills and strategies in more intense curricula create an ever-widening gap between many special and regular students. Additionally, secondary school instruction is predominately teacher-centered, and high school teachers have historically been reluctant to adopt a more student-centered approach, which is a cornerstone of the REI (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

The current position of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (1993) is that the continuum of services provided by federal mandate should be preserved, and that the regular education classroom is appropriate for many students with learning disabilities, but not for all.
Regardless of the location of instruction, it is important that the IEPs of students with special needs address each individual’s needs in every area of community adjustment. Follow-up studies which report on many aspects of community adjustment can begin to give an indication of student (and program) success in each area. Recent studies have begun to provide a more complete picture of the community adjustment of former special education students. For example, the Sitlington, Frank, and Cooper (1989) study included information about subjects’ living arrangements, marital status, and leisure activities as well as a variety of employment data. Kranstover, Thurlow, and Bruininks (1989) followed-up students who had participated in special education programs, examining former students' independent living/financial status, leisure activities and social integration, and many employment outcomes. In a one-year follow-up of special education students from Los Angeles (Renfroe, Hendricks & Weisbender, 1988), information was gathered about living arrangements, transportation, and financial independence, as well as employment data.

In the same way that research about community adjustment should be multifaceted, so should data collected about student characteristics. Students exiting from special education classes with varying degrees of disabilities enter the community with varying degrees of disadvantage. But their disability may not be the only factor inhibiting their successful adjustment to adulthood. Other characteristics have been shown to have an effect on students' futures, especially in the employment arena. Gender, race, method of exit from high school, or coursework completed in high school can impact future success.

For example, women in our society, while closing the gap in labor force participation, still earn less than men (Mortimer, Finch, Owens & Shanahan, 1990). A troubling finding in many special education follow-up studies is the often significant
disparity between employment rates of males and females, one not evident in the general population (Fardig et al., 1985; Hasazi et al., 1985; Scuccimarra, 1987; Schalock, Wolzen, Ross, Elliot, Werbel & Peterson, 1986).

Minority status, particularly African-American or Hispanic heritage, is all too often associated with lower rates of employment, higher rates of dropping out of school, and over-representation in public special education classes. It would, therefore, seem that follow-up studies of special education students would assess the impact of minority status on post school community adjustment. But the usual reference to race or ethnicity is a description of the demographics of a population or sample. It is rarely used as a predictor variable or used in any type of correlational analysis.

Nationally, students who drop out of school earn less than graduates and have a lower employment rate (Feichtner, 1989). This trend often holds true for students with disabilities. The highest grade completed was the best predictor of post school adjustment in a rural Florida setting (Fardig et al., 1985). Graduates also fared better than dropouts in other follow-up studies (Hasazi et al., 1985; Sitlington et al., 1989). The evidence is not as clear-cut when looking at the relationship between graduation status, type of program and future success in the community for special education students. In one study (deBettencourt, Zigmond & Thornton, 1989) rural LD dropouts were employed at a higher rate than LD graduates.

Participation in regular vocational education programs sometimes results in higher employment rates (Hasazi et al., 1985; Sitlington et al., 1989), and sometimes in lower rates (Guarino, 1988). One factor which may limit the success of vocational education is the often haphazard selection of vocational classes by students with disabilities. A specially designed program developed jointly by vocational and special educators (Gill & Edgar, 1990) produced higher employment rates for its graduates.
The level of handicap can also be a factor in community adjustment outcomes. Studies focus on either type of disability (e.g. LD, EMR) or type of placement (e.g. resource, self-contained), assuming that the more severe the disability, the more restrictive the placement. Hasazi et al. (1985) found resource students employed at a higher rate than those from self-contained classes. But Sitlington et al. (1989) found no significant differences for students identified as LD in various class settings.

More evidence is needed to gain a better understanding of how students with LD or other disabilities fare after leaving high school, and how a variety of personal and program characteristics relate to future success. A comparison should also be made of the adjustment level of special education students and their non-handicapped peers, whether through the use of control groups (deBettencourt et al., 1989) or through a detailed description of the community in which the students live (Schalock et al., 1986). Such a comparison is especially beneficial during difficult economic times when the status of communities around the country can vary greatly.

**Problem Statement**

The extent to which special education students are successfully adjusting to the community after exiting high school is unclear. Data needed to identify program or student characteristics which correlate with and may help to explain successful community adjustment by special education students are also lacking.

**Purpose of the Study**

There were two purposes for this study. The first was to describe the community adjustment of learning disabled students who, between the years 1984-89, had participated in the special education program offered by a unified school district in
Southern California. Students had been in either the Resource Specialist Program (RSP), spending more than half of their school day in regular education classes, or in a Special Day Class (SDC), spending at least half of their day with a special education teacher. Indices of community adjustment included data on employment, residential status, social and leisure activities, and independent living skills.

The second purpose of the study was to identify important characteristics of the student and his/her program and their relationship to successful community adjustment. Program variables included extent of participation in mainstream classes or vocational programs, and completion or non-completion of high school. Student characteristics included gender and racial or ethnic background.

Need for the Study

Halpern (1990) reviewed 27 follow-up studies which had been conducted following the 1975 passage of PL 94-142. He noted the lack of consistency in reporting data, and the limited scope of the studies, which focused primarily on employment outcomes. It is important that research be developed with a well-defined set of variables which more completely describe the community adjustment of former special education students. In this way the information from a variety of sources can be integrated into a body of knowledge useful to the education community.

The interview protocol and other features of the study were based on the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study (Sitlington, 1989; Sitlington & Frank, 1990; Sitlington et al., 1989). Although the current research is limited to a district rather than a state level, it does address some issues which were not a part of the Iowa study. Important to this study was research (Escutia & Prieto, 1986; Hollister, 1989) showing that members of some minority groups drop out of school more frequently and have a higher
unemployment rate than whites. The district which the students attended, like many in Southern California, has many minority students, especially Hispanic and African Americans. The data from the study were analyzed to determine if a relationship existed between race and successful community adjustment.

The graduating class of the students in the Iowa study had been out of school for only one year. The first year out of high school has been called a “floundering period” for regular as well as special education students (Roessler, Brolin & Johnson, 1990). This study looked at the adjustment of students three or four years after their class graduated from high school, providing a look at students after they have had more opportunity to adjust to their community.

The results of a follow-up study can be useful to educators at a variety of levels. At the school or district level, follow-up information can be an aid to program evaluation and development. Those courses or programs which are shown to be related to future success can be strengthened or expanded. Other courses may need to be significantly changed to meet the needs of students. Data showing which types of students are eventually successful or unsuccessful can point to the need for early intervention with high-risk students. On a broader scale, information from various follow-up studies can be integrated into a more complete body of knowledge which can be used to guide program development and teacher education programs.

The Approach to the Study

In order to determine the level of community adjustment and the factors which relate to it, data were gathered through an examination of school records and personal interviews with former students who have learning disabilities. Special education class lists were used to create a subject pool of all LD students who were ninth graders from
1984-86. In this way, students who dropped out of school prior to graduation were identified.

Students who transferred permanently from the district or from the special education program were not eligible for the study. The remaining students who were able to be located were interviewed by the researcher about their current status in the community. The interview protocol was based on the survey questionnaire used in the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study (Sitlington, 1989).

School records for all students eligible for the study were examined. Information gathered from the records included gender, race, handicapping condition, and a tally of successfully completed vocational or mainstream classes. A comparison was made of the demographics of students interviewed and those who were not, in order to determine if any discrepancies existed between the two groups.

The data collected through the interview process were used to describe the level of community adjustment of the former students. The relationship between community adjustment and selected characteristics of the students and their programs was also assessed.

Definitions
The term "children with specific learning disabilities" means those children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Such disorders include such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor
disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

The term “transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to integrated employment (including supported employment), post secondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s preferences and interests, and shall include, but not be limited to, instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Elementary and secondary special education students currently in America's public schools have been educated in programs guided by the rules and regulations of PL 94-142 and its subsequent amendments. One method which has been used to determine the success of these programs is the follow-up study. The competence of former students, the 'product' of special education programs, is evaluated in part through the use of follow-up data. The information found in studies of special education students provides but one piece of the puzzle which describes the post-high school success of learning disabled students. Other pieces which are necessary to complete the picture include a description of the postsecondary success of young adults in the general population, and the factors which relate to that success, for persons either with or without disabilities.

Follow-up studies of special education students can be valuable in two distinct ways. First, the methodology employed in follow-up studies can be a useful tool in planning and completing similar projects. Second, the resultant data can be used to gain a better understanding of the community adjustment of special education students, including their employment, education/training, residential, and leisure/social status. This
understanding enables more appropriate program planning as it identifies needs of students making the transition from school to work and community life.

Subjects of special education follow-up studies have an identified disability, as well as their age, in common—both of which may hinder job seeking or other community adjustment activities. They also may have other characteristics which make it difficult to successfully transition from high school to the community. Data from special education follow-up studies were examined to determine if factors such as gender, minority status, method of school exit, level of handicap, and vocational programming consistently affected the ability of students with learning disabilities or mildly retardation to function successfully in the community after they left high school.

It is also important to understand how these factors affect the employment status of the general population. If such variables consistently impact youth on a national level, it would be beneficial to determine if the same trends are reflected, and to what extent, for persons with learning disabilities. Therefore, the dual focus of the review of related literature was to examine previous research efforts, including follow-up studies of students from both special education and the general population, to determine how age, gender, minority status, vocational education, and handicapping condition influence the transition from school to work.

Community Adjustment and the Transition from School to Work

Since the early 1980s, school reform has been a major issue in education, politics, and business. The strong academic emphasis initiated by the National Commission on Excellence in Education with the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* has been tempered somewhat with an increasing awareness of the importance of
preparing non-college bound students for the workplace. One catalyst for this shift in focus has been the changing nature of the job market.

Many sectors of the labor market are becoming increasingly complex and technical, although experts do not always agree on the scope of the changes or the level of skill needed by workers in the future. A study for the Department of Labor (cited in Swasy & Hymowitz, 1990) points to the increasing complexity of jobs. Only 27% of jobs created through the year 2000 will be able to be filled with people having below-average skills. This compares to 47% of the jobs which existed in the mid-1980s. Conversely, average or higher skills will be needed for 41% of the new jobs, compared to 24% in the 1980s.

The change in some management structures with more emphasis on teams, rather than assembly line workers responsible for only one job, have brought with it a demand for new, higher level skills including teamwork, analytical skills, and problem solving (Swasy & Hymowitz, 1990).

This shift is also evident in the educational requirements which are increasing for many occupations with the highest percentage, or fastest rate, of growth. More than half of all new jobs created between the years 1984 and 2000 will require some postsecondary education, with almost one-third of those positions filled by college graduates (Johnson & Packer, 1987). The demand in California for skilled technicians is expected to grow by 38% by the year 2000 (California State Department of Education, 1990).

But growth in the job market can be reported in two ways, the rate of increase of jobs, and the growth in absolute numbers of jobs. Many fields with a high rate of growth will not add as many workers as other fields, when absolute numbers of new jobs are examined. It is expected that there will be considerable expansion in
occupations such as building custodians, cashiers, and other low-skilled service occupations (Kutscher, 1987). At the same time, many other traditional unskilled or semi-skilled jobs are showing an decline in numbers. Occupations such as assemblers, machine tenders, and miners have shown an actual decline of between 6% and 16% (Johnson & Packer, 1987).

It has been predicted that the combination of poor educational attainment of many non-college-bound students and the increased demands of the labor market lead to unemployment or a succession of low-paying jobs. "Between 1973-1986, for example, the real average annual earnings of male high school graduates aged 20-24 declined 26%. Earnings for high school dropouts fell 42%. The real wages of college graduates, by comparison, dropped only 6%" (O'Neil, 1990, p.4).

Studies Related to the Community Adjustment of Mildly Handicapped Young Adults

Research into the community adjustment of young adults has recently become a more common component of follow-up studies, although the focus is still primarily on employment. Halpern (1990) recommended a balanced approach to research which includes "employment, community integration, post-school education, and personal/social adjustment" (p.19), but noted that such inclusive research was not being conducted. These other aspects of successful community adjustment are sometimes valued more than vocational adjustment by people with disabilities and therefore need to be included in research efforts.

The community adjustment of students with learning disabilities has been studied with greater frequency in recent years than in the past (Hasazi et al., 1985). Edgar (1987) commented that it was "ironic that it was the mildly retarded who once generated
the most research in special education but now seem to be ignored" (p. 558). Of 27 follow-up studies reviewed by Halpern (1990), 6 completed prior to 1981 followed-up subjects identified as mentally retarded or educable mentally retarded. In contrast, only one study during this time frame looked at subjects with a learning disability. Studies after 1981 sampled both groups at approximately the same rate, often both in the same study.

The present review was limited to follow-up studies that focused on students with mild handicaps (learning disabilities and mildly mentally retardation) and their post-school community adjustment. Other studies deal with the adjustment of persons with severe handicaps (e.g. Liebert, Lutsky & Gottlieb, 1990; Ward & Halloran, 1989), or the academic progress of students with mild handicaps (e.g. Buchanan & Wolf, 1986), but are less relevant to the current study.

Employment Data

Introduction

An understanding of the employment status of former special education students can be clouded by many variables and by a variety of ways to report data. Do the numbers reported as percentage employed represent the percentage of the sample that is working, or is it the percentage of the sample in the labor force that is working? For example, in the Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985) study 55% of the sample was employed, but that number represented 65% of those in the job market.

Another way to distinguish between those in the job market and those who are not is to divide those not working into either unemployed or not in the labor force categories. Scuccimarra (1987) found that 63% of former resource students were
employed and 37% were not. Of those not working, 13% were unemployed and 24% were not in the labor force.

The issue of labor force participation is very important in the years immediately following high school because the subjects may choose to take advantage of postsecondary education opportunities. Edgar (1987) used an "engagement rate" to report the percentage of subjects either working or in school. The engagement rate for LD/BD students in his Washington State study was 84%.

Most employment information is given as the percentage of subjects employed, with some additional information given relative to the status of those subjects not working. Unless otherwise noted, that reporting technique will be used for the remainder of this review.

Employment Data—Young Workers

Employment data show that workers between the ages of 16 and 24 have traditionally had high unemployment rates, and that the demand for young workers has decreased in fields such as manufacturing (Sherraden, 1987). Data from the 1982 Employment and Training Report of the President (Freeman & Holzer, 1986) show the differences between young and older workers. For example, in 1981, of the 18-19 year olds in the labor force, 36% of the nonwhites and 16% of whites were unemployed. In the same year, for the 25-54 age group in the labor force, 10% of nonwhites and 5% of whites were unemployed.

Employment Data—Gender

More women are entering the job market, and it is projected that by the early 21st century, the ratio of employed 16-24 year old males to females will be 50/50
(Wolfbein, 1987). The women who are currently working also have a higher level of education than women working in 1970. Census statistics from 1970 show that 34% of employed women had less than a high school education, and 11% had graduated from college. By 1988, only 12% of employed women had not completed high school and 23% had graduated from college (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

While the number of women working continues toward parity with men, other aspects of employment have not improved as rapidly. Overall, white males earn higher wages for the same type of work than do women of any race, with women working full time earning about two-thirds as much as men working full-time (Apple, 1989; McAdoo, 1989).

Advancement and promotion for women is another area of concern. In the business world, for example, the number of women executives has doubled in the past 10 years, yet there is only one woman at the highest level of a Fortune 500 company. In the field of education, more women are earning doctoral degrees than men, yet 96% of school superintendents are men, as are 93% of secondary school principals (Curcio, Morsink & Bridges, 1989).

Although the lack of promotion to district superintendent may directly affect only a small percentage of women, the often-held perceptions of women, and of the work they should do, affect all women. Lower wages particularly impact families headed by a single mother. According to 1985 data, 54% of all children living in poverty were in families with a female head of household, and no husband present. For African-American families, the rate jumps to 78% (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1988).

Disabled women, in particular, are less likely to be employed than even disabled men, will earn less money, and will be more likely to live at or below the poverty level.
Many follow-up studies -- looking at students around the country, with a variety of handicapping conditions, who have completed many different types of secondary school programs -- too frequently point to the same result. Men are more often employed, work more hours, and earn more money than women. Results are not always significant, but almost always favor male subjects.

Males were nearly twice as likely to be employed as females (91% vs. 49%) in a study conducted in a rural Mid-Atlantic area (Karpinski, Neubert & Graham, 1992). When a second interview was taken seven months later, women had closed the gap, but the difference was still statistically significant (78% vs. 58%). The percentage of time employed was also higher for males at both the first and second interview.

Fardig et al. (1985) interviewed 113 Florida students with mild handicaps who had completed at least one year of vocational or prevocational training in rural secondary schools. An Employment Training Index (ETI) was calculated which reflected the percentage of time since high school that subjects were employed or in training/educational programs. Male subjects had a significantly higher ETI than females.

Hasazi et al. (1985) also found significant differences in a follow-up of students exiting Vermont high school special education programs between 1979 and 1983. More males were employed (66%) than females (33%), and when the percentage of time employed since high school was calculated, males had worked 58% of the time, compared to 32% of the time for females.

Subjects from the Washington D.C. area who had been in resource programs in high school were interviewed one year after exiting school. Scuccimarra (1989) found that 81% of the males were employed, compared to only 40% of the females. This trend held for students who had been in self-contained programs, with males employed at a
much higher rate than females (91% and 52%, respectively). Tests for significance were not conducted, but the results did show a great difference in the employment of males and females.

Interviews of former special education students across 11 school districts in the state of Washington revealed that 25% of the males in the study earned more than minimum wage. Only 15% of the females earned more than minimum wage (Edgar, 1987).

**Employment Data—Minority Status**

"Since 1948 the proportion of the adult population working for a wage or salary has declined more rapidly among nonwhites" (Reich, 1981, p.36). The effect of such a decline on family income can be dramatic. In 1987, the median income for an American family was $32,274, while the average for Hispanic families was $20,306 and for African-American families only $18,098. Over 33% of African-Americans live below the poverty level, compared to only 10.5% of White persons. Persons from minority groups are less likely to work in white collar jobs, and more likely to be employed in service positions, often in unskilled jobs (McAdoo, 1989).

In addition to employment and income data for minorities, studies are being conducted which demonstrate a correlation between a variety of factors or characteristics of young people and their future employment status. Unfortunately, persons of minority status are often at a disadvantage in those same areas which are associated with future job success.
The youth employment problem defined in terms of lower chances of getting a job, lower wages when obtaining a job, higher chances of losing a job, and longer periods of remaining without a job, having lost one, are highly concentrated among minority groups, inner-city, low income, high-school drop-out youth. For those with these combinations of characteristics, the problems are compounded. (Hollister, 1989, pp. 623-624)

Minority youth have unemployment rates two to three times that of white youth (Feichtner, 1989), and the percentage of white high school students who are employed is roughly twice that of African-Americans and Hispanics (Kablaoui & Pautler, 1991).

Although many ethnic and racial groups are represented in the school district being studied, African-American and Hispanic students make up the largest minority groups. The district's special education racial and ethnic makeup is consistent with the district population, as is the sample for this study. Less than 1% of the sample is from groups other than African-American, Hispanic, or White. Therefore, the focus of the literature reviewed here was on African-American and Hispanic youth.

African-American youth. Reich (1981) writes of national reports published in 1918, 1944, and 1967 on the economic condition of African-Americans. In each case, much progress was reported, and although there was still much to be done, there was great optimism for continued success. Reich analyzes a variety of indices of the economic status of African-Americans and concludes that "instead of narrowing, important racial income differentials in the United States have persisted throughout the twentieth century" (p.18).

Unemployment rates for young African-Americans are staggering, often two to three times greater than for young White persons. Data from 1987 for 16-19 year old males showed a 15.5% unemployment rate for Whites and a 34.4% rate for African-American males. Labor force participation increased for the 20-24 age group, and
unemployment rates declined to 8.4% for White males and 20.3% for African-American males. Rates for females followed the same pattern for both age groups (Holzer, 1989).

The statistics are even worse for African-American males living in the inner city. A study of youth employment (Freeman & Holzer, 1986) showed that white youths had an employment rate of 76%, African-American youths from various parts of the country had an employment rate of 61%, but only 48% of inner-city African-American youths were employed.

When the employment rates were averaged over a decade, it was found that the employment rate for African-American 16-19 year old males decreased from 48% in the 1950s to 28% in the 1980s, while for the same age group of white males, it remained at 51%, only fluctuating 3 points during the four decades surveyed (Ihlanfeldt, 1992).

Hispanic youth. The Hispanic population in the United States, as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau, is made up of five distinct nationalities: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, and Other Hispanics. It is therefore difficult to make generalizations for the group as a whole, because there are often greater differences among Hispanic nationalities than between Hispanics and non-Hispanics (Sullivan, 1985). With this caveat in mind, it is still important to understand how Hispanics in general fare in the labor market.

More immigrants enter the United States via California than any other state, including New York. Immigration is one factor in the increase in the Hispanic population which will, it is projected, establish it as the dominant ethnic group in California's schools by approximately 2030 (Bouvier & Martin, 1987). Although their numbers have increased, their fortunes have not necessarily done so. While 9% of all children are Hispanic, they make up nearly 16% of poor children (Escutia & Prieto, 1986).
Data from the *1976 Survey of Income and Education* (cited in Borjas, 1985) show that male Mexicans earn 30% less than non-Hispanic White males, whereas female Mexicans earn 20% less than non-Hispanic White females. But when the data were standardized for skill levels, only a 5% difference remained for the males, and virtually no difference for females. "Hispanics do not generally face the same extent of discrimination (as defined by the unexplained wage residual) as Blacks. Instead, their relatively low wage in the labor market is due mostly to differences in human capital investments. (Borjas, 1985, p. 151).

The educational differences which accounted for the gap in wages can be substantial for some Hispanic nationalities. The average educational attainment (also from the *1976 Survey of Income and Education*) for non-Hispanic White males was 12.4 years, compared to only 9.4 years for Mexican males or 9.8 years for Puerto Rican males. Other Hispanic groups ranged from 11.0 to 11.8 years (Borjas, 1985).

In most follow-up studies of former special education students, the only reference usually made to minority status is to the percentage of students in various ethnic/racial categories. A comparison is sometimes made of the minority breakdown of students in the school or district with that of the special education program. Such information can be used to determine if any group is over represented in the special education program, but most studies go no further in providing information about minority groups that may be overrepresented in the ranks of the unemployed.

Shapiro and Lentz (1991) reported only the percentage of minority students in their study of vocational school graduates, as did Karpinski et al. (1992) in a follow-up of rural students with LD. Even though nearly half of the sample in the Karpinski study were African-Americans, race was not used as a variable when reporting employment data.
Scuccimarra (1987) and deBettencourt et al. (1989) compared the percentage of minority students in special education to district statistics and a nonhandicapped control group, respectively. Analysis of the deBettencourt data showed no significant difference between the ethnic or racial composition of the two groups of students. Tests of significance were not performed on the Washington, D.C. sample of the Scuccimarra study, but the percentage of African-American students in both the district and the special education population seemed similar (57% district vs. 61.5% in resource programs and 59% in self-contained classes).

Two studies which used minority status as a variable produced conflicting results. Fardig et al. (1989) surveyed former students in many rural Florida areas. These students had primarily been classified as EMH (73%) or SLD (26%). An Employment Training Index (ETI) was computed for each subject using employment and training data combined with the length of time out of school. It was found that race was not correlated significantly with ETI. Conversely, Roessler et al. (1990), in a phone interview with former students in four districts around the country, found that Whites had a significantly greater Percentage of Time Employed (PTE) than African-Americans (51% vs. 15%). Subjects had participated in a career education program while in high school, and had been out of school for only one year. There was only a small number of subjects in this study (N=59) but the result could suggest a disturbing trend.

Employment Data--Method of School Exit

As the dropout rate in some urban high schools reaches and exceeds 60%, concern about the causes and consequences naturally heightens. But any consensus as to the root of the problem, possible solutions, or even methods of defining and counting dropouts is elusive at best.
Measures of the dropout rate may be based on census data and show the proportion of an age cohort that is not in school and has not completed school. Another commonly used method is attrition data in which the proportion of students entering ninth grade and graduating four years later is calculated. Each method produces somewhat different results, thus making it difficult to compare across geographical boundaries (Rumberger, 1987). The dropout rate most often used as a baseline for the United States is 25%, although the rates in urban areas can climb much higher.

Research into the dropout rate has also examined characteristics associated with students who drop out before completing high school. One factor commonly reported is minority status. Given the concern about over representation of minorities in special education, reports that higher percentages of African Americans and Hispanics drop out is quite troubling. Data from the High School and Beyond study (Wells, 1990) show that nationally the dropout rates for Hispanic students has been increasing--30% in 1974, 40% in 1979, and 45% in 1984. The same data show a decline in the dropout rate for African-Americans since 1970, but their rates are still higher than those for White students.

Dropout rates for students who are mildly handicapped are usually higher, sometimes significantly higher, than those for non-handicapped peers. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reported that 27% of students with Specific Learning Disabilities exiting school in the 1988-89 year dropped out, and an additional 15% exited with unknown status. Half of the students with Learning Disabilities earned a regular diploma, and 7% earned a certificate of completion. The dropout rate reported by OSEP is a measure of those students who formally withdraw from school, and would not include students who moved from a district and did not re-enroll or those who simply stop attending school. "It is likely, therefore, that the OSEP dropout figure is an
underestimation of the true number of students with disabilities who drop out of school." (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p.33)

The severity of the dropout problem for learning disabled students and its effect on future employment therefore becomes a critical issue. Significant differences between the dropout rates of special education students and nonhandicapped student control groups were found in the deBettencourt et al. (1989) and Zigmond and Thornton (1985) studies. In the former study, 36% of the LD group dropped out compared to 13% of the nonhandicapped group. Similar discrepancies were also found in the latter study with 54% of the LD sample dropping out of school and 33% of the non LD group doing so. The findings from these two studies are important because each used a ninth grade cohort as the sample, thereby insuring a more accurate representation of the students who began high school but did not finish.

Other studies, using different sampling techniques, still found alarming dropout rates for mildly handicapped students. Hasazi et al. (1985) found that 28% of the Vermont subjects who had been in resource or special classes dropped out of school, with an additional 13% leaving after age 18 without completing requirements for a diploma. The dropout rate in the rural Florida follow-up (Fardig et al., 1985) was 31%, in a rural mid-Atlantic district it was 40% (Karpinski, 1992), while in the Washington state study (Edgar, 1987) it was 42% for LD subjects and 14% for nonhandicapped peers.

The dropout rates in all studies have not all been similarly high, although there may be some methodological differences which produced divergent data. Scuccimarra (1987) found that only 3% of the subjects in his study dropped out, but he began with a group of students entering twelfth grade, after most dropouts have left school. Of the 1,012 learning disabled individuals interviewed in the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study
(Sitlington et al., 1989), 101 dropped out prior to graduation. A list of graduates and a list of dropouts was prepared by each of 15 Area Education Agencies across the state. No other information was available as to how the list of dropouts was compiled, or whether the 10% dropout rate was an accurate reflection of the situation in Iowa.

Most follow-up studies comparing the employment status of graduates and non-graduates with mild handicaps show an advantage to those who complete high school. The students with learning disabilities who graduated from a large, northeastern school district had a 74% employment rate, while those students with learning disabilities who dropped out were employed at only a 44% rate, a significant difference (Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). There was no significant difference, though, in the employment rate of graduates with learning disabilities (74%) and a control group of graduates from the same district, but not identified as LD (83%). It is proposed by the authors that dropping out of high school signals to potential employers a lack of dependability or a low tolerance for frustration, while graduating shows “stick-to-it-ive-ness”.

Rather than provide employment statistics, the Fardig et al. (1985) study attempted to show a correlation between certain variables and the subject's Employment Training Index (ETI). Both employment and postsecondary training are factors in the ETI equation, and it was shown that the best predictor of ETI was the highest grade completed.

There was also a significant difference between graduates and non-graduates in the Vermont study (Hasazi et al., 1985). Dropouts were employed at a rate of 51%, students who left after age 18, 30%, and graduates, 60%. The significance held only for subjects living in rural or metropolitan regions; employment rates in the urban areas were between 60% and 65% for all groups.
No tests of significance were performed on data from a Washington state follow-up (Edgar, 1987), but the graduates fared a great deal better than the dropouts. Sixty-one percent of the graduates were working, 23% were in school, and 28% were in the "no activity" category. This compares to only 30% employment for the dropouts, 10% in school, and 62% with "no activity".

Although rural graduates classified as LD had a somewhat higher rate of employment than LD dropouts, the difference was not statistically significant. Measures of job stability did significantly favor the graduates. More graduates remained at their current job longer than dropouts (12 months vs. 5 months), and more were employed at the same job when a second interview was conducted seven months later. Graduates also had a significantly higher percentage of time employed (75% vs. 50%) since leaving school (Karpinski, et al., 1992). Approaching significance were results from the Kranstover et al. (1989) study which revealed that graduates were employed at a rate of 81% while dropouts had a 68% employment rate.

In addition to potential difficulties in the job market, there is concern about the likelihood of dropouts of special education programs returning to complete requirements for a diploma or General Education Diploma (GED). Approximately 40% of dropouts in the general population return to school or get a GED, but it does not appear that the same trend holds true for dropouts with disabilities (Gerber & Levine-Donnerstein, 1989).

Only 8% of LD dropouts in the Karpinski et al. (1992) study, who had been out of school for at least 16 months, had obtained a GED, although 71% indicated they would like to do so. Fairweather and Shaver (1991), using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Special Education students, found significant differences in the postsecondary participation of graduates and dropouts, all disabilities combined (21% vs 7%).
Employment Data—Participation in Vocational Education

Vocational education is one curricular area which is either being praised or maligned. Supporters suggest that it keeps students in school and prepares them for the future, while critics decry its high costs and point to areas of low return. Both views have been taken when considering the ability of vocational education to retain students in school through graduation. Weber (1988) points out two federal reports which use the High School and Beyond data set to show that vocational education has a higher dropout rate than either the general or academic curricula. The author notes that the reports used information from the sophomore year, when students in many states are not eligible to attend vocational classes, only express an interest in them. When the data for seniors were analyzed, which provided a more accurate curriculum membership for the students, it was found that the dropout rate for general education students was significantly greater than the rate for vocational education students, which in turn was significantly greater than that of students taking the college prep curriculum. It was also found that students in vocational education are significantly lower in tenth grade achievement, family SES, and parent education levels.

Two observations which can be tentatively made regarding vocational education for special education students are that there appears to be some advantage to those students who participate in vocational classes, but that advantage is decreased by an often haphazard approach to scheduling classes which allows for no in-depth study or training. Rural Florida students took an average of 4.4 vocational or prevocational credits, but the mean number of credits in any one program area was less than one (Fardig et al., 1985). The same study also found vocational coursework a poor predictor of future employment and/or training.
One study which showed the effectiveness of appropriate vocational programming was conducted in the state of Washington (Gill & Edgar, 1990). The subjects were graduates of a specially designed cooperative program, a partnership between vocational and special education with an emphasis on options for students, trained staff, communications and planning, and ongoing support. Program graduates (Graduates) from the years 1984-86 were compared to a baseline group (Baseline) from the same set of schools but who graduated before the cooperative program went into effect. A separate control group (Control) of 1984-86 graduates from other areas in Washington state were also compared to the study group.

The employment rate of the Graduates was significantly higher than the Control group, as was the quality level of Graduate's employment compared to the Baseline group. When looking only at learning disabled subjects, the Graduates had a significantly higher employment rate and postsecondary education rate.

Employment Data--Level of Handicap

Some follow-up studies of special education students have dealt with a group of students within one category of disability, such as students with a learning disability (Shapiro & Lentz, 1991; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). Others have included students from two or more categories, using the type or level of disability as a variable in the study.

Employment data from both types of studies are useful in that comparisons can be made to determine the influence of disability on employment, and the rate of employment for different groups of subjects with the same disability.

The two primary ways in which degree of handicap has been examined as a variable have been to identify the former student's disability (Edgar, 1987; Fardig et al.,
1985; Roessler et al., 1990) or to describe the type of program in which the student participated (Hasazi et al., 1985; Scuccimarra, 1987). In the latter type of study it was assumed (or shown by a comparison of test scores) that lower functioning students would be placed in a more restrictive environment.

The main comparison to be made in the area of mild disabilities is between learning disabled (sometimes combined with behaviorally disabled) and educable mentally retarded. Generally the higher functioning students identified as LD have experienced greater success in community adjustment than the students identified as EMR. In a study of 113 subjects in rural Florida (Fardig et al., 1985) a significant correlation was found between the disability classification of the former students and their Employment Training Index. Subjects who had been classified as SLD had a higher ETI than those classified as either EMR or ED.

In another study of subjects living in rural areas (Schalock, Holl, Elliott & Ross, 1992), students classified as SLD rated significantly higher in numbers of weeks employed, hours worked per week, wages per hour, and yearly salary than students identified as MH. A significant positive correlation was also found between verified handicap and employment-related outcomes.

Edgar (1987) found that LD/BD subjects were employed at a 60% rate, while MR subjects had only a 16% employment rate. Conversely, Scuccimarra (1987) found that Levels 1-3 subjects who had been in resource programs in the metropolitan Washington area had a somewhat lower employment rate (76%) than Level 4 subjects who had been in self-contained vocational development work-study programs (80%).

Former LD and MR students who had participated in career education projects in four districts around the country showed similar employment rates (Roessler et al., 1990). The subjects with a learning disability had a 57% employment rate compared to a
53% rate for the subjects with mental retardation. More of the LD group was working full time, and more of the MR group was employed in a sheltered environment or working less than 10 hours per week.

Other Community Adjustment Data

Many follow-up studies of former special education students take place within one to three years after they were scheduled to graduate from high school. That time, so soon after leaving high school, has been called a "floundering period" for regular and special education students alike. Roessler, Brolin and Johnson (1990) suggest that immediately after high school, students "find themselves in a poverty status characterized either by unemployment or frequent job changes" (p.97). Not only does this "floundering" show up in the area of employment, it is apparent in other areas of community adjustment, particularly residential status.

A great number of former students with mild handicaps still live at home with parents or relatives, and are dependent on them for some level of financial support. Surveying students who had been out of school approximately one year, Scuccimarra (1987) found that 83% were living with parents or relatives. Eleven percent were single and living independently, with an additional 2% married and living away from their parents. Shapiro and Lentz (1991) interviewed students who had graduated from school one to two years earlier. Seventy-two percent of this group remained at home with parents. In the study of former Vermont special education students (Hasazi et al., 1985) who had been out of school from one to five years, 64% of the students lived with parents or relatives.

At the time of a first interview, taken 9 or 21 months after exiting school, 81% of graduates and 70% of dropouts were dependent on others for residence (Karpinski
et al., 1992). By the second interview seven months later, those figures had dropped somewhat to 69% for graduates and 58% for dropouts.

Other aspects of community adjustment which have been documented in research are the use of banking services such as checking accounts or credit cards, or possession of a driver's license. Kranstover et al. (1989) found that significantly more graduates of special education programs (62%) had checking accounts than dropouts (30%). There was no significant differences between men and women in the use of checking accounts (55-59%), or in the use of credit cards (49-57%).

Review of Methodology

The methods employed by researchers to gather and report follow-up data for former special education students often have similar characteristics. The review of methodology examined elements common to many studies, and how they were applied to the present work.

Subject Selection

Subjects for follow-up studies, whether selected from a school, a district, or a statewide population, can be categorized in a variety of ways. One group of studies (Mithaug, Horiuchi & Fanning, 1985; Renfroe et al., 1988; Shapiro & Lentz, 1991) looked at program graduates only, while another group (deBettencourt et al., 1989; Edgar, 1987; Fairweather & Shaver, 1991; Kranstover et al., 1989; Sitlington et al., 1989) included dropouts and students who age out of programs at 18, 21 or 22 years of age.

A possible advantage of surveying graduates is a higher response rate due to more current address information and the possibility of more recent contact with the
subjects. For example, Edgar (1987) was able to locate 51% of graduates and only 20% of those who dropped out.

Higher response rates can also be achieved by using a twelfth grade cohort as the sample, and including those who drop or age out during that year (Scuccimarra, 1987). One major difficulty with this procedure is that most students who drop out do so before the twelfth grade. Zigmond and Thornton (1985) found that students most often dropped out after the ninth grade, so subjects interviewed after dropping out of the twelfth grade will differ from most high school dropouts in both their amount of education and in numbers. Only 3% of the subjects in the Scuccimarra study dropped out during the twelfth grade.

Another method of sample selection is using a ninth grade cohort and following up all students who did not transfer from the geographical area. This would enable researchers to have information on students who exit prior to twelfth grade. deBettencourt et al. (1989) interviewed subjects who had been ninth graders in one of three identified school years. Using school records of the sample, a dropout rate of 36% was obtained, compared to a rate of 21% obtained only from interviews with located students.

If data are to be analyzed separately for dropouts, the use of school records provides the most accurate information about dropouts as well as graduates. Dropout rates for studies using ninth grade lists more accurately reflect national statistics for learning disabled students. A disadvantage of the use of ninth grade lists is increased difficulty in locating subjects, especially those who exited early in their high school career.

Some previous follow-up studies have been conducted using sampling techniques (Hasazi et al., 1985; Shapiro & Lentz, 1991; Sitlington et al., 1989), while
others have attempted to contact the entire population in question. Apparent differences between the two groups are the geographical area included in the survey and the number of subjects in the population.

**Data Collection**

Researchers collecting follow-up data on mildly handicapped subjects have chosen, as a rule, to conduct interviews. In most cases, the preferred method is a face-to-face interview, with the telephone used as a back-up measure (deBettencourt et al., 1989; Karpinski et al., 1992; Scuccimarra, 1987; Sitlington et al., 1985; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). Some studies have been conducted solely through telephone interviews (Edgar, 1987; Fairweather & Shaver, 1991; Roessler et al., 1990; Schalock et al., 1992), mail surveys (Kranstover et al., 1989), or a combination of the two (Shapiro & Lentz, 1991). Halpern's (1990) review of 27 studies found only three that used a mail survey, while all others utilized phone or personal interviews.

In a majority of cases, data were collected directly from the former student, but some studies also solicited information from a spouse, parent, or guardian if the subject was unavailable (Fardig et al., 1985; Hasazi et al., 1985; Sitlington et al., 1990). Edgar (1987) and Fairweather and Shaver (1991) interviewed the parents instead of the students. In addition to a student interview, parents were asked to rate the subjects' social and academic abilities, and their satisfaction regarding employment and postsecondary education (Spekman et al., 1992).

Response rates have been quite varied in past studies--ranging from 47% in a six month follow-up in a large urban area (Renfroe et al., 1988) to 82% of LD students across the state of Iowa (Sitlington et al., 1989), or 93% of work-study students interviewed two years out of Washington, D.C. high schools (Scuccimarra, 1987). The
response rate for most studies falls between 55% and 70%. The availability of current addresses, as previously mentioned, may be one factor influencing response rate. Other variables which may impact response rate are the length of time the subjects have been out of school, familiarity with the interviewer or project, and extensiveness of the search. Problems in locating subjects and conducting interviews have included the high mobility of special education students, phone numbers that no longer work, and subjects refusing to participate or show up for scheduled interviews (Mithaug et al., 1985; Renfroe et al., 1988).

Variables

Interview protocols have been used to examine a variety of dimensions of community adjustment, with the focus primarily on employment data. One open-ended exploratory interview consisted simply of the question "What are you doing now in terms of school or work?" (Humes & Brammer, 1985). Other protocols were compiled using input from a statewide task force (Sitlington et al., 1989) or a review of literature and existing instruments (Scuccimarra, 1987).

An example of an interview instrument which addresses a variety of dimensions of adult adjustment is that used in the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study (Sitlington et al., 1989). The following components were included:

a) general adult status (e.g., marital status, leisure activities); b) employment variables (e.g., percent employed, location of jobs, classification of jobs, wages); c) types of vocational training while in high school; d) types of post-secondary education and training; and e) perceptions of former students with learning disabilities concerning selected aspects of their high school experiences. (pp. 3-4)
Data Analysis and Reporting

Data from follow-up studies are predominantly reported in a descriptive fashion, using frequencies and measures of central tendency. Renfroe et al. (1988) and Scuccimarra (1987) used reported percentages to compare directly with other studies; the former to the Colorado follow-up study of Mithaug et al. (1985) and the latter to local, state, and national employment data as well as a variety of other follow-up studies.

Other studies have done more in-depth analysis of data in an effort to establish relationships between variables or make predictions of future success. Hasazi et al. (1985) used analysis of variance with the percentage of time employed as the outcome variable, and manner of school exit, vocational education, and high school employment as predictor variables.

Conclusions

As more data about the community adjustment of students with and without handicaps are collected, analyzed, and reported, educators will have a better understanding of how to best serve students. We will have a better chance of identifying students who have a combination of characteristics which may make it more difficult to succeed.

We must challenge women to set high, possibly nontraditional goals for themselves. We must ensure that minority students, especially those who are handicapped and living in urban areas, have every opportunity to learn and succeed. Special educators must work with vocational educators to design and implement appropriate, individual, vocational plans for special needs students which will provide some in-depth skills rather than taking a random assortment of classes to keep them
Focusing on factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, handicapping condition, and completion of school or vocational programs, while providing valuable information, should not lull educators into thinking that students themselves are the only causes of failure. What type of institutional flaws push students toward a path of failure? Is it only because inner city schools are filled with poor, usually minority, students that they have dropout rates of over 60%? Or are the schools themselves partly to blame? While student characteristics are important, school characteristics are also important in determining the success of the students.

The curricular and structural reforms going on around the country are attempting to address that issue and make improvements. Only through a process of examining students and institutional practices can effective changes be made to increase the chances of success for all students.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Information about the success, or lack of success, of former special education
students enables more appropriate program evaluation and planning. Determination of
success should begin with employment, but also focus on other important components of
adult adjustment such as residential setting, social and leisure activities, and independent
living skills. In order to determine the level of post-school community adjustment of
subjects identified as learning disabled (LD), and the program and personal factors which
may be associated with their success, an examination of records and personal interviews
were conducted. The following methodology description includes information about the
subjects, hypotheses, data collection and analysis procedures, sequence of events, and
limitations of the study.

Population

Subjects were selected from the student body of a high school and continuation
high school which serve a unified school district in Southern California. Nearly 12,000
students were enrolled in the district during the 1985-86 school year, when all subjects in
this study were ninth or tenth graders. White students comprised 68% of the district's
student population, 24% were Hispanic, 7% were African American, and nearly 2%
were from other races. Over 3,400 students attended the district's high schools, the racial composition of which was similar to that of the district as a whole.

The accessible population was all learning disabled students who had participated in either the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) or Special Day Class (SDC) offered by the special education department. RSP students must be enrolled in mainstream classes for more than half of their instructional time, while SDC students are in the special education classroom for half the day or longer. A majority of students in both RSP and SDC classes have been identified as having learning disabilities rather than mild mental retardation. Students with low incidence disabilities, such as Severely Emotionally Disturbed or Multiply Handicapped, are served by county programs at other locations.

Sample Selection

Special education class lists were used to identify all ninth grade RSP or SDC students for the years 1984-85 and 1985-86. Using ninth grade lists enabled follow-up of students who had dropped out of high school, as well as those who had graduated. Students who transferred permanently from the district were not eligible for the study, nor were any students who transferred to regular education prior to or during their tenth grade year. Those students who moved from the district and returned, or those who were placed into the regular education program after tenth grade, were eligible as long as they met the criterion of more than two years in the special education program. There were 140 students who were freshmen in the special education program during that time period, 86 of them eligible for the study.
Data Collection and Analysis

Information about student and program characteristics was obtained by examining student records such as IEPs, transcripts, and cumulative folders. Permission to access student records was granted to the researcher by the district's assistant superintendent, providing confidentiality was maintained.

A standard form (See Appendix A) was completed for each of the 140 students on the original ninth grade class lists. Handicapping condition and special education placement were noted from IEPs, as well as the most recent achievement or intelligence test results. Unfortunately, current and consistent test data were not available for all subjects, and could not be used for analysis or comparison.

Microfilmed transcripts were used for two purposes in the data collection process. First, those students who moved from the district or were placed full-time in regular education were identified and removed from the list of eligible subjects. Second, the transcripts were used to tally the successfully completed classes taken by each of the 86 eligible students. The tally was divided into categories of regular education academics, regular education electives, physical education, and special education courses. Vocational or industrial courses were counted separately, with the course titles noted instead of a simple tally. The coded transcript information was then used by the researcher to classify the students into special education and vocational education program levels based upon the definitions provided in the variable identification section.

Compilation of data from school records provided demographic information about the original 140 ninth graders. Additionally, course information was available for most of the 86 people who comprised the accessible population-- those who had participated in special education to some degree for at least two years in the district.
Comparison of the demographic and program data for the population and interviewed sample offered evidence of the representativeness of the located sample.

School records were also used to find the most recent addresses available for the subjects in the study, but much of the information was at least two years old. Letters were sent to the last known address of each of the 86 subjects to introduce the study, as well as confirm phone numbers and addresses (see Appendix B). Although a few subjects sent back information, many did not respond, and at least 14 were sent back as undeliverable.

For those subjects who could not yet be located, several methods of investigation were employed to discover their whereabouts. Local phone directories were searched, high school teachers and counselors were questioned, as were other subjects who had been found and interviewed. One successful source of information was the file of emergency cards at the district high school, as younger siblings were often still attending school in the district. Attempts were made to visit the last known address of the subject, but were met with little success.

This effort led to the location and interview of 41 of the 86 subjects, a response rate of 48%. There was no information available for 36 subjects, 1 is deceased, and 3 were said to have moved out of state, but no specific details could be determined. An additional 5 subjects, or their parents, were located but refused to grant an interview.

Halpern (1990) recommends that follow-up or follow-along data be collected through a personal interview, and that the indices of community adjustment include a variety of elements such as employment, education, social adjustment, and community integration. Therefore, students selected for participation in the study were individually interviewed by the researcher. If it was not possible to speak with the former student,
then a parent or spouse was interviewed (Fardig et al., 1985; Hasazi et al., 1985; Schalock et al., 1986; Sitlington & Frank, 1990).

The interview protocol was based on the instrument designed for use in the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study (Sitlington, 1989) and included questions from the areas suggested by Halpern. In addition to background and high school program information, questions on current life circumstances, past and current employment, and an evaluation of school experiences were included (see Appendix C). Even though quality-of-life is a broader concept than community adjustment, the interview instrument did address, sometimes superficially, 7 of the 15 outcomes suggested in Halpern's (1993) taxonomy.

The original instrument was developed by a task force of representatives from Iowa's area education agencies, state schools, and correction facilities. The survey was piloted with 878 subjects and included open-ended questions. Revisions were then made based on frequent responses to questions and interviewer comments. An interviewer handbook (Sitlington, 1989) was developed to standardize data collection, and was used in the current study to guide the interview process.

For the current study, changes were made in the original instrument which reflected only differences in time and place. The survey form was updated, deleting references to Iowa's area education agencies, districts, and high schools. Other references to Iowa job agencies were also changed, incorporating related California agencies. Information about the subjects' vocational classes was derived from transcripts rather than the interview, therefore that question was deleted from the form. The question about subject's disability at time of school exit was also deleted since all subjects in the current study were classified as LD.

Subjects were interviewed by the researcher between mid 1992 and early 1993. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with 19 subjects and over the phone with 15
subjects. The remaining 7 interviews were conducted over the phone with the subjects' parents. Each interview lasted approximately 25-30 minutes, with face-to-face meetings in students' homes typically lasting longer than phone interviews. There did not seem to be any difference in the willingness of subjects to answer questions in either setting, but when meeting in person they often provided more comments of a general nature after the survey was completed.

The information was coded and input into a database. Measures of frequency and central tendency were calculated for several questions from the survey and are presented in Chapter 4. Each hypothesis was then tested for significance using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X). Cross tabulation tables were developed which compared the variable in question to successful or unsuccessful community adjustment. For the variables of gender and method of exit from school, a 2x2 table was constructed, and a chi-square test of significance was performed. The Cramer's V formula was used for the other, larger tables.

Limitations of the Study

The small sample size precludes generalization of the results. Trends can be observed and studied in future research, but can only be applied to the district where the subjects attended school. Due to the sample size, many cells in tables contain a very small number of subjects, and using percentages in those cases to report data can be misleading. It is important for the reader to keep this caveat in mind, and pay close attention to the "n" which is also reported in each table.

The response rate was somewhat low, and may have resulted in nonresponse bias. Many students and their families had moved and could not be located. The area in which the students live is traditionally transitory, and recent downturns in the California
economy have increased the rate of migration from the state. Comparisons of some demographic variables were made between the population and sample to address that threat, but it cannot be eliminated. Additionally, five subjects (or their parents) refused to grant an interview. One can only wonder if the pattern of success for that group was the same as for the rest of the sample.

A potential problem in the interview process is the self-reporting of data. Verification of information was not made by contacting employers or parents.

Community Adjustment

Interview data were collected to describe the community adjustment of the subjects. Students who met each of the following criteria were considered to be "successful" in the Sitlington, Frank and Cooper (1989) Iowa follow-up study, and the criteria were adopted for use in this research.

(a) employed; or homemakers, students, or involved in job training; (b) buying a home, living independently, living with a friend, or living with a parent or relative; (c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and, (d) involved in more than one leisure activity. (p.29)

About 54% of Sitlington and Frank's subjects met this set of criteria for "successful community adjustment". A more stringent set of standards had been established for use in the Iowa study, but only 4% of LD graduates qualified as successful when the more restrictive criteria were in place. Therefore, the more lenient standards will initially be used to categorize the California subjects as successful or unsuccessful, and to test the study's hypotheses.
Hypotheses

1) There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment between male and female subjects.
2) There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment among subjects of different racial groups.
3) There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment between subjects who have graduated from high school and those who have not.
4) There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment for subjects who had participated in various types of special education programs.
5) There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment among students with different types of vocational training.

Variable Identification

The variables put forth in the study’s hypotheses were derived from the factors which previous research has shown to have a possible relationship to successful employment or community adjustment. Variables outlined below are the personal characteristics of gender and race, and the program characteristics of method of school exit, special education program, and vocational education program.

Personal Characteristics

Gender

As noted in the review of literature, there are frequent disparities between the success, especially in the employment arena, of men and women. The current study,
therefore, used gender as a variable in comparing successful community adjustment. It was used in hypotheses testing, and in the presentation of some descriptive data such as wages and type of job.

Race/Ethnicity

While studies of high school graduation rate or employment success often point to lower success for minority subjects, studies of the success of former special education students rarely use race as a variable. It is important to determine what impact the combination of race and a learning disability have on post-school success. In light of this concern and the large, and growing, number of minority students in Southern California, race was included as a variable in the current study.

Of the 140 special education ninth graders from which the study population was drawn, all but two were either African-American, Caucasian, or Hispanic. Neither of the two qualified for the study, so the three racial/ethnic groups listed are the only ones referred to in the current research.

Program Characteristics

Method of Exit from School

An area of concern in the field of special education is the high dropout rate of its students. The population for this study was no exception, as nearly 40% of the subjects failed to complete requirements for a high school diploma. A compounding issue when looking at high school dropouts is the high rate of leaving school for students from a minority background. For example, school records show that of the 86 students who qualified for the current study, 59% of the Hispanic students failed to complete requirements for a diploma (see Table 1).
In addition to using ‘method of exit from school’ as a hypothesis variable, most narrative data were reported for graduates and dropouts separately, due to the high percentage of dropouts in the group.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Dropped Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special Education Program Model**

In the Sitlington et al., study (1989), level of handicap is used synonymously with special education instructional model. It was assumed for the study that students who were more handicapped were placed in more restrictive environments. Three levels were used to describe the subjects’ programs.

Level One was designated Resource Teacher Program (RTP) in which students were in special education classes for a minimal average of 30 minutes per day. In Level Two -- Special Class with Integration (SCIN) -- students took one or more general education academic subjects, but spent the rest of the day in special classes. Students in
Level Three -- Special Class with Little Integration (SCIN-L) -- were integrated into general education classrooms for limited participation.

Math and reading grade equivalent scores for each level were compared using t-tests. These comparisons supported the assumption that the students in higher level special education programs were less handicapped than those in lower level programs.

The same concept was applied to this study. Information from cumulative folders was used to classify students in the following manner:

**Resource Program.** Students participating in the highest level, or Resource program, averaged one (or fewer) periods per day in special education classes during their high school career. The rest of their coursework was completed in general education classes.

**Special Class with Integration (SCIN).** SCIN students were in general education classes for an average of one or more academic subjects, yet participated in special education classes for an average of more than one period per day over the course of their high school career.

**Special Class with Little Integration (SCIN-L).** All academics for the SCIN-L students were taken in special education classes. They were integrated primarily for physical education or electives.

Unfortunately, consistent and current test scores were not available for all subjects. Therefore, it is not possible to determine if the Resource students had a higher IQ or achievement level than the SCIN students, who in turn were higher than those in the SCIN-L group. This assumption has been supported in other studies, but cannot be confirmed in the current research.
Type of Vocational Program

All but one of the subjects in this study took some vocational education classes. The difference in vocational programming lies in the continuity or depth of classes in any particular area. Some students used vocational education as a way to train for a certain job, whereas others used general vocational classes to meet elective requirements.

**Preparatory vocational program.** Students who took more than a year in the same subject area of Vocational or Industrial Technology education qualified in the “Preparatory” group. This would also include students from the Regional Occupation Program (ROP) in fields such as Restaurant Management or Auto Body Repair. Students who took courses at the Preparatory level may also have taken some General or Specially Designed courses, but were only categorized in the Preparatory group.

**General vocational program.** Subjects in the “General” category took at least one vocational class (including Home Economics or Industrial Technology) but did not study any one field for more than a semester or year.

**Specially designed vocational program.** Work Experience and School-based Simulated Work Program are examples of specially designed programs. Subjects in this group took vocational classes through the special education department, or those offered by vocational instructors specifically for special education students.

**No vocational program.** The final vocational category was for subjects who did not participate in any vocational programming during their high school career.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Research findings are presented in this chapter, beginning with a demographic comparison of the population and sample. General post-high school characteristics of all subjects are then presented, followed by specific information pertaining to employed subjects. The fourth section is a descriptive comparison of employed and unemployed subjects. Finally, a comparison of successful and unsuccessful subjects is made and the results used to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter Three. It is important to note that percentages are used in tables, but must be viewed with caution when cell sizes are small. The number of subjects is therefore listed within each table and should be taken into consideration.

Description of Subjects

The population of this study was drawn from the 140 special education students attending ninth grade in a Southern California school district between the years 1984-86. Of this group, the 86 who had remained in the district, and in special education for at least two years, qualified as the study's population. Those who permanently moved from the district or transferred to regular education prior to their junior year were not included.
The average age of the subjects at the time of interview was 22.1 years, the youngest nearly 21 years old and the oldest 24 years old. They had been out of school for an average of 3.8 years. Recent graduates had been out just over two years, and some who had dropped out early in high school had been out of school for over six years.

Comparison of Population and Sample

A comparison was made of the size of each racial or ethnic group in the district, high school, and special education ninth grade population (see Table 2). This comparison addresses the concern of overrepresentation of minority students in special education programs. The percentage of Caucasian and minority students remained stable across all reporting categories.

Table 2
Racial and Ethnic Representation of the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>District</th>
<th></th>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Special Ed. 9th</th>
<th></th>
<th>Study Sample</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Am.</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8105</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>2423</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2839</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11,977</td>
<td>3,445</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>4,086</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to the somewhat low response rate, a comparison was also made of the representativeness of interview participants and the sample group in terms of gender, race, method of exit, special education program model, and vocational program (see Table 3).

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Ninth Grade Special Education Students, Study Sample, and Subjects Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>9th Grade Special Educ. Students n = 140</th>
<th>Study Sample n = 86</th>
<th>Interview Participants n = 41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African. Amer.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Exit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed. Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN-L2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spec. Designed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data are unavailable for these cells
1 Special Class with Integration
2 Special Class with Little Integration
In comparing the data for the group of 86 who qualified for the study and the 41 who were actually interviewed, the subjects interviewed matched very closely on most variables. The percentage was slightly low for African-Americans and slightly high for Caucasians. There was a higher percentage of graduates interviewed than in the original group, but both graduates and dropouts were well-represented. The percentage interviewed was also higher in the general vocational education category, which may be partially explained by the number of students in the sample for whom type of vocational program was unknown.

General Characteristics of Subjects Interviewed

Major categories of post-school characteristics are presented in Table 4. Information about the marital status, living situation, leisure activities, and employment status are shown for the total group as well as separately for graduates and dropouts. This method of presentation will be used throughout Chapter Four due to the large percentage (32%) of the interviewed subjects who dropped out of school prior to graduation. Examining data separately for graduates and dropouts may shed some light on the effect that dropping out has on students with a learning disability.

Marital Status

Three-fourths of the subjects interviewed had never married, 20% were currently married, and 5% were divorced. As shown in Table 4, the marital status for graduates and dropouts was similar. It was also found that five of the graduates and five of the dropouts had children. Of those with children, six had only one child, and two of the dropouts had three children each.
Table 4

**General Post-high School Characteristics of Study Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Study Sample (n = 41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n = 28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n = 13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Situation</th>
<th>Study Sample (n = 41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n = 28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n = 13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents or relative</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with friend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live independently</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy own home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Study Sample (n = 41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n = 28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n = 13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/job training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full/part-time work</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Living Situation**

More than half of the subjects (59%) still lived with a parent or relative, with an additional quarter (27%) living independently. It should be pointed out that of those listed as living independently, two were renting separate living quarters, such as a
trailer, on their parents' property. A smaller percentage (7%) were living with friends, and one subject (2%) was buying his own home.

**Employment Status**

At the time the interview was conducted, 59% of the sample were working either full or part time. An additional 10% were either homemakers or full time students. One subject (2%) was incarcerated, and the remaining 30% were unemployed. If the number of subjects in the labor force includes only those who are employed or unemployed (not homemakers, full time students, or incarcerated), then two-thirds of the available labor force is working, and one-third is not.

All of the full time students and homemakers were subjects who had graduated. Of the other graduates, 64% were employed and 21% were unemployed. When looking only at those available for work, 75% were working, and 25% were not.

The one subject who was incarcerated had dropped out of school. All remaining dropouts were in the labor force, and were divided evenly between being employed and unemployed.

**Other Characteristics**

**High School Extracurricular Activities and Leisure Activities**

Most (69%) of the students who dropped out of school took part in no extracurricular activities while in high school, the remaining 31% took part in only one (see Table 5). While one-quarter of the graduates were in no high school clubs or sports, a majority (57%) took part in one activity. One graduate was involved in five different school activities.

During the interview, subjects were asked to name, without prompts, the leisure activities they currently participated in the most during their free time. As seen in Table
5, all subjects named between one and four activities; most (80%) listed two or three activities. By far the most frequently mentioned were outdoor activities/sports, visiting with friends, and organized athletics. The number of people mentioning those pursuits was 18, 17, and 16, respectively. The activities ranked next were music and repairing cars, with 7 subjects reporting each, and watching TV and doing other maintenance work, with each being reported 6 times. Fourteen other items were mentioned by at least one person.

Table 5
Extracurricular and Leisure Activities of Graduates and Dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Activities</th>
<th>Total group (n=24)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=18)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Extracurricular</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Extracurricular</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Extracurricular</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Extracurricular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Extracurricular</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Extracurricular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satisfaction with Secondary School Education

Respondents were asked a series of seven questions to help determine their satisfaction with various aspects of their high school education. For each question, the choice of responses was "very helpful", "helpful", or "not helpful at all". Areas addressed in this line of questioning were a) training to find a job, b) training to keep a job, c) preparation for their current job (if employed), d) preparation for interpersonal relationships, e) preparation for reading day-to-day or work-related material, f) preparation for maintaining the home and taking care of children, and g) preparation for doing math as it relates to financial matters (see questions 18-24, Appendix C).

Table 6
Satisfaction of the Study Sample with Various Aspects of Secondary School Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Satisfaction</th>
<th>Total group (n=41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Helpful</td>
<td>Helpful/Very helpful</td>
<td>Not Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a job</td>
<td>16 (39.0)</td>
<td>25 (61.0)</td>
<td>9 (32.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep a job</td>
<td>13 (31.7)</td>
<td>28 (68.3)</td>
<td>6 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for current job</td>
<td>17 (53.1)</td>
<td>15 (46.9)</td>
<td>10 (41.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>6 (14.6)</td>
<td>35 (85.4)</td>
<td>3 (10.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily reading</td>
<td>8 (19.5)</td>
<td>33 (80.5)</td>
<td>6 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home mgmt/child care</td>
<td>18 (43.9)</td>
<td>23 (56.1)</td>
<td>11 (39.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math/finances</td>
<td>15 (36.6)</td>
<td>26 (63.4)</td>
<td>9 (32.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: Values are expressed as frequencies and row percentages within each category
b: Applies only to employed subjects
The results are presented in Table 6, and are shown for the total group, graduates, and dropouts. The responses of "helpful" and "very helpful" are combined in the second column of each grouping. The areas with which the subjects were most satisfied were Interpersonal skills (85%) and Daily reading (80%).

These areas were also two of only three in which the dropouts' rating for "helpful/very helpful" was higher than "not helpful". In all other questions the dropouts were dissatisfied to some degree. When asked about preparing for their current job, 88% of the dropouts said their program was "not helpful". Just over half (54%) of the dropouts were also dissatisfied with the areas of finding a job, keeping a job, and home management/child care. The graduates were more satisfied with the selected aspects of their secondary education. A majority rated every category as either "helpful" or "very helpful", with Interpersonal skills being the highest rated at 89%. The area of greatest dissatisfaction was preparation for current job, which was rated as "not helpful" by 42% of the graduates.

Postsecondary Education or Training

A majority (56%) of the former special education students had not enrolled in any postsecondary education or training programs (see Table 7). The most commonly attended program was the local community college, with 15% of the total group having enrolled at some point. An additional 12% were or had been in some type of government training program. One student was in military training, and one was pursuing an engineering degree at a four-year university.

The dropouts showed little participation in any postsecondary education or training. One attended a community college or university, four (31%) attended various
district, county, or government programs, and 9 (69%) had never enrolled in any program.

Table 7
Postsecondary Education and Training Experiences of the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Total group (n=41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college/university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private training/apprenticeship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Occ. Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't training programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Banking Services

Many of the subjects interviewed had no bank accounts, loans, or credit cards (see Table 8). Of the 41 in the total sample, 37% used no banking services at all. When combining the number of subjects who did not have any account and those with only one (checking or savings), the percentage jumps to 68%.
The most common service was the checking account, used by 42% of the total group. Savings accounts were the second most frequently used service, with 34% of the subjects reporting use of one. Use of bank credit cards such as MasterCard or Visa, and other credit cards such as department store or oil company cards were each mentioned by 17% of the respondents.

There was a wide gap in the use of banking services between graduates and dropouts. While only 25% of the graduates reported using no banking services, 62% of the dropouts used no services. An additional 23% of the dropouts only used one service, either savings or other credit card. Use of a checking account, a loan, or other credit card was reported by two dropouts each (15%).

Table 8
Banking Services Utilized by the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Banking Services</th>
<th>Total group (n=41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan other than mortgage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank credit card</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other credit card</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: Respondents named all that apply, column percentages do not total 100%.
The graduates were more frequent users of banking services. Over half (54%) had checking accounts, nearly half (46%) had savings accounts. One quarter had a bank credit card, and 18% had either a loan or other credit card. Only one subject, a graduate, currently had a mortgage loan.

**Transportation**

Subjects were asked to name the ways they usually got around in their community. By far, the most common mode of transportation for the former students was their own vehicle (see Table 9). Over 63% drove their own car, truck, or motorcycle (although not all with a current driver's license). Those who did not have their own vehicle most often depended on others and/or walked. Nearly a quarter of the total group looked to others for transportation, and 15% of the group walked. A smaller portion used the city bus or drove a family vehicle (7% each). One respondent stated that his main form of transportation was a skateboard.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Transportation</th>
<th>Total group (n=41)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=28)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.       Percent</td>
<td>No.            Percent</td>
<td>No.        Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own vehicle</td>
<td>26 63.4</td>
<td>17 60.7</td>
<td>9 69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family vehicle</td>
<td>3  7.3</td>
<td>3  10.7</td>
<td>0  0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City bus</td>
<td>3  7.3</td>
<td>2  7.1</td>
<td>1  7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depend on others</td>
<td>10 24.4</td>
<td>5 17.9</td>
<td>5 38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>6  14.6</td>
<td>2  17.1</td>
<td>4  30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1  2.4</td>
<td>1  3.6</td>
<td>0  0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentages for the graduates and dropouts was quite similar in most categories. The only substantial difference was in the categories "walk" and "depend on others". Each was named by 17% of the graduates, but by 31% and 39% of the dropouts respectively.

Characteristics of Employment and Employed Subjects

While employment is not the sole determinant of community adjustment, it can be a major factor. In addition to presenting employment data for graduates and dropouts, salary will be reported for the other personal and program characteristics stated in the study hypotheses—gender, race, method of exit from school, special education program, and vocational program. Although the limited number of subjects in some categories prevents statistical analysis, reported frequencies do provide information about possible trends.

Length of Time at Current Job

The 24 employed subjects were asked how long they had been at their present jobs. Over one-third (38%) had been at their current job for less than six months, and exactly one-third had been there for over two years (see Table 10). A higher percentage of graduates (44%) than dropouts (17%) had been working less than six months. Two-thirds of the dropouts had been at their current job for over one year.

Hours Worked Per Week

Most employed subjects (83%) worked over 37 hours per week. Three graduates (17%) worked less than 21 hours per week. All students who had dropped out and were currently working were employed full time (see Table 11).
Table 10

Length of Time at Present Job for Graduates and Dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on Job</th>
<th>Total group (n=24)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=18)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to 1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Number of Hours Worked per Week for Graduates and Dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked</th>
<th>Total group (n=24)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=18)</th>
<th>Dropouts (n=6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 21 hrs/wk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-37 hrs/wk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 37 hrs/wk</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hourly Wages

Subjects who were employed were asked to provide information on both an hourly and weekly salary. The data for weekly salary was incomplete and difficult to use for comparison due to the range of hours worked per week. All wage information presented is therefore hourly wages. Table 12 presents the hourly wage information for
the demographic characteristics of gender and race, and Table 13 deals with program characteristics of method of exit from school, special education program level, and type of vocational education.

Table 12

Hourly Wages for the Study Sample by Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Hourly Wages</th>
<th>&lt;$5.00</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>$5.00-$10.00</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>&gt;$10.00</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total group (n=24)</td>
<td>$8.91</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males (n=20)</td>
<td>$9.72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females (n=4)</td>
<td>$5.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasians (n=19)</td>
<td>$8.89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Caucasians (n=5)</td>
<td>$9.69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 41 people interviewed, 24 were working at the time of the interview. Their average salary was $8.91, and ranged from a low of $4.50, just above the minimum wage of $4.35, to $17.86. Only 4 (17%) earned less than $5.00 per hour, and 8 (33%) earned over $10.00 per hour.
Wage Differences Based on Gender

Comparisons in this category are tenuous at best, due to the few women who were employed. Only 4 of the 9 women surveyed (44%) were working, and earned an average of $5.76 per hour. One earned less than $5.00 per hour, of the others, the highest hourly wage was $7.00.

The average wage of $5.76 is only 56% that of the 20 employed men in the survey, whose salary averaged $9.72 per hour. Three men earned less than $5.00 per hour, 8 earned more than $10.00. The range for the men was $4.50 to $17.68.

Wage Differences Based on Race/Ethnicity

Only one African-American of the three interviewed was employed at the time of the survey. Therefore, the data for Hispanics and African-Americans and Hispanics were combined into a category of "Non-Caucasian" and compared to the data for the Caucasian subjects.

The 19 employed Caucasians earned an average of $8.89, ranging from $4.50 to $16.85. Four earned less than $5.00 per hour while the others were almost evenly divided between the over $10.00 and $5.00 - $10.00 categories.

There were only five non-Caucasians employed, earning an average of $9.69 per hour. All but one fell in the $5.00-$10.00 per hour category, the fourth person earned $17.68 per hour.
### Table 13

**Hourly Wages for the Study Sample by Program Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Characteristic</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>&lt;5.00</th>
<th>5.00-10.00</th>
<th>&gt;10.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total group</strong></td>
<td>$8.91</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=24)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method of Exit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>$8.60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=18)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>$10.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=6)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Ed Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>$7.95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN</td>
<td>$10.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=14)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN-L</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>$8.28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=14)</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>$10.26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=7)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specially Designed</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>$17.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wage Differences Based on Method of Exit from School

The 18 graduates who were working represent 64% of that group. Their average hourly wage was $8.60. The number of people at the high and low end of the scale was almost evenly divided, with 4 (22%) earning less than $5.00 per hour, and 5 (28%) earning more than $10.00. The earnings for the other half of the group were between $5.00 and $10.00.

While a smaller percentage (46%) of the dropouts were employed, their hourly salaries were higher than those of the Graduates. The average salary for the 6 employed Dropouts was $10.45. None earned less than $5.00 per hour, half earned over $10.00, and half earned from $5.00-$10.00. One of these subjects, who was working in construction, earned $17.86, the highest hourly wage reported.

Wage Differences Based on Special Education Program Level

Students who had participated in special education at the "Special Class with Integration" level (SCIN) had the highest hourly wage of all respondents. The 14 employed subjects (58% of SCIN sample) averaged $10.34 per hour, ranging from $4.50 to $17.68. All but one earned more than $5.00 per hour.

The eight students employed from the "Resource" level averaged $7.95 per hour. One Resource student earned less than $5.00, two earned more than $10.00, and the five others were in the middle category. Both of the former students in the "Special Class with Little Integration" group (SCINL) who were employed earned $4.50 per hour, just above minimum wage.
Wage Differences Based on Type of Vocational Program

All subjects, except one, took some type of vocational education. The single subject who took no vocational classes was earning $17.68 at the time of the interview. Of the 19 students who took some sort of preparatory vocational training, 14 (74%) were employed and earning an average of $8.28 per hour. The majority (8 or 57%) of these subjects earned between $5.00 and $10.00, with three each below $5.00 and above $10.00.

Half of the students (7 of 14) who took only general vocational courses were employed at an average of $10.26 per hour. None earned less than $5.00, four earned over $10.00, with a high of $15.81. Only two of seven (29%) of the students who took specially designed vocational classes in high school were employed. The average hourly wage was $6.00.

Job Benefits of Employed Subjects

Employed subjects were read a list of common job benefits and asked which they received as part of their employment. The benefit most often named was medical insurance, although the level of coverage was not determined during the interview (see Table 14). Half of the graduates and two-thirds of the dropouts were covered by medical insurance.

Exactly half of all workers had some vacation time, and just under half (41%) had sick leave. The only other benefits named by more than one-third of subjects were dental insurance (38%) and discounts on goods or services offered at their place of employment (33%).
Table 14

**Job Benefits of Employed Workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Total group ((n=24))</th>
<th>Graduates ((n=18))</th>
<th>Dropouts ((n=6))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick leave</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life insurance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents named all that applied, columns do not total 100%.*

**Source of Job**

Much of the follow-up literature reports on the high level of reliance of special education students' on the self-family-friend network for locating employment (Fourqurean & LaCourt, 1990; Hasazi et al., 1985). The current study reinforces those reports. Overall, all but two subjects found their jobs through family (33%), friends (29%) or self (30%). One dropout found work through a temporary agency, and one graduate through a military recruiter.
Reasons for Unemployment

Some respondents gave a more specific reason for their inability to find employment which, while not useful statistically, provides some interesting background into the lives of some subjects. Four graduates were unable to find work, one because the video store he worked at went out of business. Another graduate's parent reported that drug use was the main reason for unemployment, while a dropout stated that his drinking kept him from keeping a job. The inability to read or spell was mentioned by one dropout; lack of transportation was the major problem for another.

Successful Community Adjustment

Using the following standards (Sittington, Frank & Cooper, 1989), data were compiled for each subject to determine whether each had attained successful community adjustment.

(a) employed; or homemakers, students, or involved in job training; (b) buying a home, living independently, living with a friend, or living with a parent or relative; (c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and (d) involved in more than one leisure activity. (p. 29)

Overall, 68% of the subjects in the current research qualified as having made a successful community adjustment.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses stated in Chapter Three were based on the above definition of community adjustment and a variety of personal and program characteristics. Each hypothesis was analyzed separately.
Hypothesis 1—Gender

There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment between male and female subjects.

Of the nine women who were interviewed, eight (89%) met the initial criteria for successful community adjustment. Twenty men (63%) were successful while 12 (38%) were not.

Since the variables used to test Hypothesis 1 are measured at the nominal level, a chi-square test of statistical significance was performed to determine if there was a systematic relationship between gender and successful community adjustment. The chi-square analysis failed to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 15).

Table 15
Community Adjustment for the Study Sample Based on Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Successful No.</th>
<th>Successful Percent</th>
<th>Unsuccessful No.</th>
<th>Unsuccessful Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2=2.259, \text{ df}=1, p<.132 \]

Hypothesis 2—Race/Ethnicity

There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment among subjects of different racial groups.

The three racial groups represented in the study were analyzed to determine if there was any association between race and successful community adjustment. The
very small n in both minority groups make analysis difficult, but the available results are presented in Table 16.

One of the three (33%) African-Americans surveyed was rated as successful. A larger percentage (63%) of the Hispanics were successful, five qualified and three did not. The Caucasians were the largest racial group in the sample, 73% of whom were in the “successful” group.

The Cramer’s V measure of association was used in this study for larger tables. In this instance, the Cramer’s V showed no significant relationship between race and community adjustment.

Table 16
Community Adjustment for the Study Sample Based on Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American (n=3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (n=30)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (n=8)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer’s V=.2300, p<.338

Hypothesis 3—Method of Exit from School

There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment between subjects who have graduated from high school and those who have not.
High school graduates were more likely to be successful than dropouts, with 79% of the graduates meeting the criteria for success but only 46% of the dropouts doing so (see Table 17). Chi-square analysis showed a significant association between method of Exit from School and success ($p \leq 0.038$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 17

| Method of Exit | Successful | | Unsuccessful | |
|----------------|------------|------------|--------------|
|                | No. | Percent | No. | Percent |
| Graduate (n=28)| 22  | 78.6     | 6   | 21.4     |
| Dropout (n=13)| 6   | 48.2     | 7   | 53.8     |

$x^2 = 4.309$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.038$

Hypothesis 4--Special Education Program Level

There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment for subjects across levels of handicap.

The subjects who spent more time as a high school student in mainstream classes were more likely to be successful in the community. Table 18 shows that 85% of the Resource students, who averaged one or fewer special education classes, reached the criteria for success. The SCIN group, who took some regular academic courses with other special education work, had 63% of their group reach criteria. The four SCIN-L students, who spent a majority of their day in special education classes, were evenly divided between being successful and unsuccessful.
A Cramer's V was computed to determine if any association existed between community adjustment and level of handicap as measured by special education program level. Significance was not reached, and the null hypotheses failed to be rejected.

Table 18

Community Adjustment for the Study Sample Based on Type of Special Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Special Education Program</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource (n=13)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN (n=26)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN-L (n=4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer's V=.2513, p<.274

Hypothesis 5—Type of Vocational Program

There will be no significant difference in attainment of successful community adjustment among students with different types of vocational training.

Subjects who had participated in some type of preparatory vocational education had a much higher success rate (85%) than those who had taken other types of vocational education. Only 57% of those who had taken general vocational or industrial arts classes, and 33% of those taking specially designed vocational programs attained successful community adjustment. The association between vocational programming and community adjustment neared significance (see Table 19).
Table 19

Community Adjustment for the Study Sample Based on Type of Vocational Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Vocational Program</th>
<th>Successful No.</th>
<th>Successful Percent</th>
<th>Unsuccessful No.</th>
<th>Unsuccessful Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory (n=20)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General (n=14)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spec. Designed (n=6)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None (n=1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer's V = .4200, p ≤ .0648

Higher Level of Community Adjustment

In the Iowa follow-up study (Sitlington, Frank & Cooper, 1989), the initial criteria for successful community adjustment were based on the four categories of employment status, independent living status, payment of expenses, and leisure activities, but were set at a higher level as defined below.

a) employed (full- or part-time), b) buying a home, living independently, or living with a friend, c) paying more than half their living expenses, and d) involved in more than three leisure activities. (p. 27)

Only 4% of LD students who had graduated from high school one year prior to the Iowa study met the higher standards for community success. Since the subjects in the current study had been out of school from two to six years, the higher level criteria for community adjustment were also used for analysis. The same personal and program
characteristics were examined for any association with community adjustment. Tables 20 - 25 compare success using both the lower and higher standards.

**Study sample.** A majority of the subjects (68%) were successful at the Level 1 standards. But when the higher Level 2 standards were used, only 29% qualified as successful (see Table 20).

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (Lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Adjustment (Higher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender.** While women were highly successful at the lower standards, with chi-square analysis nearing significance, they did as poorly as men at the higher levels. The rate of success for women dropped from 89% at Level 1 to 22% at Level 2 (see Table 21). Chi-square results for gender showed no association for the higher community adjustment criteria, with both groups showing low levels of success at Level 2.

**Race.** Of the three African-Americans in the study, one was successful at both Level 1 and Level 2 of community adjustment (see Table 22). While five Hispanic subjects (63%) were successful at the lower level criteria, only one (13%) was successful at the higher level. The success rate for the Caucasians was also nearly reversed for Level 1 and Level 2, with 73% achieving success at Level 1, and only 33% at Level 2. There was no statistical association between race and success at either level.
Table 21

Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample Based on Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 1 (Lower)</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 2 (Higher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=9)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 2.259, \text{ df}=1, p \leq 0.132 \]

\[ x^2 = 0.2765, \text{ df}=1, p \leq 0.559 \]

Table 22

Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample Based on Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 1 (Lower)</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 2 (Higher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Af.-Amer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=30)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{Cramer's V} = 0.2300, p \leq 0.338 \]

\[ \text{Cramer's V} = 0.1814, p \leq 0.509 \]
Method of exit from school. While there was a significant difference between the success of graduates and dropouts at Level 1, the difference between the two groups nearly disappeared at Level 2. At the lower level, 79% of the graduates were successful, but that percentage dropped to 32% at the higher level. The dropouts went from a 46% success rate in Level 1 to a 23% success rate in Level 2 (see Table 23).

Special education program level. At the lower level of community adjustment, the students who had been in the most regular education classes had the highest rate of success (85%). At the higher level, the SCIN group, which had both regular and special education classes, had a slightly higher success rate, but there was no indication of any association between the subjects’ special education programming and their future community adjustment at Level 2 (see Table 24).

Table 23
Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample Based on Method of Exit from School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Exit</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 1 (Lower)</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 2 (Higher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (n=28)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout (n=13)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(x^2 = 4.309, \text{ df}=1, p<.038\) \(x^2 = .3525, \text{ df}=1, p<.553\)
**Table 24**

Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample Based on Type of Special Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Spec. Ed. Program</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 1 (Lower)</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 2 (Higher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource (n=13)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN (n=24)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIN-L (n=4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer's V = .2513, p<.274  
Cramer's V = .1068, p<.792

**Type of vocational programming.** Subjects who had participated in a preparatory vocational program in high school had the highest success rate at both Level 1 and Level 2, but the differences at Level 2 were minimal. Even though 85% of the preparatory group were successful at the lower level, only 35% were successful at the higher level. Differences based on vocational program were nearly significant at Level 1, but showed no significance at Level 2 (see Table 25).
Table 25

Community Adjustment (Levels 1 and 2) for the Study Sample Based on Type of Vocational Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Voc. Ed. Program</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 1 (Lower)</th>
<th>Community Adjustment Level 2 (Higher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory (n=20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General (n=14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spec. Designed (n=6)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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Cramer's V = 0.4200, p < 0.0648
Cramer's V = 0.1707, p < 0.754

Summary

In some respects, many subjects in the current study had begun to make a successful adjustment to adult life in their community. Those who were working primarily had full time jobs, over a third earning over $10.00 per hour. Nearly 20% were married, and over 40% lived somewhere other than with their parents. Students who had participated in Resource programs (most of their time in regular education classes) and/or Preparatory vocational education classes (more than one year in any particular field of study) were consistently more successful than students from other programs.

But there were other findings which indicated that success was not for all, and was in fact only at a minimal level for most. One significant difference found was
between the successful community adjustment of graduates and dropouts. The rate of success for the graduates was 79%, compared to only 48% for the dropouts. This finding is especially troubling when school records showed that 40% of the original 86 students in the population did not graduate from high school. Nearly half (46%) of the subjects interviewed who had not finished high school were unemployed.

The few females who participated in the study were successful, although only at the lower level. When stricter standards for successful community adjustment were applied, the success rate for the women went from 89% to 22%. Only 44% of the women were working, and earned an average of $5.76 per hour, compared to $9.72 for the males who were working.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of Purpose and Procedure

Special education students have the opportunity to be educated in individually designed programs until age 21, until they graduate, or until they drop out of school. Their ability to cope and be successful in their communities after leaving school can, in part, be an indication of the success or quality of the educational program offered to them. The extent to which they are successful, and indications of areas of strengths or weakness can also be a valuable program evaluation and planning tool.

The purpose of the current study was to determine the level of community adjustment of a group of former special education students from a Southern California school district. Successful community adjustment was based on factors which included employment, residential status, and participation in leisure activities. An additional goal was to learn if any personal or program characteristics of the subjects had any association with community success. The variables being studied were gender, race, method of exit from high school, type of special education program, and type of vocational education program.

School records of the district’s ninth grade special education students from 1984-86 were examined. Information was collected about disability, coursework, and graduation status. Interviews were then conducted with 41 of the subjects or their
parents to gather data about their current status, including present and previous employment.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

General Status

As was the case in other follow-up studies, more than half of the subjects in this study (59%) lived with parents and relatives, even though they had been out of school for an average of 3.8 years. In the Iowa statewide follow-up study (Sitlington et al., 1989), 77% of the LD graduates who had been out of school for one year were living at home. A major factor in the high percentage of subjects living at home during the time of this study is the high cost of renting or buying a home in the Southern California area.

Data from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing show the median cost of a home in the county in which the subjects live to be $139,000 and the median rent to be $502. The two-county area was ranked as the 20th least-affordable housing market in the nation in a 1992 survey, as reported in the Press-Enterprise ("Housing affordability," 1992).

Another element of the general status was the number of leisure activities named by the subjects. Nearly all respondents mentioned between one and three areas of interest. The low response was similar to the low number of extracurricular activities in which the subjects participated while in high school. In particular, students who dropped out rarely took part in activities outside of class time. Only 31% of the dropouts joined in a sport or other activity, and in each case only one activity was listed for their entire high school career.
Employment

The 59% rate of employment for the subjects interviewed was lower than the findings from other follow-up studies, including the Iowa study on which it was based. LD graduates who had been out of school for one year (Sitlington et al., 1989) had an employment rate of 77%. In other studies, the employment rate ranged from 51% (Fardig et al., 1985) to 82% (deBettencourt et al., 1989).

Subjects who are not currently employed may be otherwise meaningfully engaged in activities such as being a student or homemaker. But only 12% of the subjects in the current study were thus engaged, and an additional 29% were unemployed. As a measure of comparison, the annual unemployment rate for 1992 for the local county was 12.3% (Employment Development Department, 1993). Although it is difficult to compare unemployment rates across different time periods and regions of the country, this study’s rate is much higher than in the Iowa study, which showed a 12% rate of unemployment. But the subjects in this study who did have a job earned more money, worked more hours per week, and had been at their current job longer than subjects in other studies.

It is also difficult to compare hourly wages across time periods and sections of the country. But using the minimum wage as a reference point can aid in the comparison. The mean hourly wage for the employed subjects in the current study was $8.91, with the minimum wage being $4.35. One-third of the subjects earned over $10.00 per hour. In the Iowa follow-up study, the average hourly wage was $4.39 per hour, the minimum wage being $3.35. Nearly half of the subjects earned less than $3.95 per hour. This compares with other studies such as Edgar (1987) in which only 23% of the students earned more than the minimum wage.
A consistent finding related to wages is the difference, usually significant, between the amount of money earned by men and women. Gender differences in wages were significant in the Iowa study and in others such as Kranstover et al. (1989). The average for the women in this study was $5.76, the highest wage for a woman being $7.00 per hour. In contrast, the average for the men was $9.72, with 40% of them earning over $10.00 per hour, up to $17.68.

A majority of employed subjects (83%) were working full time, compared to 70% for the LD graduates in the Iowa study. A third of the California subjects had been at their present job for more than two years, nearly a half for more than one year.

Community Adjustment

Study hypotheses were based on a definition of community adjustment taken from the Iowa follow-up study (Sitlington et al., 1989), in which these criteria were reached by 54% of the LD graduates and 36% of the LD dropouts one year out of Iowa's schools.

**Community Adjustment, Lower Level Criteria**
(a) employed; or homemakers, students, or involved in job training; (b) buying a home, living independently, living with a friend, or living with a parent or relative; (c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and (d) involved in more than one leisure activity. (p. 29)

These standards were not the original criteria for successful community adjustment in the Iowa study, however. The following criteria were originally in place, but when only 4% of the graduates and 2% of the dropouts achieved these goals, the lower level criteria were established. The subjects in this study, having been out of school for a longer period of time, were also rated using this higher level scale, defined below.
Community Adjustment. Higher Level Criteria
a) employed (full- or part-time), b) buying a home, living independently, or living with a friend, c) paying more than half their living expenses, and d) involved in more than three leisure activities. (p. 27)

There was one change in criterion “d” in the current study. Due to the consistently low number of responses given for the leisure activities question, the standard for “d” was changed from “more than three leisure activities” to “three or more leisure activities”. For the sake of this discussion, the lower level criteria will be identified as Level 1, the higher level will be identified as Level 2.

It is important to identify stages of success for any student leaving high school. What may be an appropriate goal for someone just out of school may not be appropriate for another who has been out for ten years. As students become adults, they must decrease their financial dependence on their family as much as is possible, be able to be productively engaged as a worker, student, or homemaker, and participate in community or other leisure activities. The subjects in the current study had been out of school from two to six years. By using the higher as well as the lower level criteria for community adjustment, the progress of the subjects can be judged at more than one point.

Total Group

For the group as a whole, as well as for many subgroups, the percentage of persons successful at Level 1 was nearly the same as the percentage of persons unsuccessful at Level 2. Even though 68% met the criteria at the lower level, only 29% met the higher level criteria, while 71% failed to do so.

In the Iowa study of students who had been out of school for one year, 52% of all students (graduates and dropouts) met the Level 1 criteria, but only 4% met the Level 2 criteria. Although the two studies cannot be statistically compared, the improvement as the subjects are out of school for a longer period of time is encouraging.
Gender

Nearly all women interviewed for the study (89%) qualified as successful at the initial lower level criteria. But the difference in the percentage of success between the lower and higher level was greater for women than for any other group in the study. Although 89% were successful at the lower level, only 22% were successful at the higher level, a difference of 63%. The level of success for men also dropped between Level 1 and Level 2, from 63% to 31%, but this shift was more in line with the other groups in the study.

Race/Ethnicity

Unfortunately, there were not enough minority subjects interviewed to obtain meaningful data, but some trends were observed which may warrant further study. The Hispanic subjects tended to be successful at the lower level, but not at the higher level, a pattern similar to the women in the study. Success at Level 1 was measured at 63%, while at Level 2 it dropped to 13%. There were only eight Hispanic subjects interviewed, so these results, as all others, must be viewed with caution.

Of the Caucasian students, 73% were successful at Level 1, as were 33% at Level 2. Only three African-American students were interviewed, and the one subject who was successful at the lower level also met the criteria for the higher level.

Method of Exit from School

A significant finding of the study was the association between the method of exit from school (graduate or dropout) and successful community adjustment (lower level). While 79% of the graduates were successful, only 46% of the dropouts met the lower level criteria for success. This gap was reduced drastically when using the higher level
standards, but the graduates were still more successful than the dropouts (32% vs. 23%).

Although some dropouts were quite successful, the overall lack of accomplishment for the group is a very troubling problem due to the high dropout rate for special education students. Examination of school records for the 86 students who qualified for the current study showed that 40% of them did not graduate from high school. A disproportionate percentage of the dropouts were members of minority groups. More Hispanic students dropped out (59%) than graduated, and nearly half (46%) of the African-Americans did not graduate. Women tended to complete school more often than men, although none of the dropouts interviewed in the current study were women.

**Special Education Program Level**

At the lower level of community adjustment, students who took more classes in mainstream regular education had a consistently higher success rate than those students who spent more of their time in special education. Resource students, who had been in regular classes except for a maximum of one period per day in special education, had a success rate of 85% at Level 1. Special Class with Integration students (SCIN), who participated in some mainstream academic classes, had a success rate of 63%, and Special Class with Little Integration (SCIN-L) students, with all academics in special classes, were successful 50% of the time.

There are at least two explanations for the success of those students who had participated to a greater extent in regular education classes. One possible reason is that higher functioning students are scheduled into regular classes, and would have more innate talent or ability to achieve future community success. Another possibility is that students in the regular classroom are exposed to information and to role models which
enable them to achieve at a higher level in the community. Without test data for each subject to determine and compare ability levels, it is impossible to know which explanation holds true for the students in this study.

At the higher level, the percentages dropped for all levels, with the drop in Resource being the highest. Only 23% of the Resource students were successful at Level 2, as were 33% of the SCIN and 25% of the SCIN-L students.

**Type of Vocational Education Program**

As was the case with special education programming, students who were in higher levels of vocational classes had a more successful community adjustment. Students who participated in preparatory vocational education had a success rate of 85% at Level 1 and 35% at Level 2. While this is a large decrease between levels, the preparatory subjects still outperformed students who took other vocational programs. Students in this category had been exposed to specific job training which could prepare them for at least an entry level job, as well as having been exposed to generalizable work skills such as dependability and job completion. Studying in a particular vocational program for more than one year may have provided enough reinforcement of skills to improve their potential for future success. It is necessary to point out once again that the ability level of subjects in the preparatory category is not known, nor is the impact of ability level on community adjustment.

Students who took general vocational education classes such as industrial technology or home economics had a success rate of 57% at Level 1 and 21% at Level 2. Of the six students who had only taken a specially designed vocational program, 2 (33%) were successful at both Level 1 and Level 2. Other studies have shown that students in special education programs often take a haphazard array of vocational courses rather than
an in-depth study in one field. For those subjects in the current study who followed that pattern, future community adjustment may have been somewhat diminished. Although they had an opportunity to learn skills, it would not be as comprehensive as those who took part in the preparatory program.

The only student who had taken no vocational courses was successful at Level 1, but not at Level 2. That subject was quite successfully employed, but still resided with his parents.

Conclusions and Practical Implications

Graduates met the criteria for successful community adjustment at a significantly higher rate than did dropouts. This fact, compounded with the very high dropout rate of the minority students in the district, point to the need for renewed efforts in dropout prevention. A recent increase in graduation credit requirements makes it imperative that students stay on track for graduation from the time they enter high school.

Special educators must work closely with students and parents to provide input and alternatives in order to increase the percentage of special education students who graduate. Students must also be willing to offer support to each other. Upperclass special education students could be paired with incoming ninth graders to give advice and direction. Program graduates, especially minority graduates, could be mentors and role models for juniors and seniors.

Subjects in the current study who had dropped out of school had rarely participated in any extracurricular activity. This could certainly be due to their shortened tenure at the high school, but could also point to a lack of connection with campus activities. Encouragement should be given to students to join campus clubs or sports. Perhaps extra credit could be given for attending and reporting about extracurricular
activities at school. A wider variety of individual sports and recreational activities could be incorporated into physical education or other special educational classes. Students need to be made aware of the possibilities available to them, both for their stay in high school and for productive use of leisure time in the future.

Students who had taken in-depth vocational training were more likely to experience postsecondary success. Students in the eighth and ninth grade need to be more aware of the options available to them in the vocational area. Vocational students should regularly visit special education classes with information and displays or demonstrations. Special education students should have the opportunity to spend some time visiting a vocational class of their choice, or visiting someone in the community who is employed in an area of interest. Females should particularly be made aware of nontraditional options which may be available to them. The female subjects in the current study who were employed were in entry level service positions which did not pay as much as many of the jobs which the males were doing, and seemed to offer little advancement opportunity.

Students who took higher level regular and/or vocational education classes were more often successful at the lower level of community adjustment. These data are not necessarily an endorsement of the Regular Education Initiative. It is not clear, due to the lack of current and comparable student achievement and IQ test data, whether the success of the students in higher level programs was due to greater opportunities in regular education, or due to the higher functioning level of the students.

It is important to remember that under current legislation, the transition needs of disabled students must be addressed in the IEP process, with appropriate educational offerings and settings. If the regular program can best meet those individual needs, it is important for the student to have that opportunity. But it is also crucial for special
educators to provide their students with any additional coursework or experiences which would enhance their transition program.

The data also showed that women were more often successful than men at the lower level of community adjustment. This information can be somewhat deceiving, because in the employment realm, men were far more successful than were the women. The success level of the women was due in part to those who were homemakers. Not wishing to disparage the homemakers, it is important to determine in the future if the “stay-at-home” women are doing so as a matter of choice, or because they were unable to locate suitable employment. Do females in special education typically see their only options as being a homemaker or working in an entry level service job?

The lower level standards of community adjustment represent only a minimal level of success, and should not be seen as an ultimate goal for most adults. Long-term goals need to be addressed as part of the transition planning mandated by current legislation. All areas of community adjustment should be dealt with realistically, including daily living skills and leisure activities, as well as employment.

Two recurring themes of student comments about their high school special education program were that a) it was too easy, and when they finished school they were unprepared, especially for further education, or b) it was either too hard, too impractical, or they didn’t get enough help. It is important that special educators address the needs of both types of students- challenging those who have the skills and interest in attending postsecondary education, and making the curriculum relevant and attainable for those who do not.
Recommendations for Further Study

A follow-along rather than a follow-up study should be conducted with a large cohort and begin in the ninth grade. There would be many benefits from such a project, especially in the areas of data collection and analysis.

Data collection would be enhanced due to greater access to records and subjects. A follow-along study which begins with ninth or tenth graders and tracks them through and beyond high school would provide opportunities to collect more complete data on each subject. Records which are kept for students after they graduate, move, or drop from a district may represent only minimal information, and may not be available for all students in the study. If information were collected on an annual basis for each subject, records would be more complete. A rapport would also be established between the researcher, the student, and the parent. This rapport, as well as a more frequent check of student addresses, would possibly facilitate a higher response rate at the time of the post-school interviews.

Data collection during the subjects' high school years would allow compilation of student discipline and attendance records. In this way, it could be determined if students who had difficulty dealing with authority or peers continued to have similar difficulties in the future.

While the subjects are still attending school, results of achievement and intelligence testing which are done in conjunction with the IEP could be collected by the researcher on a regular basis. It is also important that the testing be conducted in such a way as to be comparable across subjects.

One purpose for up-to-date test data would be to determine if the students taking more mainstreamed classes are higher functioning than those in more restricted placements, as was assumed in the current study. Without this information, it is not
possible to ascertain if the community adjustment success of mainstreamed students is due to higher ability levels, or to greater opportunities offered in mainstream classes.

By conducting a similar study with a much larger sample, statistical analysis of the relationship between race and community adjustment would be possible. Attention is rightly being placed on gender as a factor for future success, but it does not appear that the same emphasis is placed on the study of the impact of one's race or ethnicity on post-school community adjustment. It was impossible in the current study, due to the small numbers of minority subjects, to make any formal analysis of association.

Community adjustment is a broad concept with many possible components. Some subjects in this study were very successful in two or three areas, but not in all four. A scale of community adjustment which would rate levels of success within each area and give an overall score for success would be valuable in that it would provide a tool for researchers to quantify success and make comparisons across studies.

A meta-analysis of the many follow-up studies being conducted would provide the 'big picture' of the community adjustment and, eventually, of the quality of life of former special education students. But this panorama is only useful if it is examined for ways in which special educators can best insure the greatest success possible for each of the students in their charge.
Community Adjustment Follow-up Study
Data Collection Sheet

Name: ___________________________ Student Number: ___________________________

Parent Name: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

Spec. Ed. Program: ___________ Case Carrier: ___________________________

Handicapping Condition: ___________

Gender: ___________ Race: ___________ Year in Ninth Grade: ___________

Year Graduated: ___________ OR Last Year in High School: ___________

Full Scale IQ: ___________ Test Date: ___________ Instrument: ___________

Cumulative folder sent to ___________________________

### Mainstream Classes

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Tally Only

- **Academic** - Math, Science, English, Social Studies, Foreign Language
- **Elective** - Health, Art, Music, Vocational Education
- **PE** - Any class offered through the Physical Education dept.
- **Special Education** - Any class with special education teacher

### Vocational Education

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Write names of courses as well as the following codes

- 1/2 = Semester course
- 1 = Year-long course
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO SUBJECTS
Dear "Student Name":

My name is Teresa Moran and I teach in the district where you went to school. I am working on my dissertation at the Ohio State University. As part of my research project, I will be interviewing a group of students who were freshmen in high school between 1984 and 1987. The purpose of the interview is to find out how students are doing after they get out of high school. After I get the information, it can be used to help make the high school program more useful to students.

I want to assure you that all information you give me will be confidential. It will not be given to any teacher, parent, or other student. Your name will not be anywhere in the report. I will use a code number to identify your information, and after all the information is put into the computer, the code list will be destroyed.

I will be contacting you to set up an interview time. The interview should only take about 25 minutes. I know that you are all very busy, and I appreciate your help in taking the time to talk with me. It is very important to find out how former students are doing so we can better help those students still in school.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Teresa Moran
The Ohio State University
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

IDENTIFICATION -- PERMISSION

Subject Name:__________________________________________

Address:_______________________________________________

Phone Number:________________________________________

Record of attempts to contact:

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INTERVIEW PERMISSION FORM

I _________________________ agree to participate in this follow-up (full name) survey by a personal interview conducted on ___________ (date) with Teresa Moran.

(Signature of Subject or Guardian) (Date Signed)
COVER SHEET
(Fill out for all students)

1. Subject ID: ________________________________

2. Student Status in summer after scheduled graduation (Summer '88 or '89)
   ____ (0) dropout
   ____ (1) graduate/completer

3. Completeness of this interview (Check one):
   ____ (0) All sections complete
   ____ (1) School record information only
   ____ (2) Interview information only
   ____ (3) No information

4. If unable to obtain interview, please indicate why. (Check only one-the most important reason):
   ____ (0) Subject refused interview
   ____ (1) Deceased
   ____ (2) Moved out of town, unable to locate at new address
   ____ (3) In the military
   ____ (4) In jail
   ____ (5) Institutionalized
   ____ (6) No information available at all
   ____ (7) Other ________________________________
   ____ (8) Interview conducted

5. How was the interview conducted? (Check only one)
   ____ (0) Face-to-face with student
   ____ (1) Telephone interview with student
   ____ (2) Face-to-face with parent/guardian
   ____ (3) Telephone interview with parent/guardian
   ____ (4) No interview conducted
I. INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL RECORDS

6. Subject's Date of Birth _____/_____/_____  
   mo. day year

7. Gender:
   _____ (0) Female
   _____ (1) Male

8. Race:
   _____ (0) African American
   _____ (1) American Indian or Alaskan Native
   _____ (2) Asian or Pacific Islander
   _____ (3) Hispanic
   _____ (4) White

9. Reading Grade Equivalent Score (from most recent test):
   a. Grade Equivalent Score: ____ . ___
   b. Date of Testing: _____/_____/_____  
      mo. day year

10. Math Grade Equivalent Score (from most recent test):
    a. Grade Equivalent Score: ____ . ___
    b. Date of Testing: _____/_____/_____  
       mo. day year

11. Check program model subject was enrolled in:
    _____ (0) Resource Specialist Program
    _____ (1) Special Day Class

12. Check level of participation in special education (use information  
    from Student Summary Sheet):
    _____ (0) Resource
    _____ (1) Special Class with Integration (SCIN)
    _____ (2) Special Class with Little Integration (SCIN-L)
II. INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEW

A. General Information

13. If subject dropped out of school, please list the following information. If subject completed school and did not drop out, insert the number 99 for both a. and b.

   ___ a. Age when subject dropped out
   ___ b. Highest grade completed

14. Graduation Status (Check only one; be sure this is consistent with Q2):

   ___ (0) High school diploma
   ___ (1) Dropped out, but earned GED
   ___ (2) Certificate of completion
   ___ (3) Special diploma
   ___ (4) Termination at age 21 or older
   ___ (5) Dropped out
   ___ (6) Dropped out, but returned to school and graduated
   ___ (7) Other ________________________________

15. If you dropped out of school, why? (Check all that apply)

   ___ a. Not applicable -- did not drop out
   ___ b. School personnel recommended it
   ___ c. Parent(s) wanted me to
   ___ d. Needed to work
   ___ e. Personal problems (e.g. pregnant, drugs, law)
   ___ f. I wanted to
   ___ g. Other (specify): __________________________
16. Which extracurricular activities were you involved in as an individual during your high school years (regular school programs only)? Check all that apply.

   ____ a. Not involved in any extracurricular activities
   ____ b. Athletics (e.g., basketball, tennis, golf, football)
   ____ c. Music (e.g., band, vocal, choir)
   ____ d. Speech, drama, debate
   ____ e. Social activities (e.g., school dances, pep rallies)
   ____ f. Newspaper or school yearbook
   ____ g. Vocational clubs
   ____ h. Other school clubs
   ____ i. Other ________________________________

17. Were your school experiences helpful in training you to find a job?

   ____ (3) Very helpful
   ____ (2) Helpful
   ____ (1) Not helpful at all

18. Were your school experiences helpful in training you to keep a job?

   ____ (3) Very helpful
   ____ (2) Helpful
   ____ (1) Not helpful at all

19. Were your school experiences helpful in preparing you for the job you have now?

   ____ (3) Very helpful
   ____ (2) Helpful
   ____ (1) Not helpful at all
   ____ (8) Not applicable -- subject is unemployed

20. Was your school program helpful in preparing you to get along with others, deal with personal problems, make friends, etc.?

   ____ (3) Very helpful
   ____ (2) Helpful
   ____ (1) Not helpful at all
21. Was your school program helpful in preparing you to read things like the newspaper, want ads, TV schedules, weather reports, job applications, levels, consumer information, etc.?

   _____ (3) Very helpful
   _____ (2) Helpful
   _____ (1) Not helpful at all

22. Was your school program helpful in preparing you to do things like cook, repair things, do the laundry, clean, and take care of children?

   _____ (3) Very helpful
   _____ (2) Helpful
   _____ (1) Not helpful at all

23. Was your school program helpful in preparing you to do things like budget your money, save money, understand taxes, insurance, and take care of your day-to-day expenses?

   _____ (3) Very helpful
   _____ (2) Helpful
   _____ (1) Not helpful at all

24. What educational/vocational programs have you enrolled in since high school (including present programs)? Check all that apply.

   _____ a. Never enrolled in any educational/vocational programs
   _____ b. Junior college
   _____ c. Community college
   _____ d. Adult Based Education
   _____ e. Four year college/university
   _____ f. Military
   _____ g. Private training program (school, company)
   _____ h. Apprenticeship program
   _____ i. Regional Occupational Program
   _____ j. Government training program (Job Corps, etc.)

25. What are you studying to be or what have you studied to be? Please be specific in identifying a job. Note: If item 24a was checked, write NA.
B. CURRENT STATUS

26. Are you (Check only one):
   _____ (1) Single, never married
   _____ (2) Married
   _____ (3) Divorced
   _____ (4) Separated
   _____ (5) Widowed
   _____ (8) Other ______________________________

27. If you are not married, are you (Check only one):
   _____ (9) NA (married)
   _____ (4) Engaged
   _____ (3) Dating often (i.e., on a weekly basis)
   _____ (2) Dating, but not very often (once or twice a month)
   _____ (1) Never date
   _____ (8) Other ______________________________

28. How many children have you had? ________

29. How many children live with you or are you financially responsible for? ________

30. Which of the following best describes where you live? Check only one.
    _____ (8) I'm buying my own home independently
    _____ (7) I live independently in a rented apartment/home
    _____ (6) I live with a friend
    _____ (5) I live in a supervised apartment
    _____ (4) I live in a group home
    _____ (3) I live with my parents or a relative
    _____ (2) I live with my spouse's parent(s)
    _____ (1) I live in a residential facility/institution
    _____ (9) Other ________________________________
31. What part of your living expenses do you pay?
   _____ (4) All
   _____ (3) More than 1/2
   _____ (2) Less than or equal to 1/2
   _____ (1) None

32. Who gives you financial assistance? Check all that apply.
   _____ a. I don't receive financial assistance
   _____ b. Parent(s)
   _____ c. Relative(s) other than parents
   _____ d. Vocational Rehab
   _____ e. Department of Human Services (ADC, food stamps, etc.)
   _____ f. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
   _____ g. Insurance
   _____ h. Other ____________________________________________

33. In how many places have you lived since leaving school? _______
   List location/places:
   a. ___________________ d. ___________________
   b. ___________________ e. ___________________
   c. ___________________ f. ___________________

34. Do you have a current driver's license?
   _____ (1) Yes
   _____ (2) No

35. How do you most commonly get around in the community? Check all that apply.
   _____ a. Drive my own vehicle
   _____ b. Drive family vehicle
   _____ c. Use city transportation (e.g. taxi, bus)
   _____ d. Walk
   _____ e. Depend on others
   _____ f. Special regional transportation system
   _____ g. Other (specify) ____________________________________
36. Which of the following credit/banking services do you currently use? Check all that apply.
   ____ a. Savings account
   ____ b. Checking account
   ____ c. Loan (other than mortgage)
   ____ d. Mortgage
   ____ e. Bank credit cards (e.g. MasterCard or Visa)
   ____ f. Other credit cards (i.e., department store or oil company)

37. Which clubs or groups do you belong to? (Check all that apply)
   ____ a. I don't belong to any club or group
   ____ b. I belong to a social/support group
   ____ c. I belong to a church group
   ____ d. Other __________________________

38. When you have a problem that you can't handle on your own, who do you generally go to for help? (Check all that apply)
   ____ a. Parent(s)
   ____ b. Sister(s)/Brother(s)
   ____ c. Friend, girlfriend, boyfriend
   ____ d. Minister/priest
   ____ e. Spouse
   ____ f. Mental health professional (psychologist, counselor, social worker, etc.)
   ____ g. Other (specify) __________________________
39. What activities do you do most often in your free time? (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES TO SUBJECT.) Check all that subject states.

_____ a. Participate in athletic events (swim, jog, lift weights, aerobics, walk, bike ride, softball, basketball, etc.)
_____ b. Outdoor sport activities (fishing, hunting, camping, horse shows, etc.)
_____ c. Spectator sports (high school, college, professional, etc.)
_____ d. Games (cards, checkers, pool, etc.)
_____ e. Socialize with friends/dating
_____ f. Reading
_____ g. Spend time with family
_____ h. Drive around
_____ i. Dancing
_____ j. Watch TV
_____ k. Movies
_____ l. Cook/bake
_____ m. Eat out
_____ n. Relax/sleep
_____ o. Listen to music, play instrument, sing
_____ p. Maintenance work (house, garden, yard, car, etc.)
_____ q. Go to bars
_____ r. Go shopping
_____ s. Other

_____ t. Didn’t answer, refused

40. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

_____ (0) Yes
_____ (1) No
_____ (2) Declined to answer
C. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

41. How many job experiences did you have during high school? (Include summer.)
   *Note: If you can't determine this, leave blank.*
   
   _______ a. Number of paid job experiences (number)
   _______ b. Number of non-paid experiences (number)

42. Of the paid jobs you had while still in school (Check only one)
   
   _____ (0) Had no paid jobs
   _____ (1) All were subsidized (e.g. JTPA)
   _____ (2) At least one was unsubsidized

43. List the last three job experiences you had in high school. Please be specific; indicate if paid or non-paid.
   
   a. Most recent job (paid _____; non-paid _____):
      
      Title: _______________________________________
      Duties: _______________________________________
   b. Second most recent job (paid _____; non-paid _____):
      
      Title: _______________________________________
      Duties: _______________________________________
   c. Third most recent job (paid _____; non-paid _____):
      
      Title: _______________________________________
      Duties: _______________________________________
44. What are you doing now?

_____ Unemployed because: (Check only one -- the most important)

 _____ (00) Homemaker
 _____ (01) Full-time student (post-secondary)
 _____ (02) In job training
 _____ (03) In mental health center program
 _____ (04) Disabled and receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 _____ (05) Unable to find job
 _____ (06) Fired
 _____ (07) Laid off
 _____ (08) Quit my last job
 _____ (09) Other ________________________________

 _____ (10) Employed by sheltered workshop or work activity center
 _____ (11) Employed in community in subsidized job (JPTA, Voc. Rehab)
 _____ (12) Employed in community in unsubsidized job

45. If you had a job and lost it, what agencies or people would help you find another job? (DO NOT READ THIS LIST TO SUBJECT! Check all that subject states.)

_____ a. Parents/relatives
_____ b. Newspaper
_____ c. Friend
_____ d. Vocational Rehabilitation
_____ e. Sheltered workshop/work activity center
_____ f. Job Service of California
_____ g. Job Training Partnership Act personnel (JTPA)
_____ h. Staff at community college
_____ i. Special education teacher at old high school
_____ j. Vocational education teacher at old high school
_____ k. Work experience coordinator/instructor
_____ l. Other school personnel
_____ m. Other ________________________________
_____ n. Don't know
46. Have you talked with anyone from the following agencies about job information or assistance? (READ THIS LIST TO SUBJECT. Check all that apply.)
   ______ a. Vocational Rehabilitation
   ______ b. Sheltered workshop/work activity center
   ______ c. Job Service of California
   ______ d. Department of Human Services (DHS)
   ______ e. Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agencies
   ______ f. Community college
   ______ g. School personnel
   ______ h. Other ______________________________________

47. How many paid jobs have you had since you left high school (including current job)?
   ______ (number)

48. At any time since high school, were you working more than one job at a time?
   ______ (0) Yes Describe_____________________________________
   ______ (1) No

49. List the three most recent jobs you have had since leaving high school. Please be specific. Check if part time, full time, or seasonal. DO NOT INCLUDE CURRENT JOB, IF ANY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Job Description</th>
<th>Length (in mos.)</th>
<th>Check only one</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Part Time</td>
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<td>c.</td>
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</table>

NOTE: IF SUBJECT IS NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED, CHECK BELOW AND SKIP TO QUESTION 63.
Subject is not currently employed. ______
50. If you are employed:
   a. Where are you employed (includes sheltered workshop or work activity center)?

   Business or Industry's Name  City/Town

   b. What do you do?

   Job Title: ________________________________
   Duties/Tasks: ________________________________

   c. Location of job

   (2) Out in community -- competitive employment
   (1) Out in community -- employed by sheltered workshop
   (0) In sheltered workshop or activity center

51. How long have you been employed at your present job?

   (0) Less than 6 months
   (1) 6 months to 1 year
   (2) 1 to 2 years
   (3) 2 years or more

52. Amount of time you work. (Check only one):

   (4) Full time (37.5 hours per week or more)
   (3) Part time (21-37 hours per week)
   (2) Part time (less than 21 hours per week)
   (1) Seasonal
   (7) Other ________________________________
   (8) Don't know

53a. How much do you earn per hour?

   $ ______ . ______

53b. How much do you usually earn per week?

   $ ______ . ______
54. What benefits do you have? (Check all that apply.)
   ____ a. Sick leave
   ____ b. Vacation
   ____ c. Life insurance
   ____ d. Dental insurance
   ____ e. Health/accident insurance
   ____ f. Profit sharing
   ____ g. Free meals
   ____ h. Other ________________________________
   ____ i. Don't know

55. Have you received an increase in wages since you were hired at your present job?
   ____ (1) Yes
   ____ (0) No

56. How many promotions have you received since you were hired at your present job?
   (If none, write zero.) _______ (number)

57. How do you get to work? (Check all that apply.)
   ____ a. Walk
   ____ b. Taxi
   ____ c. Drive my own car
   ____ d. Car pool
   ____ e. Hitch hike
   ____ f. Parent/guardian
   ____ g. Friend
   ____ h. Sheltered workshop bus
   ____ i. Bus
   ____ j. Bike
   ____ k. Other ________________________________
58. Who is the main person that helped you get your job? (Check only one)

_____ (00) Myself
_____ (01) Special education teacher
_____ (02) Vocational education teacher
_____ (03) Work experience coordinator/instructor
_____ (04) Other school personnel
_____ (05) Parents/relatives
_____ (06) Friend
_____ (07) Job Service counselor
_____ (08) Vocational Rehabilitation counselor
_____ (09) Job Training Partnership Act counselor (JTPA)
_____ (10) Other ________________________________

59. How well do you like the job you have?

_____ (3) A lot
_____ (2) It's OK
_____ (1) I don't like it

60. What things do you like about your job? (Check all that subject states)

_____ a. The people
_____ b. The money
_____ c. The things I do
_____ d. Other ________________________________

61. What things do you not like about your job? (Check all that subject states)

_____ a. The people
_____ b. The money
_____ c. The things I do
_____ d. Other ________________________________
QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER BASED ON YOUR PERCEPTIONS

62. How happy does the person appear to be?
   Very Happy 1 2 3 4 5 Very Unhappy

63. How successfully has the person adapted to community life?
   Very Successfully 1 2 3 4 5 Very Unsuccessfully

64. Please comment on anything you may think is relevant to the interview and purpose of the study.
   COMMENTS:
LIST OF REFERENCES


