



reporter

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, CENTER FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Vocational Assessment

Can you identify careers in which you have the greatest potential for success before you train for them? The University of Minnesota's Vocational Assessment Clinic uses information about a client's abilities and interests correlated with profiles of individuals successful in various careers as a basis for selecting those careers in which the client is most likely to succeed. The Clinic is a cooperative effort of the Psychology Department and the Center for Urban & Regional Affairs. Further information about the Clinic is available from:

*The Vocational Assessment Clinic
N-555 Elliott Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 376-7197.*

Know your potential . . .

Success is more than a paycheck

In the past, men and women worked to provide sustenance and shelter; adequate pay was considered sufficient for the "good life." More recently, attention has focused on the role of work activity in satisfying psychological needs; work is viewed as central to identity in our society and has been related to self-esteem and general mental health.

Many American workers have yet to attain satisfaction of economic and/or psychological needs. Unemployment and underemployment with their resultant failure to meet economic needs are more apparent within certain groups of workers, but worker dissatisfactions and frustration of psychological needs are a generalized phenomenon, even within white-collar occupations.

Unemployment affects approximately 8% of the national labor force each month and involves one in five workers to some extent each year. Unemployment and underemployment are pernicious, especially for minorities, women, the uneducated and unskilled, and the handicapped; these workers are grossly overrepresented in unemployment and underemployment figures while underrepresented in income figures.

Worker turnover, like unemployment, affects large numbers of workers monthly and annually. Although some turnover is related to unemployment, the phenomenon is a more generalized indicator of failure of workers to remain in occupations for a substantial period of time.

Worker dissatisfaction has been difficult to measure: substantial numbers of workers report satisfaction but indicate a desire to change jobs. For

instance, in a cross-sectional study of white-collar workers including professionals, only 43% (compared with 24% among blue-collar workers) said they would choose the same occupation again. A University of Michigan survey revealed substantial discrepancies in worker descriptions of desires for given work features and job fulfillment of desires, with interesting work and other intrinsic rewards ranked above pay. While pay levels and interesting work overlapped to some degree, dissatisfaction with noneconomic job factors was widespread. Inadequately satisfied psychological needs—when considered in light of absenteeism, production of inferior goods and damage to equipment, worker alienation and verbalized dissatisfactions despite increasing pay levels—produce additional costs for business and for the workers themselves by disrupting career adjustment processes.

As early as 1942 the St. Paul Study of Employment revealed between 40% and 45% satisfaction with work. Workers reported dissatisfactions with level of work and confusion about possible vocational changes and alternatives. The study emphasized the need for more realistic vocational planning. Thirty years later, data continue to support this recommendation.

Several agencies are currently working with minority members desiring upward job mobility, women reentering the job market, dislocated or disaffected workers, and new entrants into the job market. The primary emphasis of these agencies is provision of services to motivate and support individuals in their efforts to obtain suitable education and training, to upgrade their

occupational status and to achieve appropriate kinds of employment. In addition to these services, however, it appears that there is a need for better assessment of abilities and needs of individuals engaged in the career planning process and for meaningfully relating abilities and needs to the requirements and rewards of work settings.

A Pilot Vocational Assessment Clinic

In the fall of 1973 the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs contacted Professors Lloyd Lofquist and René Dawis, psychologists long active in the area of work adjustment, to try to bring University resources to bear on this problem. Professors Lofquist and Dawis initiated a pilot Vocational Assessment Clinic (VAC) in the Department of Psychology in March 1974 with financial support from CURA.

Focusing on the characteristics of the work personality and work environment as basic for predicting work adjustment, the Vocational Assessment Clinic attempts to identify types of employment for which an individual is best suited because of his or her abilities and the potential of the work to meet his or her job needs.

Using a theory of work adjustment as a working model, the Vocational Assessment Clinic outlines a range of occupational choices in which the individual could be both satisfied (personal need fulfillment) and satisfactory (job performance). Work personality is the combination of abilities, interests, and individual needs. The work environment is the combination of ability requirements and physical or psychological conditions that satisfy needs. To match individuals with jobs suitable for their work personalities, the Vocational Assessment Clinic uses a series of measurement instruments including some that were specially designed during their research.

The VAC is a part of the Work Adjustment Project, which has been active in research for 18 years at the University of Minnesota. The first 15 years were supported in part by research grants from the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The research activity led to a theory of work adjustment and to the construction of instruments to measure work-relevant needs, satisfaction in work, satisfactoriness in work, and reinforcers in work (work conditions that fulfill workers' needs). An occupational classification system that has been recently developed, utilizes descriptive information from both Work Adjustment Project research and the work of other investigators to describe occu-

pations more comprehensively in person-related terms. Work Adjustment Project research has won research awards on three occasions from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association and on one occasion from the American Personnel and Guidance Association.

The VAC combines provision of needed community service with teaching and research. Advanced PhD students gain experience in applying concepts and techniques learned in the classroom and in a setting where they can discuss their work with faculty sponsors. The clinical experience, according to the Clinic's directors, offers a unique opportunity to provide clients with the most up-to-date service while also strengthening research and development efforts through client feedback. Professors Lofquist and Dawis feel that one of the important things that has become evident during this pilot phase is the need to develop new, non-traditional measurements of the work personality.

The instruments used by the Clinic in the assessment of work personalities include:

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

—measures satisfaction of individual's needs through work

Minnesota Satisfactoriness Scales (MSS)

—measures how well workers perform jobs

Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ)

—measures individual's vocational needs

Minnesota Job Description Questionnaire (MJDQ)

—measures kinds and level of job reinforcers

—provides Occupational Reinforcer Patterns (ORP's)

The U.S. Department of Labor's General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB)

—measures workers abilities

—provides Occupational Aptitude Patterns (OAP's)

A correspondence between an individual's needs (MIQ) and Occupational Reinforcer Patterns (ORPs) provides a basis for predicting worker satisfaction on the job. Likewise, correspondence between an individual's abilities (GATB) and Occupational Aptitude Patterns (OAPs) provides a basis for predicting worker satisfactoriness on the job. Both are essential in describing the client's work personality, and the assessment of both reinforcers and requirements is essential in describing work environments.

During its pilot phase the Vocational Assessment Clinic served a population generally restricted to women and

minorities. A referral program was set up in cooperation with the CURA's offices of Career Development and Inter-cultural Programs and the Minnesota Women's Center. The largest percentage of clients served by the Clinic was referred through the Women's Center. It is still too early to actually evaluate the impact of the Clinic's assessment on the career or the career planning of the clients who completed the vocational assessment process. The Women's Center, however, has just completed a survey of women who have used its counseling services and reports that the general response to the clinic experience was favorable. The VAC has begun the process of surveying its clients as the first part of a continuing follow-up and research program.

The typical VAC experience involves a referral from a cooperating organization, followed by a preliminary interview with a VAC counselor to discuss the client's reasons for requesting a vocational assessment. Following this interview the client completes a detailed biographical questionnaire. The client is then scheduled for a basic battery of tests including ability, need, and interest measures. If the counselor and client feel it appropriate, more specialized tests may also be scheduled. When the tests have been scored the counselor and client review the test and biographical information. This information is then evaluated against the abilities, needs, and interests characteristic of workers in various occupations. Counselor assessments are reviewed in VAC staff meetings. During these "staffings" the counselor discusses the salient aspects of a client's "credentials" with the other counselors and faculty sponsors. The consensus generated at the staffings is used by the counselor in discussing with the client those career possibilities which appear most compatible with the client's abilities, needs, and interests. Information gathered during the assessment process is confidential and the client approves a summary sheet, outlining the general results of the assessment, that is sent to the referring agency.

Through this process the VAC attempts to help clients answer the question "what are the best jobs for me?" providing the first step in sound career planning.

Full-Scale Clinic

Since July 1975, with support from CURA and a major grant from the Northwest Area Foundation (formerly

the Hill Family Foundation), the VAC has been doubling its staff and client capacity. The Northwest Area Foundation grant has been augmented by funds from the Hoerner Waldorf Corporation, Northern States Power Company, and Control Data Corporation.

This support enables the Clinic to work with private and public community agencies and firms to fill the gap which frequently exists between an organization's desire to help people who need assessment services and the organization's ability to provide such service.

The Clinic will offer its services to anyone without access to another facility. When appropriate, prospective clients will be referred to other organizations such as the University's Student Counseling Bureau, the Veterans Administration, and the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

A fee schedule for vocational assessment services has been developed. Fees will be charged during the grant period to enable the Clinic to become self-supporting. Information on referrals and fees may be obtained by calling the VAC at 376-7197.

New Quarters for Two CURA Offices

The Office of Planned Residential Development & Housing Research and the Urban Education Center are now sharing office facilities on the St. Paul campus. The new address is:

Pavilion Annex
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
(612) 376-3684

CURA Adds Associate Director

In September 1975, Thomas M. Scott joined the CURA staff as an Associate Director. A member of the University of Minnesota faculty since 1962, Scott specializes in local and urban governmental development.

Chairman of the Political Science Department from 1972 to 1975, Scott has also been active in a number of University committees, community organizations and professional associations.

Scott will be dividing his time equally between administrative duties in CURA and teaching activities in the Political Science Department.

PUBLICATIONS—1975

The following publications were released by the Center for Urban & Regional Affairs in 1975. For a more complete listing of departmental publications, contact the CURA office.

- **Brown, Dwight, et. al. *Mapping Twin Cities Minnesota Metropolitan Area Land Use With ERTS-1 Imagery*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Land Management Information System, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Planning Agency), 1975.
 - **Brown, Dwight, et. al. *Monitoring Surface Water Dynamics in Minnesota*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Land Management Information System, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Planning Agency), 1975.
 - **Brown, Dwight A., et. al. *Wildlife Habitat Change and Seasonal Cultivation*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Land Management Information System, Center for Urban & Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Planning Agency), 1975.
 - *Drury, Edward J. *Inventory of Inmate Education Programs by Minnesota Institutions of Higher Learning*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), June 1975.
 - *Fitzsimmons, James D., Julia A. Nutter, and Kathleen A. Gilder. *Housing Rehabilitation Loan Programs in Minnesota*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Office of Planned Residential Development and Housing Research, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), May 1975.
 - **Hoeft, John and William Borchers. *A Comparative Analysis of the Land Use Laws of Minnesota and Selected Other States*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Land Management Information System, Center for Urban & Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Planning Agency), June 1975.
 - *Krossner, William J. *A City Examines Itself: The 1974 Duluth Attitude Survey*. Report No. 1. (Duluth, Minnesota: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), February 1975.
 - *Krossner, William J. *A City Examines Itself: The 1974 Duluth Attitude Survey*. Report No. 2—Detailed Statistical Analysis. (Duluth, Minnesota: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), May 1975.
 - **Larson, Gregg Sydney. *Differential Assessment of Farmland in Anoka County*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Land Management Information System, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota State Planning Agency), June 1975.
 - **State Land Use Criteria: a collection of papers*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Center for Urban & Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), August 1975.
 - *Walker, Orville C., Priscilla P. Goldstein, and William Rudelius. *"Voiceless" Groups in the Twin Cities Community: Programming Needs of Some of Public Television's Non-Audiences*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), July 1975.
 - *Wattenberg, Esther and Sally Flax. *Minnesota Family Day Care Training Project*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Office of Career Development, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; and School of Social Work, University of Minnesota), June 1975.
-
- *Available through the Center for Urban & Regional Affairs, 311 Walter Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone (612) 373-7833.
- **Distributed by the Minnesota Land Management Information System, 2001 Riverside S., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404; telephone (612) 373-5865.



reporter

Vol. V, No. 2 September/October 1975

The **CURA Reporter** is a publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota. Comments and contributions are welcome. Catherine McCann Murphy, Editor. Offices at 311 Walter Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

CURA
311 Walter Library
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
