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MEETING MANPOWER NEEDS THROUGH SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION TO DEAFNESS REHABILITATION FOR TRAINED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS

By **WILLIAM E. WOODRICK**, Director, Orientation to Deafness Training Program, University of Tennessee

The University of Tennessee Orientation to Deafness Program is located within the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation. Related programs within the Department include: Teacher Education in the area of Deafness, Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program, Southern Regional Media Center for the Deaf, and Speech and Hearing Therapy. These programs enhance the training experience by offering a variety of exposure. Close cooperation with the Tennessee School for the Deaf and the local vocational rehabilitation office provide practicum facilities for the University of Tennessee Program. The attached chart describes more graphically the ancillary exposure available within the U.T. Programs.

The Orientation to Deafness Program was begun at The University of Tennessee in the Fall of 1963 with 30 trainees per year, 10 Fall, 10 Winter, and 10 Spring. This was later changed to 15 trainees per quarter for two quarters, Fall and Spring, per year. Stipend students, plus a number of non-stipend students, have attended the Program. As of January, 1972, 192 students have completed the Program representing 36 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and two foreign countries. Because of a reduction in training funds, only 25 trainees on stipend are expected to complete the 1971-72 Program.

The primary objective of the Program is to orient professionally skilled persons to: 1) the unique disabilities of persons with a hearing loss; 2) assist the trainees in learning to apply their skills in rehabilitative service to deaf persons. The Program goals are to: 1) overcome anxiety and prejudices which may exist on the part of professionals in relating to deaf persons; 2) present objective and factual information concerning handicapping aspects of the disability; 3) create an interest and desire on the part of trainees to be of service; 4) equip the trainees with the basic counseling and communication skills necessary to serve deaf persons effectively.

The 12 week Program may be varied according to the background of the trainee. For those students who are accepted into the Graduate School,

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the credit may be earned at the graduate level. Other trainees participate at the baccalaureate level or as an adult special.

Applicants are screened and traineeships are awarded to professional persons recently assigned or who anticipate rehabilitation-related work with deaf persons. Preference for traineeships is as follows:

1. Personnel employed or about to be employed by state rehabilitation agencies.
2. Personnel employed in rehabilitation supportive services such as social work, psychological services, counselor aides, tutors, workshop personnel, or religious workers.

The curriculum involves five basic academic courses plus extensive use of practicum experiences. The Program remains flexible to meet the needs of the individual student. The student who has a substantial background in any one of the five basic courses may elect from the general catalog any of a variety of courses related to his interest in Rehabilitation Counseling, Special Education, or Educational Psychology.

The five basic courses are:

Special Education 4000 – A practicum course in which each trainee is assigned deaf vocational rehabilitation clients with whom he relates on an individual basis. The local vocational rehabilitation counselors work closely with the trainees. Simulated case staffing meetings are conducted each week in which the trainee discusses his cases with the instructor and other trainees. A case study on 2 or 3 clients is required at the end of the quarter. In essence, this course utilizes the trainee's prior experiences and the information provided in the other Program academic courses.

Special Education 4230 – The course meets 10 hours per week and is geared toward acquisition of communication abilities. A number of teaching techniques are used including video tape and simulated counseling sessions. Deaf students from the Tennessee School for the Deaf and/or deaf staff members participate. In addition to classroom instruction, teaching aids include single concept cartridge films and a series of video taped sign lessons for individual practice.

Special Education 4240 – The Nature of Hearing Impairments covers the etiology of deafness, medical intervention and treatment, anatomy of the ear, testing hearing, fitting of aids, purchase of aids, and follow-up services. Although this is an introductory course, the trainee can be expected to gain insight and an appreciation of the Audiologist's role in the rehabilitation process for the hearing impaired.

Special Education 4250 – The Introduction to Education of the Deaf discusses the philosophies of education of the deaf offering insight into the nature of education of deaf youngsters. In connection with this course, trainees spend approximately 30 hours per quarter in classroom observation

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at the Tennessee School for the Deaf from primary level through vocational training and advanced departments.

Special Education 5490 – Vocational Guidance with the Deaf deals primarily with the rehabilitation process from case findings through placement and follow-up with deaf clients. In depth discussion of psychological and sociological aspects of deafness are included. Extensive reading on rehabilitation of deaf persons is required.

In addition to the academic courses with integrated practical experiences, field trips are planned each quarter. The objectives of the field trips are to: expose trainees to a variety of rehabilitation philosophies; get acquainted with ongoing programs; and interact with clients receiving rehabilitation services. Each trip is planned to have a maximum of interaction with faculty, staff, and deaf clients and a minimum of touring of physical facilities. For example, during the Spring of 1972 the trainees are attending the Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf Conference in Washington, D.C. Also scheduled will be a visit to Gallaudet College and the St. Elizabeths Hospital Mental Health Program for the Deaf. During Fall, 1972, trainees will participate in the planned Southeastern Regional Conference on Rehabilitation of the Deaf to be held in Tennessee.

Other visits scheduled each quarter are trips to the Alabama Facilities for the Deaf in Talladega and the Georgia Evaluation Center in Cave Spring. A maximum of two field trips of no more than 5 days is planned each quarter. Trainee evaluations of field trips consistently rate the trips as one of the strong points in the program.

A particularly valuable experience held for the first time during Fall, 1971, was the "Rap Sessions with Consumers of Rehabilitation Services." This was a two hour session held at Gallaudet College and consisted of deaf vocational rehabilitation clients representing the various states. The deaf consumers spoke honestly and openly about their attitudes toward services provided by the State agencies and counseling relationships. Due to positive "feedback" from the trainees, a similar experience is planned for the future.

After each training session, the trainees are asked to evaluate the Program and to make recommendations for constructive changes. These recommendations influence largely the subsequent programs.

The Tennessee School for the Deaf, with more than 400 students, provides an excellent opportunity for observation of a comprehensive educational program for deaf students. Included at the School are the following programs: Child Study Clinic; Pre-School Education; Primary, Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Educational Programs; Multiple Handicapped Deaf Unit; Pre-Vocational Training Program; Work-Study Program, a joint vocational rehabilitation supported program; Vocational Improvement Program, joint program utilizing area vocational schools; and Media Department. In addition, the School provides a professional library with extensive information on deafness and the use of classroom space where trainee classes are held on TSD campus three days per week.

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The State vocational rehabilitation agency cooperates with the Tennessee School for the Deaf in operating a work-study program on the campus including four teacher-evaluators and two full-time vocational rehabilitation counselors with case loads both within the School and the northeast Tennessee area. These counselors cooperate in providing trainees access to their files and discuss cases with trainees.

The U.T. Speech and Hearing Center provides practicum opportunities for trainees to observe testing and speech and hearing therapy. An experimental program utilizing the Verbo-Tonal technique which is concerned with residual hearing is also provided as additional exposure to newer techniques being explored in the aural rehabilitation of deaf persons.

The Institute of Human Resources has a vocational evaluation and work adjustment program in which some deaf clients are being evaluated. This recently established program will expand the opportunity for practicum within the Knoxville area.

During January and February, 1971, a simple follow-up study was made of former trainees to determine: present position; percentage of time spent in the area of deafness; evaluation of the benefit from the Program.

Since current addresses were not available on all former trainees, 17 questionnaires were returned by the Post Office unclaimed. One hundred and fifteen (115) responses were received leaving thirty-five (35) trainees who did not reply. Excluding the inquires returned by the Post Office as unclaimed (17) it should be noted that a 77% return on the follow-up questionnaire was achieved. The following tables summarize the results.

TABLE I

Number of Responses	% of Time Spent Working With Deaf People	% of Total Responses
59	100%	51%
9	75% or more	8%
7	50% or more	6%
10	25% or more	9%
12	10% or less	10%
10	Administration capacity	9%
	5% or less of time in the specific area of deafness	
8	No longer in the field of deafness	7%
115	Total Respondents	

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SUB TABLE 1

Former trainees who responded that 100% of their time was spent in the area of deafness:

Number of Responses	Current Position	% of Total Responses
35	Employed as counselors for a State DVR	59%
16	Employed by schools or training facilities and specialized programs	27%
8	Religious Workers	14%
59	Respondents	

Fifty-nine percent of respondents work as vocational rehabilitation counselors whose primary role is counseling with deaf clients. Of those in training facilities, 11 are teachers in specialized training programs for deaf persons, four are in school for the deaf administrative programs, and one is a social worker in a school setting.

SUB TABLE 2

Former trainees who spend less than 100% of their time in the area of deafness:

Number of Responses	Current Position	% of Total Responses
25	Employed by a State DVR	64%
7	Training facilities and specialized programs	21%
6	Religious Workers	15%
38	Respondents	

Among the 64% who are employed by vocational rehabilitation agencies are counselors who serve a deaf case load but also have other clients. These often are counselors who serve deaf case loads plus speech problems, blind, mentally retarded, or general cases. Among the 21% in training facilities and specialized programs are community center staff and persons employed by reporting rendering part-time service to deaf persons.

It is noted that eight full time and six part time religious workers were among those who have attended the Program. Also a part of those in specialized programs are related to religious work. The religious worker in

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the deaf community has a unique role in the rehabilitation program as described in a series of religious worker workshops sponsored during the past ten years by the Rehabilitation Service Administration. The religious worker in the deaf community often functions as a social worker or referral source. Because of communication obstacles, deaf persons often bring problems to the only person in the community who can offer a "sounding board." The religious worker may serve as a referral resource for vocational rehabilitation. Also in many areas the religious worker will be available for interpreting and/or tutoring for the vocational rehabilitation agency.

In summary, 93% (107) of the respondents are still associated with rehabilitation services for deaf people. Only 8 of the 115 respondents are no longer actively engaged in working with deaf people. Of the 107 who are still associated, 93 are actively engaged in rehabilitative work with deaf people through State vocational rehabilitation agencies or vocational rehabilitation related facilities and programs. The remaining 14 are religious workers who have responsibility for providing church related service for deaf people.

TABLE II

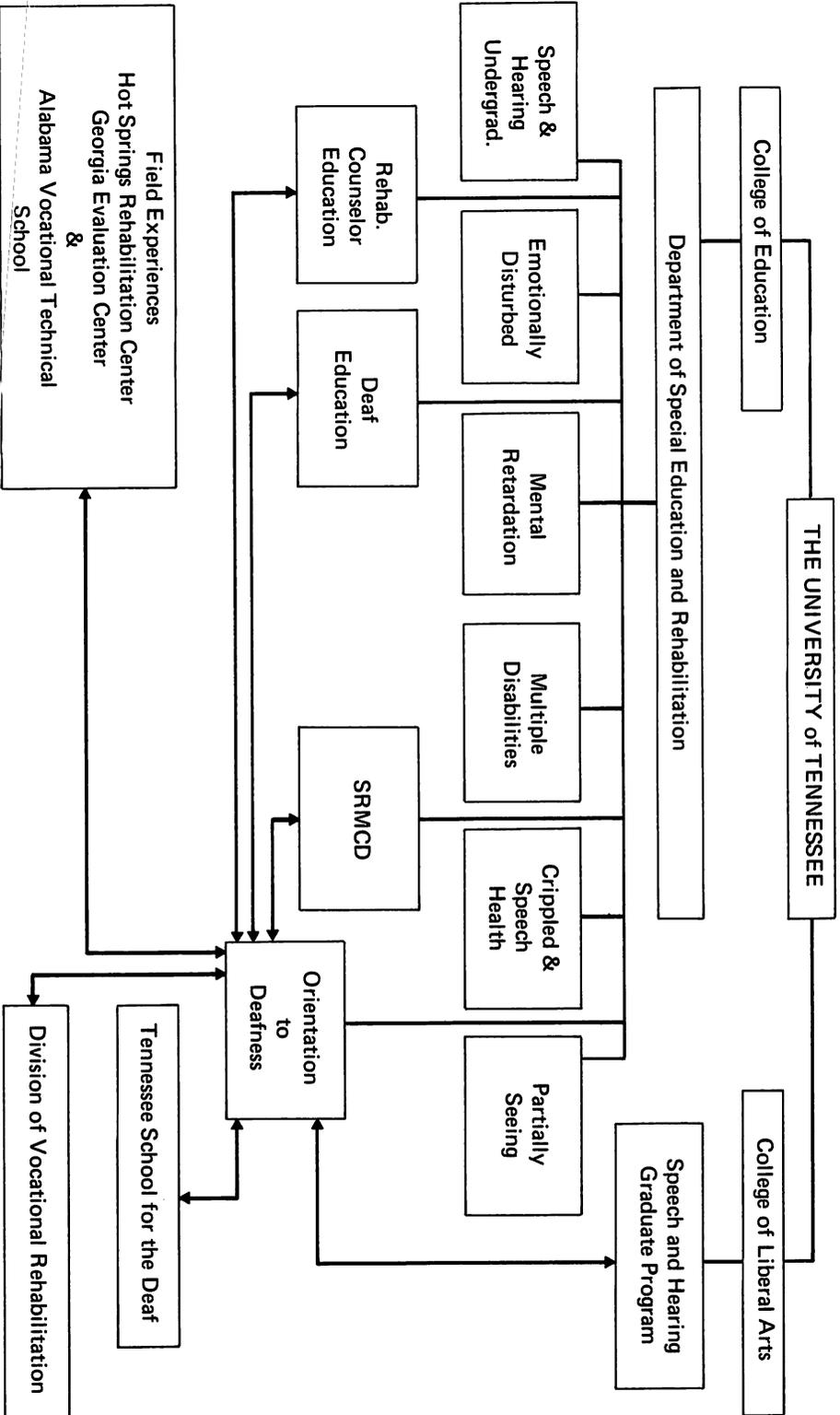
Evaluation of the Training Program.

Number of Responses	Response Made	% of Total Responses
58	Extremely beneficial	50%
48	Highly beneficial	42%
9	Beneficial	8%
0	Of little benefit	
0	Of no benefit	
115	Number of Respondents	

Respondents were asked to rate the benefit of the training program. All respondents rated the Program as beneficial as indicated in Table II.

It should be noted that 35 questionnaires were not returned. Respondents were asked to sign the questionnaires. It may be that a substantial number of the 35 might have responded negatively to the request for evaluation of benefit of the Program thus, while all of the received responses indicated positive benefit, it must also be assumed that some of the former trainees may have found the Program to be of little or no benefit. Perhaps, if names had not been requested some negative feedback would have resulted.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE – ORIENTATION TO DEAFNESS PROGRAM



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Although the results were highly favorable so far as the evaluation of the Program is concerned as well as in terms of the number of professionals trained, returned, and retained in the field, there is no data concerning the performance levels of former trainees. Thus while 93% of the respondents have indicated that they are still engaged in the area, it would appear desirable that some evaluative procedures be designed and applied to determine the performance effectiveness of these same people.

It appears that The University of Tennessee Orientation to Deafness Program has been successful in equipping professional persons with the skills necessary to serve in the field of rehabilitation of deaf persons. The Program continues to strive for practical experience as well as the academic. A number of trainees have utilized the Program as a part of their master's degree requirement in rehabilitation counseling at The University of Tennessee.