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Book review

Supported Employment: Strategies for Integration of Workers with Disabilities

Paul Wehman, Paul Sale and Wendy S. Parent,
Andover Medical Publishers, Butterworth Heinemann, 80 Montvale Avenue, Stoneham, MA 02180, 1992, 329 pp.

Beginning in the 1980s as an innovative vocational 'place train' approach for persons with severe disabilities, supported employment has grown very rapidly. This approach to job placement was first funded in 1987 as a separate supplemental program of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to state agencies and represents a major paradigm shift in rehabilitation from the 'train place' approach to job placement exemplified by prevocational day activity centers, clubhouses and sheltered workshops for individuals with disabilities. Supported employment was initially conceptualized for persons with mental retardation and is defined by the authors as 'paid employment for persons with developmental disabilities for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage is unlikely and who, because of their disabilities, need ongoing support to perform their work' p. 4.

Three major concepts: *Supported Employment Foundations*, *Supported Employment Implementation Strategies*, and *Special Issues in Supported Employment*, comprise the organizational structure of the book.

The initial *Foundations* section contains four chapters which describe a historical and current perspective of how supported employment has grown and describes and analyses how it has evolved into the individual placement approaches

and group models. It ends with a look at consumers and their notions of real choice and substantive empowerment as the driving forces behind supported employment.

The *Implementation Strategies* section, is comprised of five chapters, it brings together approaches from special education and rehabilitation and applies them to the supported employment models. It describes techniques on how to ensure the critically important consumer and family choice component in supported employment, how to assess consumers, how to identify jobs and how to make the most important match between the consumer and job. The last chapter addresses various practical issues such as non-task related behavioral obstacles and their potential resolutions.

Special Issues of critical concern shared by many in the supported employment field are addressed in the three final chapters. These issues center around the need to ensure quality supported employment programming. Discussion topics include program evaluation and quality, assurance, vocational integration of the company, specific work area, other employees and company benefits, and finally, staffing and recruitment.

The three primary authors drew expertise from several of their colleagues and from their experience with hundred of consumers with whom they collectively worked. As a non-edited text, it is designed to serve as a resource for the much needed growing number of supported employment specialists and others who seek to create solutions to employment problems experienced by persons with severe disabilities.

The authors include an exhaustive list of references, and Jane M. Everson edited a very helpful *Glossary of Supported Employment Terms and Concepts*. Despite the authors' contention of integrating vocational educational and rehabilitation models, the authors are obviously more familiar with the vocational education approach to job placement. This text would be useful for sup-

ported employment providers who work primarily with the developmentally disabled, but the sections and forms on job placement, on job retention strategies and on vocational integration would serve as a particularly good resource for providers who work with clients with a wide range of abilities and disabilities in most any supported employment setting.