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NEEDS IN THE AREA OF SHORT-TERM TRAINING FOR WORK WITH THE ADULT DEAF

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The Oregon College of Education training program for counselors working with the deaf is designed to meet the particular needs of vocational counselors and other professional personnel who work with profoundly deaf adults. The special problems of deafness are examined, communication skills developed, and specific techniques for counseling presented. Each training program is of one month duration and allows the trainee to earn nine quarter hours of graduate credit. During the month, opportunities for close association with deaf persons are provided. The trainees may elect to live with deaf families in homes of convenient proximity to the college.

The urgent need for professional personnel who have been adequately trained to work with deaf clients is recognized nationally. Numerous conferences have been held in many areas of the country in which this need has been stressed.

The pervasive nation-wide condition of under-employment and unemployment of deaf persons is prima-facie evidence of inadequacy of the availability of effective vocational counseling services for the deaf.

This condition has become more serious with the advent of automation and technological developments in industry, which have resulted in the elimination of many of the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs traditionally performed by deaf persons.

A review of the statistical data collected in the course of a research project in Oregon (Oregon Vocational Research Project for the Deaf, RD-2018-S, SRS) discloses that 62% of the adult deaf subjects (ages 24 to 54) who participated in the study expressed dissatisfaction with the training they have had, and with their present occupational level, and have indicated a desire for training to prepare them to perform in higher level jobs. Of these persons, only approximately four percent have appealed to the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or to the State Department of Employment for assistance, and of those who have appealed to these

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agencies, only a small percentage have expressed satisfaction with the services provided.

The number of counselors who have received training in the special techniques requisite for effective counseling with the deaf, and who are oriented to the problems consequent to the condition of deafness, is totally inadequate to meet the counseling needs of the deaf population. Dr. Boyce Williams (*Hearing and Deafness*; Davis and Silverman; Holt, Rinehart, and Winston; page 524) states that: "The effectiveness of vocational guidance for the deaf rests considerably on the availability of special knowledges and skills in certain areas of work, especially the evaluative and counseling activities."

Ada Morgan Hill (*Hearing and Deafness*; Davis and Silverman; page 506) writes that "The counselor must have a keen understanding of the psychological effects of deafness if he is to deal successfully with the hearing handicapped."

Dr. Stephen P. Quigley, Professor, Institute for Research on Exceptional Children, University of Illinois, states that "The persistent problem of providing occupational placement commensurate with ability indicates the unique skills which a counselor with the deaf must have." (*Report of a Workshop on Rehabilitation Casework Standards for the Deaf*; University of Illinois Press; 1966; page 4). Dr. Quigley continues, "The Vocational Rehabilitation Administration has long recognized this problem and has acted to alleviate it. Programs have been established which provide for the preparation of specialized counselors of the deaf." A comparatively small percentage of deaf persons who are in need of vocational counseling assistance appeal to state agencies for such service. Mr. R. G. Sanderson, counselor in charge of services for the deaf in the State of Utah, and former President of the National Association for the Deaf, attributes this to the fact that few DVR or State Employment Service agencies are staffed to provide appropriate services for the deaf. Mr. Sanderson states that "Referrals (to DVR) may take care of themselves quite readily if it should become known to the deaf community that there is, in DVR, a counselor who is truly an expert at manual communication."

Mr. Douglas J. N. Burke, Supervisor (former), Unit for the Hard of Hearing, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington, D.C., states that "A counselor who does not have reasonable knowledge about deafness and problems of the deaf, and does not have a program of services oriented to meet the needs of the deaf will be ineffective, even if he has the desire to be of substantial service." (*A Report of a Workshop on Rehabilitation Casework Standards for the Deaf*; University of Illinois Press; 1966, page 24).

Dr. Richard Johnson, Administrator (former), Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Lapeer State Home and Training School, Lapeer, Michigan, further expresses the need for persons trained as specialists for the deaf in the following statement; "The deaf specialist in most State DVR

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agencies is an exception, rather than the rule. In a large number of State and local agencies, the counselor who handles deaf clients does so as merely one more case in his overall general caseload.”

There is much in the literature on the deaf to confirm that deaf persons have not received the quality of service which would instill confidence and acceptance of DVR and public employment service agencies.

T. J. Holdt, Administrator, Oregon Vocational Research Project for the Deaf (now completed), points out that “It should be recognized that remedial and corrective programs for the deaf can be *Planned* and *developed* but they cannot be *implemented* without the connecting link between the deaf client and the solution to his problems – and that link is the *adequately trained counselor*. Therefore, it is imperative that a sufficient number of trained counselors be made available to serve the needs of the deaf population.”

The need for counselors who are trained to work with the deaf and seriously hearing impaired has become critical during the past few years, and will become more critical in the future, for the following reasons:

- (1) Increase in the caseload for counseling and rehabilitation services for the deaf, because of the increase in the incidence of deafness.
- (2) Disappearance, or “phasing out”, of many kinds of work traditionally performed by deaf persons.
- (3) Increased emphasis on the use of assessment instruments being developed and standardized for use with deaf clients in the counseling situation.
- (4) Planning, development, and implementation of programs for the education and training of adult deaf, in national institutions, such as the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and Gallaudet College, and integration of the deaf into hearing classes in State colleges, and establishment of programs for the deaf in community colleges, as Seattle, St. Paul, and Delgado.
- (5) National emphasis on rehabilitation for *all* handicapped persons, as evidenced by the establishment of “Governor’s Committees on Rehabilitation” in 46 states.
- (6) An increased awareness on the part of the deaf population of the need for counseling assistance that they may achieve their rightful place in the economic and social order.

The Rehabilitation Service Administration has suggested that 500 counselors for the deaf will be needed for new positions and replacements each year by 1975.¹ Tully², in a study of State agency needs in the

¹*Report on Conference of Directors of Counseling the Deaf Programs, Arkansas Rehabilitation Center, Hot Springs, Arkansas, March 1, 1971.*

²*Tully, Norm; Role and Function of Rehabilitation Counselors with the Deaf. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, 1970.*

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rehabilitation of the deaf, reported that 276 *new* positions for rehabilitation counselors for the deaf will be opening up by 1975.

This program is one of several in the area of communication disorders offered by the Oregon College of Education. The other programs are for teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech correctionists, teachers of children with learning disabilities, teachers of children with multiple handicaps, and teachers of the mentally retarded. Regular college staff members participate in the "Program in Counseling the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult" by conducting classes, assisting in seminars, and in supervising some of the practicum experiences and field trips of the trainees. The strength of the program has been enhanced by the varying backgrounds and competencies of the cooperating staff members.

Since the inception of the program, over 240 persons have attended. These trainees were professional workers from fields of vocational rehabilitation counseling, public employment service counseling, audiology, guidance counseling, psychology, religion, social work, and education.

The planning and development of the program has had the continued cooperation and support of the Oregon Cooperative Council for the Deaf, the Oregon Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Seattle Speech and Hearing Center, Seattle Community College, Oregon State School for the Deaf, the Oregon Association for the Deaf, and the staff of the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation at the Oregon College of Education.

I. Objectives of the training program

A. To train rehabilitation counselors and other professionals engaged in activities providing counseling services to the deaf in the special techniques requisite to the successful performance of such services.

B. To orient such a person to the physical, psychological, psycho-social, emotional, and educational effects and implications of severe hearing impairment.

C. To create an awareness on the part of the trainee of the occupational and vocational problems of the deaf, the importance of exploring such problems, and the need for constructive planning and programming for the alleviation of such problems.

D. To familiarize the trainee with the literature relevant to counseling the deaf and to current research in the area of deafness.

E. To generate a high level of interest in the trainee in working with deaf clients.

F. To increase the quality and effectiveness of the trainee's counseling service when he returns to the field.

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II. Action to meet objectives

A. The courses are taught and the practicum experiences are supervised by college faculty who are specialists in their area and highly competent in the presentation of course content.

B. Literature relevant to course content is reviewed and discussed.

C. Case files of agencies serving the deaf are reviewed and studied by the trainees.

D. Field trips are provided for trainees to observe deaf persons at work and to talk with them and their supervisors and employers.

E. Video tapes of work situations, test administrations, and interviews with deaf adults are produced and stored for viewing by class or individual trainees.

F. Opportunity to observe and participate in actual staffings of deaf adults is provided in a regional evaluation center.

G. Field trips are scheduled in two residential schools for the deaf at which times the trainees observe classes and discuss counseling problems with the school counselors.

H. Modern instructional technology, in addition to video tapes, is utilized by college faculty in work with the trainees: overhead projector and transparencies, 8 mm and 16 mm films, slides, records, tape recordings, and microfiche.

I. Practicum experience in manual communication is scheduled with deaf adults each week.

J. Deaf adults, selected on a basis of competency and background, deliver lectures designed to increase the trainee's understanding of the deaf person's feelings and reactions to his hearing loss and the problems resulting from his loss.

Since this short-term training program began in 1963, 241 persons have participated. Today, the program is one month in duration and is offered four times a year – winter term, spring term, and twice in the summer term.

The 241 past participants have come from 38 states and 2 foreign countries. States with nine or more trainees include: Oregon, California, Florida, Maryland, Texas, and Washington.

Most trainees have been DVR Counselors – 138; twenty-five have been religious; 17 school counselors; 10 teachers; others represent a variety of professional vocations.

This type of short-term training annually supports about 25 persons. It is the hope and goal of the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation at Oregon College of Education to fill partially the need for workers with the adult deaf through short-term training.