A Comparative Analysis of Job Engagement, Interactions and Choice Opportunities for Persons with Severe Disabilities in Supported Employment versus Sheltered Employment

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JOB ENGAGEMENT, INTERACTION AND CHOICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT VERSUS SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT. (July 1996)

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The effects of two treatments, supported employment and sheltered employment, were compared utilizing a single-subject, alternating treatment design. The study involved five participants with moderate to profound mental retardation who resided in a state-operated residential facility for persons with developmental disabilities. Intervention occurred by alternating the participants' attendance in supported employment in the community and sheltered employment in the vocational program on the grounds of the residential facility. Observations occurred in the supported employment and sheltered work settings measuring the following behaviors: (a) job engagement, (b) frequency, type, content, and quality of interactions, and with whom the interaction occurred, and (c) frequency and type of choice opportunities. Three major findings resulted. First, the level of job engagement was found for all participants to be comparable in the two treatments. Second, the frequency of interactions was found to be greater in sheltered employment than in supported employment; and in both settings, the interactions were
primarily work-related, neutral and initiated by staff. Lastly, the opportunity for choice was limited in both work settings. Results are discussed in terms of the differences found in the two settings and possible reasons for these findings.