

THE ISSUES PAPERS



National Rehabilitation Counseling Association



THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN



NARPPS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR



DIVISION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

National Association of Vocational Education



NAVESNP

Special Needs Personnel

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS



**National Forum
on Issues in
Vocational Assessment
September 20-22, 1984**

Atlanta, Georgia



Stout Vocational Rehabilitation
Institute
School of Education and
Human Services
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751

NATIONAL FORUM
ON
ISSUES
IN
VOCATIONAL
ASSESSMENT

THE ISSUES PAPERS

Edited by:

Christopher Smith

&

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EDITORS' NOTES

The National Forum on Issues in Vocational Assessment has provided the field with a valuable look at the present and future of vocational assessment. The many heads and hands that interacted to stage the forum have prepared a backdrop of professional inquiry that this collection of papers will help preserve. The editors hope that by preserving and disseminating these thoughts on the needs of the field, they will help others meet the addressed needs. These papers will undoubtedly lead to further discussions of field need issues and, thus, to refinements in proposed solutions.

Word Processor, Mary Bates worked closely with the editors to make these papers as error free as humanly possible, while transforming the 46 issue papers into a publication. She performed this task with diligence and good humor; this was no small accomplishment as several months of effort were required.

The ideas, products, services, and opinions expressed in these papers reflect the thinking of their authors. Their inclusion in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Materials Development Center, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute, University of Wisconsin-Stout, the Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association, or any co-sponsoring organization.

Christopher A. Smith
Ronald R. Fry
May, 1985

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Preface

The first National Forum on Issues in Vocational Assessment was held at the Sheraton Atlanta on September 20-22, 1984. This forum brought together nearly two hundred professionals involved in the practice of vocational evaluation from a variety of settings.

The need for a national forum of this type emerged from the growth of concern over vocational assessment issues in public schools, social security disability determination, vocational education, private rehabilitation, school psychology, and general state agency rehabilitation programs. Professionals in different settings and disciplines have realized the necessity for comprehensive vocational assessment services. As these divergent disciplines converged in planning and delivering vocational assessment services, the need for better communication and for a forum for the exchange of information was realized.

Not only did this forum provide the setting for this exchange to begin occurring, it also quite dramatically raised the awareness level for the need for this interchange to continue with those in attendance. Each discipline had information to share, that, although somewhat unique to an individual discipline, could be applied and adapted to other settings.

As the profession of vocational evaluation continues to develop, so does the need for national information exchange opportunities such as this forum. The professional organizations that coalesced to sponsor this forum are challenged to continue this initial effort and bring about future forums.

Gary Sigmon
Past President, VEWA

INTRODUCTION

Previous to the 1980's, the use of vocational evaluation services with disabled and disadvantaged populations had been predominantly conducted in facilities which served public rehabilitation populations. At the turn of the decade however, it was apparent that those services were migrating rapidly to new vocational education special needs students, and to the private-for-profit rehabilitation sector. This growth led to the developing Commission on Certification of Work Adjustment and Vocational Evaluation Specialists' Chairman Paul Myers to reflect that the future of certification for vocational evaluators was in the education setting as the potential for certifiable evaluators was four plus times greater than in rehabilitation.

At the same time, the Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association (VEWAA), the professional organization which had traditionally represented vocational evaluators, was receiving innumerable request to allow potential members to join without joining the parent National Rehabilitation Association. These requests were from evaluators working in other than rehabilitation settings who wanted representation in their specialty without joining a larger organization to which they felt no allegiance. Those evaluators desired interaction and representation for their professional role. Apart from requesting a waiver of NRA dues to join VEWAA, those evaluators were developing their own organizations or requesting increased time on programs in their current organizations to discuss issues, techniques, and models of vocational assessment. Those requests of VEWAA and the growth of organizations interested in vocational assessment led then VEWAA President Walt Pruitt to create a VEWAA Interface committee: 1) vocational evaluators in other than rehabilitation settings were experiencing the same problems that had plagued rehabilitation evaluators; 2) vocational evaluators in school

settings were developing a strong animosity toward rehabilitation evaluators because they felt rehabilitation evaluators presented a smug know-it-all image and that VEWAA was not interested in them; 3) whatever setting evaluators worked in, they were starting a separate organization to represent them or changing the nature of their traditional organization; and 4) due to a shift in the job market, a significant number of rehabilitation counselor new graduates were taking positions as vocational evaluators and feeling the professional role conflict of not knowing which professional organization to belong, i.e. VEWAA or the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA).

These factors led to the recognition that evaluators from all work settings and different training backgrounds needed to be brought together in a forum to discuss and debate issues and developments in vocational assessment. The VEWAA Interface committee took on this challenge and proposed a National Forum to be co-sponsored by all interested organizations. Those organizations invited to be co-sponsors with the VEWAA included: the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA); the Division of Career Development (DCD), a Division of the Council of Exceptional Children; the National Association of Rehabilitation Professionals in the Private Sector (NARPPS); the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); the National Association of Vocational Educators of Special Needs Persons (NAVESNP), a division of the American Vocational Association; and, the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA), a division of the National Rehabilitation Association. All but the American Occupational Therapy Association expressed their willingness to participate in this forum and assigned a member to work with the VEWAA group to make it occur.

To identify the major issues to be discussed, committee member Barbara Greenstein from New York

City took on the tasks of defining issues from the literature and surveying 20% of the VEWA membership for agreement on those. Similarly, committee member Darrell Coffey of Menomonie, Wisconsin agreed to poll the leadership of the co-sponsoring organizations for their agreement on major issues. The result of these efforts pointed to a marked agreement on six major specific issues and a general agreement on a number of others. In designing the Forum, the committee settled on a structure which would examine the current state-of-the-art in assessment and would facilitate maximum involvement of all participants. To accomplish this and give consideration to all the identified significant topics, the committee decided to invite speakers on the issues which received major attention in the surveys and to open the other topics for participant presentations. Therefore, the original six issues for invited speakers were as follows: 1) A Career Development Approach to Vocational Evaluation; 2) Marketing Vocational Evaluation; 3) Vocational Evaluators as Expert Witnesses; 4) Research Needs and Evaluation Assessment as a Science; 5) Marketing Vocational Evaluation Systems Before Adequate Testing and Validation; and 6) Vocational Assessment Theories, Models, and Applications. To those six major issues, a seventh was added by the VEWA Board and that was "Certification for Teachers and Vocational Evaluation Specialists." The committee identified the best thinkers known on these topics and approached them to present and received a 100% positive response.

The other identified interest areas clustered around eight board areas which were: vocational assessment of special populations; innovative techniques in vocational evaluation; computers in vocational assessment; training of vocational assessment personnel; physical capacities evaluation; current process and futurism in vocational evaluation; burnout in vocational assessment; and research findings

in vocational assessment. Papers were called for in each organization's literature and were ably reviewed by Robert Davis of Indianapolis, Steve Thomas of North Carolina, Pat Sitlington of Indiana, and Dennis Maki of Iowa. The result of those invited and submitted papers are presented in this document which has been so well prepared by Ron Fry and his staff at the Materials Development Center.

The Forum itself drew approximately 200 individuals, presentors and exhibitors interested primarily in one subject, vocational evaluation. There was an excitement present on location which is difficult to communicate here; however it was observed that this was one of those few times at a meeting in which taking notes was a standard procedure and where afternoon sessions were standing room only. Coming away from this Forum, it was obvious that vocational Evaluation has grown up as a profession since the last look at the state-of-the-art ten years ago. Evaluators are questioning, researching, and developing their process and techniques and are in the process of coming of age. It was an awesome experience to witness.

Making this program and this publication a reality involved a number of individuals and organizations. While the work was done by the individuals, organizations gave their full support and encouragement and are commended for the spirit of cooperation which was shown. Particular credit for this has to go to Gary Sigmon who risked a sizable portion of the VEWA 1984 budget to underwrite any losses and to the 1984 VEWA Board who went along with Gary although it did not appear to be a financially wise decision at the time. Lastly, the primary workers on the organizing Interfaces committee need a special thanks for all their efforts resulting in this event. They were: Victoria Mason, Cindy Ellis, Linda Ley-Seimer, Larry Ornberg, Gary Sigmon, Rock Weldon, Michael Peterson, Lee Reynolds,

Thomas Hohenshil, John Banks, Mike Wada, Robert Davis, Genie Bodenhamer, Carol Wagner, Paul Hoffman, Barbara Hudson, Barbara Greenstein, Darrell Coffey, Myra Small, Denese Murray, Jeani Welsh, Sondra McDaniel, Susan Scott, and Karen Pell.

Randall S. McDaniel
Conference Coordinator

