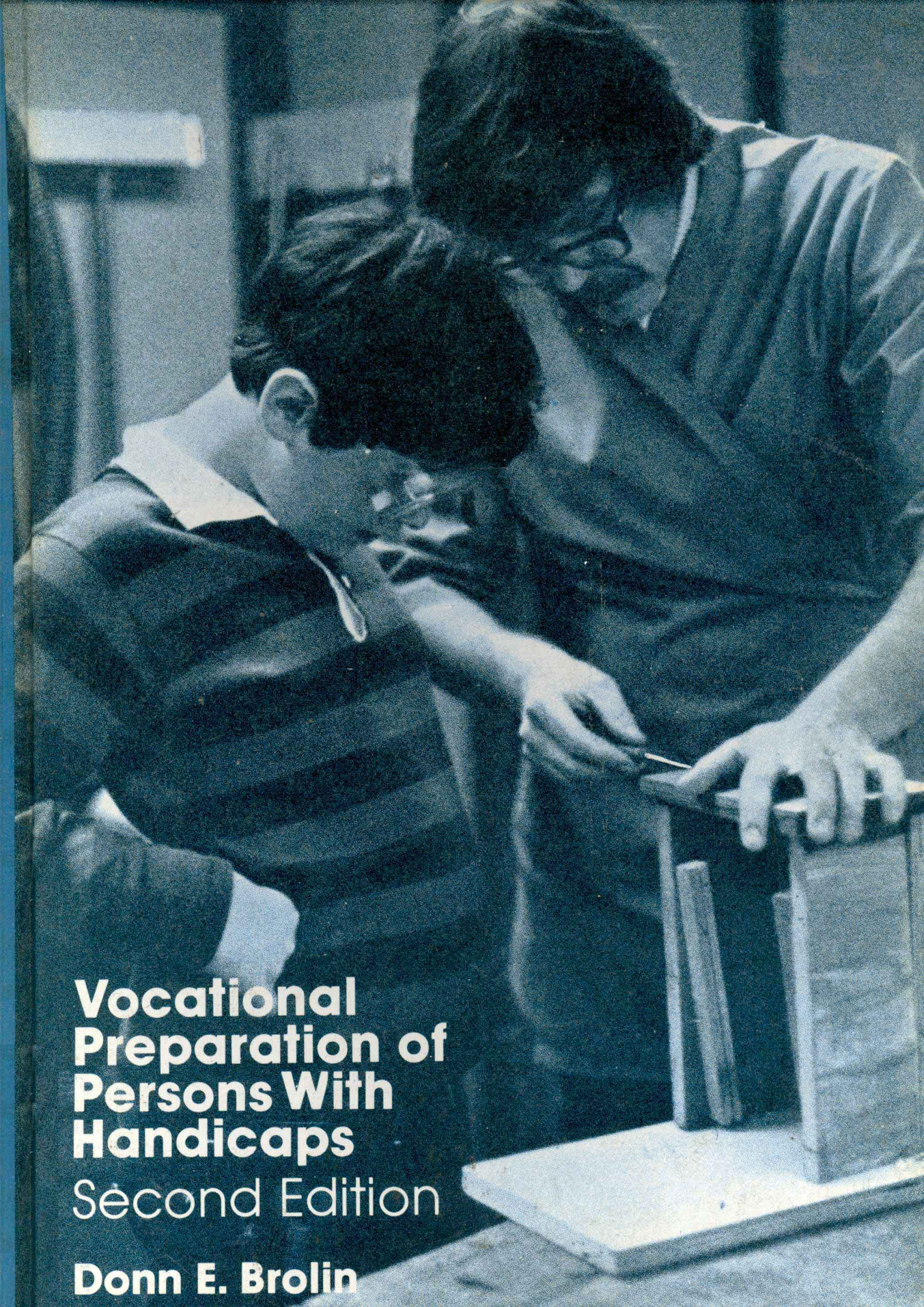

Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps

Second Edition

Donn E. Brolin

Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps

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Preface

This second edition of *Vocational Preparation of Retarded Citizens* has two particularly noteworthy changes from the first edition. First, the book includes material on other handicapping conditions besides mental retardation. This was done to respond to the many users who have suggested that most of the original concepts and methods are applicable to persons with different handicaps. The second noteworthy change is in the title of the book—*Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps.* We must constantly be aware of the fact that the people we are concerned about are people first and have a disability or handicap that does not pervade their entire mental, emotional, sensory, and physical processes. Disabilities that are handicapping may affect the persons in only 10–20–30% of their functional capacity as compared to so-called "normal" persons. I hope that we all will appreciate the need to become more sensitive to and accurate in our use of descriptive terms for the persons we profess to serve.

In this revision, I have attempted to structure the various parts and chapters as close to the first edition as possible. However, in the past 6 years the vocational field has developed so dramatically that I felt the need to add new topics and discard some of those included in the first edition. In addition, I solicited the assistance of my brother, James, who contributed additional material that reflects a somewhat different perspective as well as new concepts and processes for vocational preparation. His special expertise has added an important dimension to the book that I believe makes it a unique contribution to the field.

The book is intended for professional workers and students who are concerned about the vocational preparation of persons with handicaps, beginning during the elementary years and continuing through late adulthood. It should be useful to practitioners as well as university educators who teach the topic. Administrators and consultants should find the book of value in planning and implementing comprehensive and humanistic vocational programs. A primary objective of the book is to present a total approach to conducting effective vocational services for persons with different handicaps. The material is presented in a nontechnical manner and a "how-to-do-it" approach whenever possible.

As this book is being completed, considerable uncertainty prevails relative to the funding base and service delivery system for persons with handicaps. Social programs are being scrutinized closely for their efficacy and continuance. I hope that by the time this book becomes available we will have survived the present threat to services for persons with handicaps, and the tremendous advances of the seventies can be further developed and implemented in the eighties.

Acknowledgments

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I am also indebted to James Brolin, my brother, for his many contributions of material for this book; Nancy Brolin, my wife, for patiently waiting through another writing endeavor; Craig and Erica Brolin, my children, for their patience and understanding during the long writing process; Herbert and Marian Brolin, my parents, for making this all possible; and Brenda Eastin, my secretary, for her competent and exhaustive efforts in typing the many drafts of this manuscript.

I also want to acknowledge the helpful suggestions of the many students, practitioners, university educators, and my associates at the University of Missouri-Columbia in influencing my thinking and the material presented in this book.

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Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps

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Part One

Background

1

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

"The benefits and fundamental rights of this society are often denied those individuals with mental and physical handicaps!" So concluded the representatives of over 100,000 people who had participated in local, state, and territorial conferences that led up to the climax—the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals, Washington, D.C., May 23–27, 1977. The delegates were primarily handicapped individuals and persons from various advocacy groups. Some professional workers were also present at the conference. Speaking for seven million children and twenty-eight million adults with handicaps, the delegates pleaded for equality of opportunity, equal access to all aspects of society, and equal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

Although we live in a work-oriented society, and although persons with handicaps have time and again demonstrated their ability to be capable employees, still, a majority of some eleven million persons with handicaps, of working age, remain either unemployed or underemployed. There are many reasons for this unfortunate circumstance. It is a complex phenomenon. The author hopes that this book will adequately address many of the major problems and present a comprehensive approach to vocational preparation that can be used to assure quality and effectiveness of services offered to handicapped individuals.

By 1984, there will be 38 million severely and moderately disabled persons (Urban Institute 1975)

As this book is being completed in early 1982, the future of critical programs and services is uncertain. Recommended federal cut-backs of money, services, and personnel could seriously jeopardize the numerous accomplishments that characterized the seventies in America. If state and local units are provided with block grants as proposed, individuals and organizations concerned about the vocational preparation of persons with

handicapping conditions will need to learn new and convincing ways to obtain support for their services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NEEDS

The decade of the seventies witnessed a rapid increase in specialized vocational services for persons with handicaps. The foundation on which quality services can be built was established in that decade. During that period technology expanded, better training techniques were developed, employers were better informed, career and vocational education in the schools moved ahead, and a much greater awareness of the plight of persons with handicaps was conveyed to legislators, business and industry, and the general public.

Several important legislative Acts provided the impetus for these services: Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973; the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; Vocational Education Act of 1976; Career Education Incentives Act of 1977; and the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act of 1978. These Acts provided the mandates and funds for personnel, programs, special projects, equipment and facilities, materials, and equal opportunity that were so sorely lacking in previous years.

Despite the advances, delegates to the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals (1977) identified the following as major problems:

1. Handicapped individuals and their advocates are underrepresented at the highest level of policy making and decision making.
2. There is a lack of an organized human services delivery system and rational system of economic support.
3. Public awareness and the need for attitudinal change is a major problem.
4. Employment training and opportunities for appropriate placement are pressing needs.
5. Human and civil rights are a major concern.
6. The right to live and receive services in the least restrictive environment should be emphasized more and implemented better than at present.

This chapter will review some of the major programs and services that have particular significance for the vocational preparation of handicapped persons: the educational, rehabilitation, manpower, and institutional systems. A familiarity with all of these programs is important for professional workers in assisting handicapped individuals toward vocational independence. Also discussed in this chapter is the need for interagency cooperation, something expressed by many but practiced by few. Problems and needs relative to implementing cooperative arrangements are identified in the interagency cooperation section.

Key legislation was passed in the 1970s.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 clearly mandated that every handicapped student is entitled to an "appropriate education."

Although it was not specifically promulgated, this Act also has provided the opportunity for schools to focus their efforts on preparing students for eventual employment. There is mounting evidence, however, that the letter and intent of the law is not being carried out satisfactorily in many instances and that few Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) contain vocational goals and services of any import, particularly for students below the high school level.

General Education

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 requires schools to integrate handicapped students into regular classes where appropriate. No longer are such students to be denied services in the mainstream of education unless it would be to their detriment.

A 1980 study of 13 advocacy groups, called the Education Advocates Coalition, cast doubts on the progress in implementing the Act, labeling the situation a "national disgrace." The coalition's findings revealed:

- Thousands of children remain on waiting lists for evaluation and placement.
- Institutionalized children are routinely excluded from any kind of schooling or are denied appropriate services.
- Many children are denied related services.
- Handicapped children are unnecessarily segregated into special schools. (*Guidepost,* 1980)

The findings also revealed that many seriously handicapped children are denied education beyond the 180–day school year, many have to live away from their homes to get an education in another area; many are deprived of all advocacy in the decisions being made about their programs and placement; and parents are inadequately informed of their rights to participate in evaluation and placement decisions.

Although many educators remain inexorably opposed to or in fear of instructing or counseling handicapped students, the doors are slowly opening. Handicapped students must have the opportunity to experience a more normal program along with able-bodied students so they can live and work with them as adults. As handicapped students integrate into regular classes a greater degree of understanding and acceptance generally results, if the reception is positive and accepting.

The implementation of the career-education concept in many schools has aided the mainstreaming process. Teachers can assist students in developing basic work habits, values, attitudes, vocabulary, motivation, and career awareness while relating their subject matter to its career implications. Implementing career education instruction and experiences aids the academic process and helps the students develop the prevocational skills that will lead to more successful vocational preparation during the high school years.

Key factors to success in mainstreaming are appropriate placement, preparation of the teacher, time to modify instruction, and the availability of a special educator for consultation and emotional support.

School counselors should be substantially involved in the mainstreaming process. Legally and ethically they, like other educators, are required by law to provide a high quality of service to all handicapped students. But very few counselors are actually providing the services such students really need for

career development. Reasons often stated for not being involved with these students are:

1. A caseload of 300–400 students preventing them from providing adequate career guidance.
2. The difficulty special educators have in relinquishing their hold on handicapped students, believing their education and guidance will deteriorate if they are assigned to other school personnel.
3. Lack of support from supervisors, principals, and other administrative decision makers to serve these students.
4. Lack of access because of physical isolation of the counselor from where the handicapped students are.
5. Lack of knowledge of instructional and counseling materials for these students.
6. Counselors' lack of knowledge about their own role and function.

School administrators must provide the opportunity for counselor involvement if vocational development is to occur most beneficially for handicapped students.

Special Education

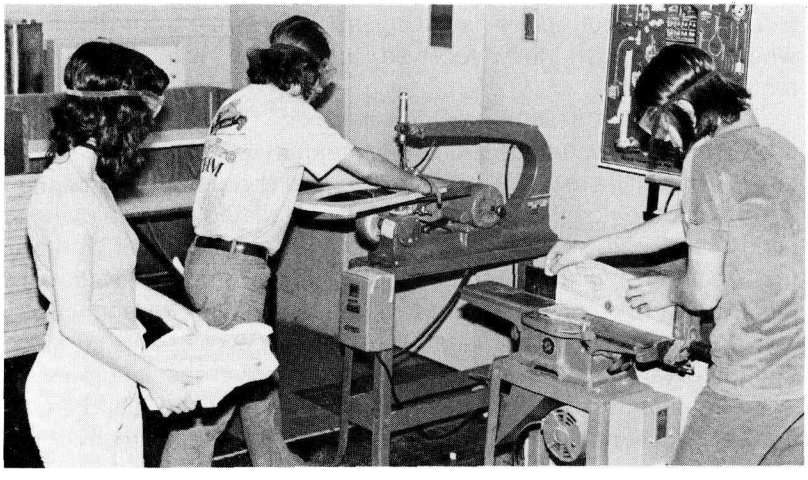
During the past decade, vocational services in the schools have increased dramatically as many special educators have responded to the need for more occupational and career-oriented instructional programs. While most of the activity has occurred at the high school level, more vocational programs are also being instituted at the junior high level. These programs, generally designed as career education, prevocational education, or vocational education, consist primarily of in-school work experiences, career awareness through exploration in business and industry, vocational assessment activities, vocational-instruction units, and classroom work projects.

Vocational efforts at the high school level are generally orchestrated by special educators with such job titles as: vocational adjustment coordinator, work-study coordinator, work-experience instructor, and the like. The duties of these individuals vary from state to state but generally consist of:

- vocational guidance and assessment
- teaching vocational vocabulary and job-seeking skills
- seeking and securing work-experience stations in the community
- placing and supervising students in community work experiences in business/industry and other vocational training programs
- keeping records and writing student reports
- working closely with parents, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, and other agencies that assist the student in career development and preparation for community living and working

There is a trend for school systems to develop their own vocational laboratories or work centers. The student's vocational potential and needs can be evaluated several times during the secondary years so that prevocational-skills training, work-habits improvement, counseling, and guidance can be provided and changed while the student is still in school. Students spend part of the week in the lab or center and receive classroom instruction concentrating on vocationally oriented subjects before eventual placement

in various training settings in the community. Some students may receive vocational evaluation, guidance, work-adjustment training, and perhaps independent-living-skills training at a rehabilitation workshop if these services are unavailable at the school. Fortunately, most public school programs now operate some type of vocational-preparation program for their handicapped students. With the entrance of vocational educators into the arena of handicapped-student education, however, many special educators have abrogated their responsibility too quickly, expecting vocational teachers to have all of the skills to be effective with the students when in reality many of them do not!



Students working in a school-based vocational center (courtesy of San Diego City Schools)

Special educators who promulgated the career education movement of the seventies were hopeful that special-education-training institutions would more fully adopt the career approach, so that later vocational-training efforts would be more successful with handicapped students. While this has occurred to a certain extent, much remains to be done if special educators are to institute the kind of vocational preparation that is needed by these students.

During the eighties we should see special educators more involved with vocational educators and vocational rehabilitation counselors in conducting comprehensive school/work programs. The three disciplines struggled through the seventies attempting to redefine their roles and functions and each other's responsibilities. Their relationship is becoming clear and cooperative agreements are being written to clarify each agency's contribution to the vocational preparation of handicapped youth. In the case of special education, greater attention to career education during the K–9 period is particularly important, since the major effort of vocational education and vocational rehabilitation is generally directed at high school students and adults. If special education can implement the career-education concept (described further in Chapter 12), during the formative years, the chances of these students gaining vocational confidence and skills during the high school years and thereafter will be more adequately assured.

The proportion of special education teacher-training programs that emphasize vocational preparation is too small.

Vocational Education

Vocational education is a local, state, and federal endeavor focusing on the occupational preparation of individuals at less than a baccalaureate level. Its

primary concern is with preparation for employment. It maintains a close relationship to actual jobs in order to understand the process of developing skills that are related to obtaining and maintaining employment. Thus, it concerns itself with work, the work process, and work skills (Brolin & Brolin, 1979).

Twice as much money became available in 1976 for developing and conducting vocational-education programs for individuals with handicaps.

Vocational education for handicapped persons was mandated with the passage of the Vocational Education Act in 1963. The Amendments of 1968 designated that 10% of the federal funds allocated under Part B of the Act be specified for the handicapped. However, it wasn't until the passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94–482) that funds became substantial. The 1976 Amendments required each state to match the 10% of federal funds received for handicapped students (20% for disadvantaged), whereas previously they received the money without any matching requirement.

Vocational-education programs are lodged in high school settings and postsecondary institutions such as community colleges. In the case of the latter, a rapid increase in programs for handicapped persons has begun throughout the country as funds become available for employing special-needs coordinators, specialists for the deaf, job-placement workers, vocational equipment and materials, and the like. Each state educational agency has a person or unit charged with the responsibility of administering the vocational-education state/federal funds—to develop and conduct vocational programs, to train personnel, and to conduct special projects.

Few handicapped students are actually in vocational education programs!

According to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94–142), vocational educators should be involved either directly or indirectly in the development of the vocational portion of the IEPs for students enrolled in vocational-education programs. Vocational education must be specifically planned so that students with handicaps may participate with nonhandicapped students to the maximum extent possible. It should be noted that state/federal set-aside funds can only be used for handicapped students who: (a) require special education and related services, and (b) cannot succeed in the regular vocational program without special educational assistance or require a modified vocational-education program.

Despite the legislative mandates, funding, and special programs established in the seventies, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (1979) revealed these disturbing facts:

- Approximately 2% of all vocational-education students are handicapped. It should be about 10 or 11%.
- Of our four-year college population, 2% is disabled. It should be about 10 or 11%.
- Of our community-college population, 3% is disabled. It should be about 10 or 11%.
- Of CETA clients, 3% or less are handicapped. It should be about 10 or 11%.
- Preliminary studies have demonstrated that the drop-out rate in high school is about five to six times higher for disabled students.

Chapter 13 discusses vocational education in detail.

Thus, although vocational education is opening up to disabled individuals, much remains to be done in the eighties to assure greater participation of these individuals in the type of education to which they are entitled by

law. No doubt much will be done so that their chances of vocational success are greatly enhanced.

REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Two types of rehabilitation agencies that are particularly significant in the vocational preparation of handicapped adolescents and adults are the state vocational rehabilitation agency and vocational rehabilitation facilities or sheltered workshops.

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

All states have vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to assist handicapped persons to become employable. This state/federal program has been in existence since 1920 and in 1980 was placed at the federal level in the new U.S. Department of Education. Until recently the VR program was directed to the training and rehabilitation of handicapped individuals for employment. Although this is still the major emphasis, the agency is now able to provide independent-living services to individuals whose disabilities are so severe that they do not presently have the potential for employment but who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation and other services.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was a landmark piece of legislation (sometimes called "The Bill of Rights for the Handicapped") in that it required state VR agencies to do the following:

1. Place major emphasis on services to individuals with the most severe handicaps.
2. Assure client involvement and approval in the design and delivery of VR services.
3. Focus research, demonstration, and training activities on rehabilitating those with the most severe handicaps.
4. Provide new incentives for the innovation of programs for rehabilitating the handicapped and expand present program and service capacities.
5. Emphasize project programs for persons with special disabilities whose multiple problems require a full range of services that can best be organized around their respective disabilities.
6. Provide administrative mechanisms to assure more effective application of agency resources to problems of the disabled and their rehabilitation.
7. Study services for individuals for whom a vocational rehabilitation goal is not feasible or indicated but who can improve their ability to live independently in family and community through rehabilitation services.

Rehabilitation and special education are both in the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1978 (Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act of 1978, P.L. 95–602) provided, for the first time, independent-living services for individuals for whom no vocational goal was presently deemed possible through VR services. Such

services could include: intake counseling to assess the needs of severely disabled persons, advocacy to ensure that clients receive services to which they are entitled, help in locating accessible housing and transportation, and other services that help clients become independent (Humphreys, 1979).

Administration and Services

The vocational rehabilitation program is financed jointly by state and federal governments. There is no set age limitation, but those normally considered are typically of the employable age; i.e., 16 through 65. The agency is generally housed in a state department of education or social services. Besides a state office, the agency has district or regional offices, some local offices in larger cities, and some special units in institutional settings. The agency accepts self-referrals and referrals from any individual, organization, or government agency. Clients are served by rehabilitation counselors, a significant proportion of whom have received graduate training in that specialty.

The federal-state vocational-rehabilitation program aids hundreds of thousands of handicapped persons return to or enter the mainstream of work each year. Administered at the federal level by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) under the Department of Education, rehabilitation agencies work with people disabled by: mental retardation, mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, amputations and other orthopedic impairments, epilepsy, cancer, stroke, tuberculosis, congenital deformities, and neurological disabilities, and more recently (1981) certain persons with learning disabilities. Eligibility is based on a physical or mental disability that is a substantial handicap to employment and upon a reasonable expectation that vocational-rehabilitation services may enable the individual to enter a gainful occupation (competitive, sheltered, or homebound). The program pays all costs of services to those disabled persons who are unable to pay; provides certain services without charge to all persons, regardless of their financial situations; and for other services, requires the disabled person to bear part or all of the cost if possible (Fenton, 1972).

Basic services under this program include (Humphreys, 1979):

- comprehensive evaluation
- medical, surgical, and hospital care, along with related therapy to remove or reduce disability
- prosthetic and orthotic devices
- counseling, guidance, referral, placement, and training
- use of comprehensive or specialized rehabilitation facilities
- maintenance and transportation during rehabilitation
- tools, equipment, and licenses for work on a job or in establishing a small business
- initial stock, supplies, and management assistance for small businesses, including establishment of vending facilities by the state agency
- readers for blind persons and interpreters for deaf people
- recruitment and training to provide new careers for disabled people in the field of rehabilitation and other public service areas
- construction or establishment of rehabilitation facilities
- provision of facilities and services that promise to contribute to a group of handicapped persons but do not relate directly to the rehabilitation plan of any one person

- services to families of handicapped persons when the services will contribute to the rehabilitation of the handicapped client
- follow-up to help disabled persons hold a job
- other goods and services necessary to render handicapped persons employable (p. 235)

As with the case of special education and vocational education, vocational rehabilitation is not without its critics. Laski (1979) reports a widespread opinion that developmentally disabled people do not have a fair opportunity to obtain vocational rehabilitation services. He cites a 1978 U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare audit of five states that revealed a number of fundamental legal requirements were not being met:

In Fiscal Year 1979, the total of rehabilitated people ("total number of cases closed as successfully rehabilitated") under the state-federal VR programs was 288,324, of which 143,375 (49.7%) had severe handicaps. One million people are served under the program each year.

1. One-half of the clients did not have an individualized, written rehabilitation plan (IWRP).
2. Over half were not aware of their right to appeal ineligibility determination.
3. About three-fourths were placed in an occupation that was contrary to their agreed-upon job goal.
4. Only 8% were referred to another agency after being declared ineligible for VR services.

Laski also reports that a study commissioned by Congress found VR agencies to be making conservative choices regarding eligibility and that severity of handicap was the most prevalent reason for the denial of services. He also reports that the United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCPA) found VR agencies provided negligible services to cerebral-palsied persons despite their completion of training programs by UCPA or other agencies and their placement into competitive employment.

Persons dissatisfied with the services they receive or don't receive from VR agencies have a right to appeal under federal law. The first recourse is to file a request for an administrative review and redetermination of the agency's action by administrators of that agency. If the client is dissatisfied with that review, a hearing before the VR state administrator or his designee can be granted. If dissatisfied with the administrator's decision, the next recourses are an appeal to the commissioner of the rehabilitation agency, then the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (now Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education). Finally, the person may sue in a U.S. District Court or state court (Laski, 1979).

Wright (1980) lists the documentation required for an IWRP:

1. Financial sources for the services to be provided
2. Counselor and client responsibilities in the rehabilitation process
3. The long-term vocational goal and intermediate objectives toward that goal
4. Services to be provided
5. Criteria and procedures for evaluating progress
6. Annual review for as long as the case is open
7. Closure information, such as reason for closure, employment status, and type of job
8. Postemployment services, if these are planned at the time of closure (p. 518)