

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Individuals with mild developmental disabilities have traditionally been excluded from full participation in their career decision making due to the stereotyping of their perceived incompetence. This view forms a mind-set or stigma that is recognized as the *disability myth*.

This study initially addressed the vocational development of individuals with mild developmental disabilities. A selected group of seven were identified from a population of 70. These seven had participated in a high school intervention program that was vocationally based and were deemed as most likely to demonstrate vocational maturity. They provided information regarding their vocational development through unstructured interviews.

Donald Super speculated that individuals with disabilities could benefit from the existing theories of

vocational development; his theory of vocational development described the seven participants. All seven were vocationally mature. All had independent adult status. All were employed and had continuous employment histories. None of the seven were receiving income replacement or benefits from dependency programs, such as, Medicaid, Food Stamps, or Supplemental Security Income. All seven participants had well defined vocational self-concepts and well developed self-concept systems. Super further speculated that persons with disabilities may need a special application of a vocational development theory although not a different one; this conjecture was not applicable to the seven participants.

Further research on the applicability of Super's theory should focus on other individuals with mild developmental disabilities who are not employed; those receiving assistance from income replacement or dependency programs should also be studied. Qualitative methods will be essential to conducting these studies. The applicability of his theory to those with other types of disabilities should also be tested.

The seven participants seemed to have benefitted from the vocationally-based intervention program. The relative benefit of each component of the intervention should be studied.

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Developmental Disabilities

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Dedication

To the Seven Participants of
this study and their
Teacher

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The Career Decision Making of Individuals with Mild Developmental Disabilities

I. Introduction

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities have generally been viewed as incompetent. This is a misconception, based on misunderstandings and stereotyping that form a *mind-set*; the stigma of the mind-set is recognized as the *disability myth* (Holmes & Karst, 1990; Wolfensberger, 1972; Yuker, 1988). The disability myth is "promoted" by the diagnostic profile of individuals with mild developmental disabilities: between two to three standard deviations below average intelligence quotients, socialization skills ranging from normal to sub average and academic attainment levels projected to be 50 percent of normal at high school graduation. Because of the disability myth, individuals with mild developmental disabilities have traditionally been excluded from full participation in career decision making (Conte, 1983). The opportunity to make significant and meaningful career choices has not always been an option for them. Rather, it is common for individuals with mild developmental disabilities to have their career options limited or chosen by professionals and service providers who assume they know what is best for them and believe it is their job to intervene

(Curnow, 1989; Grealish & Salomone, 1986; Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Hagner & Salomone, 1989). Yet the ability to choose, to make a choice regarding a vocation, is a critical part of developing a self-concept and thus becoming an adult (Conte, 1983, Osipow, 1983; Super, 1957).

The Untested Theorem

The most influential theories of vocational development and career choice are those proposed by John Holland, Donald Super, Anne Roe, and Eli Ginzburg (Curnow, 1989; Osipow, 1983); however, only Super explicitly discusses the implications of disability for vocational development (Conte, 1983; Osipow, 1983). For the past fifty years, Donald Super has been a primary contributor to the field of career and vocational development. He is recognized for proposing a comprehensive theory of vocational behavior which is rooted in the theories of self-concept and developmental psychology. Many other researchers have tried to formulate principles of vocational behavior and human development, but no one has so intricately and successfully woven developmental hypotheses into career development (Osipow, 1983).

Super (1957) proposed that people strive to implement their vocational self-concepts by making career

decisions that are self-expressions. As people progress through the developmental stages, their vocational self-concepts mature. He asserted that his theory is applicable to individuals with disabilities; however, this has not been the subject of research to date.

Questioning the Assumptions

Various studies concerned with the vocational adjustment of individuals with mild developmental disabilities have affirmed that they are capable of participating in gainful employment (Able, 1940; Cohen, 1960; Hartzler, 1951; Michal-Smith, 1950; Super & Crites, 1962). Madiline Will of the United States Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (1984) stated:

A substantial amount of research shows that such persons are capable of performing meaningful work....[yet] nearly eight percent of the yearly gross national product is spent on disability programs that largely support dependence. (p. 12)

Only 25 percent to 40 percent of individuals with mild developmental disabilities are employed, and they work mainly in the *secondary labor market*, in seasonal and low level jobs, with less pay, security, and promotional opportunities than their skills and motivation warrant (Dunn, 1981). Donn Brolin a special education teacher who has specialized in career guidance (1982) stated:

We live in a work oriented society, and although persons with handicaps (sic) have time and again demonstrated their ability to be capable employees, a majority of some eleven million persons with handicaps, remain unemployed or underemployed.
(p. 3)

An assumed benefit of employment for individuals with mild developmental disabilities is the development of their sense of self-worth and self-perception (Scott & Sarkees, 1982; Schloss, Wolf, & Schloss, 1987; Seyfarth, Hill, Orelove, McMillian, & Wehman, 1985). Another perceived benefit of employment for individuals with mild developmental disabilities is fiscal well-being. Federal support may be withheld as income is gained from working, thereby creating a financial deterrent (Schloss, Wolf, & Schloss, 1987). The fiscal incentives for individuals with disabilities to seek or maintain employment may not outweigh the potential loss of contributions made by disability support programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and the Food Stamp Program (Hommerzheim & Schuermann, 1980). Wages earned in the secondary labor market may not equal the dollar amount lost in benefits from disability support programs (Schloss, Wolf, & Schloss, 1987).

During the 1980s the number of people receiving disability benefits rose while the number leaving the rolls reached a nadir. In 1970, there were 1.5 million people receiving Supplemental Security Income; the number

had risen to 2.9 million people by 1982 (Havranek, 1991). This represents a total cash deficit transfer of \$67 billion (Berkowitz & Hill, 1986).

It may be detrimental to the self-worth as well as the fiscal well-being of individuals with mild developmental disabilities if employment is forfeited in order to maintain benefits from disability support programs. When benefits from employment (economic and self-worth benefits) result in the reduction or termination of disability benefits (economic and self-worth penalties) a phenomenon termed *learned helplessness* results. Learned helplessness occurs when individuals believe there is little relationship between their actions and outcomes (Brolin, 1983; Frankl, 1963; Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Hooker, 1976; Perske, 1972 & 1981; Seligman, 1975; Wolfensberger, 1972). In 1986, a group of adults with disabilities participated in a poll conducted by Harris and Associates. The results of this poll led to the conclusion that "not working is the truest definition of what it means to be disabled" (p. 4).

As the vocational self-concept matures, employment may be a more widely utilized option than non-employment. The maturity level of vocational self-concept may influence the career decision making of individuals with

mild developmental disabilities, such that sustaining themselves in the work force is a more desired alternative than not working, i.e., learned helplessness (Brolin, 1976; Edgar, 1985; Francis & Rarick, 1960).

Toward Understanding Vocational Development

The researcher has been in the field of special education for twenty years. During this time she had the opportunity to observe special education students in their post-high school lives, specifically situations of employment and non-employment. Why some individuals with mild developmental disabilities were employed and others were not became increasingly interesting. The researcher became aware of a high school special education program that was vocationally based and located in a rural town. This program had been developed in 1961 and had been under the direction of one special education teacher for 25 years. The employment rate of his former students appeared unusually high, and they seemed to sustain their employment.

The researcher contacted the now retired teacher and visited with him about his former students. From the diverse population served, a list of former students meeting specific profile requirements was developed as potential participants. The profile included: individuals with mild developmental disabilities (See

Appendix A for discussion of mild developmental disabilities), having no physical limitations or secondary handicapping conditions, having attended this program during the years from 1961 to 1986, having had a minimum of four academic quarters in the program, maintaining current independent adult status, and most likely demonstrating vocationally mature behaviors. From the list of 70 former students, seven participants were selected and interviewed. They ranged in ages from 24 to 46. Appendix B provides a thorough discussion of the procedures used for identifying these participants, conducting the interviews, and analyzing these data. The names of the participants and their special education teacher have been changed to protect their identities. Pseudonyms will be used to help readers relate to them as real people and not as laboratory subjects. The special education teacher's name, when referred to by the participants in this study, will be *Teacher*. The participants' comments have not been edited. All of the participants expressed a desire to help because sharing their struggles and successes might help others to understand. Since the interviews have been conducted, all seven participants have contacted the researcher to express again how much it meant to them to be invited to be part of the study. Throughout the course of the

interviews, the relating of their stories appeared to result in self affirmation.

Before discussing how the seven participants affirmed Super's theory of vocational development, a glimpse into the life of one of them might help the reader grasp a sense of who they are as individuals and collectively. *John* will be described in a *cameo* appearance. Although during the interview, John presented the information in a conversational manner, the researcher presents the case in chronological order to assist the reader in viewing his vocational development. Any of the participants could have been featured; they shared similarities in depth although they are individually unique.

II. A Case

John is 41 years old and has been successfully employed for 22 years. He resides in a small rural town where he was born and raised. John and his wife of 20 years live on a five-acre farm with their two children. John is an asset to his family, his job, his community, and to himself.

Family

John was raised by his mother and father. He has a brother four years older and a sister two years younger. He had a secure and nurturing home life. "We always knew we were loved." His father, employed as a manual laborer, maintained employment until he retired at age 62. His mother was a homemaker and managed the family income. She supplemented the family income by occasionally providing child care in their home, but she did not start working outside the home until John and his siblings had moved away from home.

Childhood

As a young child John and his siblings were assigned chores to do, and there was no question that the chores were expected to be done. In addition to his assigned responsibilities in the home, John acquired others through his early interest in animals. His interest led to his collecting an assortment of pigeons, white rats,

mice, wild birds, rabbits, frogs, fish, snakes and other "collectable critters."

John created his own opportunities to earn money and developed problem solving skills early so he could have what was important to him--his animals. "Things were tight and my folks didn't have much money for extras. They always let us have pets and stuff, but we had to figure out how to feed them." To feed the birds that had been captured or rescued, he would walk to the railroad tracks a couple of blocks from his house and scoop up grain that had fallen out of the box cars. As he grew older, and able to venture farther away from home, he and his brother would walk to a grain elevator about a mile away. There they asked for and received permission to bag up spilled grain. One of the workers told them that some of the grain had been chemically treated and that it should not be used. This was an early lesson that things which are free are not necessarily what they appear to be.

John did not receive an allowance from his parents, but they encouraged his money-making endeavors. "There wasn't money so me and my brother had to work and earn it to buy dog food for our dog." John took odd jobs around the neighborhood, e.g., mowing lawns and running errands, to earn money to buy dog food. He built rabbit hutches

and other pens for his animals from materials around the house. It did not take too many animals escaping from the pens before he asked for and received assistance from his father. His father did not "tell him" how to do it; he "showed him" how. John was handy with tools and learned quickly from example. John's father did not limit the use of the tools or materials but did expect that the tools be put back and work areas be cleaned. John thereby learned that asking for help was a way to get information and being shown how to do something was a way he learned.

The house he most remembers is the one that his parents eventually purchased. It was close to the river and the railroad tracks in the south part of town. Summers were filled with friends and backyard forts, swims in the nearby river and neighborhood adventures. John had a close group of friends and one best friend. He and his friends spent time at each other's homes. John remembered liking nearly everyone and that most everyone liked him. He remembers being picked first for teams and often was the leader. He had lots of children with whom to play in his neighborhood, and he attended an elementary school six blocks from his house.

School

John and his friends walked to and from school daily. The school he attended offered school lunch--free and reduced for those who qualified. Eighty percent of the students who attended that school were eligible for free or reduced lunch. At that time it was not unusual for the school to have the students who were on free and reduced lunch to help in the lunchroom--distributing straws and milk, scraping plates, or serving on the line. He, along with most of his classmates, helped out in the lunchroom.

John had many socially enriching opportunities as an elementary student. He attended one of the two *busing schools* in the district. A busing school accepted children from throughout the district when other schools were overcrowded. John had the opportunity to meet, and have as friends, children from a cross section of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. His classmates lived in his neighborhood, on nearby farms, on a Native American reservation, at the boys home which was for troubled and delinquent youth, as well as in homes in very affluent neighborhoods.

Academics. Through his primary grades, much of the class time was spent on group activities, and John felt successful. However, "book learning" was difficult for

John from the very beginning. Academic challenges became struggles, and these struggles frustrated him. "I knew I was as good as my friends in most everything but school work."

As he entered fourth grade the academic demands became very difficult. The academic focus was on retrieving information from books and putting it on paper. "When I was in school, if I had a problem with something, I would try to hide." Tested by the school psychologist, he was identified as having a need of special education services. His older brother had been identified two years earlier and was already receiving these services.

Special Education Program Location. At that time the program where John received special education services was located across town on a geographically segregated site away from his neighborhood and school attendance area. He was transported to the site daily.

You know, when we went through the program there was some hard times, and, you know, some people that didn't know any better, they thought that we had some other kind of a problem. That's not true.

Special Education Classroom. John attended a self-contained classroom for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. There was one teacher and eight students. Due to the self-paced curriculum, John was able to work at his "level" and use "hands on" to learn. His classroom was

one of three separate classrooms: grades K-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7-9. The classrooms were connected by a common kitchen and utility room where he and his classmates learned to cook, wash, iron, use appliances, and do projects. Each classroom had its own entrance and was designed to facilitate the teaching of self-help and living skills. This included a bathroom. The bathroom had a sink, toilet, tub, and shower which he noted as being different than his former school.

After completing his sixth grade, John was advanced to the junior high school classroom which was adjacent to the room he had been in the year before. From there he entered the high school program located on the same site, but in a separate facility.

Real Life Work Experience Program. John said that his high school program was different than what he expected. He was in a program that focused on real-life work experience.

And with your (Teacher's) program most the time I knew you weren't right. Until I got out of school [out on work experience placement] and things started getting hard. Then you were right [laugh] most the time, not all the time [laugh].

You (Teacher) helped us. You showed us. You harped at us. We (the students) used to call it "harping" when we were in school. My kids [John's children] call it the same thing because [they think] I'm not right--[that] I don't know what I'm talking 'bout. But when they get out there, they'll know what I'm talking about.

John had basic skill classes in the morning, and then he and his classmates would walk about 15 city blocks up to the high school for elective and required classes: physical education, shop, choir, agriculture, and work experience. One class that John was especially looking forward to was driver's education, for he was eager to get his driver's license. His special education teacher provided an audio tape of the driver's manual for the students. John listened to the tapes and followed along in the driver's manual. When John went for his written driver's examination, he had the option having it read to him, but chose to try it on his own, and passed both the written and performance tests. At age sixteen, along with most teenagers, he received his driver's license.

His junior and senior years were on the high school campus because the classroom was moved from the segregated site.

I was always glad I was in that program. You know, it went just a little bit further. I mean we were respected in your class and in the other classes and on **who we were** [slow and with emphases]. You (Teacher) helped us realize what we had to **do** to make it out there. It's not because I walked in and said I'm from [the Teacher's name] classroom, and they started bowing to me. That's not the way it is. We had to earn [their respect], and we had to probably earn it more than what the other [non-special education] kids had gave to them all for granted.

During his high school years, John had several work experience placements, one every nine weeks. His work experiences were non-paid and he received academic credit. These placements represented a variety of occupations, skills, and work environments. The selection of the placements were mutually agreed upon by John and his special education teacher. As part of the training, John scheduled an appointment at the state employment office to interview for the work experience placement. He knew the interview had been pre-arranged by his teacher and the employment office, but he went through the complete process just as if he were applying for the job. John filled out the application form, sat through the in-take interview and had an exit interview at the conclusion of the placement. He completed this process for each work experience placement.

John's teacher had one classroom rule that was to be followed, whether on the job or in school. The rule concerned tardiness and absences: the students were required to notify their work placement and the school. John was to call his job site first then call his teacher at the high school if he was going to be late or tardy. "My best friend and I used to sit there and roll our eyes at you (Teacher). Like, who care; what's the big deal." However, now that John is a supervisor, he reflects back,

"It is a big deal when you're the supervisor and one of the workers doesn't show up or calls in."

John's placements were monitored and supervised. His special education teacher did regular on-site visitations. Establishing and maintaining communication prevented potentially minor problems from becoming unresolved issues.

Well, I'll tell you. Yes, [the Teacher] followed us; that was good. He didn't wipe our noses. We were the ones that kept the jobs. He didn't make any excuses for us. He didn't follow us around and poke us with a stick to get us there or anything like that. [And when he did come to the work site he] wasn't there to say, "Look what I did" or anything like that. I never felt anything like that.

John's work experience performance was evaluated, and the results were reflected on his report card. The work behaviors assessed included promptness, following directions, quality and quantity of work, and personal hygiene. The evaluation employed a three-point rating scale: (1) acceptable, (2) needs improvement, (3) very poor. The evaluation form was simple, clear, and easily completed. John participated in the evaluation process, too, by evaluating himself on the same work behaviors. "I'm my own worse critic." John's self-evaluation, his site supervisor's evaluation and his special education teacher's were combined, and a grade was then assigned for his report card.

Sophomore Year. John's sophomore year started with a nine-week on-campus work experience placement at the high school cafeteria under the direction of his special education teacher. This on-campus placement was required and used by the teacher to conduct on-the-job-vocational assessments of the students' work behaviors.

My best friend and me use to sit in class and say, "He's (the Teacher) crazy if he thinks I'm going down there, and I don't care what he says." The next thing you know, you're down there enjoying the whole thing. Like I said when I went through the class I didn't agree with everything, cause I knew more than you did [laugh]. That's just being a kid.

John worked shoulder to shoulder with his classmates and his special education teacher on any task that needed to be done in the cafeteria. John's work performance was evaluated by th Teacher, the cooks (site supervisors), and himself. John successfully completed his first work experience and was ready for off-campus work experience placements.

John's preparation for work experience placements was ongoing and involved several levels of training. John's reflection on what the teacher said: "Whatever you do, go out and do it the best you can, and be proud of what you're doing. Give it the best shot you can and try to be presentable." John said about himself: "All that you can do is do the best you can, and that's what I've tried to do."

John maintained a very high standard of work performance for himself. This was also reflected by the evaluations and record of employment resulting from various placements.

I learned out on work experience how to follow directions and how to do what they were doing. I wanted to learn. I wanted to be the best person on that job. I didn't just want them to know what I did, I wanted them to know who I was.

We were set up in different situations and different jobs. We were lucky. We were lucky to have a person like [the Teacher] that cared; that was important. You (Teacher) tried to do stuff for us. We could have been sitting in a classroom learning these books, and it wouldn't have did us any good because you know lot of time the stuff they had [in the textbooks] was way over our heads. We had school work to do; it wasn't just on a job. We had school work to do, and we had different stuff we were expected to do.

John had work experience placements at the high school's cafeteria and two at large retail clothing stores during his sophomore year. John worked in the inventory section, shipping and receiving, and in sales at the clothing stores.

At [Clothing Store B] I worked there, and they were straight ahead; they were all business. I worked for them in inventory. The manager gave me a shirt; a button up shirt for Christmas. The lady supervisor, I gave her a little necklace for Christmas. She was so pleased, you'd have thought I gave her some big deal.

He was hired as a part-time employee for evenings and weekends by the store as a result of his successful work experience placement.

The people that we worked with didn't treat us any different than any of the other employees, and sometimes maybe they were a little bit rougher on us. But however it was, **it was a good experience for me** [with affirming expression]. At the time I didn't think so; I'd rather be sitting there flirting with the girls [laughs].

The summer before his junior year, he worked full-time painting houses and pitching bales of hay on a ranch. The ranch work was 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days per week. With the money from his summer employment, he bought his parents new living room furniture for their home.

Junior Year. After a summer of hard manual farm labor, John approached his work experience placements and his teacher with an enlightened awareness and appreciation. During his junior year he had work experience placements at a family-owned grocery store, a nursing home, and a locally-owned sheet metal business.

I tried after I was a junior and in my senior year. I really started trying then, because then I knew it wasn't as easy as I thought it was. [The students] thought we knew everything that there was out there, but when you get right down to it, we didn't know nothing. All that you (Teacher) were trying to show us was what we were going to be faced with.

The owner of the market requested that John stay for another nine weeks because he was such a good worker, but the offer was declined by John and his teacher so he could have other job opportunities. During spring term

John worked at the sheet metal shop. The owner of the sheet metal shop hired John to work there that summer.

We went out on job training, and a lot of kids sitting there getting A and B didn't know hardly anything about how to get a job. We were out there learning how to get a job. You can learn as much as you want or as less you want in a class like that. It's really up to you.

Senior Year. John completed two work experience placements [hospital laundry and hospital housekeeping] during his senior year before deciding to take a job at the hospital as a custodian.

When I was in your [Teacher's] class you didn't have me go and be a custodian only. That's why you set us up with different jobs so we could choose ourselves. I was at different places. [Being a custodian] was something I decided that I liked and the benefits were good, and I wasn't looking for say, "Big money."

John met the program requirements, maintained his senior class status, completed all required classes, and worked full-time as part of his scheduled school day. In June 1970, John graduated with his class and was awarded a regular high school diploma.

Post-high School Employment. John was offered a full-time job as a custodian at the hospital where he had completed his senior year work experience placement. John had been working at the hospital for over a year when he decided to get married. In the fall of 1971, he married his high school sweetheart. They rented their

first house and set up housekeeping. They both worked full-time.

John worked at the hospital as a custodian for about 16 months before being offered two other jobs: custodian at a private profit-making company (for the purpose of this study will be referred to as Company A) and a laborer position at an industrial plant.

I was working at the hospital then. In fact I worked at the hospital before I graduated, and then I had these jobs come up. I thought about going out there (to the plant), and then I kind of weighed everything. I would have weekends off, and I would have better benefits. The money wasn't quite as much, but I wouldn't have the drive [15 miles to the plant]. I just got married, and I was trying to think of the long haul. We were taught to look for the benefits in the long run. [I thought to myself] "Do I want to do that [plant work] all my life or do I want to try to get into something and have benefits and a retirement plan?" I just decided it would benefit me to go with Company A.

John reflected on his vocational decision to take the job with Company A:

If I had to do it over again, I would do the same thing. I wouldn't do anything different.

This is my opinion. I am one of the more fortunate ones, because I am in a "good home" at the company, and I plan on retiring from there. They don't judge me as a person in special education or anything like that. They didn't give me any special treatment. I got dropped into a situation that everybody has been dropped in; there was nothing special.

We don't **need** anything special. **All we need is a fair shot** [expressed with determination].

John worked as a custodian for Company A for 14 years at three different sites. His first assignment for this company was to replace a retiring custodian.

He was kind of my hero. He was, -as far as I'm concerned, he was the best custodian, and I always wanted to be like him. He wanted it done his way. His way was the **right** [with emphasis] way, not because it was **his** way, but because it was the right way.

John had the opportunity of visiting with his "hero" a few months after he'd taken over the custodian position. This visit from someone he admired had a profound effect on him.

He (the retired custodian) came up and talked to me [a few months later]. We sat down in the basement and talked a little bit. He really was sort of a legend--somebody I really looked up to. He said that the building was **really looking nice** (said with approval and pride), and that was important to me, and that boosted me a lot.

John was satisfied in his job but not every day was a rewarding one. There were difficult days not in terms of the job but in terms of his viewing himself and other workers.

I've come home and of course everyday don't go real smooth. Here I am out here doing this work and here there's two or three guys (maintenance workers) just goofing around. I'd tell my wife, I've had it. I don't care. I'm just going to start slacking off and stop doing it, and just be like the rest of them. I've had it. She would let me blow the steam off. Then I would go back and say to her, "You heard what I said, didn't you?" She'd say, "Yeah, and tomorrow you'll be out there just doing everything that you can."

In 1975, John and his wife had their first child, a daughter. Shortly after their daughter's birth, they decided to place a down-payment on their first home, a new two-bedroom house. Two years later John and his wife had their second child, a son. Their home was small and suited their needs while the children were small, but they started to plan and save for a larger home. In order to achieve this goal, John did a self-evaluation. The evaluation lead to observations about himself and formed the bases for entertaining the idea of applying for a maintenance position. John discussed the process he went through as he started to plan for a job change.

When I first went into custodial work, I just sort of wanted to do custodial work. I liked my job, and I liked the people. Then after a few years I started wanting a little bit more. One reason, when I was a custodian I would do my own maintenance work. There were maintenance workers that came to the site that were suppose to be doing it, but I would end up doing it. I knew I was as good as some of them, and I knew I was better than some of them. I got to the point where I felt like I was as far as I could go. I felt like something was missing.

John's successful job performance was a critical part of being considered for the maintenance job. He had been approached twice before by his supervisor to apply for this position, but he declined.

I started re-evaluating everything and talked to my supervisor. I told him, I'm not going to be pushed into doing boilers, because I'm not comfortable with that.

He knew that he was not ready and identified the area in which he needed training. John was still a custodian when he was approached by his supervisor to attend a training school on boilers.

My supervisor said, "There's a real good boiler school in Seattle, and I want to send you and one of the maintenance men down there to it."

John was being offered an opportunity for more training but he still had concerns.

Now, I do have a problem with reading and stuff, but I have, on my own and in different ways, I have went ahead and learned how to read better. I can read a lot better than I used to because that's what I had to do.

John did go to the boiler school in Seattle, and he successfully completed the training session.

I went up and talked to the guy (instructor) and said, "Look I'm not all that good with books and stuff like that. I want to learn. I want to learn some hands on." So, he put me close-up front. But I wasn't sitting there by myself. There was about six of us. He was a good instructor. He wasn't trying to impress us. After the class, he would help us with hands on. When I came out of there, the other guy I was with was asking me questions!

We had to take a test at the end, and we were in the room studying, and he was quizzing me about stuff because he couldn't remember.

Another opportunity was presented while he was still a custodian. The company was consolidating the custodians and the maintenance crews for a summer work session.

Well, what the company did was put us all together. My supervisor put me in charge of one of the [combined] crews. Then I started thinking this [supervising] isn't so bad. I was taking care of most of my own maintenance work, and I knew I was as good as some other the maintenance workers (he had worked with them during the summer).

John recognized that he wanted more vocational challenges, and he knew he had the ability to do more.

When I make a decision about anything that involves the family--well, [my wife] has a lot to with it. She's been with me for 20 years, and we talk over stuff, and she believes in what I think. She's got a lot of faith in me, and she's always saying to me "You can do anything you want to if it's really what you want to do." Like she said, "You're doing maintenance work now, and you enjoy it. Go ahead and [apply for the maintenance job]."

I really thought about it a lot because it is important to me. All that I wanted was a shot at maintenance. I knew I could do it, and I wanted to do it. All I wanted was just a chance to show that I could do it, and I could do a good job of it.

When the maintenance position came open again, John applied for it. "When I got ready to do it, I **knew** [expressed firmly], I knew that I could do it." Several weeks had passed, and he hadn't heard from his supervisor about the position.

There was about two months [that had gone by], and I asked [the supervisor], "What's the problem? Am I going to get the job or what?" He said, "Well, the biggest problem is nobody wants you to quit custodian."

John was hired in 1985 as a Maintenance I worker for Company A and remained in that position for three years before being promoted to level II. John and his wife

found a five-acre farm that they wanted. Shortly after John received his job promotion, they sold their house and bought the farm.

John continued to take on more responsibilities. He is responsible for replacing the thermo-window panes and safety glass. Prior to this, these replacements were contracted out at a considerable expense to the company. John continues to train and is becoming more technologically advanced in his skills.

I try to learn as much as I can because that's important to me. I have my asbestos license, and its a matter of taking a test every year, and I have it for four or five years now. We (the company) have our own little key and padlock shop, and I can do that.

John has been at Maintenance II level since 1988, and it has extended hours, increased responsibility and accountability.

I have a beeper [hands it the researcher], and I'm on call 24 hours a day. I have a company rig, and its sitting out at the house right now ready to go.

John's present position is one of considerable responsibility in terms of safety, expenditures, and supervision: evaluation, delegation, and training. John receives all the work orders, and he is responsible for reviewing and assigning priorities to them, scheduling and assigning the staff and resources to each job, and evaluating the completion of the job and workers who did

it. Jobs that require emergency attention are directly supervised by John.

When I say, "My building," that's what it becomes. I have to make decisions that I know are right. I don't ask my crews to do anything that I won't do. If I think somebody might get hurt, that's a decision that I take pretty seriously, because I don't want anybody to get hurt; so I do it.

Like I'm down here messing around with a 15-pound boiler, meaning I could blow the whole building up and everybody in it. I had to go right back to the well (had to really think) about to fix it. I can't afford to make a wrong decision. I had to decide if we were going to close down or what.

John is in a position that his decisions could cost or save the company money. They include police calls, equipment use, and purchasing of new equipment.

When alarms go off at the buildings, the police call me and ask if I want them to go out; that's 75 bucks every time they drive out to one of our buildings. So I have to decide to send them or not.

John makes recommendations to his supervisor regarding purchasing of equipment. One of the most recent purchases was a truck.

I went clear up [to another state] to find the right tar truck. I had in my mind what I wanted, and we do all our own roofing now so it was important to get something we could use.

John is presented with many challenges, "I enjoy doing it. I could go back anytime to custodian if I wanted, but I like the people I work with." John not only gives respect ("You have to have respect for the fellow

person"), but he has earned the respect of his co-workers, his supervisors, and his crews.

I enjoy doing my job. That's another thing, I've earned [my supervisor's] respect, and I have earned the respect throughout all the building. There's not a custodian that won't help me. I treat everybody the way I want to be treated.

I have a pretty high standard for myself. I guess I've got a lot of pride.

John is responsible for training new maintenance workers. He stresses the importance of being on time, prepared, dressed appropriately, and doing quality work.

Everyday you see stuff like that. We had snow one day; I had everybody already assigned. One guy didn't show up and didn't call in. We ran a little thin that day. I talked to him the next morning and explained to him that it is important to call in.

One thing I tell them, "Look, custodians out there, they have x amount of time to work. They're pretty well booked up. If you (maintenance worker) change a broken window, you clean up all the glass. And don't leave it in the garbage can in case some other employee drops something in the garbage can and reaches in to get it back and ends up cutting themselves. I'd better not hear of anybody leaving a mess. You have to have respect for the fellow person."

When I have a guy going into a building and he has his knees ripped out; that don't fly very good.

And I don't appreciate somebody's buddy coming down to the maintenance shop and shooting the breeze with them; that's company money you're on. I don't think they should be jawing when they're suppose to be working.

The stuff that I said I expect out of them (his workers) I expect out of myself.

John feels strongly about respecting others and finds dignity in all labor and laborers, relating back to what the program taught him and what he has experienced.

I was on the other end (being a custodian for 14 years). I thought when I was a custodian if I ever got on maintenance that I promise that I would never leave a person with a mess like these guys leave me.

John has received high marks on his evaluations during his years of employment and is very proud of his record.

I don't feel right if I'm just making it. I have to be out there doing the best I can. It's not just that I feel like I'm doing a good job, but that there's people around me that compliment and stuff. That's important to me. My evaluations have been straight A's since I've worked here. I haven't really had anybody chew me out or criticize me; except me. I have pretty high standards, and I'm my own worse critic. You know if you "slack up a little bit" the only thing you end up doing is "sliding down hill." I don't plan on doing that.

John's vocational life has been successful and rewarding, and his family life is equally successful. John was the president of a large riding club in his hometown for a year and continues to be active in his community. He and his family have many interests. John's wife maintains the home, works part-time, and has many hobbies and interests. John's children are successful in school and have a variety of interests. Both his children have been active in raising dogs for the blind and have received awards from the Future Farmers of America (FFA). Both his son and daughter work

part-time, go to school, and help out on the family farm.

My daughter and son have horses. The boy's going to have a pig in FFA, and he raises dogs used for guide dogs for the blind. We've always like animals and stuff, and out here we have a place for them. One agreement with the kids was that they would help do chores and stuff. My son changes irrigation pipe, and we've built a riding arena. They don't just ride horses; part of their job is to feed the horses and sheep, and they, we all do our part.

John was elected by his neighbors to be the water master for their two shared wells. As the water master, John was responsible for monitoring and distributing the water fairly. This indicated the level of trust and confidence his neighbors have in him.

At the end of the interview, John was invited by the researcher to share anything he wanted in way of closing. John had several closing remarks. The statements were heartfelt and sincere.

It's not because we're all sitting here, and I'm not just saying these things, these things are important to me. I was always glad I was in your (Teacher's) program. That program benefitted me. We were more than just students to you. We were part of your family. If I wouldn't have been in that program or had that special boost, I just don't know. You played a good-size part in all of our lives.

If I can do anything to help other kids, you guys (Teacher and researcher) just let me know. You guys are kind of a dying breed of teacher, and I think it's a shame that there isn't a program like what we had anymore.

It's important to me to make sure my family and I will be comfortable. You know, my wife and I have worked hard. The benefits and everything that I have gained over the years is more important to me than some higher paying job that you may be laid off

from. I have a slip of paper that comes and tells me how much retirement I have. I can take off a whole month of paid vacation if I want. I have sick leave and family illness pay. My family's important to me, and my job is, too, because that's part of my family.

I've made good decisions. Like I said if I had to do it over again, I'd do exactly the same.

John is facing a another vocational decision. In two years his supervisor will be retiring, and the company has approached John with the possibility of being promoted to that position. "Not bad for one of [Teacher's name] kids" (affectionate affirmation in recognition of John's vocational success). John continues to demonstrate vocationally mature behaviors, provide a stable and nurturing home life to his family, contribute to his community, and be an example to others.

III. Vocationally Mature Individuals

Presenting John as a cameo provided the readers with a *whole person*. While similar in some respects, each of the seven participants is individually unique. Although, John may seem *extraordinary*, all the participants who were interviewed possess similar depth and breadth. Each person is *data rich*, and a cameo could have been written on each. Taken together, their lives are evidence that Donald Super's theory of vocational development is applicable to them. All seven of the participants are vocationally mature, a conclusion supported by the seven participants' self-concept development, their career decision making, and their vocational maturity.

Self-Concept Development

Research on the mildly developmentally disabled is limited. Balla and Zigler (1979) specifically commented on the status of this research by stating: "The self concept construct has had a central role in general personality theory but, surprisingly, has received relatively little attention in the literature relating to developmental disabilities" (p. 33). Furthermore, much of the research is more suggestive than definitive (Zigler & Hodapp, 1986). John has well-defined self-concepts. His self-concept development started early with his family. He was raised by his biological parents

in a secure and nurturing home. How John viewed himself in relationship to his siblings and his family was important. They all were part of a family, and all had responsibilities. He learned from his parents' examples that work was important and valued. John's concept of self was well defined by how he viewed himself in relationship to his environments. He was the second son in the family, had an established place in the family with responsibilities in and to the family, interests that were meaningful to him, neighborhood friends, and viewed himself as a person with potential.

The other six participants shared John's background. Five of them were raised by their biological parents. One of the group was placed in foster care at the age of four, a move that provided stable, long-term care and a permanent family status. One of the participants was raised by his biological father and a step-mother. Six of the seven participants were raised with their biological siblings. One participant was raised with only part of his siblings due to early separation and foster placements.

All seven of the participants were given jobs and chores to do around their homes as young children. The participants related that they assisted in caring for aging grandparents, family members, and siblings. For

example, Debbie was one of five children and related this observation:

My mom and dad had five kids. We were taught to care for the younger ones and to do housework. We cared for my grandmother, too. (Debbie)

In her case early training and learning experience seemed to influence a career choice. As she reported:

I really like working with the elderly. I did a work experience placement at a nursing home and was later hired there before I graduated from high school. When I first started to work there I was pretty young, and I had an elderly lady die in my arms one night. It's hard not to get attached to my patients. It takes self discipline not to get attached. The hard part is when they pass away. (Debbie)

For Debbie this was an experience that many will never have. It could have negatively influenced her to select another career; however, for Debbie it confirmed that she was a needed and important part of these people's lives.

In her words she shares:

You become a real important part of their day. You greet them and make them feel welcome and make them feel good. I get real close to the patients. They look forward to seeing you everyday, especially if their families' are far away.

All of the participants' families were long-time residents of their rural community. Six, in fact, continue to reside in the community. One participant relocated to another state about seven years after his high school graduation, and he has remained there.

The environments in which the participants interacted contributed to the formation of their *self*. The concept of *self* is what a person is--the ego (Allport, 1943; Combs & Snygg, 1959; Sarbin, 1956; Symonds, 1951). It is how an individual pictures or perceives himself or herself. The following quotes portray various self views.

I always wanted to prove myself [on the job]. I could do it, and I wanted to do it. I'm the type of guy that just likes to **be**. I like physical work. (Jim)

I give myself a lot of credit. I'm very proud of myself. I have a job, a beautiful daughter, and a home--yeah, I'm proud of myself. (Laura)

I don't see anything that I can't do if I set my mind to it. It's one of the things you got to set your mind to and stay with it--you just can't get half way through it and say: "Well I like the job **but** I don't really enjoy my job." You've got to **like** your job and **enjoy** your job at the same time. (Frank)

Life is really good for me. I don't think I would do anything different. (David)

The socio-economic levels of the participants' families were diverse. Approximately half of the families were in the middle to upper socio-economic level. One family was in the upper socio-economic level; both parents had college training and were in professional occupations. Three of the participants had families that were in the lower economic level: manual laborers in the secondary labor force. Debbie's family

was in the upper middle; her father owned a successful business.

My dad was a hard worker. He had his own business for over 18 years. My mother worked outside the home after all of us kids were in school. (Debbie)

Two of the families were in the middle and were successfully employed by companies. None of the families received assistance from dependency programs, such as Supplemental Security Income. All seven indicated their fathers worked, and this was an expected role for males in the family. Six reported that their mothers were homemakers, and that they entered or re-entered the work force after the children in the family entered school.

Super (1963) proposes that self concept formations begin at birth and continue through life. According to Super (1963), the foundation of the self-concept begins with *self percepts*. Self percepts are those things that are observed or experienced through the senses; early sense of belonging to a family. Percepts take on meaning as they interact with other percepts, such as belonging to a family as a son and a brother. There are two kinds of percepts: *primary* and *secondary*. Primary self percepts are initial unmodified sensory impressions of an aspect of self. Super (1963) offers the following example: an individual feels the muscle in his arm; it feels firm. As others in the person's environment

reinforce this idea that the person is strong, secondary self percepts form. The initial sensory (primary self percept) impression of firmness is established. The primary self percept's functions are interrelated. The secondary self percepts that strong muscles indicate physical strength, contributes to the person's self view. No specific examples were given by the participants that would demonstrate the primary self percepts, but their failure to mention them is expected, since primary self percepts are essentially sensory discriminations that occur in the early stages of development.

At a more sophisticated level are secondary self percepts. Secondary self percepts are formed by the interaction of one or more primary self percepts which have, through their interaction, acquired meaning. John's views of his environments were examples of secondary self percepts. His knowledge that, "We always knew we were loved," provided John with a secure feeling of belonging and being accepted. All the participants verbalized how their early lives at home and growing up influenced their lives, forming their secondary self percepts.

My mom and dad were divorced when I was little (age 6); lived with dad since. No, I didn't play. All of us had chores to do. Well, I'd come home everyday, and I had chores to do before anything else. If you didn't, we'd get in trouble for that.
(Jim)

We moved around a lot when I was little. I was in elementary school when I started working in the kitchen so I could have lunches free. I used to help out in the school kitchens in the summer; I brought home left over food. That's all we had a lot of the time. I learned to drive at twelve, a stick shift. It was learn to drive or die--riding with mom and dad drunk. It was a hard life.
(Laura)

I had to learn for myself; that's the way it was. My mom wouldn't let my brothers or sisters help me; no way would she let them help me. (Mother was trying to teach independence.) (Debbie)

We always knew we were loved. (John)

My mom and dad and two sisters and you (teacher) have been a real influence in my life. I love you all very much. (David)

All the participants remembered many things about their childhoods. All indicated they drew strength from what they had experienced, even through adversity.

Three were the only children in the families who had a disability. The other four participants had at least one sibling who was disabled, and all the children were disabled in two families. None remembered being treated differently or being "overprotected" by their families because of their disability.

If people have not grown up with a handicapped person in the house, they don't know what it is like at all. My sister, to this day, says that she is glad she grew up with a handicapped person. You know, I've accepted it, and I've done really well. I get compliments even today from people who I've known that they recognize that I've overcome a lot. That's the way I was brought up. My mother used to tell my brothers and sisters, "Let her do it and let her do it her way, so she can learn from it."
(Debbie)

All indicated they did not see themselves as different while growing up until they went to school. Differences during the first few years in school were minimal. As academic attainment became the focus, all the participants remember that they "could not keep up" academically with their classmates but still viewed themselves as "like" not "different than" their peers.

Five of the seven participants were identified and placed in special education when they were in third grade; the other two participants were in the fourth grade when identified and placed.

I started in special education in the fourth grade, and I learned a lot there. (Debbie left a regular self-contained fourth-grade classroom and was placed in a full-time, self contained special education classroom.)

I don't remember the third grade teacher's name, but I remember my resource room teacher. She really helped me. I went part-time to third grade and part-time to resource. (On the other hand, Jim, remained in the third grade classroom and only attended special reading, math, and spelling classes in the resource room.)

Early intervention appears to have been a significant factor in their early views of themselves, thus displaying their self percept formation.

Self percepts are the foundation for self concepts. A self concept is the individual's perceived self picture with accrued meanings. For the first nine to ten years of their lives the participants perceived no apparent

differences. All indicated that involvement in special education was a positive rather than a negative influence in their lives. Two of the participants described the influence in the following ways.

I'm glad I was in the program. It helped me. (Jim)

You know, when we went through the [special education program] there was some hard times, and, you know, some people that didn't know any better, they thought that we had some other kind of a problem. That's not true. I was always glad I was in that program. (John)

There are two types of self concepts: simple and complex. Simple self concepts are secondary self percepts that have formed meaning resulting in a generalized idea. John's early hobby of collecting animals was a stepping stone toward developing a simple self-concept. Collecting animals involved caring for them: feeding, watering, watching, and housing them. He learned how to build cages and learned resourceful ways of feeding his animals, as he gathered grain or earned money by working. Throughout his life, when John had been presented with challenges, he was eager to proceed and find solutions; success built success. John viewed himself as a resourceful person. "I like being able to figure things out and make them work. You don't have to have lots to feel good about yourself."

Complex self concepts are abstractions from and generalizations of simple self concepts. They are viewed

in relationships, such as, status or role. John developed a well defined self-concept by these early learning experiences. John felt secure about himself. Knowing that he had skills that people would pay for increased his self perception. John sought out jobs and ask for jobs, facing acceptance or rejection. A well developed self-concept is needed to endure this, especially at a young age.

Complex self concepts result from organization of simple self concepts and set up the framework for new percepts to be added and adjusted as the perceiver sees relevance. John's early self-concept formation led to a well defined complex self concept, specifically a vocational self concept. John knew by his past performance and experiences that he was a good worker and that he had skills and talents to offer. The other participants had similar views.

My dad taught me to sew. I sew western shirts, and I make 'em good [said with pride and a smile]. They've got to withstand the strength of that horse race; it's rough on shirts. (Jim)

I've worked all my life; got up at four in the morning to help get the family up and cook breakfast. (Laura)

I think I was kind of brought up to work. Work before I went to school and worked after I got home. (Frank)
All I need is a chance. Just a chance to show them that I'm a good worker. (John)

Super (1963) states, "Self concepts tend to be self perpetuating and enduring" (p. 18), and they can be translated into self as being perceived in several roles. The participants' early positive self views developed and generalized into positive adult self views as indicated by the following statements. The self perpetuating part of self concepts for these examples has to do with the participants' views of not just that they are workers, but by their conception of what is a *valued* worker.

I'm dependable. I work independently, by myself. I work hard and need no supervision. I'm punctual; I'm always on time. It is important for me to work up town. Like now you don't see any ethnic...people working up town. That's not right; that's prejudice. (Laura)

There's a lot of guys I run around with and all they do is little odd and ends jobs. I **want** to work. I don't want to sit around. Your attitude is a big part of it. You have to have a good attitude. If you work together a lot of good will come of it. (Jim)

You can't goof off, 'cause there's always someone watching you to see what you're doing. You just don't dare slow up any; keep a pretty sturdy pace and make the right decision about what you're doing. You've got to be dependable, 'cause if they can't depend on you then it's kind of hard to get where you're going. If I keep doing the job that I'm doing the best that I can and as quick as I can and there's no complaints about my work from the foreman or the bosses, or anyone else, then I'm doing the job as good as I can. (Frank)

The statements reflect the self perpetuating positive aspects of how they view themselves. Even when faced

with significant challenges, they kept trying and succeeded.

Super (1963) suggests that each individual has several self concepts, and these self concepts make-up a self-concept system. Each person has only one self-concept system, which is general and inclusive. The self concepts are more specific and limited. A self-concept system is the constellation of all the self concepts; it is comprised of various self concepts, pictures, roles and situations that individuals have about themselves.

For all the participants there were social milestones or attainments they recognized as measures of adulthood or success: graduation from school, receiving a high school diploma, obtaining a driver's license, being employed, marrying, having children, and purchasing property.

Six participants reflect this profile. All completed the work experience program, being employed prior to graduation. All graduated from high school with regular diplomas. All maintained continuous employment and were employed when interviewed.

Two of the seven participants graduated from high school in three years.

I worked for that diploma. Matter a fact, some of the kids in the classroom and outside the classroom kind of pushed me to get it. They didn't want me to go the extra year. They wanted me to graduate with them. I worked **hard**, and I did it in three years.
(Frank)

Four of the seven participants completed and graduated from high school in four years.

Yes, I have a regular diploma. I earned it and walked down that aisle and got my diploma just like everybody else. (Debbie)

I think it is too bad that the kids (students currently enrolled in her former high school program) don't get a regular diploma like we did.
(Laura)

One of the seven, Jim moved out of town during winter term of his senior year and did not graduate with his classmates. He will be discussed later, because he withdrew from school to avoid what Super (1963) called, "stagnation." This and other vocational coping behaviors will be described later while discussing vocational maturity.

The ages of the participants at graduation ranged from 18 years and 11 months to 20 years and 3 months, with an average age of 19 years and 3 months.

Six of the seven participants have valid driver's licenses and own their vehicles. Three, in fact, have jobs that require driver's licenses.

I have a company rig, and its sitting out at the house right now ready to go. I'm on call 24 hours a day. (John)

I have a car license and a fork lift license. Yeah, I've got to go in the 20th of next month to renew my fork lift driver's license. You have to do it once a year. (Frank)

When I go to these rodeos, I pull the horse trailer with my four wheel drive rig. You have to be a good driver to do that. (Jim)

One of the participants, David, lives with his elderly parents and maintains the family residence. The family has owned the residence for several years, and this part of the estate is assigned to David.

I love my family very, very much. I help them as much as I can. My mom and dad can't hardly walk any more or stand alone (both dependent on assistive mobility devices). They can't drive any more. They're always telling me, "David, we couldn't make it without you around here. We love you very much." I love them very, very much. (David)

Two participants own or are purchasing homes combined with farm land. Frank works full-time as a fork lift driver, works and maintains his own ranch, and helps his parents maintain their homestead.

When my uncle passed away he willed some land to us three kids. I bought my little brother out of his share of 80 acres. So I own two-thirds of it now and run about 16 head of stock on it. (Frank)

We had a house in town but the kids ended up getting horses, and we were in a riding group. When we ran across this place, we bought it. It has a house, a well, out-buildings, and it's on five acres. My wife raises lambs, and that way we get a farm deferral. (John)

All seven have bank accounts. Five of the participants are enrolled in retirement systems. All pay state and federal taxes.

I'm making real good. We had a two percent raise which put me up to almost \$10.00 an hour, lacking two or three pennies. (Frank)

I have something to show for my years of employment. I have a slip that comes in and shows me how much I have in retirement, and, you know, I can take off a month of vacation if I want. I have lots of benefits. (John)

Two participants have never been married and have no children. Four of the seven participants are married; none of the participants' spouses are disabled. Five of the participants have children. None of the children have disabilities. Laura has a child, has never been married, and is supporting and rearing the child alone as a single parent.

Nobody knew I was even pregnant. We wore aprons to work in--we had to. You know, uniform-type clothes. So, nobody even noticed. See I had her (the baby) in the winter time. She was healthy, and I was glad it (the birth) was over. I think I only had a week off; then I had to go back to work. All in all it turned out really good. I think I've had a pretty good life. (Laura)

Debbie has been married and divorced twice, has one child and is supporting and raising the child alone.

I worry about what kind of education she's (daughter) getting. I tell my daughter, "You've got to get out there and work hard for your education." She's bright and wants to be a veterinarian. I know she can do it, but she needs to have real experience with what a vet does before she can really decide. (Debbie)

One of the participants has been married and divorced twice, and has two grown children.

Within their individual self-concept systems, all had well developed self-concepts. John, for example, had well defined and developed concepts of himself as a worker, a father, a husband, a son, a brother, an uncle, a community participant, a friend, and so on. Each aspect of his life interacts with other aspects to form a whole person--a mature self-concept system. Super (1963) suggest that: "The self-concept-system may be viewed as a person's psychological field, his (sic) formulation of the world" (p. 33).

Understanding one's self concept cannot develop without comparison and contrast with others; therefore, how people picture others is an integral part of their self-concept system. This is different than competition with others. Comparing one's self to others allows for opportunities to grow or to be assured in one's self. In John's situation, when he decided to apply for a management position, he was more concerned with self-evaluation based on his knowledge of himself, his skills, and his areas of further training and was not concerned about how others would view him. "I knew I could do it, and I wanted to do it."

All of the participants for this study appeared to have well developed self-concept systems. The participants' individual self concepts are well defined and are mature.

During the translation of self concepts into occupational terms the individual draws on previous experience and emerges with a formed or partially formed *vocational self concept* (Super 1963). The term vocational self-concept denotes the constellation of self attributes which the individual considers to be vocationally relevant. The vocational self concept is a well defined component within the larger self-concept system (Super 1963). Individuals may picture themselves in some occupational position performing a set of tasks or in a web of relationships related to that occupation. The work experience program during the participants' high school years provided them with opportunities to explore occupations, and this assisted them as they made their career decisions.

Being a custodian was something I decided that I liked. (John)

Always keep myself busy. If a supervisor always catches you busy; you're going to get a permanent job. Once you get that chance go that extra mile. [Working on machinery] it's working with your hands. It stretches your brain out a little bit. I really enjoy it. I didn't know how to put a lot of that stuff together--like the tractors, but I had to read them instructions and figure it out. Once in awhile I'd get stumped, but I just keep on working with it, and I got it. (Jim)

I love sports. Always want to do sports and sports announcing. That's what I do. I sell sports stuff and announce on the radio. Really, really, really neat! I really enjoy my job. (David)

I knew [life] wasn't going to be handed to me; so I worked hard. My first work experience, that later turned into a part-time job, was at a floral shop. An elderly couple owned the shop then. I really loved working there. The week I started they had a big order. I just rolled my sleeves up and went to work. We made corsages and all kinds of stuff. They taught me a lot. Then I worked at a clothing store as a clerk and that was neat. I even got to model some of the clothes and my picture was in the newspaper for back-to-school ads. That picture of me ended up in the school yearbook, too. (Laura)

I'm a CNA. That means "certified nursing assistant." I really like working with the elderly. I've been at the nursing home now for over 22 years ever since I graduated from high school. It had been one of my work experience placements. Then they hired me full-time. I also do housekeeping for the elderly in their home part-time and child care in my home. (Debbie)

I'm kind of natural with tools, living out there on the farm and all. Went from working on manual labor lines to driving fork lift. Worked my way up through the ranks. You've got to look at goals in different areas to see what you can do to meet where you want to go. I decided I kind liked the fork lift the best, so I went for it. (Frank)

I'm a supervisor at (a large national restaurant chain). I take care of 17 restaurants. I teach them how to be dishwashers. Managers call me from all around for me to come and train their people. Been doing this for 17 years. (Paul)

These participants have experienced occupational diversity not *career deprivation* which is a restriction of occupational options (Raelin, 1982). Some of the occupations represented by the participants include: sales and services in a sport store (30 years), paraprofessional in the medical field (Certified Nursing Assistant, 22 years), self-employed as a housekeeper and

child-care provider (10 years), maintenance supervisor for a private profit making company (21 years), fork lift driver at a private profit making industry (12 years), food service, dishwasher and trainer (22 years), custodian (18 years), self-employed farmer (4 years), rodeo participant (8 years), part-time factory worker (4 years), and primary child care provider (2 years).

In summary, Super's self-concept theory describes how primary and secondary self percepts form the foundation for simple and complex self concepts. The self-concept theory is essential to the career decision making process; career decisions are implementations of an individual's vocational self concept.

Career Decision Making

According to Super (1963) career decision making is the implementation of the individual's vocational self concept. Self identity continues to emerge through perceived relationships to significant people and significant environmental factors. Super (1963) states: "The self is an object of exploration as it develops and changes; so, too, is the environment" (p.12). The vocational development of the participants was influenced by significant people, many of whom were the supervisors on work experience placements.

I had some good supervisors, the kind of job you like to have. People were real nice. They ain't down on your back all the time. You work a lot better if you got somebody giving you room to breathe. (Jim)

My supervisor was really important to me; she still is. She was like a real good friend. (Laura)

He was wonderful to me; teach me a lot of things and respected me. (David)

He was like my hero. (John)

All the participants indicated that their high school special education teacher was a very important part of their total lives, an influence that extended beyond the school setting.

He was always teaching or teasing us; getting us to laugh. It really helped to have a sense of humor on the job. (Debbie)

We were more than just student; we were like family. (John)

Always remember him; he respected us. (Paul)

I think everybody should have a teacher like him. (Laura)

He was the most important part of my life. The most important thing about school was [teacher]. When I was in school, my school days were probably treasured by me the most. Looking back, we've been friends for 31 years. (David)

I learned a lot from him, and I'd do anything I could to help him. We're not just teacher and student; we're friends. (Frank)

He made a difference in my life. (Jim)

Other significant individuals that have influenced their lives included: spouses, siblings, extended family

members, friends, and employers. Interaction with others contributes to self-concept formation. All of the participants indicated that they were valued by their employers and that they received good evaluations. The relationships the participants had with their employers were significant to their overall self-concept formations. While all were similar, an illustration of this, provided by David, is worth highlighting.

David shared a Christmas card that his employer had given him within the last year. The card reveals that while his employer values him as an employee, he also values him as a friend. The title for the card, "I've Found a Lifelong Friend in You," was followed by a thoughtful and touching discourse on friendship.

You and I go way, way back, we've shared a lot together--so many happy times and tears, so many thoughts and dreams. And when I think of having kept out friendship for so long, I realize that is even more amazing than it seems--For many friendships come and go throughout one's life and yet, ours has always changed and grown and gotten stronger, too--And I just wanted you to know how much that means to me--how very glad I am to have a lifelong friend in you.

The employer, who is David's junior by 15 years, completed the card with a more personal note:

Merry Christmas, David. You're the best darn worker I've ever had, not to mention one of my very best friends. You earned the [a prestigious award given by the community to very few]. There will never be another like you. Your friend, _____

This is David's third employer. The store has had three owners and all have retained David.

The career decision making of all the participants has led to continual employment. All seven participants have chosen to be independent and stay employed, even though dependency options are available to them. All, for example, are eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income; all have made the choice not to do so. David's grandfather was very successful in the medical community and established a large trust fund, but David chooses to work and support himself: "Saving it for a raining day. Never know when I might need it." Laura could receive other community financial support instead of being employed. All participants are employed and take pride in their success and independence.

All we need is a chance to show what we can do. Just because we were in special education doesn't mean we aren't good workers. (John)

Just a chance--that somebody will give you a chance to show them that, " Yes, I can do the job". You got to be able to figure out what goals, from one goal to the next, that you strive for and which way you can get there. (Frank)

My supervisor couldn't believe I could put out so much work. I'll work for anybody, and I'll do anything for them. I just don't like them to "hog rope" me, you know. I want them to come back and give me advice if they want something, or if I'm not doing it right. (Jim)

Paul makes a very important point when he declares that, "I'm always out there shakin' the tree" (looking for more

jobs). This illustrates his understanding of continuing to look for opportunities to reach higher vocational goals. His ability to use appropriate coping behaviors and to avoid *stagnation* is illustrated in this remark.

Early days in school, I been working in my early days. I worked full-time jobs and going to school. I keep different jobs, as well as, my work experience. My work experience placements were: two clothing stores, drug stores, a pizza parlor, hospitals, and others. Plus I ran a gas station part-time for the management, and I ran two show (movie) houses all while I was going to school. Before I graduated from high school, I got hired at the hospital. I worked at hospital for seven and a half years doing janitor work, seven days a week.

Paul had been raised by his foster family and modeled their example of work. His foster father, a hard worker, provided well for the family. Paul wanted to make them proud of him and hoped to help them as they had helped him. His foster father is now in a nursing home, and Paul visits him whenever he can. Paul explains how he went about finding jobs.

Went out there and started looking. I look at newspaper, fill out applications, and everything. People tell me about jobs so I go out and ask. I tell (Teacher) about other jobs downtown. I tell him, "You should put people in those jobs." I know ahead of time who get fired and not get fired. I just talk to people. I like to talk with people lots.

Paul always had jobs, a function of his mature philosophy regarding employment and preparation for the future.

Why I keep looking for jobs when I already have a job? What if you get fired or something or the company cuts back. What you call it now-a-days is "watching out for yourself." In the 80's things were tight, and I got my hours cut from 40 to 10 hours a week. You can't live on 10 hours a week. Got to be prepared. I check them jobs out. I still do it now--new name of the game now-a-days. Got a big word for you (Teacher): "Shakin' the tree." I still go out there and shake the tree for jobs.

Paul's early experience, removal from his family and placed in foster care, may have shaped his concern for anticipating change and preparing for it. He has been eager to assert control over his life and thus avoid learned helplessness. Paul has been very successful in his occupational endeavors. He is a supervisor and trainer for a large nation-wide restaurant chain.

I am a supervisor at [company name]. I teach my workers how to be dishwashers. I set up the program. Different managers call me and ask for my help. I travel to other states to help.

Paul's position is one of authority and one of respect within the company. Some of the things that he was required to do in his work experience placements are now requirements for his workers as he notes,

I have to train kids, and lots of kids get fired. I have what's called, "pink slips." I decide if they're good workers or not. The work is hard, and they don't always like it. We do everything: Wash dishes, sweep, mop, clean tables, and everything. I give people raises, too. If they are good workers, they get pay raises. I tell my workers, "Call if you're not coming in." If they don't come in and don't call, we're kind of thin for the day. I cover and do what needs to be done to get us by. My boss supports my hiring, firing, and giving raises.

Paul's company recognized his potential and his skills, and they invited him to become a trainer.

When I am offered jobs--like supervisor job--the manager called me. I said give me three days to think about it. He called back in three days, and I took it. They [company] asked me to be a trainer several years ago. I went through the trainer program. Then you get three or four books, you got to memorize in your head. Then have a tape show and a test. You use everything and computers, too. Everything is computer now--check in and out on computer. They give you a code number, and it's your last four digits of your social security number, and then all you do is check in and out and on your breaks.

Paul has many responsibilities in his job as supervisor.

I am on the safety committee of [company]. I make sure everything is running right. No grease fires, no one getting hurt, and no one getting cut on the meat slicers. We take care of 17 restaurants in the summertime. I got one trainer under me. Summers are busy times for us, lots of summer help to train. I order all the kitchen stuff, and I use the computer to do it. I order soap, dishes, dish stuff, plates, silverware, whatever I think we need. My boss tells me, "Whatever, you think we need, order it." I even order rugs and mops and brooms.

Paul traveled over 300 miles to participate in this study. Both he and his wife work full-time, and he is still *shakin' the tree*. In Super's terms, Paul matured at a very early age and has consistently demonstrated the establishment stage and recursiveness of the vocational development theory as described by his occupational history.

"The terms *vocational development* and *vocational maturity* were not found in the literature of vocational

guidance...instead the terms *vocational choice* and *vocational adjustment*" were used (Super, 1957, p. 184). Super (1957) emphasized vocational development rather than vocational choice. The term, *vocational choice*, widely used in discussion and studies of vocational development and adjustment, "...conveys a misleading notion of neatness and precision in time, of singleness and uniqueness in the life of the individual" (Dysinger, 1950, p. 29). Super (1957) defined *choice* as a process rather than an event; the term should denote a whole series of choices and "the fact that vocational development is a process and...implies interaction and interaction can best be understood in the developmental process" (p. 283). Thus, for Super, choosing a vocation is an orderly, continuous, and developmental process, rather than a single or discrete act.

Super (1963) proposed a theory representative of how people choose, enter and progress in their occupations, suggesting that selection of one occupation did not necessarily constitute a *career*. An early approach readily practiced and accepted was based on the *trait-factor* theory of career choice (Whiteley & Resnikoff, 1972; Osipow, 1983), the static matching of people to positions (Super, 1942). Once a person was matched with an occupation, it was anticipated there would be harmony

through the person's life span. However, these seven participants were provided opportunities to choose their own occupations rather than be systematically matched. They selected occupations that satisfied their self conceived needs and interests. This is contrary to the practice of *vocational programming*, instead of *vocational counseling*, that is often provided to individuals with mild developmental disabilities due to the assumption that they are unable or incompetent to make a career choice (Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Hagner & Salomone, 1989; Holvoet, Brewe, Mulligan, Guess, Helmstetter, & Riggs, 1983). Several studies have proposed that for individuals with mild developmental disabilities, their interests, habits, and motivation are far more critical to maintaining their employment than the specific job capabilities and skills (Able, 1940; Cohen, 1960; Hartzler, 1951; Michal-Smith, 1950; Super, 1961). All seven have maintained continuous employment which is a reflection of their knowledge of their selves. For example, Jim and Frank state what is important to them when selecting a job.

I like to work with my hands. I'm the kind of guy that likes physical work. (Jim)

I like my job because it's inside and outside. I'm not stuck in one area all the time. I had my goal set on driving a fork lift and I knew to get to where I had to be I had to do my job like the best I can and as good as I can. That's what I do. I do

like my job very much, except (smiles) I wish they (company) could put a cab on my fork lift during the winter. (Frank)

Super (1942) views people and their careers as:

People are differentially qualified for occupations....[their] interests and abilities are likely to fall into patterns more consistent with some occupations than others and are more satisfied in an occupation that requires a pattern of interests and abilities closely corresponding to their own characteristics. (p.154)

Super's statement is particularly appropriate in the case of David. All the participants are active members in their communities, but David's life is noteworthy. It includes several awards for years of volunteering with youth sports programs. While sports are of personal interest and career choices for him, he also generalizes it to his other environments. He received a very prestigious community award for his 27 years of service helping children in sport programs. David expressed that he wanted to help others because others had helped him growing up.

I like everybody, and I like kids. I just think, I know I've grown up since I was a little kid. I've come a long way. Didn't know "sic 'em," like you (Teacher) use to say.

The award David received had been previously presented to city council members, the mayor, and other prominent citizens.

I won one of the highlights of my career--I won [award name]. That is the highest honor they give anybody. It was really quite an honor. They told

my mom and dad [I won it] because I was involved in sports, knew people around town and leadership. I thought that was really neat. That was something we worked on in school with you (Teacher). We worked on leadership and stuff. I just keep on being leadership.

David also received several civic awards for his support of and participation in the high school sports program for over 30 years. His picture has been in the local paper numerous times, articles have been written about him, and he helps to broadcast the "sports report" on the local radio. The downtown merchants also named a day in his honor. During the centennial celebration of the local high school, David was the "Parade Marshall" and played in the alumni game.

One of my biggest thrills was during the alumni game, five seconds left in the alumni game, and Big Boy Brown blocked for me, and I made a touch down from the 33 yard line.

Allowing David to make a touch down was an especially heart warming gesture by his classmates, who hold him in high regard. David has had a critical health condition for several years and physically would not have been able to withstand the impact of a tackle. His classmates were aware of this, and celebrated their friendship by providing him with this opportunity for a touch down. During his high school years, David was part of the football team; though he was unable to play, he nonetheless was in spirit part of the team. He attended

every game and assisted the coaches and players. David was featured in the yearbook with the team, had a class ring, and a letterman's jacket.

When I was in high school my ring cost \$45 dollars--now they cost about \$200 dollars [extends his hand to show the ring]. My letterman's jacket cost about \$50 dollars, and I still have it. At the store we sell them for \$125 dollars now.

From a very young age, David followed sports on television, at school, and in the newspaper. He has a remarkable memory for sports facts and trivia.

I've kept scrap books of scores and sports for over 30 years. Since I was nine or ten years old I wanted to be a broadcaster and be involved with sports--all my life. Picked up the newspaper and started studying the players and getting involved.

This unique and valuable skill initially provided much joy and self satisfaction, but later provided an employment opportunity. David has the ability to remember names of people. This unique ability was recognized by his special education teacher, and subsequently one of his work experience placements was in a sports store. David was hired at this sports store and has remained there for over 30 years.

I was working at the sports store when I graduated from high school.

David was hired not only to work in the store but to help the merchant with public relations. As a customer would enter the store, David would tell the merchant the customer's name.

One thing [employer's name] wanted me to do. When people came in, I told him who they were and what they did before they got in the store. I know the players by their names and their number and what position they play. I recognized them when they came in the store. I know all the college kids and all the high school kids.

David's ability to recall names was not limited to the local area. He also knew the names of the players from other towns and counties. This ability was a valuable resource for the merchant. David does not drive, walks everywhere, and knows the town well. Wherever David goes in his community, as he passes people, he calls them by name.

I'm always happy and I always know people's names. I'm always saying, "Hi."

David is a valued employee and has demonstrated that he is flexible and can adjust and grow as the job demands. His first employer, was an individual who had a physical handicapped.

I was his (employer's) legs. I'd do the banking and the lifting and put stuff away. It was just part of the job. I worked nine to five and really enjoyed it.

There are many aspects to David's job, and over the years he has continued to take on more responsibilities.

I work Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I vacuum rugs. I go bank for him. I run errands. I go get copy of the paper. Wait on customers. Like this was one of our best Christmas' and people come in the store and every year you see new faces. I put stock out and get freight in about 10:00 a.m. everyday and put it out. I cut out all the sport articles from the paper and put them on

the bulletin board at the store. That's part of my job. People come in to the store, and they like to see their names up.

David's responsibilities extend beyond his job to his family.

During my vacation last year I helped my sister do her front yard for four days. It was hard work and she took me to McDonald's for lunch I said, "Is this all I get" (laughs). Rest of my vacation I said, "Leave me alone, I'm going to rest." (laughs)

David recalls another vacation he had with his father and shares the humor of it openly.

Dad took me duck hunting once. I shot ten ducks and ten decoys, and the guy we were hunting with wouldn't let me come hunting anymore.

David has well developed self-concepts: he is a worker, a son, a brother, an uncle, a sports broadcaster, a recognized citizen in his community, and a care provider for his parents. David's self-concept system is well defined and established. David has made a career not just in the sports area, but a career of enjoying life.

If I could do anything different. I don't think I'd do anything different. Like being in school with you (Teacher); I do it over and over again. Life is really good for me.

The success and longevity enjoyed by the participants' in their selected careers demonstrate that their career decision making skills were well developed. All the participants had well developed self-concepts which constituted well defined self-concept systems. They implemented their vocational self concepts through

their career choices. Their choices were *vocationally mature*.

Vocational Maturity

Super's (1963) definition of vocational maturity involves congruence between an individual's vocational behavior and the expected behavior at a particular age. He concluded that the closer the correspondence of the two the greater the individual's maturity.

Super (1951) identified five types of coping behavior as stages that individuals pass through in the process of reaching maturity. The five coping behaviors are: (1) *floundering*, (2) *trial*, (3) *stagnation*, (4) *instrumentation*, and (5) *establishment*. Floundering describes a worker that aimlessly and randomly tries many unrelated jobs. None of the participants demonstrated floundering. A worker exhibits the trial behavior by engaging in non-random purposeful planned job explorations. The participants work experience program offered them an organized (non-random) and systematic (purposeful) process of exploring different jobs, and eliminated aimless job attempts. Stagnation occurs as a worker exhibits non-progressive work behaviors, while failing to utilize resources available. None of the participants demonstrated stagnation. To the contrary, Jim recognized that he was approaching stagnation due to

circumstances beyond his control and skillfully removed himself from that situation and into the instrumentation stage. During instrumentation, the worker utilizes the available resources to enhance the work environment.

John demonstrated this as he worked through his decision to apply for a management position. He turned to people in his environment for advice, talking to his supervisor and reviewing his goals, consulting his wife, and engaging in a self evaluation of his current skills and the skills needed to succeed in the advanced position. Workers who consistently and actively maintain themselves in a job demonstrate establishment behavior.

I've tried to learn as much as I can because that's important. If you want to learn you can learn.
(John)

John continues to take on more responsibilities, participates in new training programs, and maintains his work-related licenses. All of the participants demonstrated the establishment phase in their comments.

Super's (1942) vocational development theory is built on the framework of life stages, as defined by Buehler (1933), a developmental psychologist, suggested that life could be viewed as consisting of stages and that life tasks vary according to the stage the person is in. These stage are: *growth stage* (birth to age 14), *exploratory stage* (ages 15 to 25), *establishment stage*

(ages 25 to 44), *maintenance stage* (ages 46 to 64), and *final stage* (65 and older). Super (1942) expanded the concept of life stages to include vocational life stages, a view holding that vocational tasks reflect larger life tasks.

The two major life stages, according to Super (1963) dealing specifically in vocational behaviors are "exploratory" (adolescence) and "establishment" (adulthood). The exploratory stage consists of three substages: (1) *tentative*, (2) *transition*, and (3) *trial*. During the tentative substage (ages 15 to 17), a person explores interests, values and opportunities for tentative choices to occur. The transition substage (ages 18 to 21) consists of consideration of the reality of entering the labor market or professional training as attempts to implement self concept. The trials (little commitment) substage (ages 22 to 24) are characterized by limited commitment and attitudes toward work occupations.

The participant began their exploratory stage in their sophomore year and were assisted by their teacher. Learning experiences included a variety of jobs, skills, and occupational environments. The participants were purposefully engaged in work-experience placements, one every nine weeks that offered an orderly, continuous, and developmental process for choice making opportunities.

The participants and their teacher mutually agreed upon the placements; this mutuality was a purposeful part of the decision making process.

We were set up in different situations and different jobs. We were out there learning how to get a job. When I was in your (Teacher's) class, you didn't have me go be a custodian only. That's why you set us up with different jobs so we could choose ourselves. (John)

We changed work experience every nine weeks for experience and training in different areas. We met new people (supervisors and co-workers) and learned things at each new job. (Paul)

The participants were encouraged to "explore" a variety of work experiences, as many as twelve. Selection of one job without experiencing others would have delimited the options (career deprivation) available to them. In order to make an informed choice, the participants needed to "experience" their options; ability to generalize in different environments is enhanced by experiences.

The establishment stage, as outlined by Super (1963) consists of two substages: (1) *trial* (commitment) and *stabilization* substage and (2) the *advancement* substage. The trial and stabilization substage differs from exploration's trial substage in the degree of commitment to the occupation. Individuals begin with occupational trial and progress into a stabilized substage as they begin to take their place in the world of work. The

advancement substage is characterized by stability and continuity in the occupational field.

Super (1957) believed that individuals are capable of moving through the different stages at various speeds. It is noteworthy that Super assigned ages to the substages, although it appears he did not want to do so. The names assigned to these stages, however, would suggest a gradual process of development involving a series of vocational decisions.

Super's exploration stage represents ages 15 to 25; the average age for six of the participants at graduation was 19 years and 1 month. Six of the participants were employed at time of graduation, therefore entering the establishment stage.

I was employed before graduation and been working ever since--over 20 years. (Laura)

See, I finished high school in 1970. I was already employed full-time before that and stayed in that job for seven years before I took a different job. (Paul)

All seven participants went on to demonstrate vocationally mature behavior, and all have maintained employment throughout their careers. One participant, Jim, who was unable to complete the program and graduate with his class, nonetheless entered the establishment stage in the same time frame. Jim did not graduate from

the program and he did not receive a diploma, but he did demonstrate vocational maturity. As he related,

Well, after you (Teacher) left up there (retired), we got a new teacher. A nice lady, I guess, but she must of had little kids or kindergarten kids or something before. She treated us like little kids. **I was a young man** (said with pride), not some little kid. She didn't expect nothing from us. The program was nothing like before. Totally the opposite!

Jim began his senior year in the fall after his former special education teacher had retired. The Teacher's successor disbanded the work experience component of the program and shifted the program's focus solely on an academic-base. Jim began his work experience placement as previously planned but was removed by the newly hired teacher. He was assigned a full load of regular academic classes at the high school.

No jobs. None of us got to be on our work experience. I didn't think it was fair. I'd worked hard, and I was looking forward to my job, and they were looking forward to me being there.

Jim found himself in an unfamiliar situation. He was excluded from participating in the much anticipated vocational component of his program.

You know, it kind a took the "zap" out of me. She (newly hired teacher) never trained us in nothing we really needed. She was always giving us stuff (book work) we'd already had.

After several weeks of trying to work within the program model and with the newly hired teacher, Jim decided that it would be better for him to move. Jim illustrates well

the philosophy, "You haven't failed until you quit trying." He tried to work within the program he was restricted to, and on his own he soon recognized that if he stayed he would in Super's terminology, *stagnate*.

So I moved to a small school a few miles away where I could do my work experience and school work, too. But because I lost credits from the move I would not be able to graduate that spring. I ended up not going, and I took a full-time job, and I've been working ever since.

Jim had been successful at high school and he had received recognition for his leadership skills in his Future Farmers of America (FFA) activity.

I won leadership in "Proficiency." At first, getting up there on the stage was kind of frightening there for a little bit. I won five or six awards in two years. I've still got them.

Jim is very much a success, and he continues to demonstrate mature adult decision making behaviors, which include the ability to re-enter previously completed life stages at anytime. This supports Super's (1963) belief that career decision making is a developmental and continual process which in fact may be recursive.

I've checked into getting my GED, and I only have one credit to finish, and I'll have it.

Jim has successfully demonstrated mature vocational coping behaviors and he continues to set attainable goals for himself. Still he has faced several unique situations, all of which he addressed in vocationally mautre ways.

Jim has always had jobs, often more than one at a time, and has always provided well for his family. He and his wife had a baby about three years ago, and his wife stayed at home to care for the baby. Last year they had a second child. However, the child was born with a heart problem and was hospitalized for many weeks and survived several surgeries. During this time things were very difficult financially. Jim found part-time jobs to help with the extra expenses. During these months he and his wife shared in the care of the children. His wife was able to secure a full-time job, and together they decided that she would work full-time and he would be a stay-at-home dad. Jim would run the farm and still maintain his part-time jobs, while caring for two children under the age of five, one with a serious health problem.

Being married, you know, we had a lot of problems for awhile (ill baby). Now, we work together...it takes time. Just like now, the jobs are hard to find so Mama's (his wife) working and I'm Mr. Dad (said with much pride and a smile). I stay at home and change the diapers. I don't mind changing the diapers, feeding and taking care of the girls during the day.

This decision was not without criticism from his friends, but Jim and his wife had made a decision that reflected maturity (Jim was the youngest participant interviewed). They were proud of their decision as reflected by the following.

Lots of my friends say, "I ain't doing that. I'd call my Mom to come do it." Well, when you got t,- you got to, you know. I have a hard time with some of my friends. They just don't get it, you got to work together.

Jim reflects how he and his wife have learned to work together.

I take care of the kids during the day, then when Mama gets home, I go out and do my chores. I cook, too. One thing, I don't **mind** doing dishes, but I don't **like** doing dishes. She'd rather; Mama don't mind doing the dishes. She'd rather have me cook. I'm a pretty good cook. So, we work good together that way. However, I'm the kind of guy that uses more than one bowl to make something (smiles).

The researcher has had the opportunity to observe Jim interact with his wife and children, and he proudly carries pictures of them and waits for opportunities to share them. Jim is tall and stoutly built. At first glance one might conclude that he is "rough." His hands show that they have weathered hard work and hardships beyond his young years, yet he cradles the baby so gently. These hands, the same hands that so tenderly comfort his children, are powerful enough to tame wild horses. Jim shares about his rodeo team.

I train a lot of guys in the summer to rodeo. I got a young team going with me right now. I tell them, "There ain't no one better guy than the other." You got to work together. You got your *anchor man*. You got your *mugger*. You got your *rider*. If you work together, a lot of good things come out of it. My dad's my anchor man. I'm the mugger. I get a-hold of the head, and then the rider gets on. We're doing alright. We won a lot of money last year and quiet a few buckles (serve as awards in rodeoing).

The horses he breaks are untamed, wild horses with unpredictable behaviors. Jim's love of animals started early.

Yeah, I enjoy working, especially with something I like. I break colts in the summertime. My dad taught me how to do that. I **really** enjoy that! Cause it's me and the horse. I don't have to listen to anybody. I know what to do, and I go out and do it. I saddle him up and walk him around a little bit. We can have a horse rode in one day. He's got to trust you. It's like a one-to-one thing. It's pretty good.

His youngest daughter has required much attention due to her condition, and Jim has had the primary responsibility.

I take care of that baby pretty good (smiles with pride).

Jim demonstrates maturity: both vocational and emotional.

All the participants are vocationally mature. All the participants have well defined self-concept systems and well developed self-concepts. Their success suggests that the intervention program that they had the opportunity to participate in during high school may be a keystone. The next part of this report will describe this vocationally-based real-life work-experience program. The participants in this study were students who had been in a unique academic and vocationally integrated secondary special education program. The teacher designed this program but was unaware of Donald

Super's vocational development theory. What Super had proposed in theory was practiced by this teacher.

IV. An Intervention

The seven participants related how the teacher and their experiences in their special education program allowed them to exhibit vocationally mature behaviors. Their evidence was consistent and pervasive during the interviews; they clearly linked their learning experiences to what they did in their work, family, and community lives.

The *Real Life Work Experience Program* was established in 1961 and was one of the first pilot projects of its kind in the state. Due to the creativity of the teacher the program continually evolved to meet the individual student needs. Secondary (high school) special education programs were few in number in the early 1960's and were not mandated or typically funded through public schools. Special education prior to the implementation of the *Real Life Work Experience Program* was craft-centered, requiring minimal skills repetitive in nature producing unmarketable items. The perceived inability to compete in or complete regular public high school instruction led to students being assigned to the craft centered environment.

The *Real Life Work Experience Program* maintained its integrity for 25 years, until 1986 when the teacher retired. During those 25 years, all students completing

the program were awarded regular high school diplomas, the same diploma as their non-handicapped peers. This practice was unique in the state and for secondary special education programs.

For 23 of the 25 years of the program, all of the graduating students had gainful employment on or prior to graduation. As indicated by the seven participants, they have well represented themselves in the work force, in their families, and their communities, as well as representing the program and their diplomas.

Population Served

The program served students with varying degrees of special needs and cultural backgrounds. The populations served were identified in accordance with state, local, and federal guidelines of the times, including Public Law 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). The Real Life Work Experience Program had two philosophies: "You haven't failed until you quit trying" and "There's dignity in all labor, if you do the best you can." These two sayings were displayed in the front of the classroom and were referred to often and practiced daily by students and teacher.

Program Components

Each day was divided in to two sessions. The students' needs reflected which session they would attend

and in which order they would do so. Some had work experiences in the morning due to the nature of their placements, such as, bakeries, nursing homes, and janitorial services. Others had their work experience in the afternoon. The students' needs determined their schedules, and the teacher maintained a flexible schedule so the program met those needs. Usually morning sessions were designed for the students to learn daily living skills integrated with academic areas. Opportunities to practice or generalize the skills in other environments were incorporated. Skills that were learned focused on real-life activities. Mathematics, reading, and spelling were not presented as separate subjects areas; they were integrated, purposeful, and functional. Real life skills that reflect the "academic" areas and generalized to age appropriate vocational skills included: personal information including knowing their social security numbers, filling out job application forms (actual application forms from the community were used), writing or printing a signature, time telling, managing money, reading schedules (bus, train, class), using a telephone book and telephone appropriately, understanding a driver's manual (taped and text), and using equipment.

The second half of each day was conducted at the high school and in work experience placements. The students walked 15 blocks to the high school.

My students were going to be away from the classroom, so I needed to know exactly how long it would take them to walk to the job site or to the high school. So, I walked it, too. That way a reasonable time frame was set for students to be at their assigned places. (Teacher)

The Teacher walked the route to the high school and to the different job sites. This was not only an accountability issue for the students but a safety issue. If the student did not arrive within a reasonable amount of time, concern for the student's safety was considered and appropriate actions were taken by the Teacher.

Students attended elective and required classes at the high school and participated in work experience placements. Their first placements were in on-campus work stations. This provided the Teacher opportunities to observe and to evaluate the students' strengths and areas of challenge.

Generally, a student would come to school to do an on-campus work experience, under my supervision, for the first quarter or until they demonstrated the skills that I thought were needed before being placed off campus. I had a variety of work stations on campus, but the cafeteria often was used because it provided several levels of skills and an assortment of tasks. (Teacher)

When I first went up to the high school, you know, I didn't want to work in the cafeteria. I didn't think it would be the cool thing in school to do, I guess you would say. Then I found out a little

different. It was alright to work in the cafeteria. Everybody was just a big family up there. Them ladies were really nice to work with. I'm glad I got to work there. (Jim)

The teacher worked side-by-side with the students in their on-campus placements and off-campus work experience placements as needed.

I never asked my students to do a job that I wouldn't do. (Teacher)

This provided the students with opportunities to see their teacher working and demonstrated that there is dignity in every job if done to the best of your ability and that the teacher did not hold himself above jobs that the students were assigned.

You were there [in the cafeteria] everyday. If somebody didn't show up, you would fill in. (Jim)

Materials

Published materials appropriate for a vocationally-based program were non-existent during the early years of development and implementation. The teacher designed the program and the materials which dealt with real-life issues, family, community, and work. Program materials reflected those used in everyday living, including telephone books and newspapers, grocery advertisements, classified listings, and current events. Thursday was "consumer math" day. Students used the newspaper and grocery advertisements to calculate best buys known as "cherry pickers."

Yeah, in fact I have to do that today. We (my wife and I) go through the paper all the time and look for the sales. You remember, "cherry pickers!" (smiles) It's just not saving nickels, we're saving dollars. I've got a little baby now, and we buy milk and baby food by the week. (Jim)

As techonology improved, the teacher introduced computers and other available materials to the students which became part of the curriculum preparing the students for the increasing demands in the work force.

Job Site Development and Placement

The selection of the job site was critical to the successful experience of the students.

One of the goals I had for myself was to develop more work sites than I had students. I needed a number of placements to meet the unique needs of the students. (Teacher)

The Teacher participated as an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce for several years. He is an active member of the community and modeled this behavior for his students. Membership in the Chamber of Commerce provided him with a high level of visibility in the community among the local merchants and business people.

The Teacher approached matching the student to the job from a then untraditional point of reference, not a trait-factor approach.

I wasn't trying to tell them what to do, but give them what was needed to keep the job they wanted to do. I wanted to be sure that they had exposure to jobs that complimented their skills. It was a thrill of a life time to work with those young

people and find that special something that they excelled at. (Teacher)

The Teacher assessed the students' strengths, needs, and interests and then sought out work sites that would compliment them. This Teacher incorporated the student as part of the decision-making team. The students were active members in assisting in and planning for their program goals. The Teacher had this as an early part of his program, therefore, after the passing of Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, developing *Individual Educational Programs* (IEP's) or *Individual Vocational Educational Programs* (IVEP's) was easily implemented. The students were listed as invited members to team meetings, assisted in the planning process, and signed their individual plans.

The work experience component of the program developed over years and reflected the changing needs of the students and the changing needs of the work force. Because of the changing work force, continual site development was important.

No way can you sit in a chair in a classroom and run a quality work experience program, cover your territory, look for new sites, and create job sites. Having a number of job sites is important so you never over saturate your existing sites. A great deal of foot work and shoe leather went into the development of this program. (Teacher)

These investments led to successful placements. Commonly held ideas that this population, if they could work,

could only do so in very marginal and occupationally restrictive jobs was not supported or pursued by the teacher.

Business persons participated in the Real Life Work Experience Program and would share their experiences at the Chamber meetings. The Teacher did not have to "sell" the program. The students and their successful work experience placements sold the program. The business people sold other business people on the program; community ownership was shared with pride.

Communication among the participants and a pre-established conflict resolution plan ensured a successful experience. This was accomplished through the Teacher's regular site visits to students and their supervisors.

If a situation came up that couldn't be resolved to the company's satisfaction and with my weekly visits, then the student was to be discharged, and they spent the remainder of the quarter with me in an on-campus placement. Then goals relating to the area of challenge would be addressed during the next placement. I never had a student discharged from a work placement. (Teacher)

Placements were evaluated by the site supervisor, the student, and the Teacher, and the combined evaluation was reflected on the student's report card.

I designed the evaluation cards so that they were easy to complete. I had them printed professionally so that they looked very business like. Together we would fill out the card and decide what we needed to work on for the next grading period. We were not trying to teach a job--the evaluation card had little to do with the issue if the student could

wash dishes or not, but did he/she fulfill the needs to hold the job, no matter what the job was. We didn't teach a job, we taught skills to keep a job.
(Teacher)

These evaluation cards were kept in the students' files and later were used by the students to prepare their resumes. The work behaviors assessed included promptness, following directions, quality and quantity of work, and personal hygiene. Other related work behaviors were designed to hold the students accountable for their behaviors.

We had rules, not many rules. The students helped set the rules. The rules had to reflect real life needs. These rules included: being on time for work, ready and willing to work, friendly, clean and well groomed, dressed appropriate for work, staying in assigned work area, not asking for special privileges, able to help in emergencies, and ability to change tasks without disruptions. The dress code for the job was dictated by the nature of the job, **not** by the school dress code. (Teacher)

Three unexcused absences from a job resulted in loss of the opportunity to participate in off-campus work experience and a failing grade for that grading period; in the 25 years of the program no student was discharged from their placement.

This business of calling in was taken very seriously. Three times without calling in and the student was discharged. (Teacher)

The issue was not whether the student had a phone, but whether the student had a plan to use resources to accomplish the task. Students were encourage to have a

plan set-up prior to needing it; e.g., using co-worker to bring message to work place, locating of pay phones near home. The purpose of the requirements and the consequences of not fulfilling them was to help the students establish responsible adult work behaviors.

If you don't call in you get in trouble. Three days without checking in, you're in trouble. Call in or you get fired. (Paul)

The participants' early learning was maintained in their current work behaviors.

I always call in early, so they can find somebody to fill in if I'm sick. I didn't have a phone for a long time, but I still figured out how to get the message to my work. I always call. (Laura)

Be on time and call if you're not going to be there. I'm there at least 30 minutes early for my shift in case there's things to finish up. (Debbie)

Being on time is real important. If you're going to be late, just call in. People don't mind if you're going to be late as long as you call in. It's when you don't call, people go to yelling. (Jim)

I always call in if I'm sick. I'm always prompt. I'm on time. I get there early for my work. (Frank)

Students changed job placements every nine weeks.

This was purposeful in the design, and allowed the students to have four placements per year or twelve job explorations during their high school years. Students were placed in various occupations, representing a variety of skills, work environments, and supervisors.

One of the real strengths in the work program was the supervisors that I had at the local businesses.

They were all different. Some were very strict; some were not. Some were very demanding, and some were lax. (Teacher)

Work experience placements were mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher.

We changed work experience every nine weeks for experience and training in different areas. We met new people at each place and learn new things at each place. (Paul)

The students would go to the local state employment office and go through the same process anyone would if seeking employment.

Use of local resources to fill the needs of the students was important. We used the everyday resources that any other person would use when seeking a job. (Teacher)

The teacher had the first such arrangement in the state. The employment office personnel would "process" each student as a potential employee: application form, interview, and post employment interview. The students knew that their placements had been pre-arranged and this was an extension of the classroom work experience.

Your attitude was a big part of it. You had to have a good attitude to go in there. (Jim)

Have to have good manners. Be courteous to people. Respect everybody and everything and help people. (David)

The teacher collected application forms from nearly every business in town and maintained a file of them in the classroom. The actual application forms were used as part of the curriculum.

Every student carried a student identification card. This card served, as referred to by the Teacher and students, as a "passport" to the community. If they were stopped or found themselves in need of assistance, the card had related student information. The card also had the teacher's home phone number, the classroom phone number, the work site phone number and supervisor's name. This card was about the size of a driver's license and was also used as a reference when completing application forms at the employment office.

The teacher provided another dimension to the program. He provided the students with the opportunity to plan an educational trip. The trips were not vacations from school; they were extensions of the learning environment and not taken yearly. Trips included travel to Mexico, Canada, the sea coast, and the mountains, just to mention a few. This provided opportunities to practice cooperative group decision making skills, travel planning, financial planning, and writing for brochures regarding potential destinations. Group discussions offered opportunities to appropriately model and practice decision making skills as well as to learn tolerance of differing opinions. Suggestions by students and differences of opinion were to be respected by class members; constructive criticism could only be

offered in terms of, "May I make a suggestion." After the planning was in progress, one or two of the class members arranged to speak at the school board meeting to explain what they were doing and where they were going and to ask permission to take the trip. They then reported back to the board after the trip. Not only was this a wonderful learning activity for the students but it also provided an example of how to plan trips for their families.

That was the greatest. We had a lot of fun up there (mountain cabin). We got out there and got to know everyone better. Before that week was over, we were more or less a family. We all got to drive snow mobiles. A couple of the girls had never done that before. Everybody had jobs to do, and we all worked together. There was no fussing. We all pitched in and helped. Those were fun times. Those were learning times. (Jim)

I got to drive the snowmobile to the cabin. We had a blast! First time for me on a snowmobile. I really enjoyed it. We all cooked and helped out. It was great, but I forgot my toothbrush. (Laura)

I had my own snow mobile. My mom went with us. She had her own machine, too. It was really fun. We all got along together. (Debbie)

Most important thing, the highlight in my life, is when I went to Canada with you (teacher) and the class for two weeks. We had to write letter to all over so they'd send us information back so we could plan our trip. We camped out and everything. Everybody chipped in and did chores: tucked in their own bed, made fires, cooked, and did dishes. Went fishing the first time and got it hooked in the tree. Next time was better. Most fun trip in my life. (David)

During the first years of the program, 1961 to 1963, the teacher approached the district with a plan to use for their classroom site an old army barrack that the district had purchased. The district agreed. However, the teacher had a condition; he and his students would form a construction company, and they would help remodel the barrack.

I helped build that room (their first room) with the washer and dryer in it. Lots of work but it was really neat. (David)

The Teacher believed having "ownership" in a project offered opportunities for self-concept development, pride in oneself, and skills that could be used in everyday home repair, daily living and on the job, as well as career exploration. He and his students had their regular morning session, and then spent two hours in the afternoon working on the remodeling. They had work crews, a student foreman, a time clock and a variety of tools and projects to complete including painting walls and household repairs. The resulting facility was an asset to the district. The teacher designed it to be barrier free a decade before it was mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: ramps, lowered panic bars on all exit doors, lowered light switches, hand rails around toilets and tubs, and lowered sinks. This facility had one large classroom with overhead lighting and natural

lighting on the east and west sides, a dining room/living room area with appropriate furnishing, a fully equipped kitchen and pass-through kitchen counter, a shop area, a bedroom, two full bathrooms--the men's had a shower and the women's had a shower and a tub.

We received new desks and chairs to equip our new classroom. They were as good as the day we got them as when I retired. It was their room and their equipment and they took care of it. They took great pride in knowing that it was their room and they helped to built it. We were all very proud of the room. I was very proud of my students. (Teacher)

The program remained on this site until 1977 when it was moved to the high school grounds, following the guidelines of P.L. 94-142 that special education classrooms should be on age-appropriate sites.

Anticipating the move to the high school but fully recognizing that there was no appropriate room to continue the program model, the teacher approached the district a second time and again was granted permission to build a classroom on the high school grounds, for his special education program. The new facility was not as large, but it did have the basic components for programmatic and student needs.

Full inclusion of the students was not an issue because even at the previous off-campus site they had always participated in the regular high school classes. The teacher approached the receiving high school staff

with the same respect and knowledge base he did the community. He matched students to staff and classes that complemented each student's needs. The teacher knew that the first few placements of his students into regular classes would set the tone for all those that followed. The teacher worked as closely with the staff at the high school as he did the business people. Successes led to the high school staff feeling "ownership and pride" in their shared students and the program. Not all staff participated fully, but over all none actively worked against the students or the program. Part of the inclusion model was to have staff from regular basic core classes come to the special education room and teach classes there, too. This assisted in bridging the gap and fully addressing the inclusion model.

The students were full members of the high school student body--student body cards, pep rally and athletic passes to the games. This included their pictures appearing with their class in the year book. The year book included the students' work experience placements with pictures in the activity section. Featured articles in the school newspaper and in the year book reflected the class trips, annual holiday dance, awards, and other related class information.

The students, the program, and the teacher received state recognition. Over the years, students were "tuitioned in" from outside the district into the program. Families from other states (Alaska, Nevada, Utah, and Washington) moved to the town so that their child could be in the program. The Teacher and the success of the students who completed that program were noted.

As each group graduated, it was a tradition for the teacher to give each a special gift. This gift was a print of the poem Sermons We See by Edgar A. Guess.

This poem reflects how I've tried to live my life, through example. At different times when I've been invited into my former students' homes, often this poem was displayed in a prominent place. (Teacher)

Teacher

This special education teacher brought to the program a richness of life experiences and diversity of occupations. Not unlike his students, his early life experiences played a contributing role in his development. At the age of two, he and his three sisters were taken in by an elderly aunt and uncle after the loss of their mother.

I lost my mother when I was two years old. I was raised by my aunt and uncle with my three sisters on a 50-100 head cattle ranch in a very rural area. My aunty claimed I kept the wood box filled at age 3 better than I did at age nine (smiles).

The Teacher, like his students, was raised in a family that required all members to contribute.

I was raised that we all had to pull together and the adults set a great example. I was made to feel that I was a big part of the family and a valued worker on the farm.

During his early years he had many chores and jobs to do. School presented him with challenges, and success was not readily his in the academic world.

It wasn't until I was in seventh grade that I had any idea that I could learn. We had a young teacher right out of college, and she was able to turn my learning around. For the first time, I recognized that I could learn.

During his youth and young adulthood he had a variety of jobs and met with success in all of his occupational endeavors, including a truck driver, ship yard worker, grocery delivery, school bus driver, dish washer, carpenter, law enforcement officer, and manual laborer. The world of work continued to be a positive and rewarding place for him. He also has a wide variety of recreational interests, e.g., boating, canoeing, snowmobiling, scuba diving, fishing and other sport-related activities. Commitments to his home, family, job, and community have always been important parts of his life.

The Teacher began working with troubled youth as a sheriff. He wanted to help them and found that he needed further training to be effective with them. His desire

to work with young people led to his entering college and pursuing courses in counseling which then led to a career in teaching. He was an elementary teacher and a junior high teacher for several years before returning to college to complete his master's degree in special education. He was assigned the secondary special education program. It was at this time that he began the development of the Real Life Work Experience Program.

He was recognized for his many achievements by the state and local school district, and was the only special education teacher to receive a teacher of the year award from a professional vocational education organization to date. Throughout his life he has received many honors but he most enjoys the encounters with his former students.

We started out as students and teacher, and now we're friends. It's been a thrill of a life time to work with my students.

V. Challenging the Assumptions

The original intent of this study was concerned with the applicability of Donald Super's vocational development theory to persons with mild developmental disabilities. The importance of addressing this question was the apparent impact of the *disability myth, spread phenomenon, career deprivation, and learned helplessness* on their employability and employment in the competitive labor market. Although not intended as a part of this study, the data provided by the seven participants so clearly demonstrate their vocational maturity that they appear to challenge those negative concepts.

People who are service providers, including teachers, caregivers, guardians, and social workers, too often view individuals with developmental disabilities within the context of what has been identified as the *disability myth*, the assumption that the disabled are incompetent and therefore need protection by non-disabled people. This misconception, furthermore, is promoted by the *spread phenomenon*, the view that a single disability encompasses other aspects of the individual. Eventually negative views influence their total being thereby leaving the **whole** person viewed as disabled (Holmes & Karst, 1990; Wolfensberger, 1972; Yuker, 1988). This also tends to restrict or limit the person's vocational

options, known as *career deprivation*, because service providers make career decisions for individuals with mild developmental disabilities and believe that it is their job to do so (Raelin, 1982).

Current estimates are that three percent of the population is disabled. Of this three percent, 75 percent, or 5.6 million people, are considered to have mild developmental disabilities. Although those with mild developmental disabilities are potentially capable workers, an estimated 75 percent, or over four million of them, are unemployed and most likely participating in dependency programs, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and the Food Stamp Program. The effect of the disability myth, the spread phenomenon, and career deprivation can result in individuals with disabilities experiencing the phenomenon of *learned helplessness*. Individuals learn to become helpless when they believe there is little relationship between their actions and outcomes (Brolin, 1983; Frankl, 1963; Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Hooker, 1976; Perske, 1972 & 1981; Seligman, 1975; Wolfensberger, 1972).

The seven participants did not exhibit *career deprivation* or *learned helplessness*. All seven participants in this study have well defined self-concepts in a variety of areas: personal, family,

community, and vocational. These self-concepts appear to be fully interactive and constitute well organized self-concept systems. All the participants have adult status as indicated by several measures, lived in independent settings, were employed and support themselves, were over the age of 21, and emancipated. None were in residential facilities or group homes, received Supplemental Security Income or participated in other dependency programs (Medicaid or Food Stamps).

Career Deprivation

All the participants were enrolled in an integrated academic and vocational integrated program while in high school. They explored many diverse occupations as part of their work experience program. Through this process of exploration, the participants were able to have an informed opinion of what occupation they wished to pursue.

We were set up in different situations and different jobs. We were out there learning how to get a job. When I was in (Teacher's) class, you didn't have me go be a custodian only. That's why you set us up with different jobs so we could choose ourselves.
(John)

The diversity of occupations and the longevity of the participants within their occupations indicated that they did not experience career deprivation. This also challenges the assumption that if this population does find jobs, they usually are limited to jobs in the

secondary labor market, seasonal and low-level with less pay, security, and promotional opportunities that their skills and motivation warrant (Dunn, 1981). As has been shown, the seven participants were not limited to jobs in the secondary labor market, quite the contrary.

John holds a supervisory role in a large profit making company. His job is one of authority, and he has sought and achieved promotions. Other promotional opportunities are still available to him. He is responsible for maintenance operations for the whole plant and responsible for assigning personnel and materials to work orders he receives. His salary and benefits package with the company reflect a middle-to upper income level.

The benefits and everything that I have gained over the years is more important to me than working for some big place and having nothing to show for it. There's another job opening coming up when my supervisor retires, but I don't know if I'll go for it. I like my job, and I like the people. My supervisor's job is more office type work. I like being with my crews. (John)

Paul is a trainer and supervisor of dishwashers for a large national restaurant chain. His responsibilities include the hiring and discharging of personnel, completing job performance evaluations and recommending salary raises. He does the ordering for the restaurant and is called upon by managers from other states to provide training for their employees. His salary and

benefit package with the company are middle-income level, and continued promotional opportunities are available to him.

I've been asked to be the manager of a restaurant, you know, take it over--the restaurant, the bar, and everything. I tell them, "Give me a couple of more months to make up my mind." I maybe end up taking it, you know, run the restaurant, bar, and everything. (Paul)

David has been in the retail sports business for over 30 years. He is a valued employee and has been retained through three changes in store ownership. He works six days a week, and his salary and benefit package reflect a middle-income level. Promotional opportunities for David are in the form of salary raises, increased paid vacation time, and increased job responsibility. This is a small retail store with one manager and two employees. David's position is full-time, while the other position is part-time.

Sports business is my whole life. All my life for 31 years in the sports business. If I could do anything different, I don't think I'd do anything different. Life is really good for me. (David)

Debbie has remained in the nursing field for over 20 years. Within her current job description as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), she has job promotional opportunities and continues to maintain her certification. Debbie's salary and benefit package provide a comfortable living for her and her daughter and

place her in the lower-income level; however, Debbie supplements her income by working part-time jobs. The combination of her jobs then places her in the lower-middle income level. After her daughter has finished school, Debbie plans to attend a community college and enroll in secretarial training. Her long-term plan is to return to the nursing home but in a secretarial position, thus taking advantage of promotional opportunities.

When I first started nursing, they (company) didn't have the gate belts, to help with lifting; so when you lift the patients it will support your lower back. Now they do. I have injured myself before lifting patients. They've come out with a lot of different resources now. There's so many other opportunities out there [with the company], like activity director, housekeeper, head of laundry. I've worked laundry, too. So there are other jobs out there I can do. I've talked to (Teacher) and my supervisors about moving into another job. I haven't looked into it lately because I've been too wrapped up with my daughter and my jobs, but I've thought about going to the community college and taking secretarial training. That way I wouldn't have to be on my feet and lifting patients all the time. But I won't do that until my daughter is out of school. (Debbie)

Laura has maintained her position for almost 20 years. Laura's salary and benefit package are reflective of other civil servants: paid holidays, paid vacations, retirement, and other benefits and places her in the middle-income level. She has promotional opportunities that extend to "head" custodian. Laura and Debbie are both single parents providing well for their families. Laura, too, has a desire to attend community college and

train in the field of food service. Laura wants her daughter to complete high school before she does this.

I had been working in food service before, and I did dietician stuff. I really liked that job, but when they closed the unit I had to transfer or lose my seniority. So, I transferred, and I'm in this job now. But as soon as [daughter] is out of school I want to go back and get training in food service at the [community] college. (Laura)

Frank has been a fork lift driver for several years and worked himself up through the ranks to acquire this position. He has promotional opportunities in the direction of management. He also has a salary and benefit package that allows him to have a comfortable life within the middle-income level. Frank also earns an income from his ranch.

Well, a supervisor's spot came open, and I was thinking about putting in a bid on it, but I decided I liked what I was doing. Besides, it's an eight hour day, five days a week, and the other job you work 12 to 13 hours a day, seven days a week--weekends off but you're on call. On the fork lift job, where I go in at 6:30 in the morning, I basically know what I have to do and when my shift's up, I go home. I have several hours of work to do once I get home. So, it works out best for me. But I can't see any job I couldn't do if I set my mind to do it. The boss is real happy with the type of work I'm doing--no accidents with my fork lift. There's been a few accidents cause they're not paying attention. Safety is a big part of my job. He's really happy cause I'm a safe driver. (Frank)

Jim currently is a stay-at-home dad and maintains his ranch, rodeos, and has part-time employment in a variety of jobs. Jim's income matches that of his wife's income, who works full-time outside the home. This

places Jim and his family in the lower-middle-income level. Jim's promotional opportunities are in the area of improvement for the ranch; being a successful rancher in and of itself is a noteworthy goal.

Just like now, the jobs are hard to find so Mama (his wife) is working, and I'm Mr. Dad...I take care of the kids during the day: when mama gets home, I go out and do my chores. (Jim)

Learned Helplessness

These students present data contrary to views that this population are tax consumers. The estimated number of individuals with mild developmental disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income was 2.9 million in 1982, representing a total cash transfer of \$67 billion. None of these seven participants was receiving Supplemental Security Income or any other income replacement support. They viewed their incomes in direct relationship to their actions. None demonstrated learned helplessness, which in Super's terms, means avoiding stagnation. In the participants terms, they were following their classroom philosophies: "You haven't failed until you quit trying" and "There's dignity in all labor, if you do the best job you can." They all viewed work as an important part of who they are.

I want them (his workers) to be the best dishwashers there are. Dishwashing is an important job. Like (Teacher) use to tell us, "You can have the best chef in the world, but if the dishes aren't clean, the customers won't come back." (Paul)

Laura not only avoids learned helplessness and stagnation but she also had a suggestion for students now in school.

I think if kids now-a-days had more work opportunities for jobs like we did, you know, put them out there on jobs for class credit, so they'll know what it will be like when they get out into the **real** world. I think it really helped. It helped me a lot, and I've always got a job. Not just kids in special programs, **all** kids, even my daughter, could benefit from that. (Laura)

Debbie not only has sought out additional employment on her own, but she is a responsible employee and is a responsible CNA. Debbie takes her profession seriously and continues to maintain certification in her field.

You have 70 hours of classes with an instructor, and then you have 50 hours of clinical time. That means that the clinical time is actual time spent on the job. You can't use your job hours as part of the 50. I have to really work hard to keep up with the requirements. Then you have a test over the manual. It's a written test. I keep my CNA certification current. That's important. (Debbie)

All demonstrated appropriate vocational coping behaviors. Debbie cleans houses for the elderly after her shift at the nursing home. She does this to supplement her income and to avoid stagnation and learned helplessness.

It usually takes four hours to clean a house. Gosh, I have calls every week from people to clean their houses, too, but I already have four houses a week plus my shift at the nursing home. I'm dead tired when I'm done. (Debbie)

All seven participants pay taxes. All seven participants are contributing to their own Social

Security plans as part of their wage or self-employment tax. Six of the seven participants have job related retirement packages. None of the participants are receiving dependency support.

The Challenge

The seven participants had been and are now employed in a wide variety of occupations, most of them not associated with other persons with mild developmentally disabilities; they clearly do not exhibit career deprivation. They are also vocationally mature and therefore have not learned to be helpless. Whether the disability myth or the spread phenomenon were applied by caregivers, teachers, counselors or others who could have influenced their self concept development is unknown. Only one significant other, or person who could be classified as a professional service provider, was interviewed. The teacher seemed to view his students as potentially productive, contributing members to society which is diametrically opposed to the disability myth and the spread phenomenon. If these views were held by any professional service providers or caregivers who interacted with the seven participants, their influence appeared negligible or nonexistent.

VI. Implications

This study initially addressed the vocational development of individuals with mild developmental disabilities. Through unstructured interview procedures, seven individuals with mild developmental disabilities provided rich and abundant descriptions of their lives and self views.

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities can be described within Donald Super's theory of vocational development.

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities can be described by Super's theory of vocational development. The theory is applicable at least through the implementation stage. As Super speculated, they progress through the life stages in a continuous developmental process which allows for individual differences and recursiveness in the process as needed by the individual.

These conclusions apply to individuals with mild developmental disabilities who are continuously employed, 24 years of age or older, have no physical limitations or other secondary handicapping conditions, and have independent adult status. The findings of this study should not be generalized to other populations of individuals with disabilities. This study needs to be extended to individuals with mild developmental

disabilities who exhibit vocational immature behaviors, such as stagnation. Another focus for research of this population should include those who are not employed and receiving dependency benefits, such as, Supplemental Security Income.

This study relied on the recall of the seven participants of their lives as children and adolescents. Although their descriptions appeared to be reliable, a sample of subjects should be followed from initial identification as disabled to age 24, the age of the youngest participant in this study. This could allow greater understanding of the vocational development of persons with mild developmental disabilities, particularly how their self-concept systems develop. This would include studying the relationships among self-percepts, self-concepts, and self-concept systems.

Further research is also needed on the vocational development of persons with other disabilities or multiple disabilities, under guardianship, and other issues of independence, including participation in dependency programs, such as Supplemental Security Income. The relationship of the types of occupations in which persons with disabilities are employed and their self-concept systems should receive special attention.

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities can have career diversity and can appropriately apply vocational coping behaviors. They need not experience career deprivation or learned helplessness. This assertion applies only to the population addressed by this study. Further research, however, is needed on the extent to which the disability myth and the spread phenomenon are held by caregivers, guardians and professionals, including special education teachers and school and rehabilitation and habilitation counselors. If the myth or the phenomenon exist, the relationship between these views and the extent to which persons with disabilities exhibit occupational diversity and independence should be studied. The results of these studies could have significant impact on how professionals and service providers are selected and educated and then how their job performance could be evaluated. Super's speculation that persons with disabilities may need a "special application" was not true for the population in this study.

An intervention program can influence the vocational development of individuals with mild developmental disabilities; however, the relative effects of and intervention's components are unknown. The components that ought to be addressed are: early identification;

early intervention; integrated academic and vocational instruction; career exploration, including the diversity of occupational experiences; and student participation in the career decision making process. The nature and extent of each component and their interactions deserve extensive study.

The teacher's in-depth and diverse occupational and experiential-based background contributed to the success of the components and their effects on the participants. His extensive participation in and knowledge of the realities of the work force, his life experiences, his professional training, his educational experiences as a classroom teacher prior to becoming a special education teacher were essential to his ability to help his students to develop vocationally. Which specific attributes of the teacher and the intervention's components or combinations thereof were effective are unknown at this time. Results of these types of studies could significantly contribute to how special education teachers are selected and educated and how their interventions could be evaluated.

The in-depth interviewing of the seven participants and the richness of the data strongly suggest that this is an effective means for interacting with this population. The in-depth interviewing allowed for a view

of whole persons. The richness of the data allowed for confirmation of information and the discovery of unanticipated relationships. The use of casual conversation enhanced rapport. The delivery of the information by the participants was just as important as the words they used. This assisted the researcher in understanding the participants' views of themselves and their environments. This researcher hopes other researchers will experience the richness and quality of each person they interview as she did with these seven participants.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Characteristics of Individuals with Mild Developmental Disabilities

For the purpose of this study the population will be referred to as individuals with *mild developmental disabilities*, although traditionally referred to by the educational community as the *mildly mentally retarded* or *educable mentally retarded*. The choice of terms, by this researcher, is to reflect the individual as a person first, a whole person, and not allow the *spread phenomenon* to occur. The spread phenomenon occurs when one aspect (the disability) of an individual is viewed to envelop and negatively affect other aspects of the individual's life (Holmes & Karst, 1990; Wolfensberger, 1972; Yuker, 1988).

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities comprise three percent of the general population. The term mental retardation is a concept used to identify an observed performance deficit and has been defined in several perspectives: medical, educational, and psychological (Heward & Orlansky, 1980). The American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) has developed a functional definition of *mental retardation*. The

definition presented in their Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation states:

"Mental retardation refers to **significantly subaverage** general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with **deficits in adaptive behavior**, and manifested during the **developmental period**" (Grossman, 1973). This definition reflects a dual diagnosis for identifying and classifying mental retardation; however, there is continued reliance on using intelligence as a sole criterion (Smith and Polloway, 1979).

The **developmental period**, as referred to in the American Association on Mental Deficiency definition, includes birth to age eighteen. **"Significantly subaverage"** refers to two standard deviations below the mean as scored on a psychological test of intelligence. The Wechsler Intelligence Test and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test are often used to assist in estimating the intelligence quotient (I.Q.) score. There are four classifications of mental retardation regarding severity: mild, moderate, severe, and profound; the Wechsler scales of intelligence quotients for the four classifications are mild, 55 to 69; moderate, 40 to 54; severe, 23 to 39; and profound, 0 to 24, respectively.

"Deficits in adaptive behavior" result in the inability of the individual to function personally and socially with independence and responsibility. There are several measures available to determine adaptive behavior. The two most utilized measures are the American Association on Mental Deficiency's "Behavior Scale" and the "Vineland Social Maturity Scale."

Mild developmental disabilities may be caused by biomedical, cultural-familial, and organic factors. Biomedical causes account for approximately 20 to 25 percent of individuals with mild developmental disabilities. Individuals with mild developmental disabilities comprise approximately 89 percent of persons with disabilities. There are over 200 different biomedical causes, which include but are not limited to: prenatal infection or rubella; mechanical injury at birth; postnatal injury; various metabolic, nutritional, endocrine, or growth dysfunctions; prematurity; encephalitis; drugs; anoxia; and sensory deprivation (Grossman, 1973). About 75 percent of individuals with mild developmental disabilities are considered to have cultural-familial retardation which is attributed to genetic and environmental limitation. Cultural-familial causes are a perplexing problem, and there is little evidence to indicate significantly reducing its incidence

(Zigler, 1978). Clarke and Clarke (1977) suggest that "the prospects of halving the incidence of mild retardation is very slight because there exists in humans a perseveration of attitudes and parenting behavior--producing cultural-familial retarded persons" (p. 18).

Reducing the more severe forms of disabilities by half is quite possible in the next twenty years due to the medical and technological advances (Brolin, 1982). Medical research has permitted many people with biomedically caused disabilities to live longer and function at a higher level than previously thought possible (Brolin, 1982; Siegel & Gaylord-Ross, 1991; Wehman, 1981).

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities initially appear to be within the normal range of expected physical, social, and behavioral development. No significant exceptionalities are presented until after entering school where academically oriented learning is introduced which "...often tends to magnify their intellectual differences" (Drew et al, 1988, p. 254). Thus is coined the phrase, "The Six-hour Retarded Child" (President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969). This invisible disability prevents early identification and intervention but also allows the child to develop

his/her self concept without initial perceptions of being different.

There are approximately 250,000 to 300,000 students with developmental disabilities who are exiting publicly supported education programs each year (Will, 1984). A common view held within the field is that 75 to 85 percent of the population with developmental disabilities could achieve a competitive level of job proficiency if better training and placement techniques were available (Brolin, 1982; DiMichael, 1967; Katz, 1968; Olshansky, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1967). In contrast to this optimistic view, the employment experiences of youth identified as having mild developmental disabilities are difficult to discern and clearly need closer scrutiny because of the absence of hard data and well-designed studies (Brolin, 1982; Siegel & Gaylord-Ross, 1991).

The employability of individuals with moderate (6 percent of the disabled) and severe (3.5 percent of the disabled) developmental disabilities is receiving increased attention by researchers and training professionals in universities and agencies, rehabilitation counselors, community service providers, and educators (Brickey, Browning, & Campbell, 1982; Clarke, Greenwood, Abramovitz, & Bellamy, 1980; Sowers, Thompson & Connis 1979; Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth,

1985). Supported employment is statutory for individuals with severe disabilities but is essentially nonexistent for adults with mild developmental disabilities (Rusch & Mithaug, 1980; Siegel & Gaylord-Ross 1991). The Department of Rehabilitative Services and Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/ME) combined resources and fund job training and placement for severely disabled persons, including supported work opportunities, competitive jobs, sheltered enclaves, and sheltered industries (Moon, Orelove, & Beale, 1985). Other federal incentives, directed by Public Law 98-199 the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1983, addressed vocational training in secondary schools to assist with the transition of students into the competitive labor force (Will, 1984).

In 1980, 3.6 million of the 5.9 million individuals with mild developmental disabilities were over the age of 21 which represented potential participants in the work force (Association for Retarded Citizens, 1980). The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1983) reported unemployment rates among individuals with disabilities are much higher than non-disabled, and that approximately 50 to 75 percent of adult workers with disabilities are unemployed (Hazasi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Parrish & Kok, 1985). Siegel & Gaylord-Ross (1991) state that

"employment of persons with mild disabilities is one of the most pressing social problems...high rates of unemployment and underemployment presents unacceptable social costs" (p. 42). A study conducted by Edgar (1985) reported that graduates with mild developmental disabilities were far less likely to find post school employment (38 percent) than were graduates with learning disabilities or behavior disorders (64 percent).

Individuals with mild developmental disabilities often receive "vocational programming" instead of vocational counseling due to the assumption by service providers that they are unable or incompetent to make a career choice (Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Hagner & Salomone, 1989; Holvoet, Brewe, Mulligan, Guess, Helmstetter, & Riggs, 1983). Raelin describes this kind of situation to be "career deprivation," that is, the restriction of occupational options (1982). Different studies have proposed that, for individuals with mild developmental disabilities their interests, habits, and motivation are far more critical to maintaining the job than the specific job capabilities and skills (Able, 1940; Cohen, 1960; Hartzler, 1951; Michal-Smith, 1950; Super, 1961).

Appendix B

Methodology

Participants

The participants that were targeted for inclusion in this study were former special education students who would most likely demonstrate vocationally mature behaviors. A vocationally-based special education program located in a rural high school was known to the researcher. This program had been developed in 1961 and had been under the direction of one special education teacher for 25 years. The researcher contacted the special education teacher, now retired, and together developed a list of former students. The list included 150 former students who had been classified as individuals with mild developmental disabilities and had been enrolled in the program sometime during the time span from 1961 to 1986 (See Appendix A for discussion of characteristics of individuals with mild developmental disabilities). However, of the 150 potential participants, only 70 were initially considered for this study.

The specific profile desired by the researcher included individuals: whose primary classification was mild developmentally disabled (I.Q. range of 55-69); with academic achievement level of the fourth to sixth grade;

exhibited adaptive behaviors within the normal range; had no physical limitations and no secondary disabling conditions; completed a minimum of four academic quarters in this program; held independent adult status; and would most likely demonstrate vocational mature behavior.

(This profile was purposeful in its definition, representing about 5.6 million individuals in the general population.) From the list of 70, initially ten former students were selected as potential participants. This was based on locating and contacting the individuals, their geographic accessibility, and their availability to participate.

Initially, two 40-year-old participants who were most likely to be vocationally mature were selected and interviewed. The chronological age of 40 is characteristically reflective of the suggested mental age of 25 for this population. According to Super (1957) the establishment stage starts at about age 25 when workers enter their desired occupations. The two forty-year old participants demonstrated mature vocational behaviors. If they had not, additional 40-year-old and older participants (ages 41 to 45, and ages 46 to 50), in ascending age group order would have been interviewed. However, this not being the case, younger participants were selected and interviewed, in descending age group

order. No restrictions to gender or ethnic group were applied.

Although the initial plan was to interview ten former students, the interviewing was stopped by the researcher after the seventh because the life stages (age spans) were well represented and the interviews were so data rich that adding more numbers would not have enhanced or confirmed any more conclusively the purpose of this study.

All the participants had adult status as indicated by the following: all participants lived in independent settings; all participants were employed and supporting themselves; all participants were over the age of twenty-one and were emancipated. None were in residential facilities or group homes; on Supplemental Security Income or other dependency programs (Medicaid or Food Stamps); or were wards of the court or had court appointed guardian(s) or surrogate(s).

Five of the seven participants were white males. One of the female participants was a Native American, and the other participant was a white.

Interview Procedures

Interviews based on open-ended questioning techniques were used to encourage participants to talk about their experiences and self views. For this

population a degree of sensitivity for full inclusion of participation (reasonable accommodation) was adhered to; the researcher stated the questions to reflect receptive language levels of fourth to sixth grade.

Interview sessions included the participant, their former special education teacher, and the researcher. The interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location. Two of the sessions were held in the participants' homes, and the other five were held at various other locations. One participant traveled over 300 miles to participate in the study. He had been part of the initial selection list, but because of the distance it was unknown if he would be able to participant. However, after being contacted he wanted to be included and volunteered to come. Interview sessions were audio recorded and coded to maintain confidentiality.

Prior to initiating the interview, the researcher, the Teacher, and the participants engaged in "casual conversation" or an "ice breaker activity" for the purpose of establishing rapport. Five of the participants were known to the researcher, the other two were introduced by the teacher. Additionally, the pre-interview casual conversation set the tone for the general information gathering on date of birth, year

graduated from high school, marital status, and children. These general conversational topics were designed to elicit more data from the participants than would be possible with formal structured interview questions. A sample set of categories were used; they were: (1) participants' high school years particularly their participation in work experience placements, (2) participants' post-high school job history, (3) and participants' current job status and description.

The teacher initiated the "conversation" with the participants. The researcher intervened "conversationally" if clarification was needed. The reliability of the participants' responses were checked through rephrasing of selected questions. Internal reliability of participants' responses were documented. For example, the teacher commented, "So, you put things together." The participant responded "Yes, I assemble things" indicating that he had a clear understanding of the question. Within the contents of the interviews, all the participants demonstrated the skill of using a word and then defining it within the context, such as:

I'm dependable. I work independently; by myself. I work hard and need no supervision. I'm punctual; I'm always on time. (Laura)

You just don't dare slow up any; keep a pretty sturdy pace...(Frank)

The participants also used humor, satire, figurative language, and idioms during the interviews, such as;

Go back to the well. (John)

Shakin' the tree. (Paul)

Don't want nobody to "hog rope" me. (Jim)

Thinking about the long-haul. (John)

The participants were also very much in command of their knowledge of their jobs and the professional terms (jargon) that were associated with their occupations.

I'm a CNA. That means a certified nursing assistant. (Debbie)

We have what we call "pink slips." (Paul)

I have a slip of paper (names retirement plan) that comes every month to tell me how much I have in retirement. (John)

Several of the participants discussed in length aspects of their jobs, such as full description of how a fork lift operates.

Data Analysis

These data were organized into categories, themes, and areas of interest. As categories developed, emerging hypothesis were tested and alternative explanations were sought through the data. This researcher used the five analysis stages identified by Marshall and Rossman in their text *Designing Qualitative Research* (1989). The stages are (1) *organizing the data*, (2) *generating categories, themes, and patterns*, (3) *testing emerging*

hypotheses, (4) searching for alternative explanations, and (5) writing the report (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; p. 114). All interviews were audio recorded, and the interviews ranged between two hours to four hours. Prior to the interviews, the blank cassette tapes were labeled and prepared for coding. During the taping, the audio levels were checked for clarity and volume. After the interviews the series of tapes were coded.

After the participants had departed, the teacher and the interviewer listened to the series of tapes, checking for any malfunctions in the taping or information that was hard to retrieve for transcribing due to the taping itself, including background noises, doorbell, dog barking, phone ringing, coughing. The Teacher assisted the researcher when needed, translating technical terms, jargon, and slang that participants used. Also, one of the participants could not think of the word that was on a vocational award he had won. With the participant's permission, the Teacher called the participants advisor Future Farmers of America (FFA) teacher to secure the correct title of the award. This title was particularly important to the content of the participant's interview.

From another interview session, one of the tapes in the series broke while being transcribed. The researcher and teacher contacted the participant and revisited him

for a re-taping of a particular section; the participant was reading from a Christmas card that his employer had sent him. This was particularly important in supporting the view of how this employer valued his employee.

After all the tapes from all the interviews had been reviewed by the Teacher and the researcher and further information collected as needed, the researcher began the analysis phase.

First, the researcher listened to tapes for content and review of the information as well as participants' voices, manner of speaking and rate of speech.

Next the researcher listened to the tapes and transcribed the interviews by hand. This was very labor intensive but provided an opportunity to become very aware of the content. This method of transcribing required playing short sections of the tapes and transcribing, then reversing the tape and doing the same sections repeatedly until the passage was written verbatim. This practice increased the researcher's familiarity with the participants' patterns of speech and assisted with the transcriptions.

The researcher listened to the tapes and followed the written transcript making corrections, additions, and or deletions as needed. With the verbatim hand transcribed hard copy completed the researcher then

entered the transcripts into a word processor. This offered another opportunity for the researcher to increase her familiarity with the content of the data. The data were saved on diskettes and coded. The data were printed, and then the researcher listened to the tapes again to check the printed text for accuracy and to add notes on voice inflection and emotional emphasis. A master set of the written transcripts were kept intact for ease of reference during the analysis process.