

**KNOWLEDGE AS A FOUNDATION FOR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT:
USING SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORY IN SUPPORT OF PROGRAM THEORY-GUIDED
METRICS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS SERVING THE DIFFICULT-TO-
EMPLOY**

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Tamra Leishman Boyce

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Dr. Stuart Yeh, Advisor

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to use social science theories to develop measures of employability effectiveness and establish the validity of those measures. Three employment related theories were explored in this thesis: *human capital theory*, *discrimination theory*, and *social learning theory*, with performance measures developed within these theoretical contexts. To establish potential measures of program quality, an extensive literature review was conducted regarding the construct and definition of employability, barriers to employability, and disadvantaged groups most affected by these barriers. Reviews of three social science theories that explain employability were also conducted. These social science theories were incorporated into a theoretical framework for understanding employability phenomena. This framework offered a foundation for understanding program elements that are related to quality, designing high-quality employment programs, and investigating the validity of indicators of quality.

The research was conducted in two stages. The first, stage used the literature review of social science theories and program theory techniques to develop two case examples of employment programs serving the difficult-to-employ. These case examples were used to create program employability effectiveness indicators based on social science theories that were ranked in order of importance by three expert decision makers. The second stage incorporated the ranked indicators into a survey instrument, which was given to 21 expert decision makers for scoring. These scores were used to establish the validity of the measures using intraclass correlation, multiple regression, and qualitative analysis techniques.

Findings showed that one of the program metrics (teach clients three marketable skills) was significantly associated with overall ratings of program quality. The validity of this individual program element as an indicator for evaluating program quality is supported by the results of a regression analysis. The findings failed to support the thesis that employment

programs that address learned helplessness are rated higher than employment programs that do not address learned helplessness. Among these decision makers, there is a preference for program activities that focus on job experience and skill development.

The validity of the program element indicators for the purpose of evaluating program quality is also supported by the results of the interrater reliability analysis. The validity of the program element indicators for the purpose of evaluating program quality is also supported by a qualitative analysis of comments submitted by the 21 raters regarding the reasons for assigning the particular program quality scores that were assigned to particular program variants.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

An abundance of research exists explicating the problem of unemployment and employability among difficult-to-serve populations. The number of jobs initiatives and welfare-to-work programs to address this problem have grown rapidly since the early part of the last century, costing billions of federal dollars. Governing bodies, as well as universities and other research organizations, have conducted evaluations to test the effectiveness of these programs, often reporting mixed results. Performance indicators used to evaluate program effectiveness frequently rely on limited metrics such as skills attained, jobs retained, or welfare use reduced. Despite the research, programming, funding, evaluations, and measures all directed toward understanding and improving employability, it is unclear why unemployment continues to be such a persistent problem among the hard-to-serve. This suggests that important aspects of the problem are not adequately understood.

Conventional metrics focus on wages earned, jobs obtained, or welfare use deferred. These metrics neglect the phenomena of learned helplessness in hard-to-serve populations as well as other complex employment barriers experienced by these individuals. As a result, the problem for program evaluators is that what is being measured may not tap key constructs influencing employability. Consequently, the measures currently used in evaluations of employment programs may not accurately reflect the degree to which those programs address key factors influencing employability.

Employment program performance measures are rarely grounded in an empirically established theoretical framework that captures the multi-dimensional aspects of employability. Even so, while common employability effectiveness measures often reflect human capital theory or discrimination theories, social learning theory principles encompass the multi-dimensional

nature of employability and may offer a stronger foundation for developing employability measures. In order to develop employability effectiveness measures for programs serving disadvantaged groups, it is important to understand this population, what is meant by employability, and why employability among this hard-to-serve group is a problem that will benefit from more accurate measurement. Evaluating the effectiveness of an employment program requires an understanding of the factors that make individuals employable.

Understanding Employability

The difficult-to-employ may be defined as individuals with limited job skills, inadequate education, and inconsistent work histories, resulting in high unemployment and low job retention rates. This lack of marketable job skills is frequently coupled with criminal records, mental illness, minority membership, disability, homelessness, or substance abuse—factors that are correlated with a wide range of negative employment outcomes (Holzer & Danziger, 1998; Danziger et al., 2000; Moffitt, Cherlin, Burton, King & Roff, 2002). A third factor, frequently ignored, is the “self as an obstacle” to employment, also understood as the phenomenon of “learned helplessness”. Individuals who repeatedly encounter rejection in the labor market are more likely to experience a sense of helplessness leading to a loss of motivation, which reduces their willingness to engage in job related activities (Dairty & Goldsmith, 1993).

Defining Employability

Employability may be defined as a person’s ability to obtain and retain employment. This is the definition that will be used throughout this thesis. McQuaid and Lindsay, (2005, p. 206) articulate factors influencing employability: “employability should be understood as being derived from, and affected by, individual characteristics and circumstances and broader, external (social, institutional, and economic) factors that influence a person’s ability to get a job.” According to the authors, *individual factors* include job related skills, attributes (e.g., willingness

to work), personal competencies (e.g., motivation), transferable skills (e.g., literacy, communication, adaptability, or self-management), and educational attainment and work experience. *Individual circumstances* consists of individual socioeconomic factors, such as access to resources (e.g, transportation, childcare), access to social capital (e.g., formal and informal social support networks), or work ethic. *External factors* include labor demand and employment-supportive services, vacancy factors (e.g., working conditions, working hours, and shift work), recruitment procedures, employment policies, information and job search tools.

Broad definitions of employability have tended to be generically defined and limited to the ability to obtain and retain employment (Finn, 2000; Hillard & Pollard, 1998). However, this definition tends to mask underlying complexity. Crant (2000), in support of a more holistic understanding of this concept, demonstrated that high degrees of employability allow individuals to alter their circumstances by engaging “the situation, learning and asserting whatever influence is possible to alter the situation to fit their own occupational interests” (p. 17). Focusing a definition of employability, therefore, requires merging the capacity and willingness to be successful with the capacity to learn; thus, employability is not static but requires workers to be learners, adaptable and flexible, regardless of current and future labor market demands (De Grip, van Loo, & Sanders, 2004).

Even though identified as early as the turn of the last century (Komine, 2001), employability was not recognized as an important aspect of the problem of chronic joblessness among the difficult-to-employ until the 1970s, with its focus on skill deficits (Tseng, 1972) and skill transferability (Hoyt, 1978). Over subsequent decades, however, the idea of employability has evolved from emphasizing human capital investments (e.g., skill improvement through training programs) and towards an understanding of employability as a component of human development (Peck & Theodore, 2000).

Research has consistently demonstrated that cognitive skills are related to earning potential (Bacolod & Blum, 2010; Tyler, 2004), accordingly, skill development remains an important aspect of the employability definition. Nonacademic characteristics (e.g., punctuality, honesty, and remaining alcohol, drug, and crime free) are also relevant to the concept of employability, although research on nonacademic skills has been lacking until recently (Lerman, 2013).

Societal expectations have shifted employability as a goal of public policy or corporate responsibility and towards employability as the primary responsibility of the individual. Consequently, employability is viewed as an indicator of a person's ability to successfully join the labor market (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). This view, however, shifts the blame of unemployment onto the shoulders of the unemployed individual, requiring them to take ownership over their own career development, while strategically coping with labor market forces that are often beyond their control (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008).

As the definition of employability has evolved, it has also become multi-dimensional, incorporating competency (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999); strategy (Athey & Orth, 1999); skills (Lapiņa & Ščeulovs, 2014), cognitive and emotional aptitudes (Sternberg, 1996), self-efficacy (Wood & Bandura, 1989), flexibility (Orlikowski, 2002), durability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), adaptability (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002), and individual career development (Van Der Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006). Thus, the definition of employability is evolving, complex, and multi-dimensional.

The Extent of the Unemployability Problem

Despite improvement in the official unemployment rate since the end of the Great Recession (U.S. Government, 2013), a large population of hard-to-employ and long-term unemployed individuals remains (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). In December 2006, the

official unemployment rate hovered between 4 and 4.8%, representing approximately 6.7 million people who were looking for work but were unable to find a job (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). During the Great Recession, the unemployment rate rose to as high as 10% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), but by the end of 2013, the percentage of unemployed Americans had dropped to 7.3%, representing 11.3 million people not working (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b). An additional 2.3 million persons were marginally attached to the labor market (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b). The more expansive U-6 unemployment indicator shows that those marginally attached or employed only part-time was just over 13% at the end of 2013 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b).

Persistent unemployment undermines employability. Employability literature has shown that the likelihood of finding a job decreases the longer a person is unemployed because the value of their human capital declines (Contini & Richiardi, 2012; Rosholm & Toomet, 2005), and those social networks that could be relied on for job referrals become weakened the longer individuals are away from the labor market (Pavoni & Violante, 2007; Richiardi & Contini, 2008). Moreover, a review of the literature has indicated that long-term unemployment can exacerbate a sense of “learned helplessness” and a loss of self-efficacy as employability diminishes (Contini & Negri, 2007; Rosholm & Toomet, 2005). The result is that “people lose a sense of control over their lives, when they cease to believe that they can realistically get off welfare. People become overwhelmed by their situation and lose the ability to seek out and use the opportunities available” (Bane & Ellwood, 1996, p. 75); thus frustrating the hope and belief that job search or training and education can improve individual job prospects.

Factors Contributing to Unemployability

The hard-to-employ experience labor market obstacles at the global (Helpman, Itskhoki, & Redding, 2010), national (Easterly, 2003; Goldin & Katz, 2007), and local (Leigh & Blakely,

2013) levels. However, even more critical are the situational, dispositional, work related, and psychological conditions negatively impacting individual job prospects (Dion, Derr, Anderson, & Pavetti, 1999). Situational factors include limited transportation options (Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Ovwigho, Sanders, & Born, 2008), housing eviction, shelter living, homelessness (Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Wood & Rangarajan, 2004), domestic violence (Chandler, Meisel, & Jordan, 2003; Hauan & Douglas, 2004), or a lack of child care (Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Norris & Speiglmann, 2003).

Other factors are dispositional, including substance abuse or dependence (Hauan & Douglas, 2004); criminal records (Holzer, 2007; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2004); physical health problems and disabilities (Fagnoni, 2001; Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Ovwigho, Sanders, & Born, 2008; Zedlewski, 2003); and mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD (Danziger & Seefeldt, 2003; Fagnoni, 2001; Moffitt, Cherlin, Burton, King, & Roff, 2002; Ovwigho, Sanders, & Born, 2008). Some dispositional factors are more critical than others. For example, a study examining male and female adults showed that mental health disorders were associated with low employment rates, with study results indicating that 32-61 percent of individuals suffering from serious mental disorders were employed, and only 22-40 percent of those with schizophrenia type mental disorders could find work (Mechanic, Bilder & McAlpine, 2002).

Another critical dispositional barrier is criminal history (Holzer, 2007; Holzer et al., 2004), which often exacerbates the problem of limited work skills, inconsistent work histories, and employer liability concerns about hiring offenders (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003a). As potential employers increase their use of background checks (Blumstein & Nakamura, 2009), research has indicated that employers are less willing to hire ex-offenders more so than other disadvantaged groups (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll 2003b). Moreover, the willingness to hire ex-

offenders varied by industry and job position (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll 2003b), the type and severity of the committed offense (Fahey, Roberts, & Engel, 2006), as well as by race, with black ex-offender job applicants less likely to be hired than white ex-offender applicants (Pager & Quillian, 2005).

Along with situational and dispositional factors are employment related barriers, which include education and skill deficits, limited English proficiency, as well as a lack of work experience and problems with employer discrimination, which all have been correlated with limited job attainment or retention (Corcoran et al., 1998; Danziger, et al., 2000; Fagnoni, 2001; Nam, 2005). Furthermore, research findings demonstrate the existence of employer discrimination for the mentally ill (Corrigan, et al, 2003; Baldwin & Johnson, 2006), women (Gabriel & Schmitz, 2007), and racial and ethnic minorities (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009; Roscigno, Mong, Byron, & Tester, 2007).

The hard-to-employ also experience multiple barriers to employment (Zedlewski, 2003; Morgenstern, et. al 2008). Multiple barriers include varying combinations of situational, dispositional, and work-related factors (Fagnoni, 2001; Precin, 2011; Taylor & Barusch, 2004). An example of multi-dimensional employment barriers is males, growing up in poverty, without a father, while attending segregated schools in poor neighborhoods (Edelman et al., 2006; Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Morgenstern, Hogue, Dasaro, Kuerbis, & Dauber, 2008).

There is also a psychological barrier, an underlying pessimism that compounds the problems the difficult-to-employ must overcome. Such pessimism may even give rise to complete despair, defeat, and acceptance such as that found in Seligman and Maier's (1967) theory of learned helplessness. The authors discovered that when dogs were repeatedly subjected to unavoidable electric shocks, the animals behaved as if they were helpless to change their situation even when they were given opportunities to escape. Their learned helplessness prevented them

from acting to improve their situation. Applied to employability, individuals experiencing recurrent job denial or dismissal may learn to respond to such stress by feeling helpless and apathetic; a perceived lack of control over obtaining a job. The repeated stress of work rejection is equivalent to the uncontrollable electric shocks experienced by the dogs in Seligman and Maier's experiment; accordingly, the hard-to-employ may become passive and their behavioral and attitudinal responses to their situation may be self-defeating, contributing to their continuing unemployment. Consequently, when people perceive their inability to compete in the labor force as something they cannot change, they will reduce their efforts, withdrawing from activities that can improve their state of employability, becoming helpless at their perceived inability to alter their situation (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998).

History of Employment Programming and Funding

For almost a century, the federal government has used a range of methods to support employment programming, such as streamlining service delivery, allowing state and local governments a degree of flexibility in establishing their own employment systems, or partnering with for-profit organizations by subsidizing employment opportunities (Decker & Berk, 2011; G Conley & Dupor, 2013; LaLonde, 2003). Such programs are often funded by public dollars (Butler, Alson, Bloom, Deitch et al., 2012). A forerunner of today's current employment and training legislation was the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, establishing employment offices across the nation to match workers with jobs (O'Leary & Eberts, 2008). Wagner-Peyser was followed by the Works Progress Administration, which had the goal of supporting job training programs to assist the unemployed to find work (Bremer, 1975).

Federally-funded job training programs, however, did not really gain traction until 1962 when President Johnson declared a "war on poverty" (Brauer, 1982), bringing about five major postwar federal jobs programs, the first of which was the Manpower Development Training Act

(MDTA) (O’Leary, Straits & Wandner, 2004). The MDTA provided on-the-job training targeted at welfare recipients, with an initial appropriation of about \$5.3 billion (Mirengoff & Rindler, 1978). Following the MDTA was the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, providing over \$6.1 billion across seven years to fund programs such as Job Corps, Head Start, and Adult Basic Education (Davidson, 1969; Ferman, 1969; O’Leary, Straits & Wandner, 2004). The Work Incentive Program, established in 1967, succeeded the Economic Opportunity Act and required states to develop employment and training programs for welfare recipients, for which Congress appropriated \$328 million for the first four years (Blank & Blum, 1997). The Nixon administration replaced MDTA with Comprehensive Employment and Training Act block grants, which provided states with more than \$28 billion between 1974 and 1979 to administer low-income employment programs (Mirengoff & Rindler, 1978). The fifth major federal jobs programs was the Family Support Act of 1988. This legislation tasked each state to design and implement a Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) work program for welfare recipients, with initial appropriations of about \$800 million (Porter, 1990).

More recently, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, signed by President Bill Clinton, included an annual appropriation of \$16.5 billion (Falk, 2009) and dramatically restructured the federally-supported Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) assistance program for low income families (Schott, Pavetti, & Finch, 2012). In 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Public Law 111-5) to save and create jobs for those affected by the recession in 2007 and the fiscal crisis of 2008 (U.S. Government, 2013). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorized approximately \$840 billion of directed funds for tax incentives, infrastructure support, education, health, and energy projects, as well as an expansion of unemployment benefits and other social welfare subsidies.

Evaluation Findings Related to Employment Programs for the Difficult-to-Employ

As a result of congressional negotiation, federal employment and training laws have stipulated that programs must be evaluated. Sunset provisions end programs that fail to demonstrate effectiveness (O'Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). Evaluation results of employment programs, though, have been mixed, with programs returning small to modest gains; strong, positive outcomes that decreased over time; or positive outcomes, but only for narrowly focused programs (Brooks, Nackerud, & Riser, 2001; Butler et al, 2012; Dunifon, 2005; Hotz, Mullin, & Scholz, 2002). The most comprehensively evaluated models, Human Capital Development (HCD) and Labor Force Attachment (LFA), both initially returned positive results for participants (Hamilton, et al., 2001). Other research showed, however, that HCD participants were more likely to obtain a job and to hold their positions for longer periods of time than LFA recipients (Hotz, Imbens, & Klerman, 2006), with LFA programs failing to increase total combined income (Hamilton et al., 2001). Results for both program types, however, were not as robust when other factors were added to evaluation models (Greenberg, Meyer, Michalopoulos, & Wiseman, 2003).

Evaluation findings of more general welfare-to-work programs have returned some positive employment outcomes (Hauer, Kirchner, & Trupke-Bastidas, 2010). A meta-analysis of 24 welfare-to-work programs by Greenberg, Ashworth, Cebulla, and Walker (2005) showed that sanctions, job search skills, and vocational training had a statistically significant impact on earnings. Pavoni and Violante (2007) identified a complex mix of unemployment insurance and incentives as effective tools for moving the jobless into the labor market, while programs providing financial incentives returned a small earning effect (Greenberg, Deitch, & Hamilton, 2009) though only for the short term (Hamersma, 2008). On the other hand, Hamilton et al. (2001) argued that job training was not enough, programs needed to be well-staffed, well-funded,

integrating employment-focused case management with caseworker support and reduced caseload sizes to achieve positive employment outcomes (Godfrey & Yoshikawa, 2012).

Programs combining work experience, GED completion, and vocational education or onsite apprenticeship type programs are more successful in moving people into jobs than programs without vocational related training (Henrich & Holzer, 2011; Vu, Anthony & Austin, 2009). For example, programs providing industry-specific training, such as in the health field, maintained employment gains over time for participants (Filinson, Cone, & Ray, 2005).

Nevertheless, while there was improvement in employment outcomes when vocational training was included in a treatment program (Bos, Scrivener, Snipes, Hamilton, Schwartz, & Walter, 2002), other evaluations found no such advantage (Lidz, Sorrentino, Robison, & Bunce, 2004; Kemp, Savitz, Thompson, & Zanis, 2004; Kidorf, Neufeld, & Brooner, 2004).

Research has indicated that programs targeting individuals with multiple employment barriers failed for substance users, older participants, and participants with health problems, low levels of literacy, and those with limited education (Haennicke, Konieczny, & Raphael, 2000) or criminal histories (Mead, 2012). Even so, for other difficult-to-employ groups, positive results could be found for some employability outcomes (Butler, et al, 2012; Grogger & Karoly, 2005; Ifcher, 2007; Schochet, Burghardt & McConnell, 2008), especially for those struggling with mental illness (Bond, Drake, & Becker; 2008; Campbell, Bond, & Drake, 2011; Nuechterlein et al., 2008).

Despite the success of many programs, the gains achieved were often not maintained (Wetzler, Schwartz, Swanson, & Cahill, 2010), and participant earnings were frequently low, forcing them to live off combinations of work and welfare income (Hamilton et al., 2001). For those without a high school diploma or a GED, the participants' financial situations often worsened (Greenberg, Deitch, & Hamilton, 2009; Reese & Harding, 2007). A multivariate

analysis examining whether welfare-to-work program participants were successful in leaving welfare found that leavers experienced low wages, intermittent labor market involvement, and continued to draw economic supports from family, social, and government institutions because they were unable to meet most of their financial needs after completing the program (Livermore, Powers, Davis, & Lim, 2011).

Employment Programs Not Research Driven

Most employment programs are not developed using empirically supported theoretical frameworks that identify effective ways of moving people to employability. These programs typically address the problem or condition of unemployment, with solutions that are problem focused, not research driven (Kettner, Moroney, & Marting, 2012). For example employment programs may target a specific group of unemployable individuals with unmarketable job skills. Unmarketable job skills becomes the condition/problem, the number of the unemployed with out-of-date skills is the data supporting the condition and becomes the justification for developing a job skills program. These programs are implemented to address a problem that has become a crisis, leading to social forces organized to address that crisis (Della Porta & Diani, 2009; Kettner, Moroney, & Marting, 2012)--in this case, the crisis is the many that are unemployed and unemployable. Problem focused approaches to program creation frequently fail to draw from empirically supported research and theory, which can serve as a foundation for effective program design and measurement (Kettner, Moroney, & Marting, 2012).

Measuring Employment Programs

The preceding review of literature suggests that demonstrating the effectiveness of employment programs for the hard-to-serve is difficult. Measuring the effectiveness of employment programs is a complicated endeavor. Often program indicators lack a theoretical framework correctly identifying employability effectiveness constructs that can be measured. As

a result, the measures currently used in evaluations of employment programs may not accurately reflect the degree to which those programs address key factors influencing employability because quality performance measures are rarely grounded in an empirically established theoretical framework that capture the multi-dimensional aspects of employability.

Measurement indices identifying and tracking the success of employment programs have traditionally been limited to such metrics as wages earned, jobs obtained, or skills developed, rarely capturing the complex nature of employability and the programming activities in place to address it. Thus, there is a need to develop a broader set of program measures that recognize the links between employability and social science theories (Diener & Dweck, 1980), reflecting the motivational and emotional deficits experienced by the difficult-to-employ (Rodriguez, 1997), including the problem of learned helplessness that comes from repeated failure in the labor market (Overmier & Seligman, 1967).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to use social science theories to develop measures of employability effectiveness and establish the validity of those measures. Three employment related theories will be explored in this thesis: *human capital theory*, *discrimination theory*, and *social learning theory*, with performance measures developed within these theoretical contexts.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation strives to demonstrate that a theory-guided approach to understanding program activities and the mechanisms through which client change can occur can yield important insights essential to advancing the theory and practice of performance measurement in evaluation. Developing valid program indicators that measure program quality helps provide a clearer sense of what elements contribute to the success of employment programs serving disadvantaged groups. Given that traditional programming and their outcome measures are often

limited in scope, it is essential to know whether program practices and activities positively impact important employment outcomes.

Program staff designing effective practices to serve the difficult-to-employ depend on measures that are true and valid to demonstrate their results. Furthermore, program funders are more apt to take seriously a program's ability to improve individual employability outcomes and to decide whether to continue funding programs based on valid outcome indicators. Thus, employment programs need measures oriented toward practical use, for developing, reorienting, improving, evaluating, or funding their programming. Performance measurement provides important information for employment programming as well as for evaluators through the process of creating, testing, and refining relevant program metrics. With the appropriate performance metrics, stakeholders (e.g., nonprofit organizations, funders, state, and local governments) can make informed decisions to drive continuous program development and improvement (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006).

Employment program activities that are explicitly designed to address learned helplessness could point to the value of this dimension in program planning and evaluation for employment programs. Theory-driven metrics can also provide insight into more effective employment programs for disadvantaged groups. Thus, the work provided in this thesis offers supporting evidence for a stronger theoretical foundation when developing performance measures (Jennings & Haist, 2006; Moynihan et al., 2011; Yang, Kaifeng, & Hsieh, 2007).

Research Questions

1. What is a suitable set of metrics for assessing employment programs that includes metrics for assessing activities that address learned helplessness?
2. To what extent are these metrics valid?

Organization of the Dissertation

In order to provide a thorough review of the subject matter, this dissertation contains five chapters, appendices, and references. The chapters are organized in a manner to provide a thorough review of the subject matter. Chapter one contains an overview of the dissertation including a discussion of the many facets of the employability problem as well as the purpose of the study. The research questions are presented as are the contributions this study makes toward advancing program measurement in program evaluation knowledge.

Chapter two contains a review of relevant literature and an overview of the importance of appropriate performance metrics identifying employment program quality elements, while focusing on social science and program theory modeling as guiding paradigms for performance measurement. The intersection between program theory and social science theory is reviewed in this chapter, drawing from social learning theory as well as competing explanations for employability. A discussion of how human capital and discrimination theories explain employability is presented, along with their limitations. A review of social learning theory and how it applies to employability of hard-to-serve groups and performance measurement is examined as well as an illustration of how learned helplessness is related to employability deficits. Finally, a conceptual model of how employability and social learning theory can be integrated to show empirical support for employability effectiveness measures is presented.

Chapter three covers the methodology used to answer the research questions. A discussion of the mixed-methods research design and the pragmatic worldview is included. A review of the qualitative approaches used (document review and program theory modeling) and the quantitative approach (vignette survey design) are also provided. Validity and the use of proportional agreement is discussed. Finally, the sample, materials, and procedures for each of the study's two phases is presented.

Chapter four covers the results of the analysis. Descriptives, intraclass correlation (ICC), and linear regression analyses were conducted to establish validity. A test of the assumptions was conducted as well, and four problem cases were deleted to improve the model. The text responses by the respondents were themed and included. This chapter provides validity findings.

Chapter five summarizes the study. Within this section is a discussion about the literature review results. A discussion about the ICC and linear regression results, followed by a section on the limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations for future research is presented.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The notion of employability is not revolutionary. Over the past 50 or more years, several theories have emerged that have been used to explain the persistence of employability deficits. The development of performance measures is also not groundbreaking; there has been a call for measuring outcomes of public service efforts for a long time. This chapter explores three social science paradigms: human capital theory, discrimination theory, and social learning theory, highlighting the work of Schultz (1963), Becker (2010), and Bandura (1977a) to explore how social science theory coupled with a program theory framework can explicate employability in support of performance measurement of employability effectiveness. The last section of this chapter discusses a social learning theory of employability in greater detail, establishing a theoretical foundation and conceptual framework to serve as the study's research model.

Program Theory as a Framework for Performance Measurement

Throughout the last part of the 20th century and into the 21st, performance measurement had been the focus of program reforms targeted at accountability (de Lancer Julnes, 2006), but it has expanded to include other purposes such as improving agency efficiency and productivity (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006). Performance measurement is the “regular and careful monitoring

of program implementation and outcomes” (de Lancer Julnes, 2006, p. 7) such that indicators are housed within a measurement system quantifying program processes and actions, participant activities and outcomes, and the relationship between these and the environments in which they operate (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006; Neely, Gregory, & Platts, 1995). Performance measurement is also understood to include the frequent and repeated monitoring of program characteristics, which is what distinguishes measurement from program evaluation (de Lancer Julnes, 2006). Even though service providers report using performance measures to measure program activities, outputs, and outcomes (Berman & Wang, 2000), integrating them into daily operations is not common (Governmental Accounting Standards Board, 1997) nor are they frequently used (Behn, 2002; Chen & Rossi, 1980; de Lancer Julnes & Holzer, 2001).

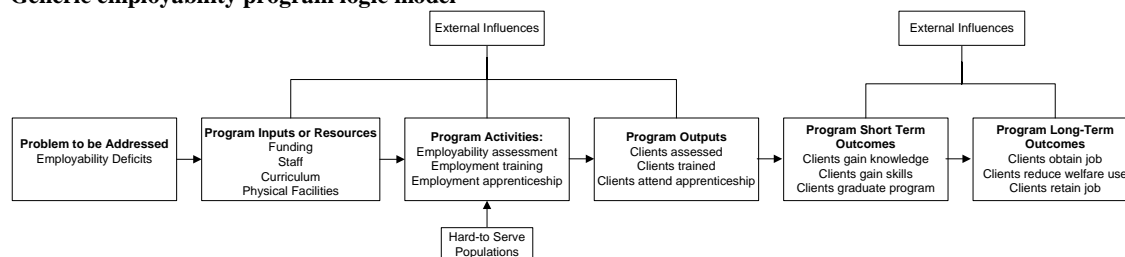
Since, performance measures were first designed to serve the needs of agency managers, program staff, and grant funders (Wholey, 1999), critics often questioned the ability of a system of metrics to adequately measure the components of complex programs, doubting that program success could be causally linked to program activities (Poister, 2008). They also feared goal displacement (Perrin, 1998), and voiced concerns that standardized systems would lead to one-size fits all programming (Henry, de Lancer Julnes & Mark, 1998). Some evaluation professionals have been reluctant to embrace performance measurement as an evaluation activity, arguing that performance measurement is more a tool of program managers to oversee their organizations (Perrin, 1998). Other evaluation experts, however, believe performance measurement can be incorporated into evaluation using similar evaluation methods and tools; for example, evaluation design, program theory, and logic models (Funnell & Rogers, 2011; McDavid & Hawthorne, 2006; Newcomer, 1997).

Designed and implemented properly, performance measurement provides information for public and nonprofit leaders to improve their decision making and program performance, focuses

stakeholder attention toward goals and objectives, provides useful feedback for program improvement, helps identify ways to allocate resources more effectively, and supports evaluation activities (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006; Poister, 2008). Not only does a quality set of performance measures support program evaluation, program evaluations can improve the credibility of performance measurement systems by verifying consistent and reliable program metrics (Guthrie & English, 1997).

Developing quality, useful measures requires a well-defined understanding of the problem the program is addressing, what the program does, and what are the intended results a program is working to achieve (Poister, 2008). One way of determining the activities a program provides is to develop a program logic model, which represents the logic underlying a program's theory, demonstrating how program elements and activities are expected to interact, the services or responses the program is expected to produce, and how the results will be generated (Bickman, 1987). Once the program's logic has been clarified, the logic model can also help guide the development of relevant performance measures (Poister, 2008). See Figure 1 for an example of a generic employment program logic model.

Figure 1:
Generic employability program logic model



A basic employability logic model would include the problem being addressed as well as program inputs, activities, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes (Poister, 2008). In the example illustrated in the figure above, the problem being addressed is employability deficits. The basic inputs, such as funding, staff, curricula, or program facilities are used to support

program activities and services that are designed to address these deficits. The primary activities of an employment program may include an assessment of skill or knowledge deficits or targeted skill development training, such as math and reading literacy. Program activities can also include specific training curricula, such as how to install, repair, and maintain plumbing systems and components.

Underlying this logic model is the expected flow of clients who will be served by the program, such as hard-to-employ individuals. It is also important to include external influences or factors that exert pressure on a program's environment that may apply positive or negative pressure on the program's performance. Identifying external influences at the program level is important because these factors can either hamper or facilitate a program's success. Two examples of external forces that can exert pressure on program performance would be funding cuts or staff turnover. The outputs reflect what a program does, or its performance, while outcomes are the results that are produced (Poister, 2008). External forces may also exert pressure at the outcome level; for example, a lack of available jobs may hinder a client's ability to obtain a job. It is vital to include external factors because they may have a major influence on the achievement of the outcomes.

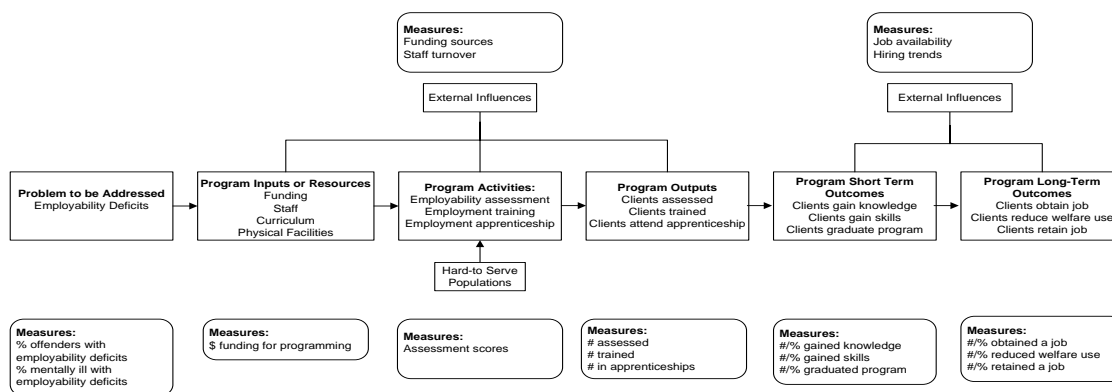
Reviewing the basics of a program logic model is necessary because a logic model can also identify points at which performance measures may be applied in concert with the program's purpose and implementation logic. Expanding the logic model example previously discussed, measures can also be identified for each of the six primary components included in the logic model (see Figure 2). Performance measures can also be identified at the transition points between the component areas in the logic model.

Social problem metrics provide the rationale for the program and program activities. Examples may include the percentage of the population that belongs to a hard-to-serve group,

such as the proportion of offenders who are unemployed living in a particular neighborhood. If the catchment area has a low percentage of unemployed offenders, then a program addressing this particular group would probably not be successful, since the number of clients participating would be low. Program input measures can include the funding that supports the program as well as measures of external influences. Assessment scores would serve as a measure of a program activity and the numbers of clients assessed, trained, or participating in training apprenticeships would be measures of program outputs.

Impact or outcome measures are the substantive results that come from the program inputs, activities, and outputs (Poister, 2008). Knowing the number of clients assessed or trained is not relevant if the program is not able to place clients into jobs that pay well enough to improve their economic situation. Measures of external factors may include job availability for a particular program’s curriculum. Including such measures explicates why a program’s outcomes may be low. For example, if a program is training ex-offenders in plumbing skills but there is no demand for plumbers, the likelihood of graduating clients finding jobs in that field will be low. Thus, poor program results may occur because there is a glut of plumbers in the job market with no openings for new plumbers, rather than because the program failed to effectively train participants in plumbing.

Figure 2:
Employability program logic model with accompanying measures



This example of a typical logic model with accompanying measures is helpful, but it is not sufficient. This logic model fails to model the more complex, multi-dimensional nature of employability. A more complex model incorporating a program theory approach as well as a well-researched, empirical social science theory may provide a stronger basis for performance measurement.

From Logic Model to Program Theory to Performance Measurement

A logic model illustrates the basic assumptions about the inputs necessary for sustaining the program activities, which produce the outcomes (Wholey, 1999). It is these assumptions which form the foundation of the program's metrics (Chen & Rossi, 1980), and the program's theory (Bickman, 1987; Weiss, 1997). The idea of program theory arose in the evaluation community about 40 years ago (Suchman, 1967) and has achieved broad acceptance as an essential tool for understanding the working mechanisms underlying social programs and for evaluating program effectiveness (Bickman & Peterson, 1990; Chen, 1990; Lipsey & Pollard, 1989; Weiss, 1997). Cooksy, Gill, and Kelly, (2001). argue that program theory can serve as a framework for conducting program evaluations, because it allows for greater understanding of a program's operations and efficacy; however, early on there was uncertainty about its applicability. Weiss (1997), an initial proponent of theory-driven evaluation, noted potential problems:

“The idea of theory-driven evaluation is plausible and cogent, and it promises to bring greater explanatory power to evaluation. However, problems beset its use, including inadequate theories about pathways to desired outcomes in many program areas, confusion between theories of implementation and theories of programmatic action, difficulties in eliciting or constructing usable theories, measurement error, complexities in analysis, and others.” (p. 501).

Prior to its use in evaluation, Stake (1967) first suggested building models that identified program resources needed for program operations, activities, outputs, and outcomes. The program operations data were then analyzed in comparison to what the program was designed to produce (Stake, 1967). Stake's model was similar to Stufflebeam's (1971) Context-Inputs-Process-Products (CIPP) model, which pushed for a systemic approach to evaluations. Stufflebeam was a supporter of using program theory concepts in evaluation practice, arguing that program theory "provide[s] a rich array of background data against which to interpret and understand outcomes" (Stufflebeam, 1983, p. 128).

Carol Weiss (1972) prescribed the use of logic models or path diagrams to graphically step through a program's chain of events, causally linking the program's activities with the outcomes, describing this as theory-based evaluation. The process of stepping through the program's logic highlights what concepts or actions should be measured and where in the process those measures should be located (Weiss, 1972). This process also helps identify missing indicators or at what points in the program's sequence incorrect measures are in place and should be modified.

Chen and Rossi (1980) also argued for "theory-driven evaluation". Theory-driven evaluations, according to Chen and Rossi (1980), are more successful at uncovering program effects than methods-driven evaluations because theory-driven approaches identify a larger set of program impacts. It was the foundational work of Chen (1990) in his book *Theory-Driven Evaluations* that argued for creating and testing program theory, helping theory-driven approaches become more accepted in the evaluation community. Following Chen's program theory models, variations of the theory-driven approaches have been adopted in work by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004), and United Way of America (Hatry, 1996), as well as a variety of social service organizations.

Chen and Rossi (1980) made the case for incorporating social science into, not just social programming, but in evaluation and measurement development as well. First, they advocated for using social science theory in support of evaluating programs: “the evaluator should actively search for and construct a theoretically justified model of the social problem in order to understand and capture what a program really can do for a social problem--social science knowledge and theory become crucial in the evaluation process” (1980, p. 111). They also argued for using social science theory to serve as a foundation for performance measures “social science theory and knowledge can tell the evaluator about possible desirable and attainable outcomes, ones which may be more useful in ameliorating the underlying social problem” (Chen and Rossi, 1980, p. 112).

After Chen and Rossi (1980), Bickman and Peterson (1990) and Lipsey (1993) argued for the use of program theory in developing a method of measuring program quality using a program’s logic model or theory of change as a “plausible and sensible model of how the program is supposed to work” (Bickman, 1987, p. 5). Thus, there is support for the use of social service theory in developing measures for social programs. There have been critics who have dismissed the idea of linking social science theory and program theory, arguing the tie to social science is irrelevant. For example, Patton (1997) contended that in a user-focused practice, the “evaluator's task is to facilitate intended users, including program personnel, in articulating their operating theory”, thus obviating the need for a grounding in social science theory. However, theory-drive metrics can be developed from existing social science theory as well as the implicit models provided by program stakeholders.

Building on the theory-driven model, Chen (1990) identified two different types of theory-driven evaluations that can also be extended to developing performance measures. First, Chen (1990) defined a normative evaluation which compares “what is” to “what should be”. For

example, in a plumbing apprenticeship program for the hard-to-serve, performance metrics may measure whether a client acquired key components of basic plumbing and soldering skills. Data may indicate that most clients successfully completed the program. However, in the job market these clients, while obtaining a job, failed to retain their position. An analysis of the program sequences may demonstrate that while the clients learned how to solder copper pipe, fix and replace faucets, and replace a toilet, they failed to learn how to replace and install a kitchen sink. The “what is” is learning to solder copper, fix and replace faucets, and replace a toilet, but “what should be” is learning all six elements of this plumbing skill set, including replacing and installing a kitchen sink. The data may show successful completion of four out of the six elements, but the job market may demand all six. Thus, identifying the important elements of a quality program can inform the relevant aspects of the program that need to be operationalized in order to accurately measure the results.

Chen (1990) defined a "causative" evaluation as a type of evaluation that explores the causal relationships between an intervention and its results or impacts in order to understand the connecting mechanisms correlated with program effects. In terms of program measurement, exploring the sequence of program steps explicates those causal mechanisms, which can offer opportunities for developing appropriate and powerful metrics that operationalizes those mechanisms. For example, sequencing the steps in the plumbing employment program logic model uncovers the fact that participants were not learning a key step in repairing a toilet. In their program classes, students may have learned that a leaky toilet can be due to a lost wax ring or an uneven floor. The instructor, however, only taught the clients how to replace the wax ring but not how to position shim gaps between the toilet and the floor before caulking. Sequencing the program activities demonstrates that an important causal link in the chain, not positioning shim

gaps before caulking, was missed, and the curriculum would then be adjusted to add this step along with indicators recording their completion.

Performance measurement requires the development of indicators grounded in social science theory, potentially offering more consequential data on whether a program is successfully impacting clients (Chen, 1990). For example, Bandura argued that learning is more likely to occur if students observe and imitate modeled behavior from a respected teacher (1971; 1977a), and data on how well students observed and imitated fixing a leaky toilet would be collected along with other measures. A subsequent evaluation may determine that students were more likely to retain information from observing and imitating their teacher than those that did not have such an opportunity. Furthermore, analyses may demonstrate that those students that learned their skills through observing and imitation were also more likely to obtain and retain a job post program completion. Therefore, social science theory can provide a foundation for a richer and more accurate set of performance measures potentially creating significant and meaningful measures of employability effectiveness.

Limitations of Program Theory

Logic models support the use of program theory by providing a greater understanding of how programs work, which offers greater insight into metric development. The approach, however, has some drawbacks. Developing a program theory and constructing logic models is resource intensive (Bickman, 1989). However, the cost of developing program theory and logic models may be offset by gaining a clearer understanding of how a program works, of its overall program quality and effectiveness, and how to use a well-linked set of performance metrics.

Another limitation is that program theory encapsulated in a logic model can become a rigid program plan or map which stakeholders may be reluctant to change, making the program inflexible to modification even in the face of new information (Weiss, 1997). Program

stakeholders may also be constrained by outside agencies. For example, if grant funds for program activities are tied to specific program activities and reporting is dependent on funder approved measures, then program stakeholders who change their programs may risk the loss of program funding.

A third limitation is that performance measures will also have been linked to each step in the logic model and program stakeholders may be reluctant to change their measures, because they are connected to data systems and data processes, all of which would have to be modified as well. Finally, a fourth disadvantage is that evaluators may also view the logic model and program theory as rigid statements of the program's design, adhering to the plan and ignoring other factors that may be influencing program outcomes.

Social Science Theory and the Hard-to-Employ

The current study uses three social science theories to explore employability and provide a basis for building program quality metrics. The three theories are *human capital theory*, *discrimination theory*, and *social learning theory*. While each of these three theories has strong explanatory importance to understanding employability among hard-to-serve groups, the current study seeks to demonstrate that *social learning theory* may be more useful in understanding employability and offers a better foundation for developing employability effectiveness measures. The review of these theories helps to situate employability in a framework that then can be used to develop employability effectiveness measures.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory was initially put forward by Theodore Schultz in 1963 to explain the relationship between investments in education or training and income disparities (Schultz, 1963). He argued that employability is related to a lack of investment in people; that individuals do not have the necessary work-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that would allow

them to be actively engaged in the labor force (Dickens & Lang, 1985). Development of KSAs can follow several different pathways: high school graduation, college degree, vocational training completion (Blaug, 1976; Heckman, 2000), on-the-job training (Becker, 1994), and informal education gained through work experiences, internships, or apprenticeships (Blaug, 1992; Hollenbeck 2008).

Schultz (1963) also argued that individuals rationally and deliberately choose to maximize their earnings potential by investing in their own intellectual growth, suggesting a causal relationship between education and future earnings. He posited that individuals will compare the cost of educational investment to the corresponding increase in income they will receive; if the rate of return in income is greater than the cost of education, individuals will seek further education and training (Schultz, 1963).

Jalles (2011) argued that human capital gained through education, training, and work experience increases worker desirability since employers tend to hire the most desirable workers, those offering the highest level of productivity derived from higher skill levels. Correspondingly, educational advancement is desirable for workers because the resulting knowledge, skills, and abilities increases their store of desirable skills, improving their overall employability (Becker, 1994).

Human capital theory provides a framework for understanding the extent of the employment problem for the difficult-to-employ with limited human capital. If human capital theory links higher earning potential with increased employability derived from improvements in individual skill development, then the opposite can also be argued: deficiencies in human capital can at least partially explain employment difficulties among unemployable workers. In 2011, jobless rates were higher for high school dropouts compared to those with some college (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). During the Great Recession, workers with limited skills were

also more likely to lose their jobs compared to workers with higher skill levels (Loprest & Nichols, 2011; National Bureau of Economic Research Business Cycle Dating Committee, 2013), and those with limited education, training, and job skills were concentrated in low-skilled and low-wage jobs (Hutchison, 2011; Szeltner, Van Horn, Zukin, 2013; Wilson, 1997). Research has also shown that a lack of human capital becomes a barrier to employment and worsens an individual's ability to obtain and keep a job when human capital deficits are coupled with individual barriers (Danziger et al., 2000), or co-occurs with external barriers (Nam, 2005).

Human capital theory is supported by empirical findings that demonstrate a strong link between education, training and employability. A study by Hollenbeck (2008) found that community college graduates, apprenticeship holders, as well as students graduating from career schools showed increased employability and wage gains. This also held true for participants in dislocated worker programs, federal job training programs, and adult education programs, though with only modest success (Hollenbeck, 2008). Employees with higher levels of human capital were considered more productive, earned higher wages, and were more likely to be employed (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). It has also been demonstrated that mixing high-skilled and low-skilled workers increases the productivity of low-skilled workers whose work related knowledge and skills improves when working with high-skilled workers (Ciccone & Peri, 2006; Moretti, 2004).

Furthermore, studies found that even small improvements in education level, regardless of the type of education, were financially beneficial (Cohn & Geske, 1990; Sweetland, 1996). Financial benefits have long been the focus of human capital research, showing a relationship between human capital investments, increased earnings, and increased productivity (Hong & Pandey, 2007; Krueger, Lindahl, & Page, 2001; Perna, 2005). Additionally, training and education, especially post-secondary education, has been shown to substantially improve career

prospects (Hart & Livingstone, 2009). In support of this contention, U.S. census data has shown that bachelor's degree holders earned more than one and a half times more per year than those with only high school degrees (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013).

Limitations of Human Capital Theory

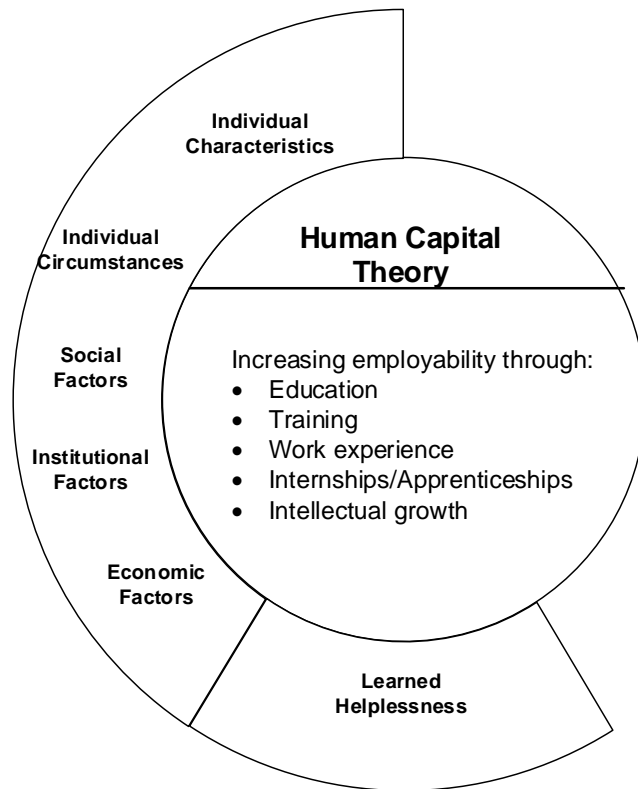
Livingstone (1997), however, argued that human capital theory fails to explain the inequities in economic opportunities that are observed when investments in human capital are increased. It appears that some individuals profit more than others. Furthermore, research has shown that individuals who have difficulty finding employment may encounter obstacles despite investments in education and training (Knapp & Harms, 2002). Critics of human capital theory also raised concerns about economic assumptions such as imperfect capital markets and unequal access to educational resources (Wang & Holton, 2005).

Additionally, the logic behind human capital theory suggests that individuals with higher levels of human capital have a competitive advantage in obtaining higher-skilled jobs with higher earnings compared to those with lower levels of human capital. But this has not always been the case. For example, foreign born workers may come into the United States with strong education backgrounds and substantial work skills and experience, but they are less likely to be hired compared to native-born workers (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009; Lubotsky, 2007; Oreopoulos, 2009). In another example, older adults with more education and work experience, according to human capital theory, should be able to achieve a higher job class and command higher salaries than younger workers with less education and less work experience. A report by von Wachter (2007), however, showed that workers near retirement age (60-64) were less likely to be reemployed, and the gap between younger and older workers held true for older workers with higher education. Thus, even with less job skills, younger workers are still more likely to experience more favorable job outcomes than older workers (Johnson & Mommaerts, 2011).

Human Capital and Employability Effectiveness Measures

The metrics used to measure outcomes reflecting human capital theory are limited (See Figure 3). For example, program employability effectiveness measures falling under a human capital rubric can include education achieved, training hours completed, job obtained, or wages earned (Greenberg, Ashworth, et al., 2001; Pavoni & Violante, 2007). These metrics, however, do not fully measure employability; and thus fail to completely measure program employability effectiveness. Nor do these measures identify how programs help clients overcome learned helplessness. Thus, this theory fails to provide a way to measure the multi-dimensional aspects of employability, because programs that are based on human capital theory are limited in how they measure a program's effectiveness.

Figure 3:
Employability and human capital theory



Discrimination Theory

Employment and employability can also be framed through the perspective of discrimination theory. The discrimination lens recognizes inequitable practices due to someone's age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or country of origin as "attributes of inferior position of some minority groups to the socio-economic structure of society" (Hou & Balakrishnan, 2004, p. 274). Workplace discrimination occurs when an employer uses observable characteristics to deny employment to an individual who is as skilled or more skilled when compared against a competing job candidate (Hou & Balakrishnan, 2004). Arrow (1973) argued that income disparities among different groups, regardless of their skill levels, occur because these groups have characteristics that are not valued in the market place such as religion,

language, skin color, or gender. These characteristics, coupled with perceptions that individuals with such attributes are less skilled or productive, become the rationale for not hiring them.

Even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that workplace segregation was unconstitutional, discrimination in employment continues (Barnard, & Rapp, 2004); however, serious efforts to fight discrimination did not start until the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Gyimah-Brempong, Rabino, & Jewell, 2002). Title VII focused efforts towards opening access to lower level jobs for minorities and prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. While such blatant practices have been decreasing (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009), inequities in hiring, wages, and promotional opportunities have persisted (Green, 2003). For example, African American workers are twice as likely to be unemployed as white workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013c), and the wages of minority workers has lagged behind their white counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). In the face of legislation and accompanying penalties for discriminatory hiring practices, discriminatory behavior has become more covert (e.g., requiring a college degree) than overt (e.g., “white” jobs or “male” jobs) (Sturm, 2001). Overt discrimination is as equally damaging to individual employment prospects (Bisom-Rapp, 1999) with significant consequences for workplace earnings and rewards (Grodsky & Pager, 2001).

Employer preferences for white workers have been identified across studies (Bendick, Jackson, & Reinoso, 1994; Fix & Struyk, 1993; Pager, 2007b), and workers with racially identifiable names are less likely to get job-related callbacks (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003). One study reported that employment outcomes were worse for darker skinned Hispanics than for individuals with more obvious European features (Darity & Mason, 1998). In 2008, the labor force participation rate of minority men was seven percentage points lower than among white men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013d), and employment duration and wage differentials

exist between minorities and whites even after controlling for education (Carnerio, Heckman, & Masterov, 2005; Galenianos & Kircher, 2009; Lang & Manove, 2006; Shi, 2009). Research on racial differences in labor market experiences reported that wage gaps between African American and white males could not be explained by human capital deficits alone (Darity & Mason, 1998). Studies have also found employers prefer white job applicants with criminal records over black applicants with no criminal record (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009). Charles and Guryan (2008) found that a racial wage differential resulted in significant negative lifetime earnings.

In other examples, Men also experience higher labor participation rates compared to women in 2012 (89% and 75%, respectively) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013d). Between 1989 and 1995 four representative surveys were administered nationwide with results showing that individuals with any mental illness experienced lower employment rates (48%) than those that did not report a mental illness (73%) (McAlpine & Warner, 2002). Research has also shown that discrimination against older workers occurs during the job application process (Lahey, 2005) and continues after a job placement. Once hired, discriminatory practices against older workers impacts their job security, retention, and promotion opportunities (Goldman, Gutek, Stein & Lewis, 2006).

Some employers have avoided labor laws by moving job recruiting to predominately white neighborhoods (Tilly, Moss, Kirschenman, & Kennelley, 2001) or demanding “soft skills” standards for hiring and promotional decisions (McQuaid, 2006; Moss & Tilly, 1996; Roscigno, 2007). Proponents of discrimination theory would argue that some practices, such as job networking and race-neutral hiring decisions maintain or even worsen unemployability for minority groups (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009; Roscigno, 2007). Other discrimination theorists posit a “statistical discrimination” model, which contends that groups may be

discriminated against because employers may make hiring decisions based on a perception that one group is a more preferable hire, on average (Arrow, 1973; Phelps, 1972; Rodgers, 2009).

When employing statistical discrimination methods, researchers have found that because employers cannot know everything about job candidates they are incentivized to use group membership as an indication of individual performance (Darity & Mason, 1998). This belief of poor work performance among some groups can result a loss of motivation to engage in work related activities. For example, individuals being rejected in the labor force because of an attribute, such as skin color, may become less motivated because of repeated employment rejection (Darity & Mason, 1998). Thus, an employer's initial belief of poor work performance of a minority group may be realized over time as some groups withdraw from the labor market (Darity & Mason, 1998).

Arrow (1998) posited that market-based theories of marketplace discrimination is inadequate arguing for the contribution of social interactions or relationships or social capital in employment. According to Arrow (1998) "a dense network of social connections . . . will enhance both political and economic efficiency" (p. 98). Arrow pointed out that acquaintances and friends are important sources of job referrals – and those experiencing social segregation results in limited access to available job opportunities. Heckman (1998) also argued that American children and their parents may expect to experience discrimination, and as such, they may invest less in building skills and attributes that allow them to compete with other groups in the labor market.

Discriminatory legal, regulatory, social, cultural, or political practices can hinder some disadvantaged groups from achieving employment for which they are qualified, including immigrants (Chang, 2002), offenders (American Bar Association, 2004; Archer & Williams, 2005; Pinard, 2006), minorities (Becker, 2010), women (Ortiz, & Roscigno, 2009), the mentally ill (Stuart, 2004), and older workers (Hedge, Borman, & Lammlein, 2006). For example, state

and federal regulatory licensure rules exist for some classes of jobs (e.g., real estate and contractors) or for immigrants and those with criminal records (International Affairs Office, 2007; Lucken & Ponte, 2008). According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are over 50 professional fields that require some degree of licensure or accredited postsecondary education or training as a prerequisite for immigrant entry (International Affairs Office, 2007). Also, thousands of occupations demand some level of licensure that limits the employability options for native born workers who are ex-offenders because they are barred from many licensed occupations (Lucken & Ponte, 2008).

Discriminatory practices are linked to poor psychological and physiological outcomes for individuals who are the target of discrimination, further impacting employability. Although researchers have examined the causes of discrimination extensively for some time, it is within the last decade that they have tried to understand the psychological and physiological impacts of discrimination on employability (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Having a job is a key factor to economic stability and for obtaining a basic quality of life (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Even with a job, discriminatory practices have been found to have negative psychological impacts, such as decreased employee motivation and diminished worker performance, which in turn has been shown to lead to further negative employment consequences, such as job loss, lack of promotions, and lower wage rates (Becker, 2010; Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009).

There are indications of psychological and physiological effects of discrimination on the unemployed. If hard-to-employ individuals cannot obtain a job because they are denied access to work due to undesirable attributes, they are unfairly kept from competing in the labor force and ultimately unable to obtain that economic stability and quality of life (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999). Research has shown that individuals experiencing discrimination are also more likely to have higher levels of mental illness such as depression and anxiety as well as poor health

outcomes (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999), all of which have also been found to impact employability (Bell, Adair, & Popkin, 2004; Gorman & Sivaganesan, 2007; Sanderson & Andrews, 2006).

Mental illness can reduce a person's employability. In a review of the literature, individuals suffering from mental illness, while willing to work (Macias, et al., 2001; Schulze & Angermeyer, 2003; Stuart, 2006), faced considerable workplace discrimination (Cook, 2006). For example, Lewis, Lee, and Altenbernd (2006) reported that persons with moderate to severe depression were 43% less likely to be employed than those with no depressive symptoms. Individuals with mental disorders are also more likely to have lower earning rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010); work reduced hours (Kessler & Frank 1997; Stewart, Ricci, Chee, Morganstein, & Lipton, 2003), and experience more lost work days (Wang et al 2004; Kessler et al 2006). Furthermore, employers are more likely to hire someone with a physical disability than those with a serious mental disorder (Stuart, 2006).

Limitations of Discrimination Theory

Discrimination theory is limited when explaining the complex, multi-dimensional nature of employability. For example, wage differentials may be explained because some minorities are more likely to attend lower quality schools and live with families in neighborhoods that transmit traits and attitudes that negatively impact employability (Holzer, 1999; Lang & Lehmann, 2011; Neal & Johnson, 1996; Saez-Marti & Zenou, 2012), or marginalized groups of people may self-select into low-wage jobs (Breen & Garcia-Penalosa, 2002). Studies have shown wage gaps between minority men and white males decrease with increased skill and education (Neal & Johnson, 1996), arguing against discrimination theory since wage differentials should be apparent at every point along the wage scale (Lang & Lehmann, 2011). Furthermore, while discrimination theory may explain differences in employment outcomes between white and black men, results

are not as conclusive for other minority groups or women. According to Neal (2004) and Lang (2011), wage differentials are lower between black and white women. In some jobs, the wages of black women are higher than that for white women; and both black and white women are more likely to be employed compared to Asian women (Toossi, 2012).

There are labor market explanations for differential employment outcomes that are not focused on undesirable attributes. For example, small pockets of discriminatory hiring practices may not result in large-scale discriminatory behavior (Lang & Lehmann, 2011). Job rationing may mean some workers take lower-skilled jobs because of a lack of opportunities for higher-skilled work opportunities; thus, once demand for labor with certain skills is met, there is no need for any more workers with those skills (Swinton, 1987). Consequently, failure to hire may have less to do with individual attributes, but to a lack of demand for a set of skills. Discrimination theory is also based on unrealistic economic assumptions. As Lang and Lehman (2011, p. 13) point out:

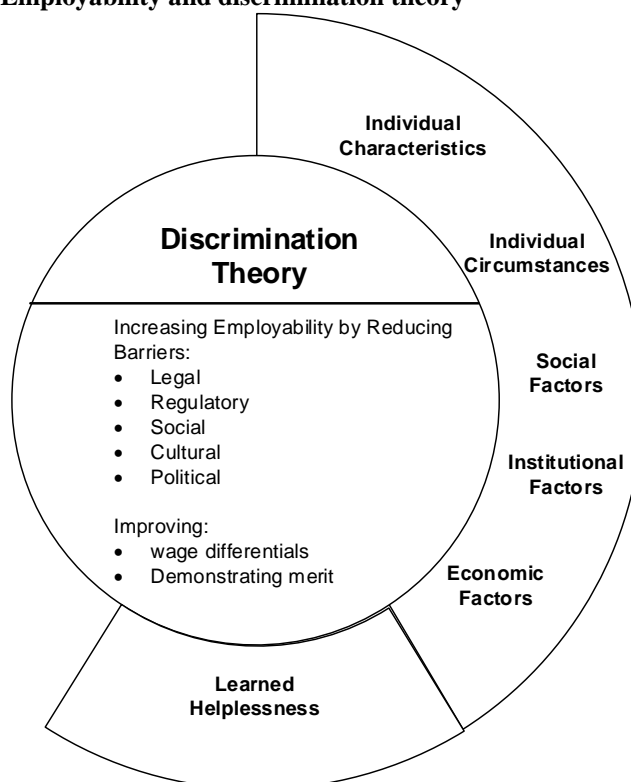
If we assume that all firms are the same size, black and white workers are perfectly segregated, that there is no consumer prejudice (or at least that the market can avoid it), that the distribution of prejudice is the same among employers as among the population as a whole and that the labor force participation rates of black and white workers are the same, then the critical percentile of the prejudice distribution is the proportion black in the state.

Discrimination Theory and Employability Effectiveness Measures

The measures used by employment programs that reflect discrimination theory have limitations (See Figure 4). For example, workplace discrimination based metrics would require programs to address hiring differentials and wage disparities (Black, Haviland, Sanders, & Taylor, 2006; Milkman, Wright, & Meyers, 2006). Also, these measures do not show how

programs help clients overcome learned helplessness. While reducing legal and regulatory barriers will help improve individual employability, this theory fails to show how programs can use these indicators to measure employability effectiveness. Like human capital theory, what is missing are metrics that fully illustrate the definition of employability.

**Figure 4:
Employability and discrimination theory**



Discrimination and Human Capital Theory Summary

Human capital theory and *discrimination theory* suggest that unemployment is a result of factors that are difficult to change; for example, attributes that individuals cannot control (e.g., gender, race) or cannot change without a lot of expense (e.g., education or training) or cannot change but can moderate with effort (e.g., criminal offending). While both of these theories explain some aspects of employability, reducing discriminatory practices or increasing job skills should have, over time, improved employability for hard-to-serve groups, but that has not been

the case. In addition, both of these theories fail to model the interaction between participants and their environments, as necessitated by the employability definition adopted for this thesis.

Discrimination in the workplace for many disadvantaged groups is real and persistent as demonstrated in this literature review. However, the existence of discrimination is not easily addressed by managers of employment programs. Discrimination theory fails to offer useful guidance for managers of employment programs seeking to help clients who face discrimination in the job market (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Even if programs incorporate program activities, giving clients tools to understand and respond to discriminatory practices, such tools or strategies may actually have negative outcomes because of stereotype threat. Steele (1992) posited that experiencing a lifetime of work related negative feedback and encounters may result in inferiority anxiety leading to withdrawal from labor force participation. Consequently, programs that include activities related to overcoming workplace discrimination may revive this anxiety resulting in a decrease in employability efficacy and a worsening of learned helplessness regarding success in the workforce.

Neither human capital theory nor discrimination theory offer adequate guidance for program managers seeking to design programs that help clients to overcome learned helplessness. In contrast, social learning theory suggests that modeling, observation, and imitation of successful models may be much more effective than traditional programs that seek to build skills through conventional job training programs.

Social Learning Theory

The underling concept of social learning theory is that human capacity is the result of a complex interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental processes and offers a new approach to understanding individual employability barriers and, thus, for developing better measures of employability effectiveness. A key element to social learning theory is how it

identifies environmental influences on individual decision making and response behaviors (Bandura, 1977a). Bandura drew from psychological experiments establishing how learning occurred through imitation, consequences, and rewards, creating a comprehensive theory of social learning, which became an influential theory of learning and development (Bandura, 1977a).

Originally, social learning theory was grounded in psychology, initiated by Edward Tolman, who established the basic framework for the theory with his rat experiments in the 1930s (Tolman, 1948). Approximately a decade later, Miller and Dollard (1941) extended Tolman's view to include the learning process of children and group behavior, incorporating the concept of imitation and ultimately coined the phrase social learning. Sutherland also contributed heavily to a more general theory of learning by introducing "differential association" (Sutherland, 1945), demonstrating how individuals learn attitudes, behavior, and values from their interactions with others. A psychologist, Julian Rotter, contributed to social learning theory by including the concepts of perceived norms and expectations, creating measurement scales of norms, and introducing the concept of "self" (Rotter, 1954).

By expanding on the earlier explorations of the theory, Bandura emphasized the importance of modeling and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and responses of others (Bandura, 1977a). He explained that "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (Bandura, 1977a, p. 22). Bandura (1977a) further argued that the learning relationship is not unidirectional, but consists of mutually reciprocating actions between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental pressures. The key principles of social learning theory are modeling, aspirational/reference models, observation and imitation, rewards and consequences, reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, symbolic representation (mental models), and motivation.

Modeling. Learning attitudes, beliefs, and skills can be complex, tedious, and potentially dangerous, but the learning process can be accelerated through modeling (Bandura, 1971; Bandura, 1977a). Individuals being observed are the models, usually influential individuals such as parents, siblings, co-workers, supervisors, teachers, sports heroes, or television personalities (Bandura, 1971, 1977a). These models provide examples of preferred behavior for others to observe and imitate; someone the individual identifies as possessing qualities that are seen as desirable. According to Bandura (1977a), identification occurs when the observer adopts the modeled behavior, attitudes, or beliefs. Much of the learning process in work environments can be demonstrated by influential managers and supervisors or peer workers modeling the correct behavioral and attitudinal responses for specific work functions. Learning can also occur vicariously, which allows people to learn new behaviors and attitudes without having to undergo the trial and error of complex learning processes required for new knowledge (Bandura, 1971). Bandura outlined five interrelated components for effective modeling of behavior and attitudes (1971):

1. Attention: individuals must attend to the behavior or attitude being modeled.
2. Retention: individuals must remember what they were attending to and create mental images.
3. Motoric Reproduction: individuals turn the symbolic representations into action.
4. Motivation: individuals are motivated to imitate when observing behavior being rewarded or hold expectations of future behavior being rewarded.
5. Self-regulation: individuals realize the ability to control behavior.

Aspirational models. Successful modeling also requires what Bandura calls “aspiration models” or “reference models” (1997), individuals influential enough to motivate observing, imitating, and learning preferred behavior. Aspirational models are necessary for people who

have had few models from which they can imitate workplace competencies. Bandura argued that having similar reference models on which to base a sense of achievement or accomplishment is necessary for effective transference of skills, attitudes, and beliefs, especially beliefs about individual abilities (Bandura, 1997; Petrovich, 2004). Extending Bandura's thesis, Strauser, Waldrop, and Jenkins (1998) held that the aspirational models should not only be someone who has similar attributes, but who has had similar experiences or who has also overcome negative experiences, thus, increasing the impact of modeling. For example, programs improving employability of homeless clients should employ an aspirational model who is a former homeless person who had triumphed over his or her obstacles to employment and is successfully employed.

Imitation and observational learning. Bandura posited that learning was not unidirectional but consisted of mutually reciprocating actions between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental processes. These interactions determine what will be observed, how the observations will be perceived, and ultimately internalized, and retained through symbolic constructions of the observed behavior. Observational learning does not automatically result in duplication of the behavior, rather the observer may act contrary to what they observe because the observed behavior led to undesirable consequences (Bandura, 1969).

In order for an observer to learn from modeling, there must also be influential sources of information or antecedent learning. Such information can be expressed through physical demonstrations, graphical displays, or verbal instruction (Bandura, 1971), from direct sources (e.g., parents, teachers, pastors) or indirect sources (e.g., internet, television, videos, films, and other media presentations) (Bandura, 2001). For observers, learning also comes from vicarious experiences, both informal and formal observations of the actions of others, or through individual mastery experiences developed by performing a progression of learning activities (Bandura, 1971). Thus, learning becomes the "gradual acquisition of complex cognitive, social, linguistic,

and/or physical skills” (Gist, 1987, p. 472). In terms of employability, training programs may incorporate observational learning and imitation into jobs programming activities. For example, a training program teaching plumbing skills may use instructors that model the correct steps in caulking a bathtub. Participants would observe and imitate the instructor’s actions in order to learn that skill.

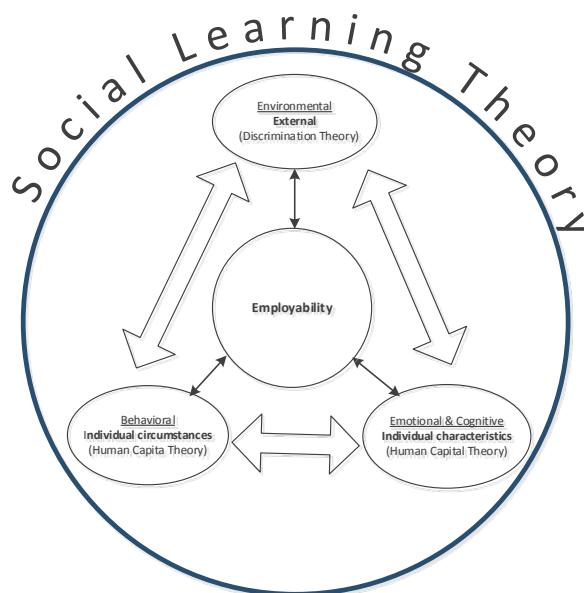
Reinforcing consequences or rewards. Bandura also demonstrated the importance of reinforcing consequences for learning (1977a). Reinforcement can be external (e.g., approval from a parent, supervisor, teacher, or sibling) or internal (e.g., a personal sense of accomplishment) as well as vicarious (e.g., observed rewards received by others) (Bandura, 1977a). Behavior that is rewarded and reinforced tends to be repeated. Maladaptive, oppositional behavior may be repeated and may strengthen if it leads to increased social status or other rewards. The behavior of rejecting employment can be negatively reinforced if it removes a negative consequence such as harassment in the workplace due to a skin color or gender.

Reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism incorporates the environment as a key factor into the model of individual learning (See Figure 5). There are three factors that influence behavior: the environment, personal characteristics (e.g., one’s thoughts, emotions, beliefs, goals), and behavior (e.g., skills and actions) itself. Learning affects individual cognitive processes, which influences individual behavior, which then can improve or worsen an individual’s situation (environment) (Bandura, 1978). Thus, the direction of causal influence flows in both directions: from environment/situation to individual and from individual to environment, in a process of “behavior, thought and other personal factors, and environmental influences all operat[ing] as interlocking determinants of each other” (Bandura, 1981, p. 30). For example, an individual living in a neighborhood which rejects traditional work activities (environment), may reject traditional work (behavior), while thinking or believing that traditional work is a waste of time

(cognition). Thinking that traditional work is a waste of time, the individual may engage in criminal activities to earn money, which in turn changes their environment to one in which they are sentenced to prison.

As can be seen in Figure 5, social learning theory includes elements of human capital theory and discrimination theory. For example, workplace discrimination (discrimination theory) reflects social learning theory's environmental component. A lack of job skills or limited education (human capital theory) suggests social learning theory's behavioral process. Social learning theory also aligns well a more complex employability definition. The environment corresponds with *external factors*, emotion & cognition reflect *individual characteristics*, and behavioral processes aligns with *individual circumstances*. Thus, social learning theory becomes an overarching framework for understanding employability in order to create measures of employability effectiveness.

Figure 5:
Social learning theory as an overarching theoretical framework for employability



Self-Efficacy and learned helplessness. A key construct in Bandura’s social learning theory is self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s ability to determine “how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations” (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). Bandura (1997) argued that individual self-efficacy arises from causal attributions of past experiences. Studies testing the relationship between attributions and self-efficacy show that causal attributions can impact individual assessments of employment efficacy (Martocchio & Judge, 1997; Holladay & Quinones, 2003; Silver et al., 1995).

Consequently, how individuals identify the causes of their employment successes and failures influences the development of their employability efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). Efficacy beliefs can impact human achievement, attitude, and skill proficiency (Bandura, 1977b, 1997). Thus, if individuals feel like they cannot learn new skills demanded in the workplace, their employability efficacy decreases.

Furthermore, self-efficacy literature recognizes that individual perceptions of their employability skill, capacity, and competency can be derived from the causal attribution of their

past successes and failures (Gist & Mitchel, 1992). If individuals have experienced employment failure in their past and they have attributed that failure to their own lack of skills or expertise, they may apply that failure to their inability to obtain a job and just give up. Silver et al., (1995) showed that people with low-efficacy attributed their failures to internal deficits. Learned helplessness studies reported similar results, that individuals who had experienced episodic unemployment developed a sense of futility about being able to change their work-related circumstances (Zippay, 1995). Consequently, with low self-efficacy may avoid difficult situations, concluding that many work requirements are too advanced for their abilities and feel helpless to change their situation.

Symbolic representation (mental models). To Bandura (1977a), symbols are a source of motivation because they enable individuals to visualize future rewards (e.g., getting a job and buying a car), which motivates present behavior towards future rewards or avoiding future punishments. The value of creating symbolic representations of behavior, Bandura (1977a) believed, was to allow individuals to imagine acting and being rewarded for similar behavior. Symbolic representations of future rewards then become goals (Bandura, 1977a). Goals are a cognitive representation of future benefits which drives the motivation to push toward meeting those goals. Bandura (1977a) pointed out that it is not the goals that provides the motivational effects, but an individual's ability to visually achieve those goals and respond to their own ability to meet them.

An example of this symbolic construction of self and employability of the hard-to-serve is the negative construction of self. What happens when a person's sense of self is a symbol of failure? For example, men who are involved in the criminal justice system are met with repeated reminders of their social failure: loss of social status or standing within the mainstream environment. However, this example is actually more complicated. Deviant or criminal behavior

may not be met with rejection from sub-culture primary reference groups. In fact it can be seen as a form of masculinity (Messerschmidt, 1993), or a way of providing for basic needs such as housing, clothing, and food. These external manifestations of approval may lead to a positive sense of self that is worthwhile, though criminal, but this positive self-concept is in conflict with negative responses from mainstream actors.

Prior to Bandura, Cooley postulated that individual identities arise as reflections of the responses and evaluations of others, and an individual's perceptions of those evaluations may influence their observation of themselves in relation to these external biases (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). To illustrate this concept, a disabled person may see themselves as less hireable than a non-disabled person because of the attitudes employers may exhibit toward their disability. Thus, they may internalize the bias as true and lower their expectations for their own labor force participation or opt out of the labor market altogether. Cooley argued that an individual's sense of "self" is more than the reflected appraisals of others' assessment, but also that "human beings are motivated to experience themselves as causal agents in their own environments" (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983, p. 79), which intersects well with Bandura's discussion of symbolic construction or mental models (Bandura, 1977a). The ability to use symbols allows individuals to understand how they fit in the social world through assessments of self through the eyes of others (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). For example, people with undesirable attributes may create symbols of their self as difficult-to-employ.

Motivation. Individual motivation is a function of the goal setting that comes from creating mental models of behavior, rewards, and future rewards. From Bandura (1977a) "the motivational effects do not derive from the goals themselves but rather from the fact that people respond evaluatively to their own behavior. Goals specify the conditional requirements for positive self-evaluation" (p. 161). If an individual's behavior is considered deviant and

mainstream society requires changes in that behavior that better aligns with current and dominate social expectations, the offender may fail to view themselves positively; their symbol of self is as a criminal. If they cannot see themselves in a positive frame, they are not motivated to change, or to engage in ways that would lead to employability, such as attending a job training program, developing soft skills, or attending a substance abuse programs.

Employability, Learned Helplessness, and Social Learning Theory

Since the Great Recession, individuals have been suffering from stress resulting from job loss, job insecurity, and chronic unemployment (Klehe, Vianen, & Zikic, 2012) that, when coupled with fast-moving technological advances and global competition, has made it difficult for those with limited employability assets to compete in the modern labor market (Probst, 2003). The abundance of research literature reviewing and testing learned helplessness theory has shown that when people experience stressful events beyond their control, a sense of helplessness arises (Seligman, 1972; Seligman & Maier, 1967). Consequently, those struggling with economic stress develop feelings of helplessness, leading to a loss of self-esteem and confidence, and self-doubt about individual employability (Chen & Lim, 2012).

After experiencing economic hardships, the difficult-to-employ may shift their actions from problem-focused (e.g., gaining skills or finding a job) to emotion-focused, coping with perceived failure by withdrawing or giving up, feeling helpless and becoming unmotivated to build competencies that improve their employability situation (Chen & Lim, 2012). Research has shown that such individuals become passive, and remain passive, even after the economic pressures have been removed (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). They may also rationalize that using public assistance or welfare, or engaging in criminal activity is more achievable than pursuing education or training, because they believe traditional employment is beyond their reach.

Learned helplessness may also result from discrimination and stigma. Discrimination has been shown to create conflict and stress (Heslin, Bell, & Fletcher, 2012). When minorities, of any group, are blocked from access to jobs or skill training opportunities, they may become discouraged workers, which negatively affects their job search efficacy, leading to feelings of helplessness (Heslin, Bell, & Fletcher, 2012). This is learned helplessness from direct experience. There is also research that shows discrimination-based learned helplessness can also be acquired through indirect experience. According to (Heslin, Bell, & Fletcher, 2012), individuals in groups that routinely face discrimination in the workplace, whose job acquisition has been hampered by discriminatory practices, serve as role models for those around them. As these authors (2012) wrote:

Minority socialization—whereby parents and other socializing agents convey their experiences and strategies for coping with discrimination—may prime identification with a stigmatized minority group. Such identification makes stigmatized minority role models’ (unsuccessful) job search outcomes particularly salient, thereby diminishing a focal individual’s job search self-efficacy (p. 6).

Social Learning Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Employability

Human capital theory focuses on the influence of educational credentials and skill development on economic outcomes. However, human capital theory fails to take into account the need for life-long job related learning and the “necessary substantial informal learning that is required to master a job” (Livingstone, 1997, p. 9). Social learning theory, however, fills in these gaps, such that learning experiences influence more than just individual skills and education but also attitudes, values, work habits, and personal attributes (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999).

The employability of homeless individuals and substance users can be used to illustrate how the social learning theory framework encompasses human capital theory. For homeless individuals and substance users, a job is crucial to social inclusion, independence, and recovery (Leete, 1992; Stuart, 2006). Employment becomes a pathway to acceptance and integration into society because working is valued by its members (Storey, 2000). For each of these two groups, being able to compete in the labor market fosters a positive identity, while building self-worth, supporting wellbeing, increasing self-efficacy, reducing psychological symptoms, and reducing poverty (Moll, Huff, & Detwiler, 2003). Thus, social learning can explain employability as derived from increases in self-efficacy that comes from developing human capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

According to Bandura (1977a), the ability to create a mental image of accomplishing a task allows for learning, goal setting, and motivation. But this may be difficult for some groups, such as substance users. For those dependent on alcohol and drugs to be able to learn new skills, Bandura (1977a) asserted that there are five primary processes necessary for learning: attention, retention, reproduction, motivation, and self-regulation. If these processes cannot be adopted, then building human capital through learning becomes difficult, and drug and alcohol addiction limits this learning process. For example, substance users must be able to perceive and attend to what is being modeled. In order to replicate the modeled behavior, they have to program the information into long-term memory to retrieve at a later time. Finally, they must be motivated to engage in the learning process and regulate their behavior, ultimately using the information they have learned. For those struggling with drug and alcohol abuse, the ability to code information into long-term memory is limited, and abstract reasoning, goal persistence, and attentional control are impaired (Giancola & Moss, 1998), as well as retention and self-regulation (Giancola & Moss, 1998; Moss, Kirisci, Gordon, & Tarter, 1994).

Social Learning Theory, Discrimination Theory, and Employability

A social learning theory framework expands discrimination theory's explanation of employability by demonstrating how individuals acquire a sense of their employable self. As noted previously, a number of characteristics are considered undesirable by employers, such as worker age, gender, minority status, and mental illness (Becker, 2010; Hedge, Borman, & Lammlein, 2006; Ortiz, & Roscigno, 2009; Stuart, 2004). As a result, holders of these attributes face potential employer discrimination as they seek work, with discriminatory hiring practices becoming one of their barriers to employment (Goldsmith, Veum & Darity, 1996; Stuart, 2004).

Social learning theory connects the relationships between employability, self-efficacy, and discrimination. A person's judgment of their ability to obtain a job, or to be employable, promotes a positive perception in their belief of their ability to influence events around them, their perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). For example repeated encounters of discrimination can lead individuals to reevaluate their overall employability as negative in the face of repeated hiring rejections resulting from perceptions that their sex or age or race is undesirable to an employer.

As employment programs improve their programming, there are indicators they are changing their models to address the complex nature of employability. In working with a local government agency, many of the contracted vendors who provide employment programming for disadvantaged groups had limited programming activities. For example, program activities offered jobs training programs, employment soft skills classes, job coaches, supported employment jobs, employment supports, and job placement follow up. In some programs, they did offer auxiliary programming such as: assessment, family development planning, gang reduction groups, empowerment classes, and referrals to social service programs. However,

outcomes were limited to placement in supported work positions, transition to unsubsidized employment, increased hours, and jobs obtained and retained.

A specific example is Twin Cities Rise! in Minnesota. This is an example of a program that has modified their programming to address the complex nature of employability. Their vision is to empower individuals from disadvantaged groups, especially men of color, to achieve long term job success. They provide work skills training, internship opportunities, job search assistance, and employment placement services, working with participants to find meaningful employment. They have jobs coaches who provide one-on-one support and partner with participants for a year after hire. They also offer a personal empowerment program, to provide transformative change that fosters self-confidence and self-reliance. Even so, programs such as this do not incorporate social learning theory principles in their designs.

Limitations of Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory does have some disadvantages as a theoretical framework for constructing measures for quality employment programs. Because individuals are free to construct learning experiences that conforms to their own self-perceptions, incorrect beliefs may impede employability learning and growth. Bandura (1989) argued that individuals may wrongly believe that they are unable to learn a given task, and will choose to not learn or act, even in the face of a reward, and "self-perceived inefficacy can thus nullify the motivating potential of alluring outcome expectations" (p. 1180). Bandura (1986) also argued that "misbeliefs would not last long were it not for the fact that they influence selection and production of experiences. Coincidental association is often converted through misbeliefs into a genuine correlation" (p. 219). Furthermore, the freedom to select experiences can also influence a transformative learning process. Bandura (1986) posited that in order for individuals to learn and progress, they must be able to have the agency to choose to influence themselves as well as their environment, "people

select and process sensory information, rather than simply react to whatever impinges on their sense organs” (p. 198).

Program employability effectiveness indicators measuring how learning experiences can transform employability can become impossible as people exert their freedom to shape their experiences, especially if it is toward continued unemployability. Weaknesses of Bandura’s social learning theory also include a dependency on the quality of the models (Bandura, 1986), and the motivation levels of the individuals to observe and modify their actions (Bandura, 1977a), necessary considerations when developing performance measures of employability effectiveness.

Social Learning Theory Illustrated with the Delancey Street Project (Delancey Street, 2007)

The application of social learning theory to the topic of employability may be illustrated through the Delancey Street program. Delancey Street is a residential self-help organization for former drug and alcohol abusers, ex-offenders, the homeless, the functionally literate and the poor, those with limited to no marketable job skills. Started in 1971 in San Francisco, California, Delancey Street serves teenagers and adults of all ages, sexes, races, and ethnicities. The minimum stay is approximately two years, but residents stay, on average, about four years. The program requires strict compliance to three primary rules: (1) no drugs or alcohol; (2) no threats of violence; and (3) no physical violence. Everyone involved in the program is expected to contribute to the operations. The operations are based on the “each-one-teach-one” principle, where existing residents teach new residents, who then are required to help the next arrival. The goal of this approach to accountability is to help residents “replace old self-destructive habits with new strengths, talents, and a sense of responsibility” (Delancey Street, 2007). Delancey Street is self-governing, the leadership and management is drawn from residents as they address housing concerns, rule violations, education needs, employment opportunities, and other problems that arise.

Delancey Street is an example of an organization that provides real job experience through mastery experience embedded in a social learning model framework. Delancey Street addresses those behaviors and attitudes that hamper individual progress toward employability. One way this is accomplished is by providing “mastery experiences”, where participants are immersed in an environment where they are not only expected to become productive members of society, but they are given the necessary job training in real world jobs in real companies. Consequently, Delancey Street participants experience actual success in real jobs, thus reinforcing behavioral and attitude changes required to move them from a state of helplessness to a state of high employment self-efficacy.

Offering education and vocational training are primary goals at Delancey Street. Program participants tutor residents in basic skills, education (GED), and college courses. For example, using the “each-one-teach-one” method, a resident that reads at the eighth grade level teaches another resident who reads at the sixth grade level, who teaches a resident at a fourth-grade level, who teaches a new resident who is illiterate. All residents learn at least three marketable skills with training provided by other residents in businesses run on the Delancey Street Campus. The residents achieve by practicing and teaching life skills, job skills, and inter-personal skills. Job-ready residents obtain employment outside of the Delancey Street campus but remain housed at Delancey Street for some time to save their money and develop credit and debt management skills until they are ready to live fully outside the campus. Delancey Street offers a wide range of vocational programs, some of which are:

- Accounting and bookkeeping
- Handcrafted wood terrariums, ironworks, and furniture
- Advertising specialty sales
- Automotive, mechanical, repair and painting

- Construction and property management
- Moving and trucking
- Restaurant, catering, event and wedding planning

The Delancey Street program may be used to illustrate concepts drawn from Bandura's social learning theory. By surrounding participants with a new environment that reinforces productive thoughts and behaviors and extinguishes unproductive thoughts and behaviors, Delancey Street trains participants to become the type of individual desired by employers. Delancey Street aims to redirect residents from their self-destructive behavior into new, positive and self-determining attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The focus is on learning that is "rooted in direct experience, [and] results from [an understanding of] the positive and negative effects that actions produce" (Bandura, 1977a, p. 17). When clients behave counter to the organization's rule of conduct and expectations, they receive consequences from the group, punishing unacceptable behavior, while teaching and rewarding acceptable forms of behavior to model and imitate. Each program component becomes an activity that can be measured.

Modeling is a key component of Delancey Street success as well as a primary component of social learning theory's learning process. According to Bandura (1977a) most behavior is learned through modeling or observing the behavior of others and includes these learning processes: *attentional*, *retention*, *motor reproduction*, and *motivational*. Because Delancey Street residents cannot learn from observation unless they pay attention to the behaviors they observe, this is the *attentional processes*. Encouraging proper attentiveness to the correct behaviors is established through the each-one, teach one method. The resident-as-teacher identifies the correct behavior to attain and focuses the attention of the resident-as-learner on a specific behavior or action (thus, the resident as-learner's attention is focused appropriately). Since the resident-as-learner cannot progress without learning the correct procedural steps for an action, they are

limited in the types of behavior they will repeatedly observe and practice, thus allowing them to learn the appropriate behaviors thoroughly.

The *retention process* is necessary for learning new behaviors. According to Bandura (1977a), it is only through the ability to represent memory through symbols that individuals can retain what they have learned. Two imagery processes are essential in retaining the mental images required to learn modeled behavior; *imagery* and *verbal*. For Delancey Street, residents-as-learners are repeatedly exposed to the steps in each activity by the residents-as-teachers verbally and through physical demonstrations. This repetition creates lasting images of the modeled actions, which can be retained and reproduced at a future time.

Modeling's third element, *motor reproduction process*, converts symbolic representations of the steps into actions. Because residents-as-learners must repeat the same procedural stages over and over, and then teach them repeatedly to subsequent learners, they are more likely to retain the task steps themselves. Individuals are also more likely to adopt modeled actions that provide rewards than those that lead to punishment, or *motivational processes* (the fourth process). For the Delancey Street project, the resident-as-teacher repeatedly models the desired activity and the steps for completing that activity correctly with regular prompts when the resident-as-learner fails and rewards them when they follow the correct procedures. These rewards encourage the residents-as-learners to continue learning.

Applying Social Learning Theory to Hard-to-Employ Groups

The next section explains in more detail the employability struggles among difficult-to-employ groups: criminal offenders, homeless individuals, those with disabilities and mental illness, and substance users. Following each brief discussion are short examples of how specific social learning concepts can be applied to particular difficult-to-serve subgroups. Demonstrating how employability and social learning theoretical concepts relate to the hard-to-employ further

illustrates the multi-dimensional nature of employability, supporting the need for metrics that measure the complex, intertwined nature of these principles.

Employability and Criminal Offenders

Ex-offenders are more likely to have long periods of unemployment (Bushway, 1998; Nally, Lockwood, Ho, Knutson, 2014; Western & Beckett, 1999); remain jobless after their release from an institution (Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2011; Pager, 2007; Raphael & Weiman, 2007), and if convicted of a felony or incarcerated, experience reduced job prospects (Cantora, 2015; Harlow; 2003; Nally et al., 2014; Pager, 2003; Schmitt & Warner, 2010; Western & Beckett, 1999; Western, Kling, Weiman, 2011). According to Myers (1981) criminal behavior did not explain the variation in hours worked for black male ex-offenders but did so for white male ex-offenders, though working in a job before incarceration raised employment prospects for both African American and white ex-offenders after prison, though more so for white ex-offenders. African American ex-offenders that had a job arranged for them at release – especially the first six months, increased their average hours worked. Having a job with livable wages has been found to have a deterrent effect on criminal behavior (Myers, 1983), decreasing criminal offending more effectively than punishment.

Small studies have found that incarcerated women are more likely to be unemployed prior to their incarceration (Young & Mattucci, 2006), and post-incarcerated women are even more economically marginalized (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2006; Lee, Bank, Cause, McBeath, & Newell, 2015; O'Brien, 2002; Rose, Michaelsen, Wiest, & Fabian, 2008; Zaitzow, 2006).

The social learning theory concepts of aspirational models, symbolic representation, and reinforcing consequences illustrate how offenders struggle with employability. Criminal behavior can be learned through observing criminal models (Bandura, 1986). Individuals observe and imitate patterns of criminal and non-criminal behavior, attitudes and beliefs, from parents,

siblings, friends, and community members who select criminal activity over non-criminal activity to achieve economic goals (Farrington, et al., 2001; Rowe & Farrington, 1997; Thornberry, 2005). When deviance is rewarded, or at least not punished, it leads to positive mental images of offending and the increased likelihood of adopting criminal actions (Akers & Jennings, 2015).

Employability and Homelessness

Studies have identified a variety of employment obstacles experienced by homeless people: lack of education, limited job skills, limited transportation options, child care problems (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008; Hawthorne, et al. 2012; Long, Rio & Rosen, 2007), as well as sporadic work histories (Baggett & Johnson, 2010). They struggle with physical disabilities, mental health issues (Tam, et al. 2003; Ji, 2006; Zuvekas & Hill, 2000), incarceration (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008; Hawthorne, et al. 2012), and substance use (Zlotnick, Tam, & Robertson, 2003), which increases their likelihood of being unemployed (Shier, Jones, & Graham, 2012). The homeless also have limited access to technology, though many jobs require some type of technical skills, and job searches often require a basic knowledge of computers (Miller, et al. 2005), which are often unavailable to the homeless.

Bandura's (1985) discussion of observation and symbolic representation can be applied to the employability problems of homeless individuals. Bandura (1985) holds that observing a similar role model offers information on how to be successful when performing the same employment task. Therefore, if a homeless individual observes a formally homeless staff member, who has overcome their own employment difficulties, model success, then the observer creates an image of themselves also achieving success, and feel motivated to pursue employability.

Employability and Persons with Physical Disabilities or Mental Illness

According to the U.S. Census (2014), 17.1% of persons with a disability were employed. According to Fogg, Harrington, and McMahon (2010), the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was 1.8 times higher than those who were not disabled, and those with disabilities experienced longer periods of unemployment than non-disabled persons (Brault, 2012). A study by Chatterji, Alegria, and Takeuchi (2011) found that a psychiatric disorder reduced the likelihood of employment between 9-15 percentage points among males and by 9-19 percentage points among females. These findings support other studies reporting unemployment rates for those with a mental health disorders that ranged from 60 to 90 percent (Cook et al., 2005).

Bandura's (1977a) discussion of symbolic representation applies to both those that struggle with mental illness and those that are disabled. Social workers may have lower expectations for their clients' ability to keep and retain a job if they have a mental illness or are disabled. Thus, these clients may create symbolic representations of themselves as low-skill workers and seek jobs requiring limited knowledge and skills, but which also pay smaller salaries. These lower expectations translate into reduced expectations for learning higher level work skills and workers may redirect their clients toward low skilled jobs. Once in these environments, coworkers may also act toward them negatively, dismissively, or even maliciously based on what they have learned about the mentally ill from others or the media (Bandura, 2004). A mentally ill or disabled worker would observe these attitudes toward themselves, experience the prejudice toward their disability, and feel diminished; consequently, they may seek lower-skilled jobs, becoming excluded from higher paying opportunities.

Employability and Substance Use

Individuals that struggle with substance abuse are less likely to be employed than non-substance abusers (Chandler, Meisel, & Jordan, 2003; Morgenstern, et. al, 2008). The

unemployed are more likely to use illicit drugs, smoke marijuana, consume large quantities of alcohol, and report drug dependence compared to full time workers (Larson, Eyerman, Foster, & Gfroerer, 2007). While abuse of alcohol and drugs does not always make users unemployable (Morgenstern, et.al 2008; Metsch & Pollack, 2005; Wetzler, et. al, 2010), it is difficult for many to obtain and keep a job (Wetzler, et. al, 2010; OAS, 2014; Bray, et al., 2000). Studies indicate that substance users earn lower wages, have lower employment rates, and lower levels of productivity (Galaif, Newcomb & Carmona, 2001; Kaester, 1998), experience inconsistent job histories, report low motivation levels, and have limited marketable job skills (Dunlap et al., 2007; Shepard & Reif, 2004).

According to Bandura (1977a), programming and reproducing observed job-related behavior into long-term memory is a necessary process of learning, and thus, becoming employable. This process entails creating mental images or symbols of the observed behavior and retaining them as a blueprint for future attitudes and actions (Bandura, 1977a). For addicted individuals, observing or attending to the appropriate employment behavior and attitudes maybe difficult. If they cannot attend to the right employment behaviors, they cannot convert them into mental images of learning, achieving, and obtaining a job, nor would they be able to reproduce the correct work related behaviors (Giancola & Moss, 1998; Moss, Kirisci, Gordon, & Tarter, 1994).

Employability and Minority Workers

Unemployment rates varied among different racial groups. In February 2016, the unemployment rate was 4.3% for whites; 3.8% for Asians; 8.8% for blacks; and 5.4% for Hispanics (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Racial gaps in unemployment rates held true across education levels. At the lowest education level, “less than high school”, 22% of blacks were unemployed compared with 14% of whites, 11% of Asians and 13% of Hispanics, with the

greatest gap occurring between blacks and Asians (Jacobsen & Mather, 2011). Only when black individuals reported some college education did the unemployment gap shrink. For those with some college education, the greatest disparity occurred between blacks and whites, a difference of 4.8 percentage points (Jacobsen & Mather, 2011). Examining foreign born workers, Mexican immigrants worked fewer hours than whites or blacks; working an average of 2-4 hours less than other racial groups (Lin, 2011).

Social learning theory provides a framework for understanding how aggregate neighborhood unemployment can exert powerful modeling effects on race and ethnic unemployment (Bauer, Fertig, & Vorell, 2011). Research indicates that neighborhoods with large proportions of unemployed exert social and psychological pressures on community members to also be unemployed (Clark, 2003; Kassenbohmer & Haisken-DeNew, 2009). Social networks can serve as a vehicle for social learning (Manski, 2000). For example, if an individual observes others being rewarded or not receiving punishment or negative consequences for not working and concurrently observes others getting enjoyment from non-employment activities, those activities become appealing and desirable to model. Not-working may be considered normal for some community members, increasing the likelihood that individuals will adopt similar non-working behavior.

Modelers not only model work rejection behavior; they also model behaviors conducive to working in low-skill jobs. This is modeling downward, and individuals observing such behavior may imitate the low expectations of low-skilled work (Manski, 2000). What this means is that instead of striving to rise above the low economic status of family members or friends, individuals aspire to achieve at the same economic status.

Reciprocal determinism also explains this neighborhood effect (Bandura 1977a). Reciprocal determinism holds that a person's behavior, attitude, and beliefs are influenced by the

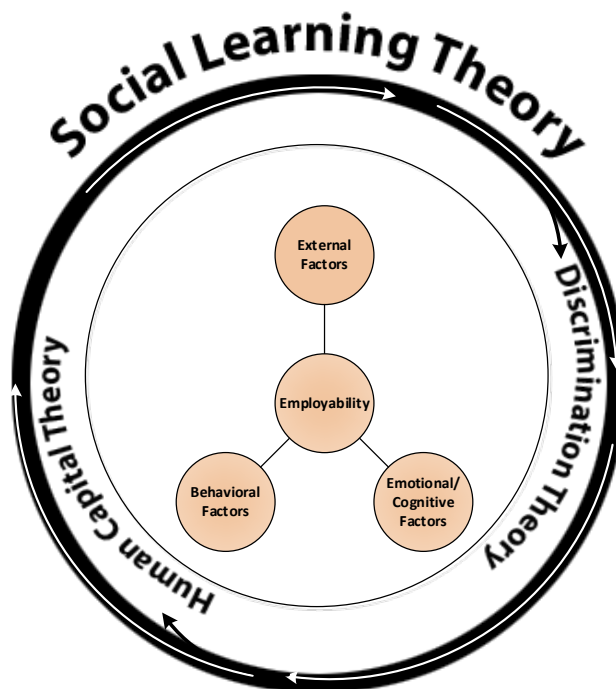
interaction of behavior, personal characteristics, and environmental forces. When people live in neighborhoods that model low-aspirational jobs, and there is no positive reward for higher-aspirational activities, then observers are motivated to imitate such behavior, ultimately following a similar trajectory of education, training and career paths in low-skill jobs with low earning potential.

Social Learning Theory and Employability Effectiveness Measures

Now that social learning theory can be connected to employability among disadvantaged groups, this thesis extends its usefulness to measurement of employment programs that serve this population. Human capital theory measures employability in terms of skill development or years of education acquired and other related measures (Greenberg, Ashworth, Cebulla & Walker, 2005; Hamilton et al., 2001; Pavoni & Violante, 2007). Discrimination theory measures employability largely in terms of wage differentials, discriminatory hiring practices, or merit (Kang & Banaji, 2006). What these two theories fail to measure is the complex nature of employability. Programs reflecting human capital and discrimination theory principles constrain program measurement to these narrow and limited range of indicators. Such limited metrics are what program evaluators are compelled to use to measure the effectiveness and quality of employment programs. As this literature review has indicated, employment programs that focus on these metrics have not consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for the difficult-to-employ over the long term. It is not that these measures are flawed but that they are incomplete. Thus, improving the evaluation of employment programs requires metrics that accurately measure program quality in terms of employability effectiveness, which encompasses all the tools and activities that programs use to help clients overcome the multi-dimensional barriers to employment.

Social learning theory provides an overarching framework for understanding the complex nature of employability, identifying program activities that support full employability, and for developing metrics designed to measure a range of employability effectiveness indicators. In Figure 6, social learning theory captures relevant elements of discrimination theory and human capital theory. Thus, the applicable elements from each of these three theories become one larger framework that represents the relationship between the theories and the definition of employability. These relationship then establishes the components necessary to determine appropriate employability effectiveness measures.

Figure 6:
Employability and social learning theory



What would social learning theory based metrics for employability effectiveness look like? Metrics would measure how well program activities address employability among program

clients, with a set of indicators reflecting social learning theory. See Table 1. For example a program activity would be “program teaches essential workplace attributes” and a corresponding metric might be *clients imitate modeled essential attributes*, of course the indicator would be more specific to the program.

Table 1:
Examples of employability effectiveness measures using the employability definition and social learning theory principles

Example Program Activities	Social Learning Example Indicators
Program activities related to <i>individual characteristics</i>: Program teaches essential workplace attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational role models model reliability, willingness to work, or understanding of actions and consequences and rewards client actions • Clients observe modeled essential attributes • Clients imitate modeled essential attributes
Program offers transferable skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational role models model work tasks and rewards client actions • Clients observe modeled work tasks • Clients imitate modeled work tasks
Program activities related to <i>individual circumstances</i>: Program provides access to transportation and child care	Reciprocal determinism: changes in environment/ circumstances (transportation and child care) results in changes in behavior (take up employment opportunities) leading to changes in employability which leads to changes to environment (employed).
Program activities related to <i>External factors</i>: Program provides participants with a way to expunge their criminal history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants improve their sense of self – views the self as hireable and not as a criminal – improving self-efficacy.
Program activities related to <i>External factors</i>: Program develops a pro-work and worker support social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients develop self-efficacy as a worker, overcome a sense of learned helplessness, and embrace co-workers as friends – changing their own environment of anti-work to pro-work.

Social Learning Theory Conclusion

To summarize, social learning theory helps explain the ways an individual's environment triggers particular thinking and feeling and action, and, in turn, how an individual's thinking and feeling and action influence his or environment. Examining the unemployed as a function of cognitive and emotions (personal), behavioral (actions) and environmental processes further describes the conditions under which thinking and behavioral congruence may act in accordance with external environmental pressures to limit hirability. The literature review established the

problem of employability among many disadvantaged groups. The Delancey Street example clarifies how the problem may be effectively addressed through program activities that reflect social learning theory principles. The next step, then, is to develop a balanced set of key performance measures of employability effectiveness. Social learning provides a theoretical framework for understanding the elements that contribute to employability deficits and becomes useful for guiding the construction of metrics that measure important aspects of employability effectiveness.

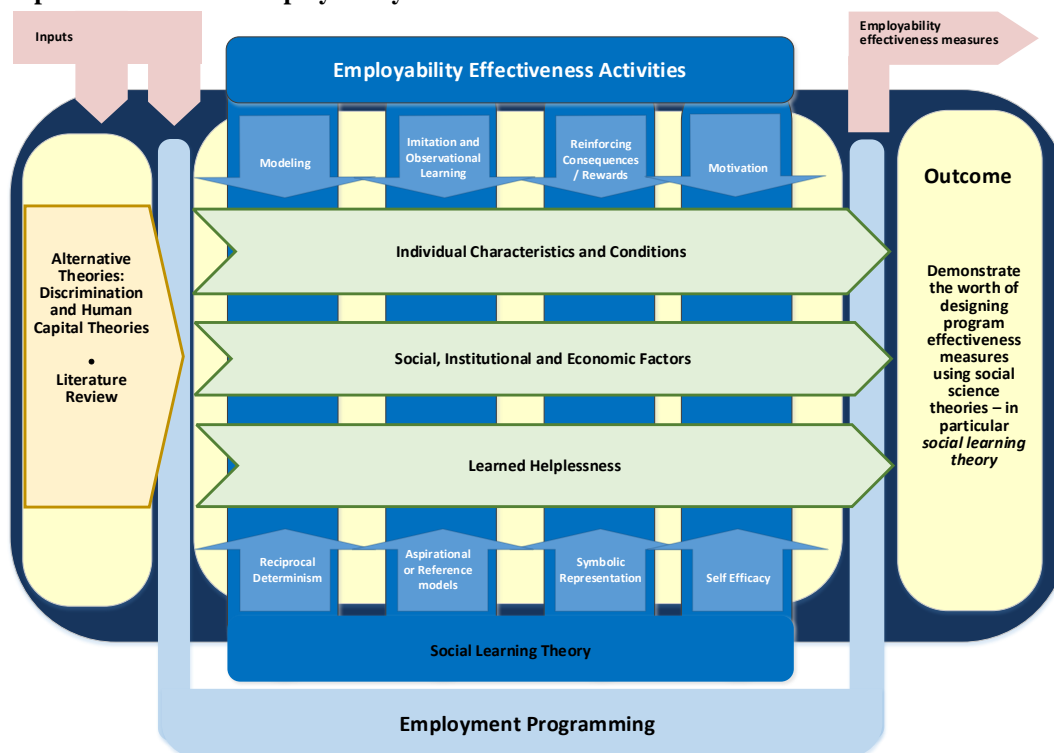
Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed suggests that a social learning theory approach can provide explanatory power for understanding employability that goes beyond explanations that rely on human capital and discrimination theories. The literature also showed that the available metrics used to capture employability and program quality outcomes are limited, failing to operationalize the learning process necessary to become employable. What is lacking is a high-quality set of performance measures that reflects this view of factors inhibiting the employability of the most difficult-to-employ individuals. The current study seeks to develop and validate appropriate metrics that reflect this view.

The conceptual framework in Figure 7 illustrates the intersection between social learning theory, program theory, and measurement. The conceptual framework merges Bandura's (1971; 1977a) social learning theory principles with the employability definition, including the problem of learned helplessness. The literature review of employability and learned helplessness, the Delancey Street model, social learning theory, human capital, and discrimination theories become the inputs. However, social learning theory and the employability definition guides the development of employability effectiveness measures (activities) using the Delancey Street model as the frame for these activities. Actual employability effectiveness measures become the outputs.

Validating those measures – to demonstrate the worth of designing program effectiveness measures using social science theory becomes the outcome for this study.

Figure 7:
Conceptual framework - employability effectiveness



CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter restates the research problem, then reviews the purpose of the study and the research questions. The research paradigm is discussed, followed by a description of the research process. An overview of methodology is also provided, including a description of the sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Restatement of the Problem

Over the last several decades public resources have been dedicated to solving the problem of unemployment of disadvantaged groups, yet the problem of unemployment still persists (Butler, et al., 2012; Decker & Berk, 2011; G Conley & Dupor, 2013, LaLonde, 2003). Research has shown that employment programs serving disadvantaged groups focus primarily on skill development (Hamilton, et al., 2001; Henrich & Holzer, 2011; Vu, Anthony & Austin, 2009) failing to address the complex barriers to employment (Kettner, Moroney, & Marting, 2012) including the problem of learned helplessness (Carnochan, 2014), which severely limits their ability to find and retain work (Cole, Daly, & Mak, 2009). Evaluations of such programs have shown that they often fail to improve the employability of their participants over the long term (Butler, 35 al., 2012; Grogger & Karoly, 2005; Livermore, Powers, Davis, & Lim, 2011; Wetzler, Schwartz, Swanson, & Cahill, 2012).

Measurement indices used for the evaluation of these programs have been limited to such metrics as wages earned, jobs obtained, or skills developed, rarely capturing the complex nature of employability and program activities designed to improve it. These metrics also neglect the phenomenon of learned helplessness in hard-to-serve populations as well as other complex barriers to employment experienced by these populations. Thus, the problem for program evaluators is that what is being measured may not reflect the correct employability constructs.

Programs and their evaluations maybe missing key factors identifying employment program effectiveness because quality performance measures are rarely grounded in an empirically established theoretical framework that capture the multi-dimensional aspect of employability. In other words, they are not measuring program quality such as employability effectiveness. Therefore, there is a need to develop a broader set of program quality measures that recognize the links between employability, learning, and learned helplessness (Diener & Dweck, 1980; Overmier & Seligman, 1967) and reflect the motivational and emotional deficits experienced by the difficult-to -employ (Rodriguez, 1997).

Purpose of the Study/Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to use social science theories to develop measures of employability effectiveness and establish the validity of those measures. Three employment related theories were explored in this thesis: *human capital theory*, *discrimination theory*, and *social learning* theory, with performance measures developed within these theoretical contexts.

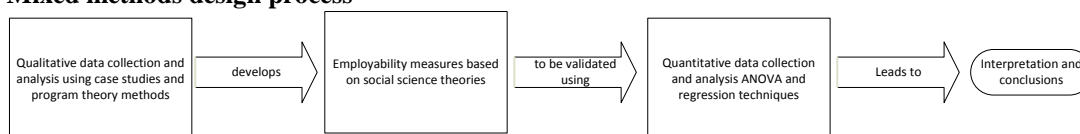
Research Questions

1. What is a suitable set of metrics for assessing employment programs that includes metrics for assessing activities that address learned helplessness?
2. To what extent are these metrics valid?

This research was conducted using an exploratory mixed methods design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) by applying both qualitative and quantitative techniques for collecting and analyzing data across two stages of the research process (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Choosing exploratory mixed methods requires initial qualitative research findings to be subjected to later quantitative analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007). See Figure 1. The reason for using mixed methods is that neither the qualitative nor the quantitative approaches are enough to identify and validate social-theory based measures of program quality on their own

(Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Drawing from the literature reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, qualitative techniques were used to develop program quality indicators that were used in the second quantitative phase of the study.

Figure 8:
Mixed methods design process



Research Paradigm

The use of mixed methods draws from both quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing the strengths of one method to compensate for the weaknesses in the other, or what is called triangulation (Flick, 2008; Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). Qualitative research offers “an inquiry process of understanding” in which the researcher establishes a “complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). Quantitative designs, on the other hand, are commonly aligned with positivism and post-positivism paradigms (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), the purpose of which is to generate knowledge, demonstrate cause and effect, test hypotheses, develop and validate measures, and test theories through the collection and analyses of numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002).

Researchers using mixed methods designs create knowledge from a pragmatic perspective (Creswell, 2003; Maxcy, 2003), focusing on “what works” (Howe, 1988). The pragmatic perspective offers techniques and approaches that best uncover answers to the research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). A driving assumption of pragmatism is that quantitative and qualitative methods can complement each other, integrating both numerical and text data collected sequentially or concurrently in ways to investigate the research problem (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Mixed methods align well with the pragmatic worldview, supporting Weiss

(1997) who stated that methods are “bundles of techniques that can be put together in different combinations” (p. 180). Using a pragmatic worldview transcends the debates about how best to study reality by discounting the perception of quantitative and qualitative incompatibility (Morgan, 2007), while borrowing tools and techniques from each paradigm. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p.713) defined pragmatism as:

a deconstructive paradigm that debunks concepts such as ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ and focuses instead on ‘what works’ as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation. Pragmatism rejects the either/or choices associated with the paradigm wars, advocates for the use of mixed methods in research, and acknowledges that the values of the researcher play a large role in interpretation of results.

Establishing the research paradigm at the outset of a research study provides a roadmap for the methodological approach, the research design, the types of questions asked, and the populations sampled (Weaver & Olson, 2006). Ontologically, pragmatists accept external realities and seek explanations that best return desired outcomes (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Epistemologically, pragmatism encompasses both subjective and objective points of view, using inductive and deductive research approaches, exploring and examining phenomena from a different perspective to test a hypothesis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In terms of axiology, the choice of what to research and how to conduct the research are determined by the researchers and informants’ values, beliefs, and experiences (Mertens, 2014). Thus, pragmatism offers a practical and applied research worldview by which to guide this study.

Research Design

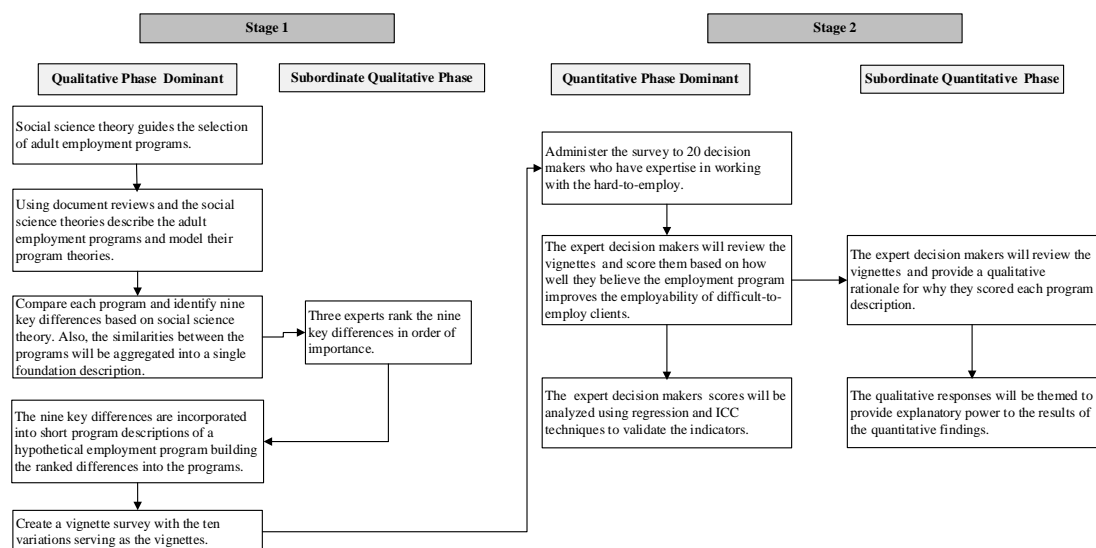
This study used an exploratory, sequential, mixed-methods design conducted in two distinct stages (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell and Clark (2007) this is also called an instrument development design because a “researcher develops an instrument as an intermediate

step between the phases that builds on the qualitative results and is used in the subsequent quantitative data collection” (p. 86). Using mixed methods for the development of qualitative or quantitative instruments is not common (Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante, & Nelson, 2010), though there has been three studies in recent history doing just that (Collins et al., 2006; Hitchcock, et al 2005, 2006). The process of developing assessment tools may be influenced by the selection of a research paradigm, especially when qualitative approaches are used to develop qualitative instruments and quantitative approaches are used to develop quantitative assessment tools (Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante, & Nelson, 2010). There is empirically supported literature, however, that has shown that qualitative meaning can be incorporated into quantitative assessments, though such techniques are more likely to be found in the public health or medical fields (Fleury, 1992). Thus, selecting this design for this study satisfies a need for developing performance measures encompassing qualitative standards because they “devise more effective ways of representing and investigating the complexities of human experience; [thus], the use of qualitative data for instrument development is an important aspect of such scale development.” (Fleury, 1992, p. 135).

The research was conducted in two stages and within each stage were two phases. The first, qualitative stage, used the literature review of social science theories and program theory techniques to develop two case examples of employment programs serving the difficult-to-employ. These case examples were used to create program employability effectiveness indicators based on social science theories that were ranked in order of importance by a small panel of expert decision makers. This ranking by a panel of expert decision makers is the second quantitative phase in Stage 1. In the second quantitative stage, the ranked indicators were incorporated into a survey instrument, which was given to another group of expert decision makers for scoring. These scores were used to investigate the validity of the measures. The

survey instrument also included text fields asking the respondents to provide a rationale for their scores. See Figure 9.

Figure 9:
Research design process



Qualitative Phase: Developing Case Examples

The previous review of the social science theory literature in Chapters 1 and 2, document reviews, and theory of change modeling of existing adult employment programs were used to develop indicators of program quality. The qualitative phase provided greater understanding of the employability construct. The information gathered using these three approaches identified standards of performance for employment programs with respect to employability effectiveness. The process for developing these indicators followed the first four guidelines for scale development outlined by DeVellis' (1991):

1. Clearly determine what is being measured;
2. Generate the item pool;
3. Determine the format for measurement; and

4. Review of items by panel of experts.

Determine what to measure

The definition of employability was the domain of content explored to determine appropriate measures of employment program quality or effectiveness. This definition was used because it captured the complex, multidimensional nature of employability; more specifically, the employability of disadvantaged groups, those that are most likely to struggle with employment, because establishing employability effectiveness means understanding what makes individuals employable. These are not just indicators of individual employability, however, but indicators of how well employment program elements are theorized to improve the employability of underserved groups.

Generate item pool

A review of the literature did not find comprehensive instruments designed to directly measure program employability effectiveness for programs serving the hard-to-employ individuals. Additionally, the review did not uncover instruments designed to measure these outcomes across programs. Thus, the item pool was made up of untested indicators developed to assess a program's ability to improve the employability skills among clients. The item pool was generated by drawing concepts from the three social science theories that have been discussed at length; examining existing employment program documents; and developing program theory models of employment programs serving disadvantaged groups.

Determine the format for measurement

The format for presenting the items was in the form of descriptions of hypothetical employment programs serving hard-to-serve groups. These were descriptions of hypothetical programs developed for the purpose of review by selected program decision makers. The items were incorporated into the program descriptions to reflect specific employability constructs and

were meant to tap into progressively higher levels of program quality as determined by the decision makers.

Review of items by panel of experts

Expert decision makers reviewed the program descriptions. These experts were those that would typically review descriptions of employment programs in the course of their work activities. They included executive managers, program managers, supervisors, hiring managers, trainers, funders, and employers.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative: Document Review and Literature Review

This study used document reviews and program theory modeling techniques to develop employment program case examples of adult employment programs (Yin, 2003; Funnell & Rogers, 2011). Document analysis is a systematic procedure for analyzing documents found in print and electronically. Like other qualitative research methods, document review and analysis requires that information be examined and interpreted to extract meaning, gain insight, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Rapley, 2008).

Documents take a variety of forms. In recent years, with the advent of the internet, documentation, including websites detailing program descriptions, have increased substantially and are readily available. For this thesis, the documents reviewed were program descriptions, contracting language, reports, and websites that described adult employment programs, exemplifying the three social science theories. Non-technical reports, websites, program reviews, program contracts, program descriptions were the source of information for the case examples used in this thesis and has support in the literature (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Furthermore, as Merriam (1988) argued, “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (p. 118).

Document review is frequently used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation when studying the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009), requiring at least two sources of evidence. While not a standard method of supporting evidence (e.g., interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and physical artifacts) (Yin, 2003), a literature review was used as a secondary source of evidence. The literature review of employability, the three social theories, and program theory modeling was used to create the indicators extracted from the document reviews. Using document reviews and social science theoretical frameworks created a “confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p. 110) as indicators of program employability effectiveness were developed. The document review and the literature review helped to guard against any concern that this study’s findings were an artifact of a single method of the investigator’s bias or preference.

Qualitative: Program Theory

Drawing from the document reviews, program theory modeling methods were used to describe how each employment program’s inputs and activities contributed to outcomes in order to model each program’s theory of change (Bickman, 1987; Chen, 1990; Chen & Rossi 1983, 1992; Weiss, 1997a). In this sense, theory does not mean an overarching theory in the traditional social science definition (e.g., “systems theory”), but instead describes the program’s logic model or theory of change creating a “plausible and sensible model of how the program is supposed to work” (Bickman, 1987, p. 5). Carol Weiss (1997a) clarified how theories about program implementation and theories about program activities differ, with the latter explicating “assumptions about how implementation becomes transmuted into desired outcomes” (p. 506), or what she called program theory. Developing program theories was key for understanding employment program processes and identifying important program employability effectiveness

indicators. This study drew from Lipsey's (1993) work arguing for program theory as a method as well as from Bickman's (1987) body of literature discussing program theory.

Program theories are complex hypothesis or theories (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004) about how the program is supposed to impact client outcomes and are often illustrated as program logic models or the chain of assumptions that identify how program activities lead to outcomes (Weiss, 1997; Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999). Logic models graphically contextualize this causality typifying the "naturally unfolding program" (Patton, 1987, pp. 42) by detailing resource inputs, activities, and the outputs and outcomes that will occur. Overlaying the logic model is the theory of change model which is a representation of how the change is believed to occur (Funnell & Rogers, 2011).

Connell and Kubisch (1998) outlined three reasons for using a theory of change approach: (1) clarification about the activities and process to achieve the intended outcomes; (2) explication of the theoretical principles and program activities to achieve intended outcomes; and (3) the program theory may point to places in the process which existing or potential measures can be identified. Bickman (1987) supports this approach arguing that program theory can also be used as a method for improving causal attributions related to program impact. Carol Weiss (1997a) identified four sources of information that can assist in developing a program theory:

1. prior research – literature searches,
2. interviews and focus groups of appropriate people,
3. program document reviews, and
4. logical reasoning.

Prior research has been identified in Chapters 1 and 2 through literature searches for employability, employment related theoretical frameworks, and evaluations conducted on employment programs. Developing a program theory was further explicated through document reviews of employment programs drawing from reports, contracts, program descriptions, and

program websites. Integrating document reviews with the prior literature supported logical reasoning in developing each employment program's theory. Carol Weiss (1995) has been a strong proponent of theory of change approaches to evaluation for some time, arguing that theories of change are simply "theories about how and why the program will work (p. 66). Without explicating the theory of change, it would be impossible to understand those overt and covert actions and responses that contribute to the ultimate outcomes.

Document analysis and program theory modeling were used to create descriptions of various employment program models that operationalized the core program design principles into measures of employability effectiveness. This approach did not just isolate one or two causal factors operating on a single outcome variable, but was instead used to identify a variety of variables simultaneously (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Thus, document review and program theory techniques can help capture the complexity and fluidity of intervention programs - program multi-dimensionality (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). This approach aligns well with social learning theory's principle of reciprocal determinism, but instead of individuals, it is programs that function as a result of a fluid and joint interaction among program environment, activities, and inputs (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Program theory was used, not merely to describe each intervention program but to capture and operationalize the variety of interconnected factors that can impact change. It is this relationship that may hold as yet operationalized indicators of a program's employability. Information from the document review and the program theory models were combined with the information from the literature review to create a heuristic description of employment program activities, making it an appropriate method for identifying and operationalizing standards of program employability effectiveness.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative: Survey Research

Survey methods were used to collect the data for the quantitative phase. Surveys are a method for collecting numerical data that describes knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, or opinions of a population by sampling members of that population (Creswell, 2003). Survey research can be either longitudinal (i.e., data collected over time) or cross-sectional (e.g., collecting data at one point in time) (Fowler, 2013). A cross-sectional survey research design was selected because the purpose of the study is to collect scores related to employability effectiveness. These scores were used to investigate the validity of the employability effectiveness indicators. Survey design is a quick and cost effective method for gathering the required data needed for this study (Fowler, 2013).

For this study, a vignette type survey was used to collect the scores of respondents (Finch, 1987). It is not common to combine the vignette technique with traditional survey methods for exploring respondents' judgments (Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010). According to Atzmuller and Steiner (2010), "a vignette is a short, carefully constructed description of a person, object, or situation, representing a systematic combination of characteristics". Often, single survey experiments suffer from low external validity because of nonrepresentativeness and oversimplified question constructs, especially when measuring complex theories (Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010). Using vignette surveys, however, "enables the simultaneous presentation of several explanatory as well as contextual factors which leads to more realistic scenarios presented to respondents" (Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010, p. 129). Vignette surveys do not offer respondents fixed question choices that may or may not adequately represent their perceptions or judgments well, but questions in vignette surveys can be written to be situationally specific (Finch, 1987). For this thesis, a vignette-type survey presented different program descriptions (vignettes)

followed by a scaled rating-choice response plus an open-ended question. These program vignettes were longer and more complex than traditional survey questions in which respondents were asked to make a judgment on a given set of circumstances at one point in time. Instead the survey questions utilized employment program descriptions involving sets of program activities that were incrementally incorporated in order of employability effectiveness as ranked by experts.

Quantitative: Panel of Expert Decision Makers

Two expert decision maker groups were recruited for this study. There were three individuals in the first group of decision makers who reviewed and ranked program elements. The second group were expert decision makers asked to review the survey instrument. These were decision makers drawn from various for-profit, non-profit, and public agencies throughout Minnesota.

Quantitative: Exploring Validity

Construct validity is an overarching term regarding the assessment of the validity of the measures of a particular construct (e.g., employability effectiveness) (Newton & Shaw, 2014). Construct validity becomes a necessary step when developing indicators because it links abstract concepts with observable and measurable indicators (Newton & Shaw, 2014). Past research has laid out the process for establishing construct validity (Newton & Shaw, 2014) and will be the process used for this study:

1. Conduct a literature review identifying the relevant elements associated with the employability phenomena.
 2. Develop indicators related to the construct.
 3. Collect data to test the indicators.
- Steps 1 and 2 were completed in Stage 1. The data were collected in Stage 2. Expert decision makers were chosen based on their expertise with developing, funding, managing, hiring, or monitoring employment programs for the hard-to-serve. The decision makers were

selected using convenience sampling. The decision makers were asked to score the quality of the program variations.

Stage 1: Qualitative Primary - Quantitative Secondary

Phase 1: Qualitative Component

Method

Materials and procedures. The literature reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2 was used to identify program elements that contribute to employment program quality. Document reviews of employment programs (e.g., contracts, reports, evaluations, websites, newspapers) from Hennepin County, Minnesota, and Delancey Street provided a basis for the development of hypothetical case examples to be used in Stage 2. The employment programs selected were those that involved both traditional employment programs (e.g., focused on skill building or overcoming or reducing discrimination in the workplace) and alternative programs that offered innovative approaches for improving employability.

Two case example descriptions of employment programs were created based upon information from the document reviews and the three social science theories. The first case example reflected elements of social learning theory. The second case example was a composite description based on programs that reflected human capital and discrimination theories. The case examples included descriptions, logic models, and a program theory. One case example represented traditional employment programming (see Appendix A) and the second case example represented alternative employment programming (see Appendix B). The use of program theory modeling techniques helped to identify the elements of the program that contribute to the program's outcomes and, taken as a whole, pointed to indicators of overall program quality. Employability indicators were developed at some or all of the steps of each program's sequence of actions, activities and client responses and behavior.

The two case examples were compared and nine program elements were identified. These program elements are described in Table 2. These distinctive program elements were translated into nine indicators of employment program effectiveness. Table 2 describes the nine program elements that were selected as indicators of employment program quality.

Table 2:
Program elements

-
1. Clients are trained in at least three marketable skills by working in BtW's business enterprises.
 2. Clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients and through repetition; working at the tasks until they have acquired the skill before moving on to the next one. This process helps clients learn how to succeed at challenging tasks by developing confidence, perseverance, and goal setting.
 3. All participants must carry a daily performance evaluation to be completed by work supervisors and program staff. Participants are evaluated on the basis of their cooperation with their coworkers and supervisors, effort at work, punctuality, and personal presentation.
 4. Veteran clients serve as aspirational role models. They model expected behavior and conduct, visibly rewarding new clients for behaving appropriately; thus, teaching new clients the language, social values, and attributes of success. Veteran clients help teach and train new clients, using the "each one teach one" principle; clients teach what they know and do to newer clients; anyone who knows a little teaches someone who knows less.
 5. BtW clients hold each other accountable, through mutual, direct but supportive feedback and criticism, thus experiencing the consequences of their actions and behaviors. When mistakes are made, they learn to acknowledge them and take the consequences, then move on.
 6. Clients work their way up through the various jobs in BtW's business enterprises, acquiring a broad set of skills and learning how to operate actual businesses while developing normative work skills and habits. Thus, they learn to keep reaching for their goals by developing the capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions, and to overcome obstacles.
 7. BtW teaches clients strategies on how to present as desirable hires and cope with stigma and discrimination. To help clients overcome potential hiring discrimination, BtW issues "certificates of employability", signifying that the client has job skills and character traits of a desirable employee, as assessed by BtW.
 8. Once hired, BtW helps clients maintain employment once they secure it for the first three weeks by meeting with participants and employers as needed to discuss work performance issues.
 9. Specific program activities are in place to help clients overcome feelings of learned helplessness.
-

Phase 2: Quantitative Component

Method

Participants. Three decision makers were selected using a convenience sample, and they were asked to rank the nine employability indicators. Their job functions included employer, funder, and contract manager. Criteria for selection was they had to have had experience interacting with disadvantaged groups or the programs addressing employment problems among the hard-to-serve. Participants were invited to participate through phone calls. No incentive was provided for participation in the study. Participants were given a survey of program elements (See Appendix C). The three decision makers were asked to rank the program elements from 1-9 with one representing a program element that, in their experience was more likely to support employability, and nine representing the program element that they believed was least likely to support employability. See Table 3 for the rankings by decision maker. The rankings were then summed and averaged. The final rankings were used in the second phase of the quantitative stage.

Table 3:
Scoring and ranking of program element differences

	Program Difference								
Role of Respondent Scorer	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Employer	1.00	2.00	7.00	6.00	9.00	4.00	5.00	8.00	3.00
Funder	2.00	1.00	8.00	6.00	7.00	4.00	9.00	5.00	3.00
Contract Manager	2.00	1.00	9.00	4.00	8.00	6.00	7.00	5.00	3.00
<i>Score</i>	<i>1.67</i>	<i>1.33</i>	<i>8.00</i>	<i>5.33</i>	<i>8.00</i>	<i>4.67</i>	<i>7.00</i>	<i>6.00</i>	<i>3.00</i>
<i>Final Rankings</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>9.00</i>	<i>5.00</i>	<i>8.00</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>7.00</i>	<i>6.00</i>	<i>3.00</i>

Materials and procedures. The final rankings were used to create nine program descriptions of a hypothetical program serving the hard-to-employ. The first program description consisted of a base or foundation program. This was assembled from core program elements that were embedded in both case examples. Using this base model as a foundation, nine additional

models were constructed by adding nine program elements (A through H) to the base model (Model 0). The ranking score (Table 3) determined the order in which the program differences were incorporated into the base model. The highest ranked difference (B) was incorporated first (Model 1). The second-highest difference (A) was then added to B and added to the base model, resulting in Model 2. This process was continued until nine models were constructed. The models were reduced to vignette descriptions of the sort that decision makers might see in the course of their daily work activities. The vignettes were incorporated into the Stage 2 survey administered in the second stage of the current study. The vignette survey method was designed to imitate a format that would be familiar to the decision makers.

Stage 2: Quantitative Primary - Qualitative Secondary

Phase 1: Quantitative Component

Method

Population. Thirty-seven decision makers were contacted throughout Minnesota through phone and email asking if they would like to participate in the study. No incentive was provided for participation. Respondents agreeing to be a part of the study were given the option of receiving the survey by mail or email. Twenty-two (59%) returned a survey. One survey was excluded because of missing values for a total of 21 – a 57% response rate. The respondents were asked three description questions. See Table 4 and Table 5 for a breakdown of respondents by job function, industry, and average number of years in service.

Materials and procedures. The ten programs were reduced to ten program descriptions in a vignette survey. Except for the base program, the remaining nine elements were incrementally included into each program description vignette by a ranked score determined in Stage 1. The respondents were asked to score each program on a scale from 0% to 100% based on how well they believed each employment program could potentially improve the employability of

difficult-to-hire clients. The respondents were then asked to provide the rationale for scoring each description in five words or less. The survey included three items that collected information about the characteristics of the respondents including their job functions, years of service, and industry sector.

Table 4:
Participant descriptives by job function and average years of service

Job Function	Frequency	Percent of Total Responses	Average # of Years in Service by Job Function
Program Supervisor	2	9.52%	8.00
Funder	1	4.76%	9.00
Case Manager	3	14.29%	3.83
Program Manager	5	23.81%	8.60
Executive Decision Maker	7	33.33%	15.64
Hiring Manager	2	9.52%	9.00
Trainer	1	4.76%	8.50
Total	21	100.00%	10.26

Table 5:
Participant descriptives by industry and average years of service

Industry	Frequency	Percent of Total Responses	Average # of Years in Service by Job Function
Non-Profit	9	42.86	8.22
Public	9	42.86	11.00
Private for-Profit	3	14.29	14.17
Total	21	100	10.26

Phase 2: Qualitative Component

Method

Materials and procedures. The respondents were asked to provide a rationale, in five words or less, for scoring each description. The purpose of these short descriptions was to understand why the respondent gave the vignette a particular score, allowing them to articulate the rationale for each program quality score.

Data Analysis

Reliability was operationally defined as the percentage of interrater consistency and was calculated from the intraclass correlation (ICC). A standard of .80 was adopted (Newton & Shaw,

2014). The second research question was addressed by investigating the degree to which the intraclass correlation suggested that ratings were consistent (McNeil, et al., 2012), the degree to which the linear regression results indicated that the program element indicators predicted overall program quality scores, the degree to which program quality scores behaved as predicted, and the degree to which comments collected from the respondents suggested that scores were assigned as predicted.

The variables are defined in Table 6. Covariates include respondent role, industry, and years of industry experience. Respondent role was coded into dummy variables (executive decision maker was the reference category). Industry was coded into dummy variables with private, for-profit coded as one, and zero otherwise. Public and non-profit were collapsed into one category (non-profit) and was the reference category. There is a categorical dummy variable for each rater to control for rater effects.

Table 6:
Variable definitions

Variable	Definition
Program Quality Score	A score assigned by each decision maker to each of the ten program variations
B1	The presence of program element B1 = 1, zero otherwise.
A2	The presence of program element A2 = 1, zero otherwise.
I3	The presence of program element I3 = 1, zero otherwise.
F4	The presence of program element F4 = 1, zero otherwise.
D5	The presence of program element D5 = 1, zero otherwise.
H6	The presence of program element H6 = 1, zero otherwise.
G7	The presence of program element G7 = 1, zero otherwise.
E8	The presence of program element E8 = 1, zero otherwise.
C9	The presence of program element C9 = 1, zero otherwise.
Years	Number of years of industry experience.
Hiring Manager	Hiring manager coded 1, zero otherwise.
Program Manager	Program Manager coded 1, zero otherwise.
Case Manager	Case Manager coded 1, zero otherwise.
Private, for Profit	Private, for Profit coded 1, zero otherwise.
V1001	V1001 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1001, zero otherwise.
V1002	V1002 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1002, zero otherwise.
V1003	V1003 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1003, zero otherwise.
V1004	V1004 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1004, zero otherwise.
V1005	V1005 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1005, zero otherwise.
V1006	V1006 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1006, zero otherwise.
V1007	V1007 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1007, zero otherwise.

V1008	V1008 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1008, zero otherwise.
V1009	V1009 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1009, zero otherwise.
V1010	V1010 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1010, zero otherwise.
V1011	V1011 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1011, zero otherwise.
V1012	V1012 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1012, zero otherwise.
V1014	V1014 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1014, zero otherwise.
V1015	V1015 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1015, zero otherwise.
V1016	V1016 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1016, zero otherwise.
V1017	V1017 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1017, zero otherwise.
V1018	V1018 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1018, zero otherwise.
V1019	V1019 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1019, zero otherwise.
V1020	V1020 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1020, zero otherwise.
V1021	V1021 coded 1 if respondent identifier equals V1021, zero otherwise.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Analyses were conducted in several stages. First, a qualitative summary was compiled of the literature regarding employability, learned helplessness, and social science theories related to employability. Second, descriptive statistics for all dependent and independent variables included in the quantitative analysis were calculated. Next, an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated to investigate the consistency of employment program quality scores assigned by 21 individuals who are either case managers, hiring managers, executives, or program managers involved with employment programs. Fifth, an ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression was conducted to investigate the strength of various indicators of program quality and the validity of these measures for the purpose of measuring program quality. Finally, a qualitative analysis was conducted of comments made by the 21 individuals who scored the quality of 10 employment program variations.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked “what is a suitable set of metrics for assessing employment programs that include metrics for assessing activities that address learned helplessness?”.

To establish potential measures of program quality, an extensive literature review was conducted regarding the construct and definition of employability, barriers to employability, and disadvantaged groups most affected by barriers to employability. Reviews of three social science theories that explain employability were also conducted. These social science theories were incorporated into a theoretical framework for understanding employability phenomena. This framework offers a foundation for understanding program elements that are related to quality,

designing high-quality employment programs, and investigating the validity of indicators of quality.

Table 7 summarizes the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. This literature guided the development of employability effectiveness indicators. The table breaks down the literature sources first by definition of employability, and then by employability barriers, and third, showing how the three social science theories may be applied to these barriers. For example, one barrier relates to persons with mental illness. Several sources are provided that explicate that employment barrier. Social learning theory principles are cited to show how this theory can be used to improve employability by addressing factors that inhibit employability. Human capital theory components are cited to show how increased education, training, and improved job and soft skill development can improve employability. Discrimination theory principles are cited to show how legislative initiatives might be employed to reduce the discrimination that may be experienced in the workplace by persons with mental illness.

Table 7:
Employability and social science theories literature review

Employability Phenomena	Literature Source	How Social Learning Theory Applies	How Human Capital Theory Applies	How Discrimination Theory Applies
Definition	Athey & Orth, 1999; Bacolod & Blum, 2010; Crant, 2000; De Grip, Van Loo, & Sanders, 2004; Finn, 2000; Hillard & Pollard, 1998; Hoyt, 1978; Komine, 2001; Lapina & Sceulovs, 2014; Lerman, 2013; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005;; Orlikowski, 2002; Peck & Theodore, 2000; Rodriguez, et al., 2002; Sternberg, 1996; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999; Thijssen, et al, 2008; Tseng, 1972; Tyler, 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Wood & Bandura, 1989	Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981). Influential or reference models: (Bandura, 1971; 1978, 1997; Petrovich, 2004; Strauser, Waldrop & Jenkins, 1998). Imitation & observational Learning (Bandura, 1971; Bandura, 1977a). Mental Models (Bandura, 1977a). Program and reproduce observed behavior into long-term memory Bandura (1977). Aspirational model (1977a, Bandura, 1978, 1981; Bandura, 1986; Farrington, et al., 2001; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983.	Education and training, job, and soft skills (Bond, 2001; Kopelowicz, et al, 2006; McGurk, et al, 2005). Skill, training, education (Baum, et al, 2013; Becker, 1994; Blaug, 1976, 1992; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Hart & Livingstone, 2009; Heckman, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). Labor participation (Hamilton, 2012; Perkins, 2008). Combining Human Capital and Work First Strategies (Lindsay, et al, 2007)	Changing practices (Holzer, et al, 2004; Holzer, et al, 2002; Holzer, et al, 2006). Legislation, disability rights, and policy changes (Daruwalla, & Darcy, 2005; Hernandez, et al, 2000; Sayce, 2000); Strategies for changing attributions (Corrigan, et al., 2001; Corrigan, et al, 2012). Tax credits to increase job opportunities (Davidson, 2013). Reducing legal barriers (Bingham & Yasui, 2009). Institutional Change (Reitz, 2005). Improving wage disparities and hiring differentials (Black, et al, 2006; Milkman, et al, 2006)
Employability Barriers: Situational and Dispositional Factors				
Transportation, child care, housing, or domestic violence	Chandler, et al, 2003; Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Moffitt, et al, 2002; Ovwigho, et al, 2008; Norris & Speiglmán, 2003; Wood & Rangarajan, 2004	External factors: reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981)		
Substance use or dependence	Bray, et al., 2000; Chandler, et al, 2003; Dunlap et al., 2007; Galaif, et al, 2001; Gutman, et al, 2003; Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Kaester, 1998; Larson, et al., 2007; Morgenstern, et. al, 2008; Shepard & Reif, 2004; Terza & Vechnak, 2007; Wetzler, et. al, 2010	Influential/reference models (Bandura, 1971; 1978; 1997; Petrovich, 2004; Strauser, Waldrop & Jenkins, 1998). Imitation & observational learning and mental models (Bandura, 1971, 1977a). Reproduce observed behavior into long-term memory (Bandura, 1977).		
Persons with criminal histories	Blitz, 2006; Blumstein & Nakamura, 2009; Bullis & Yovanoff, 2006; Bushway, 1998; Pager, 2005; Geller, et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2007; Holzer et al., 2004; Loudon et al., 2008; Nally, et al. 2012; Nally, et al, 2010; O'Brien 2002; Pager, 2007; Pager, et al.,	Aspirational models, reciprocal determinism: (Bandura, 1977a, 1978, 1981, 1986; Farrington, et al., 2001; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Sutherland, 1947; Rowe and Farrington, 2002; Thornberry 2005		Expunging criminal records, changing practice for hiring offenders (Holzer, et al, 2004; Holzer, et al, 2002; Holzer, et al, 2006)

	2011; Prins & Draper, 2009; Raphael, 2007; Rose et al., 2008; Rossman & Roman, 2003; Schmitt & Warner, 2010; Vacca, 2004; Western & Pettit, 2005; Zaitzow 2006; Zarch & Schneider, 2007		
Persons with mental illness	Becker, 2010; Chatterji, et al, 2011; Cook, 2006; Danziger & Seefeldt, 2002; Ettner, 1997; Kessler & Frank 1997; Lewis, et al, 2006; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Mechanic, et al, 2002; Moffitt, et al, 2002; Nilsen, 2001; Pager, et al, 2009; Stewart, et al, 2003; Sturm et al, 1999	Symbolic Representation, sense of self, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a, 1987, 1997; Banerjee, & Damman, 2013; Silver, et al, 1995; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Martocchio & Judge, 1997; Silver et al., 1995)	Education and training, job and soft skills (Bond, 2001; Kopelowicz, et al, 2006; McGurk, et al, 2005)
Persons with physical disabilities	Brault, 2012; Fogg & Harrington, 2010; Hauan & Douglas, 2004; Long & Runch, 1983; Nilsen, 2001; Ovwigho, Sanders, & Born, 2008; Zedlewski, 2003	Symbolic Representation, sense of self, self-efficacy. Improving employability by addressing core functioning capabilities (Bandura, 1968 1977a, 1987, Bandura, 1997; Petrovich, 2004; Strauser, Waldrop & Jenkins, 1998)	Education and training (Alper & Raharindirina, 2006; Bond, 2001; Dutta, et al, 2008)
Psychological Barrier - Learned Helplessness	Chen & Lim, 2012; Cherniss, 1980; Judge, et al, 1998; Rotter, 1954; Seligman, 1972; Seligman & Maier, 1967; Teasdale, 1988	Aspirational models, reciprocal determinism: Bandura, 1977a, 1978, 1981, 1986; Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Farrington, et al., 2001; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Sarason, et al, 2014; Sutherland, 1947; Rowe & Farrington, 2002; Thornberry 2005)	Skills, training, education: Baum, et al, 2013; Becker, 1994; Blaug, 1976, 1992; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Hart & Livingstone, 2009; Heckman, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004
Immigrant Status	Akresh, 2007; Grieco, et. al, 2012; Ken-Hou Lin 2011; Lubotsky, 2007; Maxwell, 2010; McDonald, et al, 2009; Oreopoulos, 2009	Influential or reference models: (Bandura, 1971; 1978, 1997; Petrovich, 2004; Strauser, Waldrop & Jenkins, 1998). Imitation & observational Learning (Bandura, 1971, 1977a). Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981). Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1997)	English language classes, skills training (Cohen-Goldner & Eckstein, 2008; Delander, et al, 2005; Galarneau, & Morissette, 2009; Reitz, 2005
Homelessness	Bailis, et al, 2000; Benda, 1990; Blasinsky & Tecco, 1991; Greenberg, 2008; Gribsby, et al., 1990; Hawthorne, et al. 2012; Ji, 2006; Miller, et al. 2005; Long, et al, 2007; Tam, et al. 2003; Zlotnick, et al, 2002; Zlotnick & Robertson, 1996; Zlotnick & Robertson, 2003	Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1994). Modeling and Influential role models (Bandura, 1971; 1978; 1985). Symbolic Representation (Bandura, 1977a; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983. Learned helplessness (Strauser, Waldrop, & Jenkins, 1998); Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; 1985, 1994)	Skill, training, education (Baum, et al, 2013; Becker, 1994; Blaug, 1976, 1992; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Hart & Livingstone, 2009; Heckman, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004)

Legislation concerning disability rights and policy changes (Daruwalla, & Darcy, 2005; Hernandez, et al, 2000; Sayce, 2000) ; Strategies for changing attributions about mental illness (Corrigan, et al., 2001; Corrigan, et al, 2012)

Legislation concerning disability rights policy (Daruwalla, & Darcy, 2005; Hernandez, et al, 2000; Sayce, 2000)

Situation testing to influence law and policy (Bendick, 2007). Institutional Change (Reitz, 2005)

			Skill, training, education (Baum, et al, 2013; Becker, 1994; Blaug, 1976, 1992; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Hart & Livingstone, 2009; Heckman, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004)
Self-efficacy	Bandura, 1988, 1997; Gist & Mitchel, 1992; Manocchio & Judge, 1997; Quinones, 1995; Silver et al., 1995	Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1988, 1994, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Silver, et al, 1995	
Workplace Barriers			
limited English proficiency	Blumenberg, 2002; Goldberg, 2002; Tumlin & Zimmermann, 2003	Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1978; Bandura, 1981)	Language classes, skills training (Cohen-Goldner & Eckstein, 2008; Delander, et al, 2005; Galarneau & Morissette, 2009; Reitz, 2005).
Skill deficits	Ciccone & Peri, 2006; Corcoran et al., 1998; Danziger, et al, 2000; Fagnoni, et al, 2001; Goldberg, 2002; Hong & Pandey, 2007; Krueger, et al, 2001; Loprest 2002b; Heckman, 2000; Hollenbeck, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Moretti, 2004; Nam, 2005; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004; Perna, 2005; Schultz 1963	Instructive modes (Bandura, 1969, 1971, 1977a, 2001)	Skill building and increased education (Adams, 2012; Finn, 2000; Hamilton, 2012; Lightman, et al, 2007). Education and business partnerships (Asher, 2005; Zinser, 2003). Soft skills (Robles, 2012)
Education deficits	Baum, et al, 2013; Becker, 1994; Cohn & Geske, 1990; Corcoran et al., 2000; Hart & Livingstone, 2009; Hong & Pandey, 2007; Heckman, 2000; Hollenbeck, 2008; Jalles, 2011; Loprest, 2002b; Nam 2005; Perna, 2005; Sweetland, 1996	Instructive modes and learning activities (Bandura, 1969, 1971, 1977a, 2001; Gist, 1987). Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981)	Improving education (Hamilton, 2012); incorporating employability skills and learning (Asher, 2005); Alternative training networks (Campbell, 2004)
Lack of Work Experience-low wage jobs	Becker, 1994; Blaug, 1992; Danziger, et al, 2000; Goldberg, 2002; Harris, 1996; Hollenbeck, 2008; Holzer 1996; Hutchison, 2011; Loprest & Nichols, 2005; Loprest & Zedlewski, 2006; Szeltner, Van Horn & Zukin, 2013	Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981)	Labor participation (Hamilton, 2012; Perkins, 2008); Transitional or subsidized jobs with follow up supports (Jacobs & Bloom, 2011). Using a market solution and entrepreneurship (Javits, 2014). Tax credits to increase job opportunities (Davidson, 2013). Combining Human Capital and Work First Strategies (Lindsay, et al, 2007) Tax credits to increase job opportunities (Davidson, 2013)
Discrimination			
Discrimination: actions, beliefs, and practices	Acs & Nichols, 2007; Arrow, 1973; Baldwin & Johnson, 2006; Bisom-Rapp, 1999; Corrigan et al., 2003; Grodsky & Pager, 2001; Gyimah-Brempong, et al, 2002; Hutchison, 2011; Hou & Balakrishnan, 2004; Jacobsen & Mather, 2011; Johnson & Mommaerts, 2011; Loprest & Nichols, 2011; Moss & Tilly,	Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981). Employment efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977b, 1982, 1988, 1997; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Silver, et al, 1995. Symbolic Representation (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983)	Reducing legal barriers to employment (Bingham & Yasui, 2009); Institutional Change (Reitz, 2005). Improving wage disparities and improve hiring differentials (Black, et al, 2006; Milkman, et al, 2006).

	1996; McQuaid, 2006; NBER, 2012; Pager, et al. 2009; Phelps, 1972; Rodgers, 2009; Roscigno et al., 2007; Sturm, 2001; Szeltner, et al. 2013; Tilly, et al, 2001; von Wachter, 2007; Wilson, 2011		Tax credits to increase job opportunities (Davidson, 2013)
Discriminatory legal, regulatory, social, cultural, or political practices	American Bar Association, 2004; Archer & Williams 2006; Becker, 2010; Chang, 2002; Hedge, et al, 2006; International Affairs Office, 2007; Lucken & Ponte, 2008; Ortiz, & Roscigno, 2009; Pinard 2006; Stuart, 2004;	Bandura, 1978, 1981; Bisom-Rapp, 1999; Black, et al, 2006; Carnerio, et al, 2005; Galenianos & Kircher, 2009; Green, 2003; Grodsky & Pager, 2001; Lang, 2011; Lang & Manove, 2006; Lang & Lehmann, 2011; Neal, 2004; Neal & Johnson, 1996; Milkman, et al, 2006; Pager, et al, 2009; Shi, 2009; Toossi, 2012	Reducing legal barriers to employment (Bingham & Yasui, 2009). Institutional Change (Reitz, 2005). Improving wage disparities and improve hiring differentials (Black, et al, 2006; Milkman, et al, 2006).
Multiple Barriers	Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Edelman et al., 2006; Fagnoni, et al, 2001; Miller, et al, 1999; Morgenstern, et al., 2008; Precin, 2011; Taylor & Barusch, 2004; Zedlewski, 2003	Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981). Employment efficacy (Bandura, 1977b, 1982, 1988, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Silver, et al, 1995. Symbolic Representation (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983)	Improving education (Hamilton, 2012); incorporating employability skills and learning (Asher, 2005); Alternative training network (Campbell, 2004)
Other Barriers			
Neighborhood effects	Edelman et al., 2006; Fryer & Levitt, 2008; Holzer, 1999; Lang & Lehmann, 2011; Morgenstern, et al, 2008; Neal & Johnson, 1996; Saez-Marti & Zenou, 2012; Zedlewski, 2003	Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981, 1982. Modeling, observation, imitation (Bandura, 1977a; Bauer, et al, 2011; Clark, 2003; Kassenbohmer & Haisken-DeNew, 2009; Manski, 1995, 2000	Targeting local development (Leigh & Blakely, 2013)
Regulatory Barriers	ABA, 2004; Archer & Williams, 2005; Becker, 2010, Chang, 2002, Hedge, et al, Lammlein, 2006; International Affairs Office, 2007; Lucken & Ponte, 2008; Pinard, 2006, Ortiz, & Roscigno, 2009, Stuart, 2004	Reducing legal barriers to employment (Bingham & Yasui, 2009). Changing environments - Reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978, 1981)	Reducing legal barriers to employment (Bingham & Yasui, 2009)
Program Modifications	Godfrey & Yoshikawa, 2012; Greenberg, et al, 2009; Hamersma, 2008; Hamilton et al., 2001; Pavoni & Violante, 2007	Change the environment (Hill, 2004). Alternative staffing agencies (Center, 2005)	

The literature described in Table 7 was synthesized and operationalized into ten indicators that may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of various programs that are intended to improve the employability of disadvantaged groups (see Table 8). “BPO” is an indicator for a standard employment program offering standard basic skill development and education activities. The rest of the indicators identify program elements that were labeled consistent with the labels used in Chapter 3 (see Table 8). For example, “B1” refers to program element “B” in Chapter 3, Table 2. The “1” in the label refers to the ranking assigned to this program element by the panel of three expert decision-makers who were recruited to rank each of the ten program elements.

Table 8:
Social science based indicators of employment program quality

Program Element	Theory
<i>BP0</i> : Clients receive basic job and soft skills training. They are given the opportunity to earn their GED and improved their math, read, writing, and English speaking skills. They are assigned wage-subsidized jobs.	Human Capital Theory
<i>B1</i> : Clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients and through repetition; working at the tasks until they have acquired the skill before moving on to the next one. This process helps clients learn how to succeed at challenging tasks by developing confidence, perseverance, and goal setting.	Social Learning Theory
<i>A2</i> : Clients are trained in at least three marketable skills by working in program business enterprises.	Human Capital Theory
<i>I3</i> : Specific program activities are in place to help clients overcome feelings of learned helplessness.	Social Learning Theory
<i>F4</i> : Clients work their way up through the various jobs in the program's business enterprises, acquiring a broad set of skills and learning how to operate actual businesses while developing normative work skills and habits. Thus, they learn to keep reaching for their goals by developing the capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions, and to overcome obstacles.	Human Capital Theory
<i>D5</i> : Veteran clients serve as aspirational role models. They model expected behavior and conduct, visibly rewarding new clients for behaving appropriately; thus, teaching new clients the language, social values, and attributes of success. Veteran clients help teach and train new clients, using the "each one teach one" principle; clients teach what they know and do to newer clients; anyone who knows a little teaches someone who knows less.	Social Learning Theory
<i>H6</i> : Once hired, the program helps clients maintain employment once they secure it for the first three weeks by meeting with participants and employers as needed to discuss work performance issues.	Social Learning Theory
<i>G7</i> : The program teaches clients strategies on how to present as desirable hires and cope with stigma and discrimination. To help clients overcome potential hiring discrimination, they are given "certificates of employability", signifying they have job skills and character traits of a desirable employee.	Discrimination Theory
<i>E8</i> : All participants must carry a daily performance evaluation to be completed by work supervisors and program staff. Participants are evaluated on the basis of their cooperation with their coworkers and supervisors, effort at work, punctuality, and personal presentation.	Human Capital Theory
<i>C9</i> : Clients hold each other accountable, through mutual, direct but supportive feedback and criticism, thus experiencing the consequences of their actions and behaviors. When mistakes are made, they learn to acknowledge them and take the consequences, then move on.	Social Learning Theory

Research Question 2

The second research question asked "to what extent are these metrics valid?". Descriptive statistics including means, median, and standard deviations for the program quality scores were calculated for each grouping of respondents. To investigate construct validity, an intraclass

correlation (ICC) was calculated. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was performed to investigate the strength of relationships between the program indicators in Table 8 and program quality scores assigned by 21 informants to 10 employment program variants, controlling for the sector (private-for-profit or public) in which the informants worked, their job roles, and the number of years of industry experience. An analysis was performed regarding the degree to which program quality scores behaved as predicted. A qualitative analysis was performed regarding the degree to which comments collected from the respondents suggested that scores were assigned as predicted.

Program Quality Score Consistency

One aspect of construct validity is whether case managers, hiring managers, executive decision-makers, and program managers who manage, and are familiar with, employment programs score programs containing the program elements described in Table 8 in a way that is consistent. Are the scores assigned in a way that would be expected?

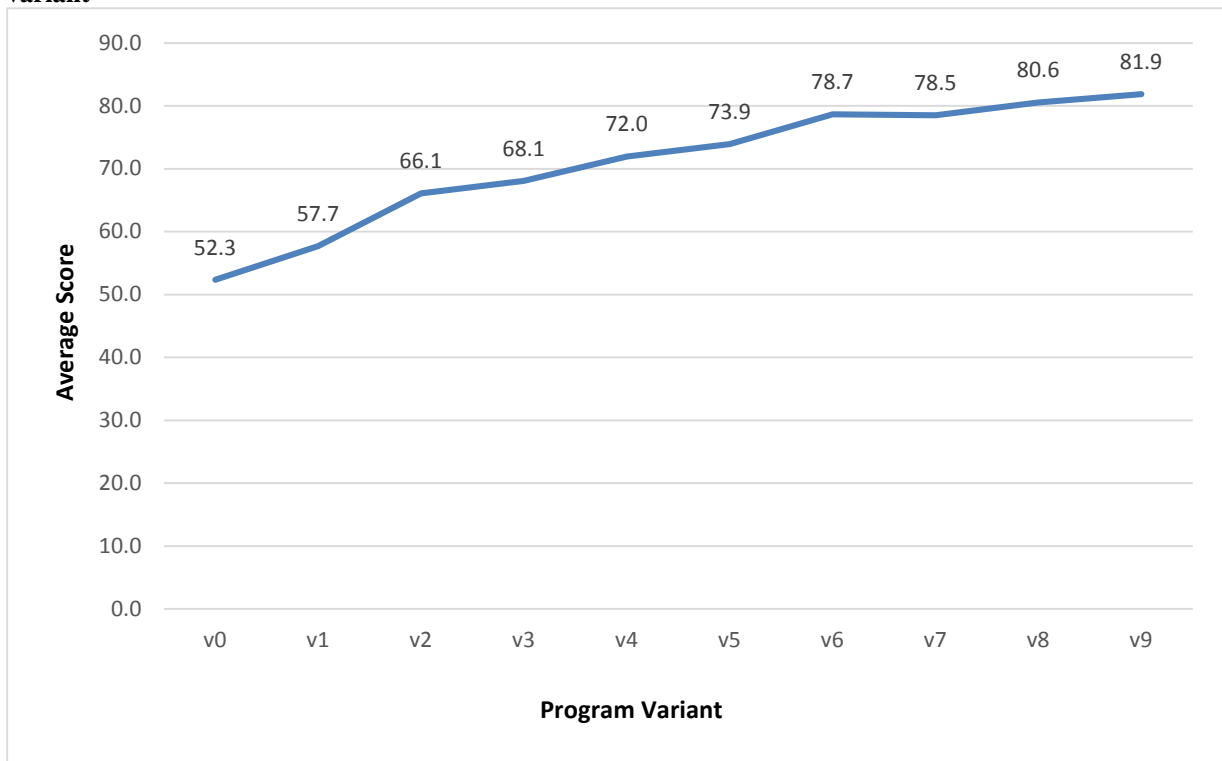
In general, the expectation is that scores should increase monotonically as the program elements described in Table 8 are incrementally incorporated into a basic employment program that is defined by indicator BP0. Therefore, 21 case managers, hiring managers, executive decision-makers, and program managers who manage employment programs were recruited. These individuals were asked to read and score descriptions of employment programs. The descriptions varied from a base program that only included basic program elements (skills and education) to a comprehensive program that included all ten of the program elements described in Table 8. When the mean scores are plotted in order, from the most basic program variation to the most comprehensive program variation, the scores increased monotonically as expected (see Table 9 and Figure 10).

**Table 9:
Program Quality Scores**

Program Variations	Program Quality Scores			
	Count	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
v0	21	52.3	51.0	16.9
v1	21	57.7	57.0	14.8
v2	21	66.1	65.0	15.7
v3	21	68.1	68.0	14.5
v4	21	72.0	71.0	16.5
v5	21	73.9	76.0	14.7
v6	21	78.7	79.0	14.0
v7	21	78.5	80.0	16.1
v8	21	80.6	83.0	15.2
v9	21	81.9	85.0	18.2

As can be seen in Figure 10, the average score for each of the program variations steadily increased as the program elements in Table 8 were incorporated into a base program (v0) that only offered the activities described by BP0. The most comprehensive program variation, which included all program elements, received the highest average score, and the base program was scored, on average, the lowest. However, starting with the v6 program variation, the scores flattened, with small incremental increases in the average score as additional program elements were incorporated. This type of pattern would be expected if the incremental addition of the program elements described in Table 8 results in improvements in perceived program quality. Since the highest ranked program elements were added first, a steep increase in program quality scores may be expected as the first few elements are incorporated. However, increases in program quality scores would be expected to level off as the lower ranked program elements are incorporated. This is the pattern that was observed.

Figure 10:
Mean scores increase as expected from the basic program variant to the most comprehensive program variant



The Effect of Respondent Role

While the scores assigned by case managers, hiring managers, executive decision makers, and program managers were, in general, well-behaved, increasing monotonically from the score assigned to the base program variant to the score assigned to the most comprehensive program variant, these four sets of decision makers did not score the programs exactly the same way (see Table 10 and Figure 11).

When the scores are broken down by the role of respondent, it became apparent that executive decision-makers assigned a low score of 46.6 to the base program variation, whereas case managers assigned a low score of 51.0 to the base program variant, program managers assigned a low score of 54.5 to the base program variant, and hiring managers assigned a low

score of 68.5 to the base program variant. In other words, the bottom anchor score varied according to the type of respondent.

Similarly, the top anchor score varied according to the type of respondent, with hiring managers scoring the most comprehensive program 91.0, program managers scoring the comprehensive program 83.8, executive managers scoring the more comprehensive program 88.1; however, case managers scored this program an average of 54.0.

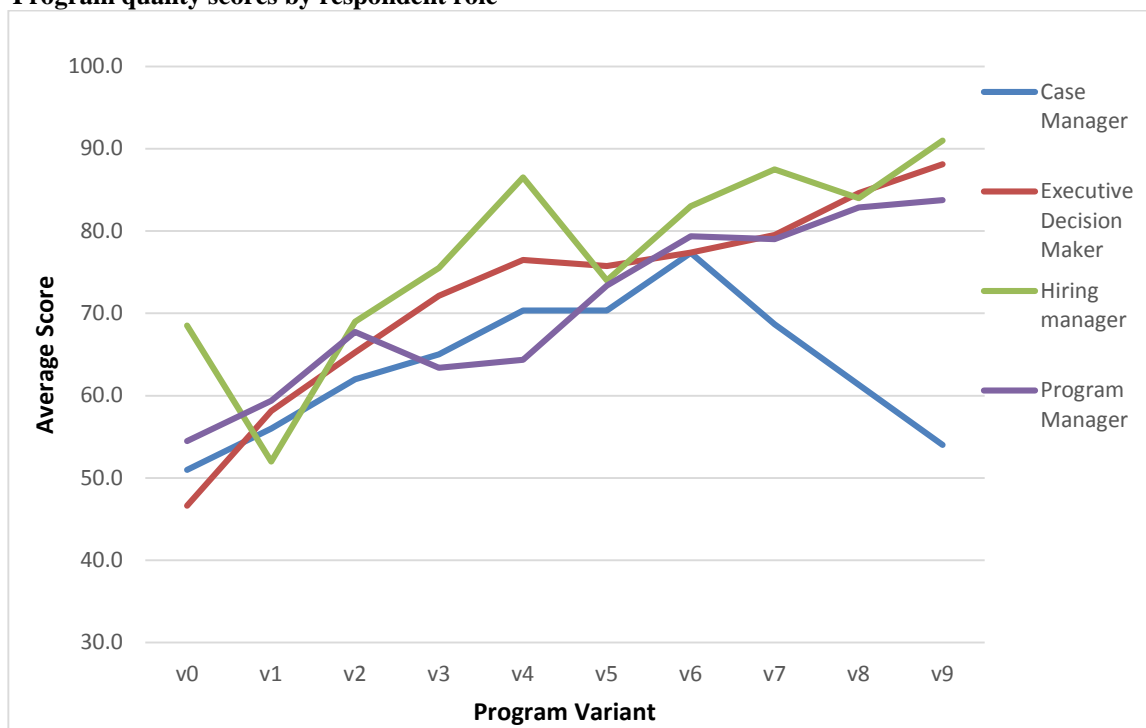
With a few exceptions, executive decision makers, program managers, and hiring managers scored the program variations such that the scores rose monotonically from the score assigned to the base program variation to the score assigned to the most comprehensive program variation. In contrast, the scores assigned by case managers rose monotonically until program variation v6, then decreased with each addition of the last three program elements.

The variation in the bottom and top anchor scores suggests variation in the scale used by each type of decision maker and a need to control for this variation. In addition, it appears that case managers value compact employment programs that focus on a few key program elements rather than comprehensive programs that include all ten of the program elements described in Table 8.

Table 10:
Program quality scores by respondent role

Role Category	Program Variant	Count	Program Quality Scores		
			Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Case Manager	v0	3	51.0	53.0	25.1
	v1	3	56.0	58.0	15.1
	v2	3	62.0	63.0	11.5
	v3	3	65.0	65.0	10.0
	v4	3	70.3	71.0	15.0
	v5	3	70.3	70.0	5.5
	v6	3	77.3	77.0	2.5
	v7	3	68.7	71.0	17.6
	v8	3	61.3	61.0	26.5
	v9	3	54.0	59.0	26.9
Executive Decision Maker	v0	8	46.6	47.5	12.3
	v1	8	58.1	56.0	13.9
	v2	8	65.3	66.0	16.0
	v3	8	72.1	73.5	14.5
	v4	8	76.5	77.5	16.8
	v5	8	75.8	79.0	14.6
	v6	8	77.4	82.0	18.6
	v7	8	79.5	85.0	18.7
	v8	8	84.6	83.0	11.2
	v9	8	88.1	94.0	13.3
Hiring manager	v0	2	68.5	68.5	19.1
	v1	2	52.0	52.0	4.2
	v2	2	69.0	69.0	25.5
	v3	2	75.5	75.5	16.3
	v4	2	86.5	86.5	14.8
	v5	2	74.0	74.0	28.3
	v6	2	83.0	83.0	19.8
	v7	2	87.5	87.5	13.4
	v8	2	84.0	84.0	18.4
	v9	2	91.0	91.0	8.5
Program Manager	v0	8	54.5	54.0	17.6
	v1	8	59.4	59.0	18.8
	v2	8	67.8	69.0	17.4
	v3	8	63.4	64.0	16.2
	v4	8	64.4	65.0	15.8
	v5	8	73.4	76.0	16.3
	v6	8	79.4	78.0	12.2
	v7	8	79.0	80.5	14.4
	v8	8	82.9	81.5	10.1
	v9	8	83.8	83.0	12.2

Figure 11:
Program quality scores by respondent role



The Effect of Industry

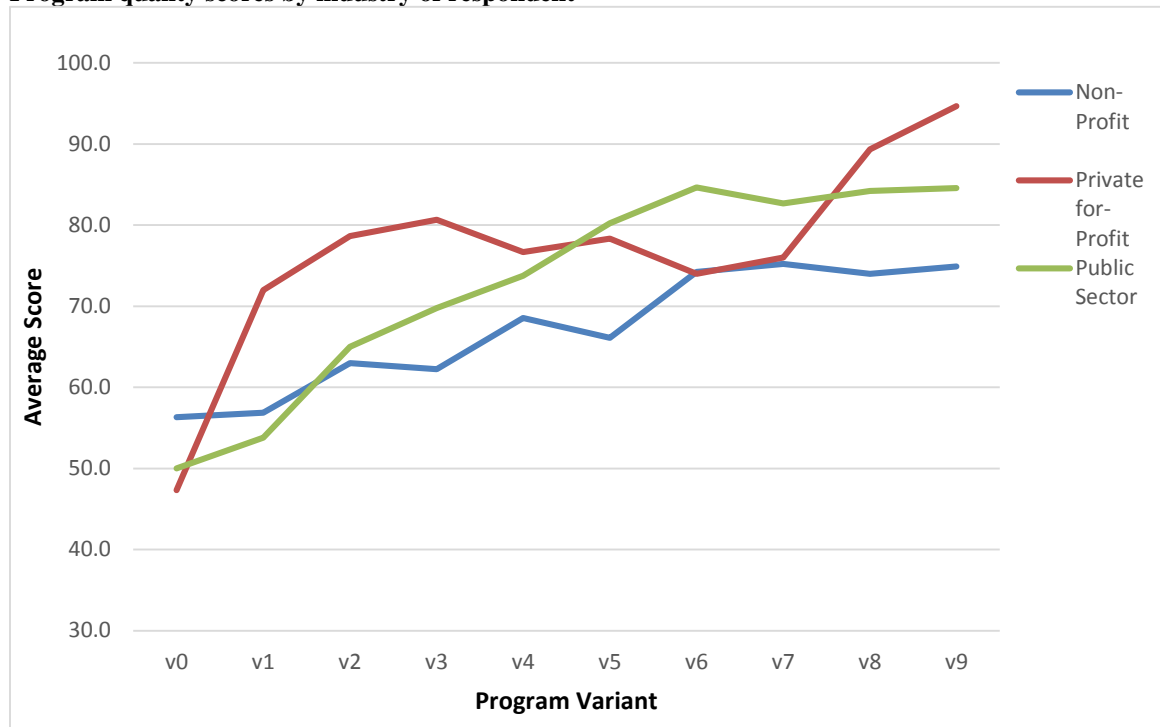
When respondents were characterized by industry (private-for-profit, non-profit or public) the program quality scores rose monotonically from the score assigned to the base program variation to the score assigned to the most comprehensive program variation. Yet, as seen in Figure 12, there was considerable variation in the curves for each group. In addition, there was variation in the range of scores. For non-profit workers, the bottom anchor score was 56.3 and the top was 74.9, a range of 18.6 (see Table 11). For private, for-profit, the average bottom anchor score was 47.3 and the top was 94.7, a range of 47.3. Finally, for public sector employees, the average bottom anchor was 50.0 and the top anchor score was 84.6. Again, this indicates a

need to control for variation introduced by the type of industry where the respondents were employed.

Table 11:
Program quality scores by industry of respondent

Industry	Program Variant	Program Quality Scores			
		Count	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Non-Profit	v0	9	56.3	57.0	19.3
	v1	9	56.9	57.0	12.7
	v2	9	63.0	63.0	14.7
	v3	9	62.2	64.0	13.9
	v4	9	68.6	68.0	18.2
	v5	9	66.1	70.0	15.7
	v6	9	74.2	75.0	10.6
	v7	9	75.2	78.0	12.0
	v8	9	74.0	73.0	17.4
	v9	9	74.9	78.0	21.8
Private for-Profit	v0	3	47.3	50.0	19.1
	v1	3	72.0	75.0	10.8
	v2	3	78.7	80.0	13.1
	v3	3	80.7	80.0	11.0
	v4	3	76.7	75.0	17.6
	v5	3	78.3	80.0	17.6
	v6	3	74.0	85.0	30.0
	v7	3	76.0	90.0	31.4
	v8	3	89.3	95.0	12.5
	v9	3	94.7	99.0	8.4
Public Sector	v0	9	50.0	51.0	14.5
	v1	9	53.8	53.0	16.2
	v2	9	65.0	63.0	16.9
	v3	9	69.8	75.0	14.1
	v4	9	73.8	71.0	15.7
	v5	9	80.2	80.0	9.6
	v6	9	84.7	87.0	9.2
	v7	9	82.7	89.0	14.8
	v8	9	84.2	83.0	12.1
	v9	9	84.6	93.0	14.6

Figure 12:
Program quality scores by industry of respondent



Program Quality Scores by Level of Industry Experience

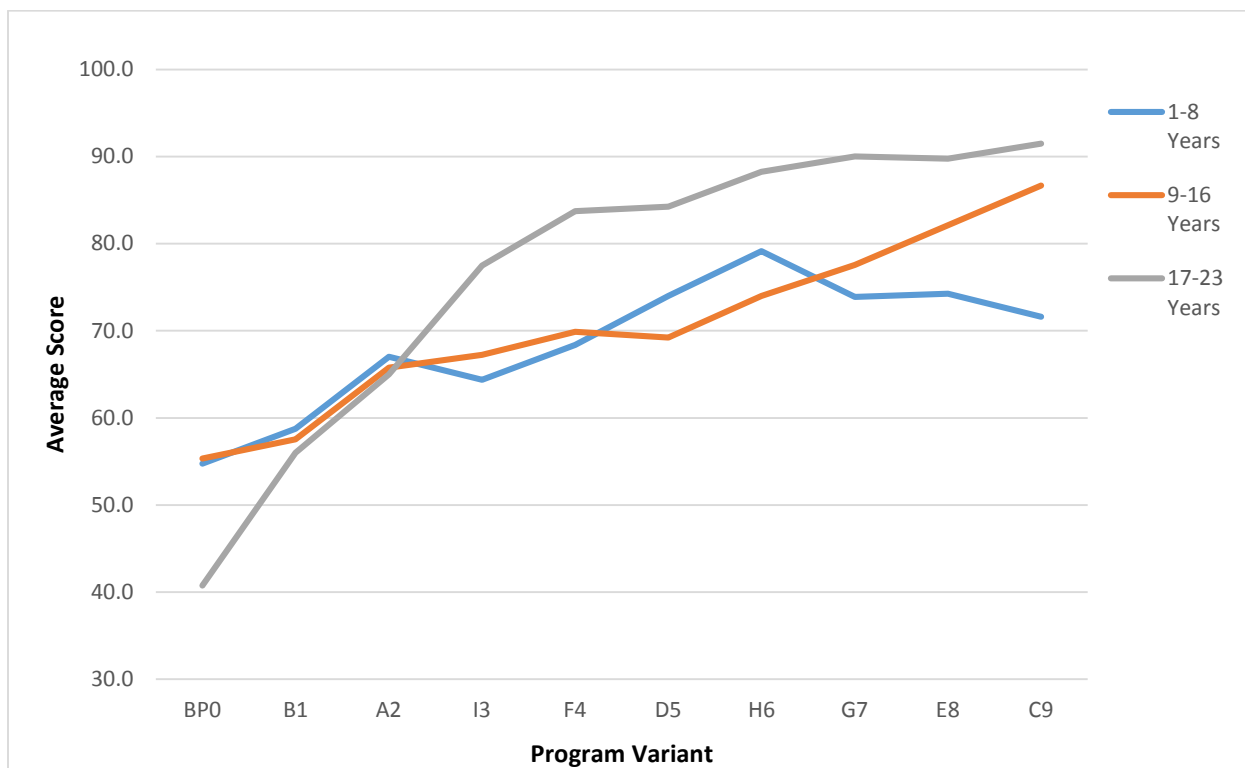
In general, when respondents were broken down by years of industry experience, the program quality scores rose monotonically from the score assigned to the base program variation to the score assigned to the most comprehensive program variation. However, respondents with 17-23 years of industry experience assigned a low score to the base program variation that was approximately 14 points lower than scores assigned by respondents with fewer years of industry experience. While there was a small difference in the average top scores assigned by respondents with 17-23 years' experience, compared to the average scores assigned by respondents with 9-17 years, there was almost a 20 point difference in the average top score assigned by respondents with the fewest years of industry experience and scores assigned by respondents with more than 17 years of industry experience. This indicates a need to control for years of experience. The

widest range of scores was assigned by the group of respondents with 17-23 years of industry experience (50.8 points), and the narrowest spread of scores was assigned by the group with the least amount of industry experience (16.9 points). See Table 12 and Figure 13.

Table 12:
Program quality scores by years of industry experience

Years of Experience	Program Variant	Program Quality Scores			
		Count	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
1-8 Years	v0	8	54.8	55.0	20.9
	v1	8	58.8	60.5	18.5
	v2	8	67.0	69.0	14.8
	v3	8	64.4	64.0	12.9
	v4	8	68.4	67.0	14.1
	v5	8	74.0	73.0	8.3
	v6	8	79.1	76.0	6.0
	v7	8	73.9	76.5	16.5
	v8	8	74.3	75.5	19.6
	v9	8	71.6	73.0	23.1
9-16 Years	v0	9	55.3	55.0	14.3
	v1	9	57.6	55.0	11.5
	v2	9	65.8	63.0	16.0
	v3	9	67.2	68.0	15.9
	v4	9	69.9	68.0	18.5
	v5	9	69.2	77.0	18.9
	v6	9	74.0	79.0	18.9
	v7	9	77.6	79.0	17.2
	v8	9	82.1	83.0	11.6
	v9	9	86.7	91.0	12.2
17-23 Years	v0	4	40.8	42.5	10.2
	v1	4	56.0	51.5	17.6
	v2	4	65.0	64.5	21.2
	v3	4	77.5	79.0	13.6
	v4	4	83.8	87.5	14.4
	v5	4	84.3	86.0	10.4
	v6	4	88.3	90.5	9.4
	v7	4	90.0	91.0	7.5
	v8	4	89.8	89.0	7.9
	v9	4	91.5	95.0	9.8

Figure 13:
Effect of years of experience on program scores



Interrater Reliability

To assess interrater reliability, an analysis was performed regarding the consistency of the program quality scores within each category of respondent. The intraclass correlation (ICC) was calculated using type of respondent to define the class (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). This approach permits an evaluation of response consistency within the categories of respondents. A high ICC indicates a high level of agreement among respondents within each category of respondent type.

For this study, ICC was calculated using a two-way mixed model. The factors were the raters (the respondents) and rater type. Cicchetti (1994) provides frequently-cited cut-off values

for ratings of consistency based on ICC values: IRR = *poor* (ICC < .40); IRR = *fair* (ICC >= .4 and < .60); IRR = *good* (ICC >= .60 and < .75); and IRR = *excellent* (ICC >= .75).

The ICC was calculated as a measure of interrater reliability in a two-way mixed effects model to assess if there was consistency in the program quality scores assigned by 21 decision makers. A high degree of consistency was found in the program quality scores. The ICC was 0.93 with a 95% CI (0.85, 0.98), ((F(9, 189) = 26.16, $p < .001$). Thus, there is evidence to support the consistency of the program quality scores across raters within employment type. This suggests that raters were consistently able to rate the employment programs as intended by the system of program quality metrics. The resulting average ICC was in the excellent range, indicating the decision makers exhibited a high degree of consistency, which suggests that program quality was rated consistently across decision makers. Cronbach's alpha = .935 indicates a high level of internal consistency.

Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Diagnostics. Regression diagnostics evaluated the independence, unusual and influential data, outliers, heteroscedasticity, collinearity, normality, outliers and influential data points, and violations of the linearity assumption. An assumption of linear regression is that the error terms are independent. This assumption is violated if there is serial correlation among the error terms.. The Durbin-Watson statistic tests for autocorrelation by measuring the correlation between error terms and their immediate predecessors. The Durbin-Watson statistic ranges in value from zero to four; a 2 indicates the error terms are independent; values closer to 0 indicate a positive autocorrelation; and values closer to 4 indicate negative autocorrelation.

The test for serial correlation was conducted before incorporating the controls for the raters. In testing the assumption that the errors are not correlated, the resulting Durbin-Watson

statistic for this data was 1.6. This indicates there is a positive autocorrelation in this data, which means there are dependencies between the program quality scores. Autocorrelation can lead to underestimated residual variance and an overestimation of R^2 . In other words, the goodness of fit will be exaggerated, the estimated standard errors will be smaller than the true standard errors, and the variances of the regression coefficients will be biased. The error terms are not independent which indicates that there is uncontrolled variance.

It is not surprising that there is a lack of independence between scores for each of the respondents. In the survey, respondents were asked to score how well they believed the program would improve the employability of difficult-to-employ clients. It is likely they compared program 1 with program 2 and program 4 with program 3 and so on. To control for this lack of independence, dummy variables were included in the model for each of the respondents (respondent control variables), except for one (V1013) which served as the reference category.

A new model including the respondent control variables was used for the remaining regression diagnostic testing. In testing for unusual and influential data, outliers, a histogram showed some possible outliers and a scatterplot and a normal P- P indicated some problems with the data (See Figure 14). Examining the studentized deleted residuals indicated eleven cases residual values greater than two. Cook's Distance is a general measure of influence and for this model there were ten cases that exceeded the cut-off for the Cook's D statistics. One of the assumptions of linear regression is that the residuals are normally distributed. The Mahalanobis distance values for cases did not exceed 20, within an acceptable range¹. Skewness (-.578) and Kurtosis (1.730) and the tests of significance (Kolmogorov-Smirnov; Shapiro-Wilk) are

¹ Tested the saved Mahalanobis Distance (M-D) for each case compared to a chi-square distribution with DF equal to the number of predictors in the Regression. The p-value was computed – and no value was found to be significant (< .001) with 30 degrees of freedom (DF, where DF is based on the number of variables.)

significant, thus the residuals from this regression violate the assumption of being normally distributed. The pattern of the data points showed a slight pattern to the data. Exploring potential for multicollinearity, the VIF (values greater than 10) and tolerance (values below 0.1) did not raise cause for concern; all VIF values are less than 10 and all Tolerance values are greater than 0.1. For tests for nonlinearity, all independent variables, except for *years*, are nominal, thus, there is no meaningful linearity assumption to check.

Regression Analyses

The regression analysis controlled for variance attributable to the respondent (respondent control variables), the average differences in the scores assigned by the four types of respondents, average differences attributable to the sector in which the respondents are employed, and differences attributable to the years of industry experience associated with each respondent. These last three variables are “respondent attribute” variables. The multiple regression model estimated the strength of associations between indicators for each of the nine program elements and the program quality scores. All regression analyses were conducted using an alpha level of .10. The predictors were indicators for the nine program elements and the control variables (both respondent attribute and respondent. All independent variables were included; however, *years*, *casemanager*, *hiringmanager*, *programmanager*, and *privateforprofit* were not statistically significant and were dropped in the final model. These are the respondent attribute variables. All of the respondent control variables were kept in the model.

The results of this analysis produced a significant regression equation ($F(29, 180)=11.22$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .64 and an adjusted R^2 of .59. This implies that 64% of the variation in the program quality scores was explained by the model. See Table 13. The prediction equation for program quality scores, after excluding insignificant predictors, was $Y(\text{program quality score}) = 34.86 + 8.38(A2) + 18.30(V1001) + 22.50(V1002) + 22.40(V1003) + 24.60(V1005) +$

28.80(V1006) + 12.50(V1007) + 23.50(V1008) + 14.00(V1010) + 32.80(V1011) + 15.20(V1012) + 12.90(V1014) + 12.30(V1016) + 23.50(V1017) + 33.80(v1018) + 22.00(V1019) + 14.40(V1020) + 34.50(V1021).

The coefficients of the program element dummies indicate the incremental boost in program effectiveness when those elements are added to the base program (BP0). Thus, the coefficient for A2 (clients are trained in at least three marketable skills) increased the program effectiveness score more than eight points.

All but three of the respondent control variables were significant. For example, respondent V1017 scored program quality 23.5 points higher than respondent V1013 (the reference category). Respondent control variables, however, are included to control for the lack of independence of respondent scores across successive program variants and will not be discussed further in this thesis. Rater experience, role and sector control variables were not statistically significant after incorporating the controls for each rater.

After dropping insignificant predictors, a reduced model regression analysis was performed. The results of this analysis produced a significant regression equation ($F(21, 188) = 11.62, p < .001$, with an R^2 of .57 and an adjusted R^2 of .52. This implies that 57% of the variation in program quality was explained by the model. The prediction equation for program quality scores was $Y(\text{program quality score}) = 37.55 + 19.94(A2) + 18.30(V1001) + 22.50(V1002) + 22.40(V1003) + 24.60(V1005) + 28.80(V1006) + 12.50(V1007) + 23.50(V1008) + 14.00(V1010) + 32.80(V1011) + 15.20(V1012) + 12.90(V1014) + 12.30(V1016) + 23.50(V1017) + 33.80(v1018) + 22.00(V1019) + 14.40(V1020) + 34.50(V1021)$. See Table 13.

In the reduced model, the coefficients also show the incremental boost in program effectiveness when those elements are added to the base program (BP0). The coefficient for A2

(clients are trained in at least three marketable skills) in the reduced model increased to 19.94 from 8.38 in the full model. Thus, compared to the base program, the BtW program with A2 improved the program quality score by almost 20 points.

Table 13:
Regression of program quality score on program quality indicators

Variable	Full Model			Reduced Model		
	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β
B1	5.38	3.58	0.09			
A2	8.38	3.58	0.19**	19.94	2.17	0.44****
I3	2.00	3.58	0.05			
F4	3.86	3.58	0.11			
D5	1.95	3.58	0.05			
H6	4.76	3.58	0.13			
G7	-0.14	3.58	-0.00			
E8	2.05	3.58	0.05			
C9	1.29	3.58	0.02			
V1001	18.30	5.19	0.22***	18.30	5.61	0.22***
V1002	22.50	5.19	0.27****	22.50	5.61	0.27****
V1003	22.40	5.19	0.27****	22.40	5.61	0.27****
V1004	3.40	5.19	0.04			
V1005	24.60	5.19	0.29****	24.60	5.61	0.29****
V1006	28.80	5.19	0.34****	28.80	5.61	0.34****
V1007	12.50	5.19	0.15**	12.50	5.61	0.15**
V1008	23.50	5.19	0.28****	23.50	5.61	0.28****
V1009	-5.00	5.19	-0.06			
V1010	14.00	5.19	0.17***	14.00	5.61	0.17**
V1011	32.80	5.19	0.39****	32.80	5.61	0.39****
V1012	15.20	5.19	0.18****	15.20	5.61	0.18****
V1014	12.90	5.19	0.15**	12.90	5.61	0.15**
V1015	0.50	5.19	0.01			
V1016	12.30	5.19	0.15**	12.30	5.61	0.15**
V1017	23.50	5.19	0.28****	23.50	5.61	0.28****
V1018	33.80	5.19	0.4****	33.80	5.61	0.40****
V1019	22.00	5.19	0.26****	22.00	5.61	0.26****
V1020	14.40	5.19	0.17***	14.40	5.61	0.17**
V1021	34.50	5.19	0.41****	34.50	5.61	0.41****
<i>Constant</i>	34.86			37.55		
<i>R</i> ²	0.64			0.57		
<i>F</i>	11.60			11.63		
<i>N</i>	210			210		

p* < .10, *p* < .05, ****p* < .01 *****p* < .001

Conclusion

The results only support the use of one of the nine program elements identified through the literature review as a program indicator associated with ratings of program quality. The results of the regression analysis suggest that individuals who have expertise with regard to employment programs identify one program element that is especially important in improving the employability of difficult-to-employ clients. This program element was drawn from human capital theory.

Analysis of Qualitative Comments

To better understand the scoring rationale of the decision makers, respondents were asked *“In five words or less, please indicate why you gave this program description your score”*. Each respondent provided a response. Responses were coded and themed into four broad categories: *inadequate or missing program activities; limited effectiveness; useful or helpful activities; program too complicated or expensive.*

Base Program (v0)

The base program represents a traditional employment program with a focus on basic job and soft skills training. In this program variation, clients are also given the opportunity to earn their GED and improve their math, read, writing, and English speaking skills, and they are assigned wage-subsidized jobs. The average score for the base program was 52.3. In general, the respondents indicated that the base program was limited with regard to program activities, basic, missing key programming, weak, or not effective. Comments included:

1. “limited in soft skills but I appreciate the ‘first job’ approach. Glad that this program works to help clients acquire a GED and literacy.”
2. “fails to support other client problems”

3. “very basic, no participant follow up not effective”
4. “Wage subsidized jobs are not a long-term”
5. “like so many we contract with already and it's doubtful it would be an more effective
6. they may not have the skills I need. I need to know they are trainable.”

Other respondents reported a positive response to the base program. They reported that the elements had value. For example:

7. “The fact they have work resume is helpful”
8. “Good basic job activities, the job experience helps a lot.”
9. “they come with soft skills and some job experience – helps”

Program Variation v1

Program variation v1 incorporated program element B1: *clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients and through repetition; working at the tasks until they have acquired the skill before moving on to the next one. This process helps clients learn how to succeed at challenging tasks by developing confidence, perseverance, and goal setting.* The average score for program variation v1 was 57.7. In general the respondents indicated again that some of the program activities were missing key program elements.

1. “no client-needs screen - intervention not targeted”
2. “still seems like old approaches. Even with the observing and imitating- depends on the skills and the tasks what they learn”
3. “need more time on job”

For some respondents, there was appreciation for this learning approach that is at the heart of social learning theory.

1. “liked how respondent learns tasks - through imitation”

2. “appropriate start of telling, showing, and imitating process”
3. “uses peer role models”

Yet, others wondered how feasible this program element would be. They were concerned about staff, cost, and short-run gains.

1. “has value but would cost more”
2. “not sure where we would find the veteran clients”
3. “Not sure this is possible in the short run. Not realistic - the observing and imitating veteran clients.”
4. “requires hiring more people”

Program Variation v2

Program variation v2 incorporated the following program element: *clients are trained in at least three marketable skills by working in BtW’s business enterprises*. The average program quality score was 66.1. There was a stronger indication that respondents liked this program variation

1. “having them with some pre-skills would help learning positions I supervise”
2. “I may fund this program. Developing confidence, perseverance and goal setting and three marketable skills is specific enough in its goals and timed to job obtainment”
3. “more likely to be effective than the first two with the three marketable job skills. Concern is are those skills really marketable and how well do the clients perform?”
4. “the three marketable skills would probably get this person an interview depending on the job
5. steady progression with correct mixture of program activities and diversity”

Others felt that, while programs with this element had value, this program variation would be expensive or complicated to support.

1. “a good idea - but expensive and what if the skills need to change?”
2. “May work, but would increase overall costs to provide”
3. “Would have to check out the three marketable job skills. Are they really marketable? It would be difficult to follow this in the contracting process”

Program Variation v3

Program variation v3 added this program element: *specific program activities are in place to help clients overcome feelings of learned helplessness*. The average score was 68.1. Only one respondent felt that there should be more focus on task time. But in general, respondents had a difficult time understanding learned helplessness.

1. “not sure what this means but if it is therapy and it helps them to not reoffend then and keep a job then ok”
2. “not sure how we would address learned helplessness”
3. “I'm not sure what learned helplessness is. If it gets clients out working then I'm for it. I'm not sure that we can put a performance cost to that.”
4. “how are you going to overcome feelings of learned helplessness?”

For other respondents, though, there was support for the program element, even if they felt the program was still weak, especially if it helped their clients.

1. “addressing learned helplessness is interesting - would consider but would want to see how they are measuring that.”
2. “weak but incorporates emotional readiness”
3. “how are you going to overcome feelings of learned helplessness?”

Program Variation v4

Program variation v4 incorporated this program element: *Clients work their way up through the various jobs in BtW's business enterprises, acquiring a broad set of skills and learning how to operate actual businesses while developing normative work skills and habits.*

Thus, they learn to keep reaching for their goals by developing the capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions, and to overcome obstacles. The average score for v4 was 72.0. In general, the respondents were positive about this program variation.

1. “the business enterprise/operating actual businesses concept is interesting - would want to see more but can see how this makes clients marketable. Would consider funding.”
2. “Like the opportunity to move up”
3. “The jobs in business enterprises, running actual businesses would definitely help get our clients in the work force. The manage emotions is really important - would like to know more how they would accomplish that.”
4. “being realistic about goals should be stressed”
5. “hands on work activity is a real plus”
6. “this is resume building stuff - depending on the job or skills, I would offer an interview”
7. “correct mixture of program activities with goal setting”
8. “I give this one a higher score because of the business operations - these skills may transfer. Having employees manage emotions is necessary”

Yet several responded that this program variation would be complicated and expensive, or they were concerned about the commitment and the lack of follow through.

1. “somewhat comprehensive but lacks follow through”
2. “understand the benefit of this - but don't see how we could produce it”
3. “How would we measure and pay for this? (Self-motivate, manage emotions, and overcome obstacles?)”
4. “longer commitment, cost investment”
5. “Great opportunity, complicated”

Program Variation v5

Program variation v5 included these activities: *veteran clients serve as aspirational role models. They model expected behavior and conduct, visibly rewarding new clients for behaving*

appropriately; thus, teaching new clients the language, social values, and attributes of success.

Veteran clients help teach and train new clients, using the “each one teach one” principle;

clients teach what they know and do to newer clients; anyone who knows a little teaches someone

who knows less. The average score for v5 was 73.9. There was some concern about this program

variation:

1. “I would want to see more about the veteran clients serving as aspirational role models. It's worth a second look.”
2. “to work, needs exceptional veterans”
3. “Think each one teach one can be helpful”
4. “incorporates mentorship, lacks follow through”
5. “better mix of program activities (graduated job experiences)”
6. “correct mixture of program activities with modeled behaviors”
7. “interpersonal, modeling, expensive, client commitment”

As seen in several of the comments, respondents show concern about the training and expense. Even if a respondent thought it was expensive, they did note that such an element would be effective.

1. “too much training drains profit”
2. “effective, demanding expensive”
3. “Here’s value to part of this but would have to find those that can do this. Would be expensive - more staff. If it keeps them in a job then good.”
4. “This one is a struggle. I think this would be expense, who pays veteran clients?”

Program Variation v6

Program variation v6 incorporated this additional program element: *once hired, BtW helps clients maintain employment once they secure it for the first three weeks by meeting with*

participants and employers as needed to discuss work performance issues. The average score for v6 was 78.7. The respondents felt the addition of this program element was particularly useful, especially the three week follow-up period.

1. "I like having a partner to help with work performance issues."
2. "Like that BtW helps clients in new positions"
3. "comprehensive, follows through employment maintenance"
4. "if they are non-traditional hires, working with the referring source might help smooth rocky hiring transition"
5. "better mix of program activities (richer peer role model)"
6. "correct mixture of program activities and feedback"
7. "Having the provider work with us on transition the new hire would be great"
8. "Valuable and beneficial - incentive for employer to hire - they may be taking a risk on these hires and this would help"

Like previous program variations, there was concern about the program being too complicated and expensive, as well as having too much oversight. Another concern was that this element assumed the client would have work performance issues.

1. "too much oversight"
2. "comprehensive, demanding, high number of drop outs, effective for those who complete, expensive"
3. "work performance issues - assumes the clients will have work performance issues"
4. "expensive, commitment, employer support"

Program Variation v7

Program variation v7 incorporated elements that addressed workplace discrimination and stigma into the BtW program: *BtW teaches clients strategies on how to present as desirable hires and cope with stigma and discrimination. To help clients overcome potential hiring*

discrimination, BtW issues “certificates of employability”, signifying that the client has job skills and character traits of a desirable employee, as assessed by BtW. The average score for v7 is 78.5. There was interest in how stigma and discrimination would be addressed, but overall there was strong support.

1. “I would want to see the strategies for coping with stigma and discrimination”
2. “This makes sense to help reduce stigma because of the hiring practices in our area”
3. “Not sure what the certificates offer in terms of hiring. If they have a record and are a substance abuser, certificates aren't a lot of help. There may be a liability issue - employer accepts certificates and the hire assaults someone.”
4. “comprehensive with validation for client”
5. “The coping with stigma is good as well as the working with hiring discrimination - not sure how that would translate into the real work world. I know it's a problem.”
6. “The teach strategies for overcoming potential hiring discrimination is exceptionally important. Good idea. Would like to see more of it.”
7. “Helping our clients deal with discrimination is so very important - making this program more complete and potentially more effective”

Even so, there were several that felt the BtW program was becoming overly complicated, involved, and demanding.

1. “seems complicated”
2. “way too much involvement”
3. “comprehensive, demanding, high number of drop outs, effective for those who complete, expensive”
4. “excessive activities and measurement components”

Program Variation v8

Program variation v8 added an additional program element: *BtW clients hold each other accountable, through mutual, direct but supportive feedback and criticism, thus experiencing the consequences of their actions and behaviors. When mistakes are made, they learn to acknowledge them and take the consequences, then move on.* The average score for v8 was 80.6. The respondents were less likely to see the value of the element that was added to this program variation, finding it complicated and expensive.

1. “Don't see additional value. Makes the program more complicated”
2. “peer support/critique a plus, very demanding expensive”
3. “excessive peer accountability”
4. “too much detail”
5. “Unless they brought it to their interview, this wouldn't matter. In fact, it might be odd if they showed this at an interview”
6. “Not sure the accountability is helpful”
7. “Honestly don't care if program staff hold clients accountable. I just want them to be able to work”

Several, though, saw the value, interpreting the program element as a positive for integrating the client into a job.

1. “It is good to have workers who understand accountability”
2. “Learning to accept criticism would be helpful - hopeful we would have lower turnover”
3. “Advantageous - depends on what the procedures are - don't want to beat down already beaten individuals”
4. “solid mix of program activities should be really effective”
5. “comprehensive, good risk/reward element”

6. strong, long, expensive, logical

Program Variation v9

The final program variation incorporated a worker evaluation element: *All participants must carry a daily performance evaluation to be completed by work supervisors and program staff. Participants are evaluated on the basis of their cooperation with their coworkers and supervisors, effort at work, punctuality, and personal presentation.* In general there was concern about this final program being complicated and intense.

1. “The daily evaluation makes sense, they are used to critiques before they come to me. I would support the program, but it seems intense”
2. “The performance evaluation may be useful but at least it mirrors some real experience the clients may have in the work world. May be too expensive for this entire program.”
3. “Don't like the daily performance evaluation. Not sure it helps unless it is done well.”
4. “Again no additional value - too expensive and complicated. Need to move people through the process more quickly.”
5. “daily performance feedback great - the log will help when we review progress - very expensive model for the public sector”
6. “unrealistic expectations, excessive peer accountability”
7. “Too much - too complicated at this point. Though it would probably be successful.”

Others, however, reported that a program with this type of program element would have value. They viewed this last program as comprehensive.

1. “best mix of program activities”
2. “all encompassing, Great!”
3. “I would like to see the performance evaluation as part of the hiring process - if it's good it would be a key element in their hiring.”

4. “complete, comprehensive, measureable”
5. “Effective - again depends on how it is conducted. People would have to be trained how do this so it is beneficial”

Summary

Respondents indicated that the base program was weak and did not include key program elements such as assessment and follow up. Despite the criticism, some respondents reported that the basic program elements involving basic job experience and soft skills training was helpful. There was considerable support for program variation v1, which incorporated training in three marketable skills, though there was concern that this program variation was still too basic. The addition of the program element (B1) described as *clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients* was met with positive reactions. Responses to the program variation that included the *learned helplessness* (I3) program element was met with confusion and respondents were not sure how activities addressing learned helplessness would improve the employability of clients.

The program element F4 (*clients work their way through various jobs in BtW's business enterprises*) was met with a number of positive reactions, including how the program ties job skills learned from working in the business enterprises with training in managing emotions, perseverance and self-motivation. Program element D5 (*veterans serve as aspirational role models*) was also met with more positive responses than negative even though there was concern about who the veterans would be. Some respondents saw this program element as incorporating missing elements such as mentoring, and role modeling. However, one respondent indicated that the heavy emphasis on “training” would drain profits.

Most respondents liked program element H6, involving a *three-week follow up post hire* and felt the inclusion of this element was a “better mix of program activities and feedback”. The

raters commented favorably on the attention to discrimination and stigma, and believed that this program element made the program more complete. The last two program elements, E8 (*holding program participants accountable for their actions*) and C9 (*all participants must carry a daily performance evaluation*) were met with criticism as being excessive, overly detailed, expensive, and complicated.

Conclusion

The results from the ICC, multiple regression, and qualitative text responses showed that decision makers with expertise in employment programming identified one program element that was particularly important in improving the employability of difficult-to-employ clients. This element (clients are trained in at least three marketable skills) reflects human capital theory.

As expected, respondents indicated that the base program was missing key programming elements. They were positive regarding the program elements that incorporated training and skill building as well as the program variation that described as *clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients*. Responses to the program variation that included the learned helplessness program element was met with confusion. In general, the respondents found value in each of the program variations, though there was less support for the lower ranked program elements. Most of the raters commented favorably on the attention to discrimination and stigma, and the last two program elements were viewed as excessive and overly complicated.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The results of the regression analysis indicated that one program element was significantly associated with overall ratings of program quality. The analysis found significant effects for program element A2 after controlling for differences among raters. There was a significant and positive relationship between A2 and the program quality score. A2 improved program quality by almost 20 points. The model explained 57% of the variation in program quality scores. Thus, when A2 was added to the program variants, program quality increased almost 20 points compared to a program without this element. This provides support for the validity of only this program element as an indicator for the purpose of evaluating program quality. The regression results suggest that incorporation of this program element has a significant impact on overall program quality. The findings failed to support the thesis that employment programs that address learned helplessness are rated higher than employment programs that do not address learned helplessness. Among these decision makers, there is a preference for program activities that focus on job experience and skill development.

Even so, there was evidence indicating the validity of the program element indicators for the purpose of evaluating program quality was supported by the results of the interrater reliability analysis. This result, however, may be because respondents scored each program variant as a whole – perceiving each subsequent variant higher in totality rather than responding to the effect of the program elements individually.

The validity of the program element indicators for the purpose of evaluating program quality appeared to be supported by an analysis suggesting that the addition of each element served to increase overall program quality scores monotonically, as would be expected if

independent raters judged that each element contributes to overall program quality. The average score for each of the program variations steadily increased as the program elements were incorporated into the base program. For example, the base program (v0) was scored, on average, the lowest (52.3) and the scores steadily increased across the ten program variations, with the most comprehensive program variant (v9) assigned the highest score (81.9). This increase in scores across the variants is evidence supporting the validity of the system of indicators. By the v6 program variation, the scores flattened and exhibited small incremental increases through the last program variation. This pattern of incremental increases and the leveling of the scores of the bottom ranked program elements in the last program variants suggests that the panel of 21 raters scored the program variants in a way that is consistent with the program element rankings assigned by the three expert decision makers.

The validity of the program element indicators for the purpose of evaluating program quality is also supported by a qualitative analysis of comments submitted by the 21 raters regarding the reasons for assigning the particular program quality scores that were assigned to particular program variants. In general, this analysis suggests that the addition of each program element served to increase judgments of overall program quality monotonically, as would be expected if independent raters judge that each element contributes to overall program quality. Raters were given the chance to provide a rationale for their scores. Not surprising, the low scores corresponded with comments such as “limited”, “fails to support client problems”, and “basic.” For each subsequent score, raters were generally positive about the program variations: “steady progression with correct mixture of program activities”, paralleling the monotonic increase of the scores. By program variant v6, the raters, while still responding positively to the each subsequent

program element, were also reporting that the last program variations were “comprehensive”, but “too complex”; “demanding”, but “too much involvement”.

Cronbach argued that a weak study is one that includes a heavy dose of exploratory empirical research. A strong study of construct validation is typified by how prominent role theory plays in validation (1971). Cronbach and Meehl (1955) discussed the importance of theory preceding and guiding the development and validation of constructs, arguing that the results of research, and the proposed interpretation, should situate the construct within a broader theory. The program elements were situated within theory. However, these results offer only limited evidence regarding factors that influence ratings of program quality.

All but one of the program elements that were expected to have a significant predictive impact on the program quality scores failed to do so. B1 presented the program element: “clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients and through repetition” to respondents. Reviewing the respondent comments may provide a rationale for why this program element was not significant. There were 16 negative comments and seven positive, with many respondents reporting both positive and negative comments. Three respondents indicated that this program was not “that special either” or “still seems like old approaches”, or “basic”; thus, they were comparing this program variant with the two previous program variants and failed to see B1 as adding value. Most of the respondents identified the program variant with this element as unrealistic and required hiring more staff, which would be expensive. One said that the veteran clients should move on from the program. Still others thought this program variant lacked adequate job activities, screening, and wanted more targeted interventions.

The program element, I3, is related to learned helplessness. It was surprising that this program element was not significant. There are two possible explanations. First, the program

element was poorly operationalized and respondents confused this element with counseling or identified it as a pejorative. Second, the foundation of learned helplessness is a loss of motivation or belief that a poor employment situation can be changed. Thus, the problem of learned helplessness is perhaps best addressed through A2 (learning three marketable skills) which would improve individual employment efficacy, possibly leading to the belief that individuals could compete in the job market. Consequently, I3 is irrelevant, or less relevant, than A2 and this irrelevancy may be reflected in lack of significant findings.

Program element F4 is “clients work their way up through the various jobs in the program’s business enterprises, acquiring a broad set of skills and learning how to operate actual businesses while developing normative work skills and habits”, was not found significant in the analysis. Further examination of the comments fails to provide a clear explanation for why this element was not significant. For example, using the comments as a guide, positive and negative comments were equally split, 11 positive and 11 negative (with some providing both positive and negative responses). Exploring the negative comments, however, provided some insight. Some respondents reported they wanted more information about the business enterprises, and one respondent expressed concern that this would make the clients too marketable – thus, being available for the jobs they themselves offered. Another said the skills learned would limit the marketability of clients to just these skills learned. Another respondent suggested that being realistic about goals should be stressed and the program variation with this element was only somewhat comprehensive and lacked follow through. Others reported that this program would be difficult to measure, and struggled with how such program activities would be accomplished, citing expense as a companion issue. Thus, for F4, it appeared the respondents were conflicted, viewing this program element in a positive and negative light. Also, it could be that respondents

failed to score this program element higher because it was similar to BPO and A2 , perceiving this element as having only marginal value to skill sets developed in BPO and A2.

Program element E5 was not significant. This program element was “veteran clients serve as aspirational role models. They model expected behavior and conduct, visibly rewarding new clients for behaving appropriately; thus, teaching new clients the language, social values, and attributes of success. Veteran clients help teach and train new clients, using the ‘each one teach one’ principle; clients teach what they know and do to newer clients; anyone who knows a little teaches someone who knows less.” There were 13 negative comments and eight positive comments. Respondents wanted to know more about how using veteran clients would work and how they would be funded – though one indicated that the veterans would have to be exceptional. One said like this program element, but it entailed too much training and another stated this element was unnecessary.

Program element H6 was not significant. This element helped “clients maintain employment once they secure it for the first three weeks by meeting with participants and employers as needed to discuss work performance issues”. There were seven negative comments and 16 positive comments. Most respondents liked the program variant with this element, noting that they appreciated having a partner to help them work through work performance issues. The criticisms noted three weeks not being long enough for the transition or the program was demanding with too much oversight. The key to understanding why this program element was not significant may be found in Figure 10; as can be seen, it was at v6 (H6) that the program quality scores began to flatten when lower ranked program elements were included. The lack of significant may just reflect the point when lower ranked program elements were added.

G7 was not significant and included this program element: “the program teaches clients strategies on how to present as desirable hires and cope with stigma and discrimination. To help clients overcome potential hiring discrimination, they are given ‘certificates of employability’, signifying they have job skills and character traits of a desirable employee.” There were ten negative responses and 9 positive (two comments did not address the program element). For the negative responses, respondents indicated that this program variation was complicated, was too involved, and demanding. One respondent said that this program variation was “demanding, high number of drop outs, and effective for those who complete, but expensive”. Another respondent felt that this program variation included excessive activities and measurement components. Others wanted more information about activities that reduced stigma and discrimination, with one respondent stating “something more solid, but this is a start”. Most respondents indicated that addressing stigma and discrimination was of value. So why was this program not significant? First, it may be that respondents were responding to the program variation as a whole – responding more to the excessive number of activities than just to the program element. Thus, the value of this program element may have been lost in the number of activities presented to respondents in this program variation.

Another reason may be that addressing discrimination may just be too complicated to reduce to simplistic program element indicators. Regardless of the program activities incorporated into employment programming, in terms of the number of activities or the quality of those activities, clients cannot change the nature of discriminatory practices, because these practices are more likely to occur at the structural level, beyond the power of the individual to effect change regardless of the coping skills they are taught.

In support of this contention, Darity and Mason (1998) argued that disparity in employment outcomes may be attributed to differences in racial groups based on skills (a human capital gap) and a discrimination gap. For the human capital gap, program element BP0, A2, or F4 can address gap – and the regression analysis confirmed the value of program element A2 to respondents. If skills development is provided in a consistent way, with high levels of skill mastery across all clients regardless of gender, race or ethnic attributes, then the human capital gap is reduced or eliminated, if this state, race and gender groups can compete on a level playing field with white and male hires. Programs with high levels of skill mastery training, accompanied by strong work experience, help clients reduce potential discrimination of groups because it eliminates the argument that non-white or female job candidates, for example, are less skilled or less productive than their white counterparts. Consequently, what is left is the discrimination gap in which racial or gender groups experience reduced economic opportunities due to differential treatment in the labor force because of their race, ethnic, or gender characteristics (Darity & Mason, 1998). If the latter is the case, then there is little an individual can do to change the biases occurring during the hiring processes, they must seek employment with a business that places more emphasis on skills and experience than skin color or gender or other undesirable attribute. Consequently, this indicator is problematic because it does not improve an individual's ability to reduce discriminatory hiring practices that are beyond their control.

Another reason is that addressing discrimination and stigma may actually have a negative effect on individuals. Steele and Aronson (1995) showed that negative stereotype about a group undermined performance. Researchers Gupta, Turban, and Bhawe (2007) explored stereotype threat on entrepreneurship for men and women. Their findings showed that stereotype threat depressed women's entrepreneurial intentions and increased men's. Yet, when entrepreneurship

was presented in a gender neutral fashion, there was no difference between men and women in becoming entrepreneurs. The conclusion from this is that the discrimination related program element is an inappropriate indicator to include. It cannot operationalize the complex nature of discrimination and employment, clients experiencing discrimination in the workplace have inadequate tools for changing that situation, and even identifying discrimination may have a negative impact on client's belief that can improve their employability situation.

Program element E8 was also not significant. This element was "all participants must carry a daily performance evaluation to be completed by work supervisors and program staff. Participants are evaluated on the basis of their cooperation with their coworkers and supervisors, effort at work, punctuality, and personal presentation". E8 had more negative responses (13) than positive (seven). The negative responses clearly showed that respondents did not see the value of this program element. One respondent questioned if this would work, but others indicated that this element made the program variation more complicated, demanding, and expensive, and one stated they did not think such an activity would be helpful. One respondent reported that if a potential hire brought this up at an interview, it would be considered odd, while another respondent reported that they "honestly don't care if program staff hold clients accountable. I just want them to be able to work". Finally, another respondent reported that such a program activity might have negative impacts on the clients "depends on what the procedures are - don't want to beat down already beaten individuals".

Program element C9 was "clients hold each other accountable, through mutual, direct but supportive feedback and criticism, thus experiencing the consequences of their actions and behaviors. When mistakes are made, they learn to acknowledge them and take the consequences, then move on." Holding the clients accountable appeared to be particularly concerning for the

respondents. There were 16 negative responses and 12 positive responses with most respondents reporting both positive and negative reactions. Some thought this program activity was intense, expensive, complicated, and raised concerns that in order to be effective it had to be done well. One respondent felt that this program element offered “unrealistic expectations, excessive peer accountability”. Another respondent was concerned that such information might violate confidentiality or privacy laws related to labor practices.

In summary, there were six program elements that were not statistically significant. In general respondents felt these program elements provided no additional value to the program variations and often labeled these elements as complicated, expensive, intense, and raised concerns about beating down already beaten individuals. One comment was cautionary, suggesting that if such program activities were to be part of an employment program they had to be done well. In general these program elements were not seen as providing any added value to the program variations, suggesting that these decision makers sought more practical programs and activities, with several respondents indicating: “I just want them to be able to work”; “I want them to show up which can be learned in the first two BtW programs”; and finally “need to move people through the process more quickly”.

Significance

There are important social applications of conducting this research. Program evaluations of many employment programs have returned mixed or only short-term positive results. One reason results have mixed or limited outcomes is that program activities and their accompanying measures do not address the complex nature of employability. This study was an attempt to provide a more comprehensive exploration of employability and to develop measures that better reflect the complex, multi-dimensional aspects of employability for hard-to-serve groups.

There is no shortage of literature exploring employability, barriers to employment, and theories that explain the employability phenomena. A wide-ranging review was conducted to capture this information and convert findings into employability effectiveness constructs reflecting employment program activities that can be measured. Three social science theories were identified that would have the strongest explanatory power for employability. Two theories are central to conventional strategies for addressing and improving employability: human capital theory and discrimination theory. A third theory, social learning theory, was explored because of its potential to expand the understanding of employability that goes beyond improving skills and reducing wage differentials, with the promise of fundamentally improving activities and indicators measuring those activities.

A hypothetical employment program (BtW) was created that incorporated a traditional set of basic employment program activities. This was designated as a base program. Subsequent program variations were created by incrementally incorporating nine additional program elements. Descriptions of the ten BtW program variations were submitted to 21 expert decision makers who scored the overall quality of each program with regard to the degree to which each program variation was expected to improve the employability of difficult-to-employ individuals. These program variations were presented in the form of a survey that included vignettes of each program variant. The vignette survey was designed to mimic the type of program descriptions that are often reviewed by decision makers. Embedding the program elements that were the focus of this study into hypothetical descriptions of a base employment program served to present the rating task in a way that would be familiar to the raters and would serve to contextualize the rating task.

As seen in the descriptive analysis of overall program quality scores, the scores increased monotonically as the program elements described were incrementally incorporated into a basic employment program that included none of the program elements being validated. This result is suggestive of the validity of the constructs. However, there were variations in the program quality scores within subgroups. For example, the scores assigned by case managers rose monotonically until program variation v6. However, average program quality scores then decreased despite the addition of each of the last three program elements. Case managers scored program variants v1-v6 in incrementally increasing scores, v1 was the highest ranked program variation, v2, the second highest ranked and so on until v7 when the scores decreased. It is theorized that because case managers work closely with clients, they would value compact employment programs that focus on a few key program elements. They may also reject long-term programming because it keeps their clients in training for longer periods, failing to move individuals into the workforce quickly.

Oddly, hiring managers scored the highest ranked program variant v1 lower than the base program. This may be because hiring managers are more likely to respond more positively to “quantifiable” information in their hiring job role, focusing on years worked, skills attained, and marketability, and would find such information more valuable than how clients learned to acquire job skills. Executive decision makers may view the program variations more systemically – believing that comprehensive programs may produce longer term positive outcomes. On the other hand, program managers may be focused on the success of their particular program and more concerned about the feasibility, sustainability, and expense of program activities. Their scores may reflect this focus.

Validity

The intraclass correlation indicated consistency among the raters of the ten program activity variations. This suggests that raters were consistently able to rate the employment programs as intended by the system of program quality metrics.

The results of the regression analyses suggests that the decision makers perceived that programs incorporating skills based programming would improve the employability of difficult-to-employ clients as seen by the significance of A2. The respondent attribute variables, in particular the indicators for hiring managers, program managers, private, for-profit and years of industry experience, were not statistically significant and were dropped in the final model.

Respondent Score Explanations

Not surprising, the base program was seen as too basic, which reflects its lower score. Even though the program element B1 (three marketable skills) was seen as a positive addition to program variant v1, this variant was still perceived as very basic; respondents indicated that they would like to see more assessment and follow up. However, most of the respondents were confused about the notion of incorporating activities designed to address learned helplessness, wanted more information, or wondered how they would include this in their programming. It was not that they rejected this element, but they did not understand it well. Thus, the incorporation of this program element might have contributed more to perceived program quality if respondents had a better understanding of what learned helplessness was, how it would translate into programming, and what types of outcomes would be linked to this activity.

The fifth program element -- *clients work their way through various jobs in BtW's business enterprises. . . developing capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions and overcome obstacles* received positive respondent support. Even so, this program element is an example of how the method may have muddled the different indicators. For instance, it can be argued that

this element mixes human capital theory (*work their way up through various jobs in BtW's business enterprises*) and social learning theory (*developing capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions and overcome obstacles*) with the latter intersecting with learned helplessness.

The last two program elements were met with heavy criticism: “expensive”, “complicated”, and “unwieldy”. This raises another question about this study. Were the respondents responding to the program variations as different program elements were included or were they responding to each program variation as a whole? Their comments such as *complicated* and *expensive* seem to relate more to the entire program variation description and less to the individual program elements.

Limitations of the Study

Although the literature review was extensive, it was difficult to incorporate every study related to employability. The literature on discrimination theory, learned helplessness, and racial disparities in employment and employment programming is vast. The complexity of the program descriptions and associated program elements introduced the possibility of confusion among raters. For example, consider the program activity indicator: *clients work their way up through the various jobs in BtW's business enterprises, acquiring a broad set of skills and learning how to operate actual businesses while developing normative work skills and habits. Thus, they learn to keep reaching for their goals by developing the capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions, and to overcome obstacles*. Raters may have been confused by the multiple activities that were included in this description and may have been confused about how the activities would be operationalized.

The vignette survey was complicated, lengthy and may have confused respondents. Respondents may have been influenced by the number of program elements that were included in each program variation rather than the contribution of each element to program quality.

Both groups of expert decision makers were drawn from a convenience sample. These individuals may not be a representative sample from which to establish validity of the program activity indicators. Also, there may be problems of measurement error. For example, measurement error may be introduced by imprecision, inaccuracy, or poor scaling of the items within an instrument such as the vignette survey. These issues may adversely affect reliability and validity of the results from this study.

The fact that serial correlation exists indicates that the assumption of independence is violated. In other words, idiosyncratic differences among the raters influenced the results. The implication is that it would be important to use the same panel of raters to evaluate a given set of employment programs if the results were used to compare the quality and effectiveness of the programs. This would represent a major limitation of the rating scheme. Also, the regression diagnostics showed that the data violated several other assumptions as well; because of this, the analyses results, and the interpretations, may be incorrect or misleading.

This study used a convenience sample, which results in a number of biases. A convenience sample can lead to the under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample. It may be that there are missing groups or that individuals within groups may have a greater variation in how they perceive program quality. For example, hiring managers from the public sector and hiring managers from non-profits may vary considerably in their perception of program quality. The reason why many of these decision makers agreed to take part in the survey is as a favor to the researcher. There may be a different distribution of

responses if respondents were randomly drawn from a pool of decision makers that were not known to the researcher. Since the sampling frame is not known, and the sample is not chosen at random, the inherent bias in convenience sampling means that the sample is unlikely to be representative of the population being studied. This undermines the ability to make generalizations from the sample to the population that is being studied. While a convenience sample should be treated with caution, this is the first study investigating social learning theory as a bases for program quality indicators for employment programs serving the hard-to-employ.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is still a need for employment program activities that reflect social science theories that point to better program activities which improves the employability outcomes for the hard-to-serve. Improved program activities would require better performance metrics. There are directions for future studies. First, an expanded review of the discrimination theory literature would be required – a deeper exploration of racial barriers to employment – as well as activities that have been directed toward addressing not just racial barriers, but gender, sexual orientation, immigration, and religious related work barriers. It appears that many of these activities have not been institutionalized in a formal way into employment programming. There may be interest in how to incorporate such activities into employment programming and ultimately how to measure those activities.

Finally, it may be useful to pursue further research regarding the influence of rater characteristics and roles on program quality scores. As seen in the results, program quality scores differed by role of the respondents. It would be worth exploring how different program stakeholders weigh various indicators of success.

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Appendix A: CENT Case Example

Program: Case Example Non-Traditional (CENT) employment program serving the difficult-to-employ.

Program Objective. To improve the employability of the most difficult-to-serve people. CENT prepares clients to compete for jobs by teaching them new forms of skills and knowledge and to think as autonomous agents while navigating complex work demands. CENT also addresses behaviors and attitudes that hamper individual progress toward employability.

Program Goals. CENT will help residents:

1. obtain a GED;
2. obtain advanced education;
3. move from self-destructive actions into new, positive and self-determining attitudes, beliefs and behaviors;
4. develop workplace professionalism;
5. gain job experience;
6. overcome employability deficits;
7. become employable; and
8. earn income.

Population Served. CENT serves adults of all ages regardless of sex, race and ethnicity. CENT is a residential, self-help organization for former drug and alcohol abusers, ex-offenders, the homeless, the functionally literate and the poor; those with limited employment histories and little to no marketable job skills. They do not accept individuals with serious mental illness, sex offenders or those who have not dealt with their legal issues.

Program Setting. Participants live and work in a multi-story complex that contains street level retail stores, a restaurant, espresso café and bookstore, and several other onsite vocational training businesses. The residence houses approximately 500 participants in 177 studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, which are assigned on the basis of seniority. Residents share central dining and recreational facilities, including a social room, library, multipurpose meeting room, swimming pool, and spa. The benefit of the residential facility is that it allows participants to learn interactively, meaning learning flows from the residence (e.g., its business enterprises which serve as onsite vocational training) to the participants and from participant to participant.

Program Referral. Veteran residents interview all applicants. A newcomer enters the reception area and sits down on a hard wooden bench. About 75 percent of the participants come straight from courts or prison, referred by judges. About 25 percent come from referrals from former participants. Residents don't pay anything to the program, they just apply. To be accepted, applicants are interviewed by other CENT veteran residents. Veteran residents check to make sure court or police issues are resolved and their mental illness controlled. If program veterans are convinced applicants are serious about turning their lives around, applicants are accepted.

Program Staffing. CENT is self-governing, leadership and management are drawn from residents as they address housing concerns, rule violations, education needs, employment

opportunities, and other problems that arise among participant members. No one draws a salary, and residents set the rules. CENT prides itself on having no outside professional staff.

Program Funding. CENT receives no federal, state or municipal funding. It's entirely self-supporting and has no staff other than residents. CENT supports itself mainly through its businesses, but also accepts donations. Everyone in CENT works, and no one receives an individual salary. Any money received or earned is donated back into the general fund pool. That general fund provides for the care of all residents. Pooling earnings is accomplished primarily through peer pressure. Income from CENT businesses account for 60 to 70 percent of the program's annual budget. Except for a small personal allowance, no salaries are paid to residents, but all basic needs are provided, including dormitory housing, meals, clothing, transportation, medical care, education, training, and entertainment. CENT has no administrative overhead; no money goes to public relations, grant writing, data collection and reporting, marketing, or fund-raising.

Program Timeframe: The minimum stay is 2 years; the average stay is 4 years. Residents can stay longer if they wish.

Program Summary. CENT residents replace old self-destructive habits with new strengths, behaviors, attitudes, abilities, and a sense of responsibility. This is accomplished through “mastery experiences”, gained through team assignments, living communally and engaging in education, employment, interpersonal, and social opportunities. During the average two-year stay, a resident receives a high-school equivalency education and is trained in at least three marketable skills by working in CENT’s business enterprises, which serve as vocational training schools. The business enterprises are managed by the residents. Residents conduct all the teaching and training, based on the “each one teach one” principle where veteran residents help newer residents and everyone works, thereby developing a strong work ethic. Everyone involved in the program is expected to contribute to the operations; residents pool earnings to provide at least 60-70 percent of the program’s annual budget. Some of these training programs generates funding for CENT and others support administrative program functions. For example, the residents working at the onsite restaurant or café earn income from patrons that is then placed in the general fund. Residents learn by repetition; working at program tasks until they have acquired the skill set well enough to teach a new resident. The purpose of this technique to help the residents attend to the important elements of the task, retain the information and reproduce it as a form of muscle memory. Additionally, veteran residents demonstrate expected behavior to new residents by modelling appropriate conduct then visibly rewarding residents for their actions.

Program Philosophy. The underlying philosophy is social entrepreneurship². The CENT program does not use a program delivery model. Through the contribution of participants, CENT has developed multiple business ventures that train participants in a variety of marketable skills. New residents work their way up through the various jobs in these enterprises, while learning the normative work and life skills. Teaching through actions is the program’s motto. Each resident is placed in charge of someone else the very first week, employing CENT’s primary teaching method - “each one, teach one”, where residents teach what they know and do to newer residents; anyone who knows a little teaches someone who knows less. Each one, teach one is the core of

² Social entrepreneurship is the attempt to draw upon business techniques to find solutions to social problems.

CENT. All residents serve as resident-as-teachers and as resident-as-learners. For instance, an experienced resident takes the new resident under his or her wing and teaches them to set a table in the restaurant. When someone even newer comes in, the new resident is in charge of teaching the newer resident to set the table, and so on. This way residents regularly participate in running actual business operations, learning the skills and habits required to successfully participate in real world working environments. Contributing to the operations of actual companies provides training in understanding the consequences of actions and behavior on the success or failure of these businesses. Because there are no employees, residents must perform all the tasks necessary to make CENT self-sustaining. In this way, each individual is given real responsibility and becomes an important contributor to the organization and other residents. The CENT program believes that all residents can improve by working hard and holding each other accountable, through mutual, direct but supportive feedback and criticism.

Program Expectations:

1. Earn an GED
2. Work from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm six days a week
3. Learn how to dress, speak, and eat in social settings
4. Wear suits and dresses at dinner
5. Accept feedback from other residents
6. Attend and participate in group discussions
7. Be polite and “act nice,” until the act becomes real
8. Accept consequences for misbehavior
9. Teach newcomers all aspects of the program using each one, teach one
10. Obtain at least three months job experience
11. Live in the residential complex
12. Remain with the program for at least two years

Program Rules. The program requires strict compliance to four non-breakable rules:

1. no drugs or alcohol;
2. no threats of violence;
3. no physical violence; and
4. earn income.

Program Process. Once applicants have been accepted, they spend their first thirty days without any contact with their families; after 30 days, they are allowed to write and receive letters. During the initial six months, residents are not allowed to walk the grounds unless accompanied by a more experienced resident. After six months they earn a telephone call home. They are given five sets of clothing: three work outfits; a leisure ensemble, and one more formal set of clothes for dinner and outings into society where they can attend the theater and opera. New residents first begin working in a maintenance program, performing janitorial duties for the entire facility. The first three months are the most difficult because new residents often have a hard time adjusting to the rigorous work load and repetitive tasks.

A typical day begins at 6 a.m. Residents wake up and shower in dorms they share with at least ten other members. By 8 a.m., landscaping crews are combing the manicured grounds with rakes, while other crews (new residents) clean windows and mop floors. At CENT, residents start at the bottom and work their way up from labor intensive jobs to ones. For example, as residents

advance in the program, they move from menial labor to the shops or sales and administrative offices, improving their marketability with each successive move. At noon, they break for lunch. After lunch, they attend a peer-lead seminar. Work continues until 4:30 p.m., which is followed by a recreation period. They also attend several meetings, ranging from group encounters to gripe sessions. Residents can attend a number of extracurricular classes, including cooking, navigating computers, creative writing, and GED preparation and completion.

New residents are placed in a group of ten people led by a group leader. The group leader, a veteran resident, acts as mentor, teacher, and confidant. The group leader is also responsible for the progress of the group. Placing residents in groups or teams allows individuals to learn attitudes, behaviors, and values from their interactions with their team as well as other residents. The mentor, or resident-as-teacher, models the preferred behavior for others to observe and imitate; someone the resident may look up to, as having the qualities that are determined desirable. Mentors teach the residents personal skills: how to break old habits, how to get along with other people, and basic hygiene, for example. Most of the residents have never had jobs, so mentors teach basic work habits – showing up on time, listening to their supervisor, and getting along with coworkers, helping residents learn the language, social values and employability attributes of success. These group leaders are also responsible for the social and psychological welfare of the group; thus, if a group member acts destructively, the group leader takes actions to address the problem.

The group leader is in charge of the everyday life of the group, who does what job, what phone calls can be received, when residents may visit their families, when new residents move out of maintenance jobs, and so on. All residents learn by observing and imitating veteran residents, rather than passively listening in a classroom setting. Every four months residents rotate jobs. Residents must compete and provide a proposal for the job they want, with veteran residents deciding who is ready for promotion. Often new residents do not get the job of their choice and have to learn to keep reaching for their goal while still putting in a 100 percent effort at the job they hold; that way residents develop the capacity to self-motivate, manage emotions, and identify ways to overcome obstacles. They also learn to identify strategies that help them succeed at challenging tasks through confidence, perseverance, and goal setting. Eventually these ten people become a true unit. The message is that each member is not only responsible for themselves but for each other as well. They are also instructed in middle-class values. The men must wear a coat and tie to dinner, the women must wear dresses. Residents are required to be active in community service and volunteering at local special events. CENT stresses the interaction of the individual with the social system, while working face-to-face with members of the community.

Program Components. CENT offers five primary program components: education, job training, interpersonal skills, social responsibility, and therapeutic programming, which are described below.

Education Component. The first area of education is school learning. Everyone who comes to CENT is tutored in basic skills: reading, writing, and math. They are required to obtain a GED. Second, CENT offers high-school level liberal arts courses in literature, composition, as well as classes in art and music appreciation, and creative writing. Every morning and every noon at a daily seminar, residents learn the basics of money management, civics, archaeology and cultural anthropology, etiquette or fashion and style. These sessions are

conducted in a seminar fashion, where each resident speaks for a few minutes on the subject being discussed. Those who stay three years can attend a post-secondary academy accredited by the State, but paid for by CENT. High school tutoring is provided in-house by residents who have completed their diplomas, and university courses are taught by volunteer professors.

Vocational Job Training Component. CENT maintains several enterprises which serve as vocational training schools:

- Accounting & bookkeeping
- Advertising specialty sales
- Car and mechanical repair & painting
- Catering and event planning
- Commercial decorating & print shop
- Construction and property management
- Film screening and projection
- Restaurant management and cooking
- Moving & warehousing
- Limousine service & truck-driving
- Purchasing & contracting
- Clerical & computer services

While working in these vocational training program, residents-as-teachers model the appropriate skills in each aspect of each business site while residents-as-learners observe and imitate the skill set being taught. These are the businesses in which CENT earns its living. CENT residents work in every aspect of the business enterprises, which serves as their job training while gaining job experience. Vocational training is accomplished in three phases. The first is in-house training, where residents learn basic skills and how to develop work habits and self-discipline. When residents have mastered basic skills they move on to testing these skills in work performed through one of CENT'S business enterprises in the second phase. They must learn one manual skill, one clerical/computer skill, and one interpersonal/sales related skill. After achieving a level of competence, they move on to the third phase, which is to get a job in the community where they must work successfully for six months prior to graduation. Participants are regularly mentored by individuals who successfully transitioned from unemployment to employment, themselves. Also, participants regularly teach and mentor a program novice, so that the mentor experiences and learns the value of teaching and mentoring, becoming aspirational role models for new residents.

Interpersonal Skills Component. Learning interpersonal skills is accomplished informally twenty-four hours a day through communal living. For example, residents who were once members of racially-oriented gangs, live together in the same dorms. They are required to speak properly, no slang or prison language. Because residents work together, they must learn to accept authority and dispense authority to others; feedback is continuous. The formal method for learning interpersonal skills is the group process meeting in which residents must participate three times weekly for three to four hours each session. The meeting is led each day by a different resident. The focus of these group meetings is to correct each resident's style of relating to others. In these groups, residents explore their feelings for and their actions and behaviors toward one another. They discuss their problems; they point out each other's issues and behaviors. These groups also allow for the release of hostilities verbally rather than physically.

Social Responsibility Component. Following the philosophy of restitution, residents are required to provide community service and interact with individuals outside the campus, such as working with senior citizens or with juveniles from poor areas. For example, residents take youth to cookouts, on tours of the city, and give them crime and drug prevention seminars. Residents are also trained in social survival skills, such as the importance of proper handshakes, good body language, conversation skills, proper dining and eating skills, and manners. After getting a job on the outside, participants may continue

to live at the facility during a two-to-three-month transition period. After that, they are encouraged to volunteer with the program.

Therapeutic Component. Each new resident is assigned a mentor and is placed in a group of ten other residents. This way they form a unit with shared responsibility for each other and become responsible for helping their unit become successful. There are no therapists, no case workers, and no professional social service workers. Residents rely on each other, learning from those that have experienced similar situations. Thus, they develop their strengths, not through therapeutic means, but through actually practicing life skills, living, working, and interacting with others in the facility and in the broader community. When mistakes are made, they learn to acknowledge them and take the consequences. In their groups, residents are given the opportunity to express their feelings, admit their mistakes, apologize, and then move on. As residents observe others being punished, they learn what is acceptable and unacceptable; thus, learning to self-regulate their own behavior and fit in with the program and other members.

Rewarding Consequences. CENT insists on accountability at all times. They make residents acknowledge truths, all the things people do not like said out loud, in front of everybody. As residents advance through the system, they are granted more privileges and more freedom. They are taught and expected to earn what they get. Every reward must be earned through self-discipline, hard work, and caring for others as well as themselves. Punishments for wrong-doing involve extra work or losing rewards. Washing dishes is often a punishment for breaking the rules. If participants break the non-breakable rules, it is automatic grounds for dismissal.

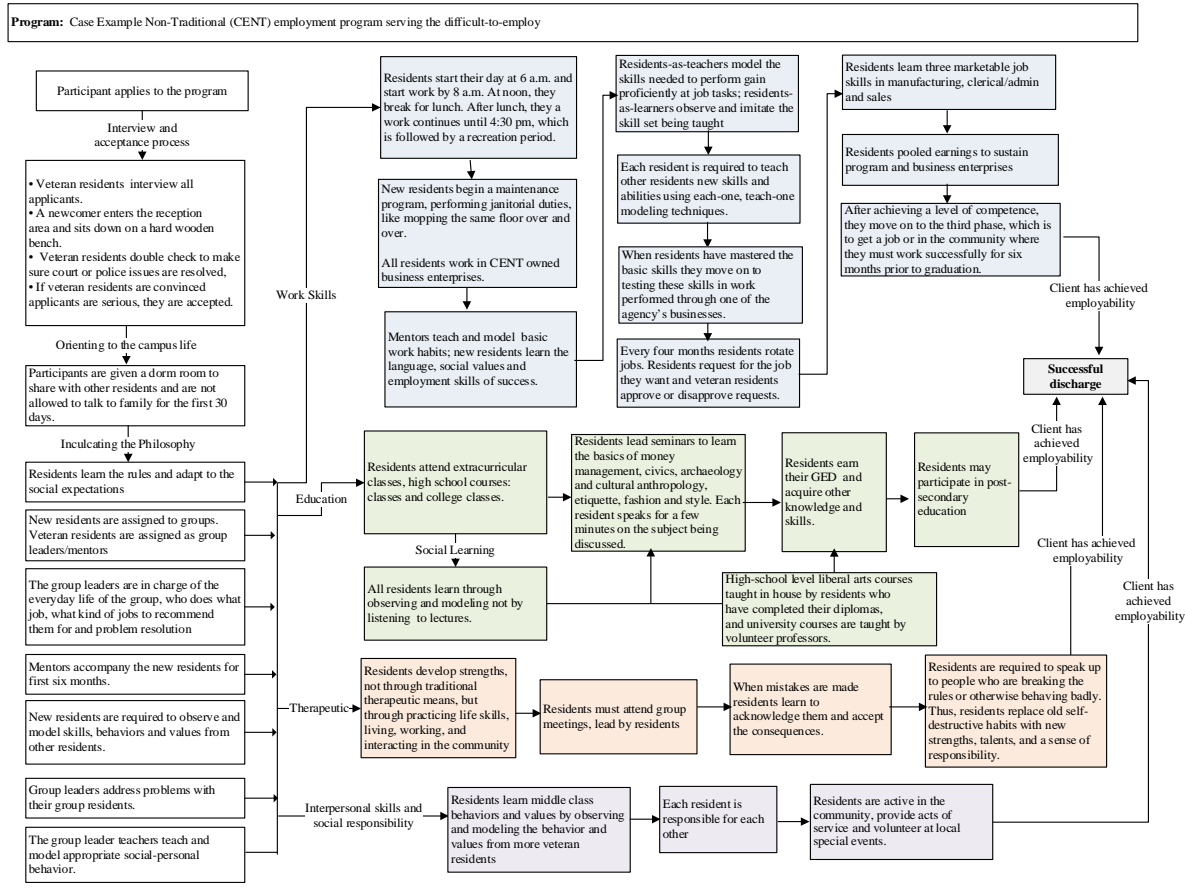
Program Discharge. When clients are ready to graduate, they obtain an outside job, but they usually continue to live in the CENT complex for several months. They save their money until they can continue their new lives, on their own, in the mainstream society. As residents leave, they present in a discharge group, reviewing their past histories, reliving every act they have committed in the past. Then the departing residents relate how they now view themselves as desirable hires, motivated to pursue and achieve their employability goals. This way the veteran residents model to the newer residents how they have proven themselves to be someone new, exchanging their old life for a new one.

Program Outcomes:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Residents complete program and stay for two years | 8. Residents demonstrate proficiency in the skills they are taught |
| 2. Residents earn high-school a GED | 9. Residents accept accountability and hold others accountable. |
| 3. Residents perform tasks assigned to them | 10. Residents provide at least 60-70% of the program's annual budget |
| 4. Residents are trained in one manual skill, one clerical/computer skill, and one interpersonal/sales related skill. | 11. Residents gain job experience |
| 5. Residents develop a work ethic | 12. Residents demonstrate leadership skills |
| 6. Residents teach other residents desirable behavior and job tasks | 13. Residents obtain permanent employment |
| 7. Residents learn social survival skills. | 14. Residents replace old self-destructive habits with new ones |

Program: Case Example Non-Traditional (CENT) employment program serving the difficult-to-employ

Social Problem to be Addressed (In order to address these risk factors)	Inputs (resources – what is invested)	Activities (to address the social problems)	Target Population (For these people and for this amount of time)	Theory of Change	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education • Lack of marketable skills • Employability deficits • Hireability deficits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents staff, manage and operate CENT's business enterprises Residents staff, manage and operate CENT's administrative and operation functions • Residents perform teaching and training functions in CENT's business enterprises. • A multi-story complex that contains vocational schools. • Residential housing for 500 participants in 177 studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments • Shared spaces in complex for meetings, education, etc. • Income earned and pooled by residents. 60-70% of funding is provided by residents to support agency functions • Business enterprises which serve as vocational training schools and program funding source • Volunteer professors • Donations: money and goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application process • CENT first job assignment • Group leader assignment • Team assignment • Residents set CENT rules • Business enterprise assignment, job rotation and job advancement • Resident each one teach one assignments • Meal times • Peer lead seminars • Group process/gripe meetings • Extracurricular classes • Recreation Periods • Mastery experiences • Business enterprise vocational training school activities • Pooled earnings to support CENT • Community service and volunteering • Education related activities • Vocational training schools via CENT's business enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ in-house training w/ basic skills ◦ job in CENT's business enterprises ◦ job in the community • Interpersonal skills activities • Social responsibility activities • Therapeutic activities • Accountability activities and rewarding consequences • Reliving past histories and other discharge activities • Transition activities 	<p><u>Adults:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all ages • sex/genders • all races and ethnicities • former drug and alcohol abusers, • ex-offenders, • homeless, • functionally literate • poor; • limited employment histories <p><u>Amount of Time</u> 2 years; average 4 years; more if desired</p>	<p>IF residents have a place to stay with aspirational models like themselves . . . THEN residents will become engaged in the program.</p> <p>IF residents are engaged in the program . . . THEN residents will observe modeled behavior and learn the expected skill sets.</p> <p>IF residents learn those job tasks by imitating other residents . . . THEN they will teach/model those skills to new residents.</p> <p>IF residents teach new residents . . . THEN residents reinforce each others attitude and beliefs with positive/negative consequences.</p> <p>IF residents reinforce each others attitude and beliefs with positive/negative consequences. . . THEN residents learn responsibility.</p> <p>IF residents learn responsibility . . . THEN they adjust their future behavior so as to align with normative expectations, while helping others do so as well.</p> <p>IF residents adjust their future behavior so as to align with normative expectations, while helping others do so as well . . . THEN they will have replaced old self-destructive habits with new strengths, abilities.</p> <p>IF residents have replaced old self-destructive habits with new strength and abilities . . . THEN they are motivated to work toward future goals.</p> <p>IF residents are motivated to work toward future goals . . . THEN they will attain their GED, learn at least 3 marketable job skills and, if desired, seek further education.</p> <p>IF residents complete their GED and learn at least three marketable job skills . . . THEN residents develop employment efficacy.</p> <p>IF residents develop employment efficacy . . . THEN residents are qualified for other jobs in the program and in the broader society.</p>	<p><u>Short term outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents complete program and stay for two years • Residents earn high-school a GED • Residents perform tasks assigned to them • Residents are trained in one manual skill, one clerical/computer skill, and one interpersonal/sales related skill. • Residents develop a work ethic <p><u>Intermediate outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents teach other residents desirable behavior and job tasks. • Residents learn social survival skills. • Residents demonstrate proficiency in the skills they are taught • Residents accept accountability and hold others accountable. • Residents provide at least 60-70% of the program's annual budget. <p>Residents gain job experience</p> <p><u>Long term outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents demonstrate leadership skills • Residents obtain permanent employment • Residents replace old self-destructive habits with new strengths, talents, and a sense of responsibility.



Appendix B: CET Case Example

Program. Case Example Traditional (CET) employment program serving the difficult-to-employ.

Program Objective. CET provides comprehensive subsidized work experience, wraparound services, and train-to-work opportunities for hard-to-serve individuals.

Program Goals. CET will help participants:

1. complete their GED and improve their math, reading, English speaking, and writing literacy;
2. gain job experience through subsidized jobs;
3. earn income through subsidized jobs;
4. develop workplace professionalism;
5. address psychosocial needs;
6. complete train-to-work;
7. help reduce the stigma of workplace discrimination; and
8. find a permanent, unsubsidized job.

Population Served. CET serves adults of all ages, regardless of sex, race, and ethnicity. CET also serves offenders, homeless, and those on welfare and general assistance. They will not serve participants with severe physical or mental health problems, who are destructive to themselves, use illegal substances, or who have committed serious person felonies.

Program Setting. The program is situated at a learning center in an urban setting.

Program Referral. Referrals come from state and local government social service and correctional agencies and other providers that serve hard-to-employ groups, as well as from recruiting and outreach. The program is voluntary.

Program Staffing. The 21 member team includes job coaches, employment specialists, support staff, and assessment staff. CET provides hoteling space for teachers and job trainers.

Program Employer Partnerships. CET works with local employers to develop avenues for job placement.

Program Funding: CET's primary funding comes from federal, state and local government contracts, donations, and foundation grants.

Program Timeframe. The participants are enrolled in the program for 12 weeks. If participants fail to complete they have to begin again to complete the entire 12-week program.

Program Compensation. Participants receive the minimum wage and are paid daily, up to four days per week for 20 hours per week for subsidized wage jobs. Funding for the job salaries come from for-profit, non-profit, and public grants and contracts.

Program Summary. CET focuses on education, employment training and support services for those struggling with employability. At the core of the program is an intensive case management model targeting different categories of employability deficits: illiteracy, job skills, and psychosocial problems. Through education and job training, CET believes on building a strong work ethic based on helping the hard-to-employ master the skills to become a valued employee. They believe that demonstrations of marketable job skills, work readiness and professionalism helps dispel the perception that the hard-to-

serve are unemployable. CET also provides “certificates of employability” that demonstrate to potential employers that participants have the attributes of good employees. Furthermore, CET teaches participants strategies on how to present as desirable hires and cope with stigma and discrimination. Lastly, CET employment specialists works closely with potential employers to hire program participants, regardless of their less than optimal backgrounds (i.e., criminal histories and homelessness).

Program Philosophy. The CET philosophy is about investing in an individual’s education and intellectual growth to maximize their earning potential. They also provide access to supportive services to help participants overcome additional barriers to employment. CET does this through work-first,³ remedial and GED education, workshops and seminars, supportive services, train-to-work vocational opportunities, certificates of employability, and unsubsidized job placement. Work-first emphasizes immediate job placement in subsidized employment to improve the employment and financial situation of the most difficult-to-employ. CET also provides remedial education (e.g., math, reading comprehension, English proficiency, and writing), GED completion, workshops covering a variety of topics, and train-to-work opportunities to improve individual employability. CET also offers referrals to social supportive services to help participants in five cluster areas: chemical dependency, mental health, developmental disabilities, criminal histories, and homelessness.

Program Expectations:

1. Show up on time and consistently
2. Complete a GED
3. Follow all case plans
4. Attend workshops/seminars
5. Attend peer group meetings
6. Gain job experience
7. Attend meetings with assigned case workers
8. Complete train-to-work program
9. Obtain and keep an unsubsidized job

Program Rules. The program requires compliance to five rules (these are not unbreakable):

1. No new offenses
2. Fulfill all court orders
3. No return to homelessness
4. No welfare sanctions
5. Provide accurate information

Program Process. CET is divided into two phases. Phase 1 includes work-first subsidized jobs, education and workshops, and supportive services. Phase 2 includes the train-to-work program, certificates of employability, and job placement in unsubsidized jobs. Phase 1, starts with the pre-acceptance application process, which determines applicant eligibility. CET staff use a pre-acceptance checklist to evaluate how well an applicant meets program eligibility criteria. Ineligible participants are referred to other programs; however, ineligible participants are encouraged to return when their issues have been resolved. The pre-acceptance criteria checklist includes:

1. Background check for serious person felonies in criminal history.
2. Welfare use to check whether participants are in compliance.
3. Warrant/court orders to show that participant is in compliance.
4. Mental/physical health screens to identify serious mental or physical health problems.
5. Drug tests to demonstrate participant is not currently using illegal substances.

³ Work first believes work is the first step toward creating marketable employees by providing temporary, on-the-job work experiences in a real job in which the pay is subsidized by CENT.

6. Checks for pending serious charges (i.e., person felonies).

Next is the intake process. At intake the participant completes their application. The application includes information on their education and work history, criminal history and current legal status (pending charges or outstanding warrants), income, and welfare status. CET staff administer different tests and assessments to determine participant eligibility and needs. These include educational and vocational deficits and competencies, psychosocial needs, and a physical and mental health screening. Staff simultaneously assesses intangible factors, such as attitude or immediate life challenges or gaps in skill sets as they conduct one-on-one interviews with potential participants. After intake staff review all the materials and make a final determination on the applicant's eligibility.

Once accepted, participants attend orientation, where they are given an overview of the program, and they sign release of information forms so the CET workers can coordinate case requirements with state or county case workers, case managers, probation/parole officers, or therapists. The participants are tested for soft skill deficits, literacy level (using TABE) and are given an employment assessment. The participant commits to being involved in the program by signing a "commitment to complete" agreement at this time. Then they are then assigned to a job coach, service mentor, and an employment specialist.

The job coach coordinates with their clients to place them in a paid, work-first, subsidized job. Participants work for a minimum of 20 hours per four-day work week. They have flexible day and night schedules so they can meet their other obligations. The job coach and service mentor also work with participants on their life, education, work, work backup and discharge case plans. Participants meet with their job coach twice a week to demonstrate their progress. All participants must carry a daily performance evaluation completed by job coach and the supervisors at their work-first job. They are evaluated on the basis of their cooperation with the supervisor, effort at work, punctuality, cooperation with coworkers, and personal presentation. If participants fail to maintain their daily performance evaluation, they are required to meet with their job coach three times a week. Participants are assigned to workshops, classes, events, and seminars, scheduled around the work-first subsidized jobs. These education and work support activities include:

Remedial education		Addressing housing issues
Career coaching		Work sanctions resolution
Life skills)	Household finances and budgeting
Job search and preparation	1.	Health, nutrition and hygiene
Financial literacy	2.	Understanding taxes
Understanding employer expectations ⁴	3.	Finding community resources
Workplace professionalism and building soft skills ⁵	4.	Strategies for overcoming stigma and discrimination

Service mentors refer participants to third-party social services programs (city, county, and state contracted social service providers) for related problems (i.e., criminal behavior, homelessness, developmental disabilities, substance use, or mental illness). Participants meet with their service mentor once a week to demonstrate their progress. They also coordinate case plans with the participant's probation officer, social worker, or case manager. Peer support group sessions are held once a week; these are voluntary but participants are encouraged to attend. These are one-two hour meetings where participants discuss their frustrations and successes. A service mentor, job coach, or employment specialist facilitates the group sessions. Participants help each other work through job or personal problems and provide encouragement and support. As participants relate their successes, participants are

⁴ Understanding employer expectations includes showing up on time, what to do if you're going to be late, taking sick leave and customer interactions.

⁵ Workplace professionalism soft skills includes interviewing, appropriate dress, making appointments, how to speak without offense.

given “kudos” or tokens that allows them to purchase items at the CET on-site convenience store or to trade in for certificates or passes.

The employment specialist, job coach and service mentor review the participant’s daily performance evaluation to determine where the participant will transition to Phase 2. The train-to-work programs provide vocational training in low-skilled to moderately-skilled trades with the training occurring off-site. The employment specialist, job coach and service mentor meet with the participant and assigns them to the preferred vocational training program. Once the decision is made, the participant begins to train in their assigned or chosen vocational field. After the participant has finished their train-to-work program, CET issues “certificates of employability” which states the person has job skills and character traits that make them a desirable employee, as assessed by CET. Finally, the job coach and employment specialist work with the participant and employer partners to place the participant in an unsubsidized job in their chosen field.

Program Components. CET offers several program components: service mentors, job coaches, employment specialists, Work-First, education, and train-to-work.

Service Mentor. Every participant who enrolls in the program is assigned a service mentor who works with the participant to develop a Life Plan to include personal goals. This plan could include but is not limited to: housing issues, life skills, mental health and chemical health needs, and health outreach. The service mentor provides referrals to appropriate service providers if the issues are serious and ongoing. The service mentor also meets with the job coach and employment specialist to develop an Education Plan, Work Plan, Work Backup Plan⁶ and a Discharge Plan. Service mentors are responsible for following up with clients and coordinating social service and employment goals with the job coach. Participant follow-up is conducted a minimum of four times a month by the service mentor. Support programs help participants address their psychosocial needs. These resources are outside the agency, thus the participants are referred to community resources for these services. The service mentor also works with social workers, and probation/parole officers to coordinate case requirements and follow up with referrals made to social service providers.

Job Coach. The job coach provides individualized outreach, mentoring, mediation, coaching, and worksite intermediary services to participants. The job coach assigns the participant to their subsidized work experience. Working with the employment specialist and train-to-work leader, the job coach coordinates the education and work components of CET. The job coach refers participants to additional resources, including remedial education, job and college fairs, and internet searchable job databases. On-site job coaching activity is available twice a week with more intensive daily coaching support during the first week on the job for both subsidized and unsubsidized employment. If the participant is being sanctioned, due to poor work performance, they must attend the sanction resolution workshop at CET. The job coach checks in with the participants and their supervisors and is available for calls during the entire period of subsidized employment. Job coaches also help clients maintain employment once they secure it for the first three weeks in a subsidized job, by providing ongoing meeting with participants as needed to discuss work performance and issues.

Employment Specialists. CET employment specialists work with community employer partners to develop private, public, and non-profit sectors subsidized and unsubsidized job positions, including a job bank of potential employers. They develop employer partnerships that are geographically located throughout the region. Prior client placement in either the subsidized or unsubsidized job, the employment specialists has the participant tour the jobsite, job shadow and conduct a practice transportation run. After the twelve-week program is completed, employment specialists encourage employers to retain participants and transition them to unsubsidized employment. Finally, employment

⁶ The Work Backup Plan will help participants plan for contingency situations such as an alternative transportation and job loss.

specialists meet with potential employers to demonstrate the value of hiring program participants as a way of overcoming hiring stigma for hard-to-employ clients.

Work-First. Work-first is a four-week subsidized work program that places participants in part-time jobs serving on crews performing basic property maintenance, repair, construction demolition, and event preparation for government agencies. Work-first offers an immediate entry-level job so that participants can gain on-the-job work knowledge and skills. The employment specialists works with employer partners to locate these jobs and support the hiring of participants. CET pays the salaries of the participants in subsidized jobs; funding for the job salaries come from for-profit, non-profit, and public grants and contracts. The employer partners sign off on the participant's daily performance evaluation, which evaluates participants' attendance, attitude, ability to work with others, and their work skill performance.

Education. Participants are required to develop an educational plan that outlines their education goals. Participants will attend GED (conducted onsite with CET teachers) and make progress toward completion if they do not have a high school diploma. CET provides educational life skills workshops which includes: household budgeting, housing issues, general overall health promotion and checkups, discussion of tax credits and filings, nutritional classes, use of community resources (i.e., food shelves, and clothing closets), and personal hygiene. Lastly, CET has developed a successful partnership with the city schools and Adult Basic Education with full-time teachers who come onsite to provide customized remedial reading and math instruction to program applicants. The education component lasts four weeks.

Train-to-work. Train-to-work provides a choice of career paths within an eight-week program. The train-to-work program activities provide hands-on education and training in the selected occupation/industry so participants develop skills and abilities that allow them to compete in the labor force. The train-to-work opportunities are selected to emulate industry-recognized credentialing related to jobs in demand. Participants in the train-to-work courses meet daily for eight weeks. All train-to-work programs include classroom instruction followed by job shadowing and workplace experience (in the form of short internships) in the relevant field. The training programs are offered in partnership with local for-profit and non-profits around the region. These job training opportunities include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Health Records Certification | 4. Customer Services |
| 2. Forklift | 5. Trucking |
| 3. Cable TV Installer | |

To pass the train-to-work, program staff and worksite supervisors evaluate participant performance. If all are favorable, CET recommends the participant for job placement, though participants must interview and compete for the job. Even if they had completed an internship at the jobsite. CET also provides a certificate of employability to the participant to give to the employer. To pass the train-to-work program participants must have:

1. 100% attendance (can make up missed lessons);
2. demonstrated understanding of the course content;
3. active class participation with a positive attitude; and
4. pass all tests at 80% or higher each segment of the course.

Once the participant has passed their train-to-work, the job coach and employment specialist provides assistance with searching and applying for a job, and setting up interviews. Both job coach and employment specialist guide the participant through all aspects of job search and job placement including resumes writing, interviewing, networking, informational interviews, keeping a job, preparing for transition into a new position or a new field, and terminating employment. Finally, CET gives the participants a "certificate of employability" to give to potential employers as evidence of acquired

education and job training, workplace professionalism, and soft skill abilities. The purpose of this certificate is to reduce the perception that the participant is an undesirable hire.

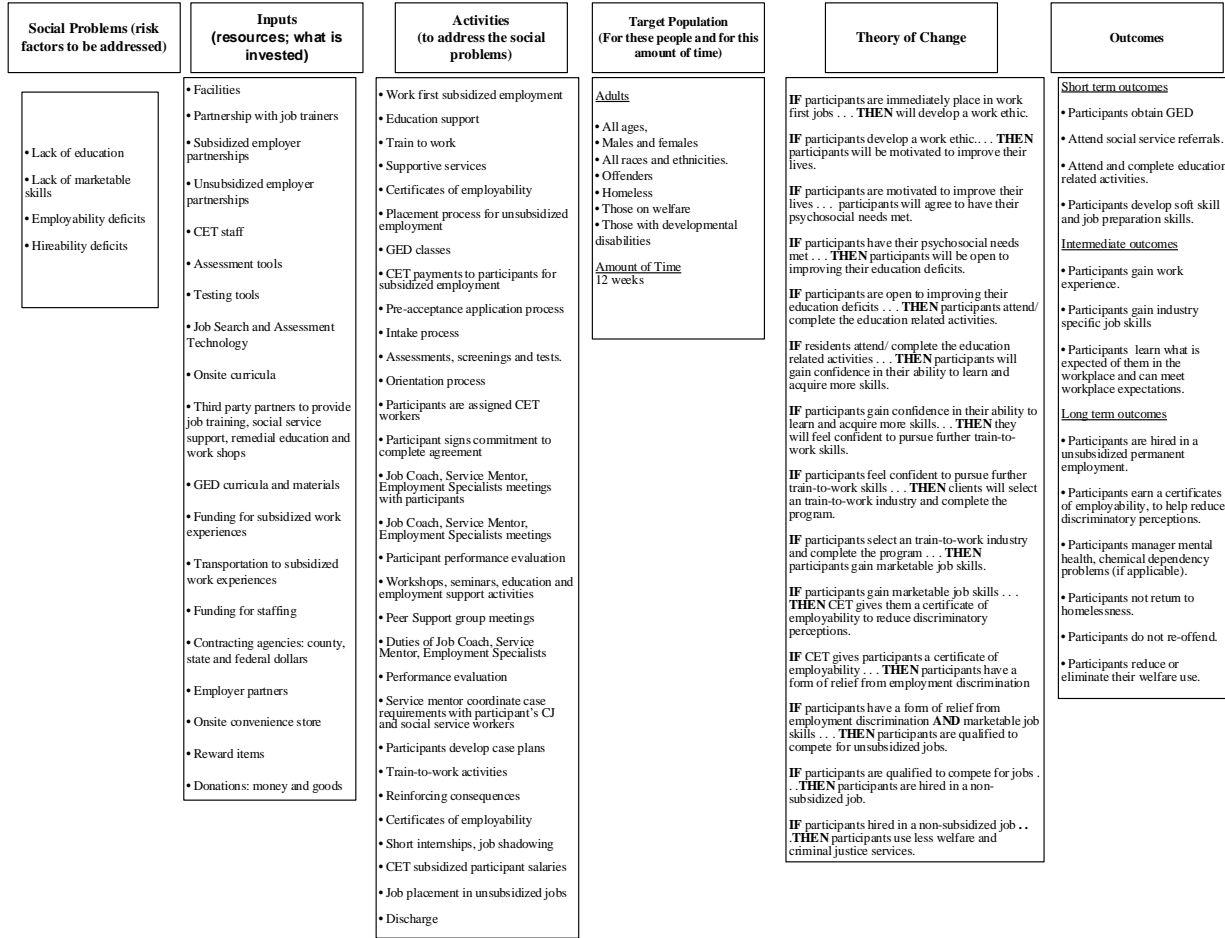
Reinforcing Consequences. There is a rewards program for participant success. CET provides movie or event tickets and grocery vouchers to mark milestones of success. There are also kudos tokens for participants with verifiable successes in their personal and work lives; tokens can be used to purchase items for CET's onsite convenience store or to trade for passes to movies or sporting events. If the participant is non-compliant, staff work with the participant to improve their situations. Non-compliance is addressed through non-compliance meetings. If the participant has not improved their performance after three non-compliance meetings, they are dismissed from the program.

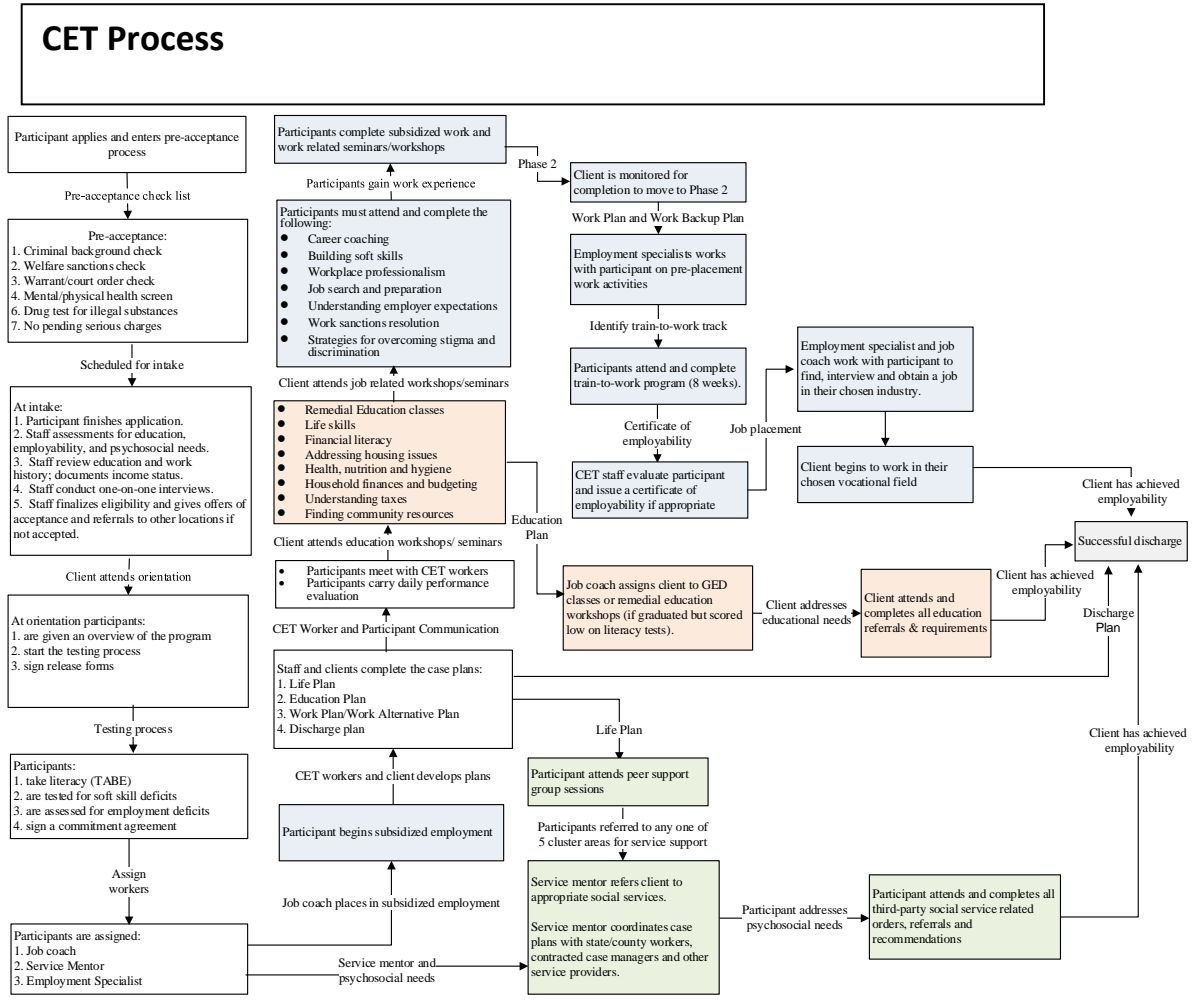
Program Discharge. A discharge plan begins at the case plan development meeting between participant and their job coach. All service plan objectives must be completed to be considered successfully discharged. A negative discharge is determined when the individual has not had contact after repeated outreach by the case coordinator over a period of 60 days. A negative discharge also occurs when a participant has not achieved at least two objectives outlined in their work, life, education plans, and work plans within a 12-week period. The participant may reapply and start the program over again if they have been negatively discharged. CET discharge has a three step process: (1) verbal warning; (2) written warning; and (3) termination.

Program Outcomes:

1. Participants obtain GED
2. Participants attend social service referrals
3. Participants complete education activities
4. Participants develop job related soft skills
5. Participants gain work experience
6. Participants gain industry specific job skills
7. Participants can meet workplace expectations.
8. Participants are hired in an unsubsidized job
9. Participants manage psychosocial problems
10. Participants do not return to homelessness
11. Participants do not re-offend
12. Participants reduce/eliminate their welfare use

CET Logic Model





Appendix C: Data Collection Instrument for Employability Performance Measure Study

Thank you for participating in my research project. For this study, there are two sections. The *first section* asks three questions about your role as a decision maker. Please do not include our name; your name will not be associated with the answers you provide in this instrument.

The second section asks you to read ten program descriptions and score then on a scale of 0 -100 using the scale provided as a guide. Then you will be asked to provide short description of your scoring rationale.

Definitions

Employability: employability should be understood as factors that influence a person's ability obtain and retain a job.

Difficult-to-Employ: are those who struggle with poverty, homelessness, criminal histories, limited English proficiency, poor job skills, and mild mental health and substance use problems – the characteristics and experiences that are common barriers to employment.

SECTION 1: Decision Maker Expertise

1. Please identify your last (if retired) or current primary role as a decision maker (e.g., policy maker, funder, contract manager, program manager, supervisor/manager program monitor, executive decision maker, employer, hiring manager, other-be specific). *If you held multiple roles, please select the role that consumed the majority of your time (51% or more).*

2. In what industry did you work as that decision maker?

_____ Public Sector (federal, state or local government entity)

_____ Non-Profit Sector

_____ Private/For Profit Sector

_____ Other, please specify _____

3. How many years in this role? _____

SECTION 2: Employment Program Description Scoring

In your role as a decision maker and using the scale provided as a guide, please score each program description from 0-100. *Higher scores indicate programs have a higher likelihood of effectively improving the employability of difficult-to-employ individuals*, and *lower scores have a lower likelihood of effectively improving the employability of difficult-to-employ individuals*.

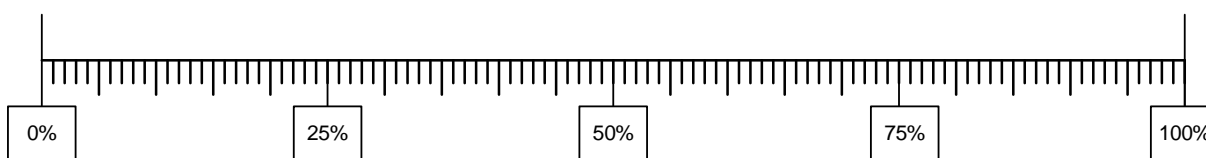
After you have scored the program description, please briefly provide your rationale of your score for each program. Please limit your comments to five words or less.

Note: please read each description thoroughly. While the descriptions appear to be the same across all ten program options, there are program activity variations within each description.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: BP

“Back to Work” (BtW) is an employment program serving difficult-to-employ adults. Program activities include helping clients earn a GED and providing remedial coursework in English speaking, math, reading, and writing. Clients are first assigned to a wage-subsidized job (e.g., cashier, hotel maid, store clerk, or janitor) paid by BtW. These positions help clients enter the workforce quickly, earn income, demonstrate a work ethic, and develop a work resume. BtW provides workshops to build client soft skills such as interviewing for a job, meeting employer expectations, and developing positive work habits and professionalism.

This employment program potentially improves the employability of difficult-to-employ clients . . .



Score: _____

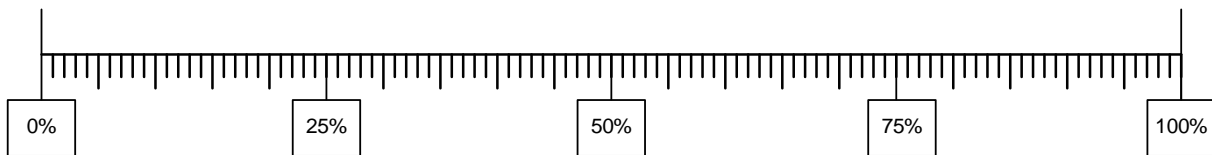
In five words or less, please indicate why you gave this program description your score (e.g., expensive, too few job activities, correct mixture of program activities, too many job activities, comprehensive, weak, etc.)?

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: ZB

“Back to Work” (BtW) is an employment program serving difficult-to-employ adults. Program activities include helping clients earn a GED and providing remedial coursework in English speaking, math, reading, and writing. Clients are first assigned to a wage-subsidized job (e.g., cashier, hotel maid, store clerk, or janitor) paid by BtW. These positions help clients enter the workforce quickly, earn income, demonstrate a work ethic, and develop a work resume. BtW provides workshops to build client soft skills such as interviewing for a job, meeting employer expectations, and developing positive work habits and professionalism.

Clients learn job tasks by observing and imitating veteran clients and through repetition; working at the tasks until they have acquired the skill before moving on to the next one. This process helps clients learn how to succeed at challenging tasks by developing confidence, perseverance, and goal setting.

This employment program potentially improves the employability of difficult-to-employ clients . . .



Score: _____

In five words or less, please indicate why you gave this program description your score (e.g., expensive, too few job activities, correct mixture of program activities, too many job activities, comprehensive, weak, etc.)?
