On-campus student employment is a highly visible, if little observed, phenomenon. Institutions seem to employ students in ever increasing numbers in all activities from providing assistance in classroom instruction and research laboratories to selling popcorn at intercollegiate athletic events. The actual number of student employees and their earnings are estimates, at best. One estimate is 1,200,000 students and earnings in excess of two billion dollars.

Student employment has a long and proud tradition. It is as old as American higher education. American biography is replete with stories of benevolent presidents of colonial colleges providing employment to needy youth to finance their education. Personal benevolence became institutionalized with Harvard, the first college, also being the first to have a formal student employment program to provide financial aid to students. With the land grant movement, student employment joined the curriculum, assisting students in acquiring practical skills and inculcating moral values, especially an appreciation of the “dignity of labor.” The archives of many land grant institutions of the late 1800s include photographs and accounts of students employed in large numbers in farming, dairying, and building construction. These enterprises were important to developing and fiscally strapped institutions. They also helped institutions counter the fears of farm parents that higher education would lead their sons and daughters from agrarian and practical values. It was a hopeless cause. The children of farmers went from colleges and technical institutes to the emerging cities to fashion an urban, industrialized society. The universities, as they emerged in this century, were significant in this development, providing mass education, community service, and basic research functions.

In the last five years, there has been increased dissatisfaction by all parties with student employment programs. Graduate students have successfully organized at a number of universities to bargain collectively on wages and working conditions. A high turnover in employment of all students suggests low overall student job satisfaction. At professional meetings of administrators of programs, there are horror stories about the behavior of both student employees and the persons who direct their work. At many institutions a work-study job is understood by both students and regular employees as a position that provides paid study time.

Student employment programs today operate in a context of conditions and values which can negatively affect their quality. Any attempt to improve the quality of these programs must be cognizant of these realities. Not only are they
powerful impediments to quality, but some, in being less than obvious, are often overlooked. A change in a simple operational procedure can be rejected because it conflicts with traditional values in higher education or the general culture.

There is an inherent conflict in the twin objectives of providing productive manpower for the institution and financial aid to students. This conflict of two centuries has been heightened by demographic changes in student population in the last decade as institutions attempt to serve persons previously excluded from higher education. With the increase in the number of older students, adults with good work experience and skills are asked to work on campus for wages which are much less than they earned in regular employment. To the contrary, more and more students who, from race or class discrimination, are ill prepared for productive work, must work to finance their education, with the institution they attend being in the position of employer of last resort.

This situation of a relatively smaller pool of willing and capable students is made more critical for institutions-as-employers by the changes in higher education itself. The 1970s was the decade for accountability in higher education. This movement continues and grows as external agencies ask for accountability of public funds and concurrence with regulations to effect desired societal objectives as diverse as equal employment opportunity and humane treatment of laboratory animals. Yet, in this situation where more work is required of institutions, fewer resources are available. Not only are funds not provided for regulatory compliance, but cuts are being required in both funds and the number of regular employees to support normal operations. In short, higher education is in the unenviable position of declining resources with expanding responsibilities.

Moreover, there are changes in the general economy which place colleges and universities at a competitive disadvantage as they try to employ students in overcoming this dilemma. In the general economy, the greatest growth is in the service industries, particularly in direct service occupations where skill requirements are typically minimal. Fast food franchise operations and retail sales do provide strong competition to higher education institutions as employers of students. The wages provided are certainly no less, and often more, and the working hours are much more flexible than those available in the daytime, weekday schedules of colleges and universities.

The competition for student workers is particularly acute in urban areas. It is in urban areas where the growth of direct service industries is greatest. It is also at urban institutions where there is the most growth in higher education. At urban institutions, students typically live off campus, are often part-time students, and in many cases 50% are employed off campus in the general economy. The orientation of these urban students is not to the institution but to the community, and it is, both in expectation and reality, the place of employment. With these constraints, institutions seeking student workers are hardly competitive with the local economy.

Institutions seem unwilling to improve their competitive position, particularly in the critical area of student wages. Students generally are paid less than regular institutional employees. One basis of this practice is the tradition, from the founding of the university, of the mendicant student. Supposedly, material well-being and creature comforts distract students from the pursuit of knowledge. The paternalism which is part of the ethos of American higher education hardly counters the mendicant tradition. The college will provide for essential needs, but nothing more. The difficulty is that needs as defined by government regulations and institutional policy are considerably less than those defined by popular culture.

The popular culture of mass media and mass consumption includes in its definition of acceptable life styles such items as stereos, phonograph records, automobiles, and designer jeans. These are hardly available to students from on-campus employment where earnings, in effect, are limited by a more Spartan, statutory definition of financial need. This conflict between cultural and statutory definitions of need constitute a powerful motivation for students to seek
Another tradition with negative implications for student employment is a bias in higher education against concern for efficiency. The outcomes of higher education are considered by those within academe to be of such a kind and magnitude that concern for efficiency is blasphemous in the cathedral of learning. With this bias, institutional personnel, particularly those directly involved in the instructional process, act quite differently from persons in the general economy of goods and services in the management of work activity. In student employment, the lack of concern for efficiency means that work tasks for students are often poorly defined, with even less concern for active supervision and performance evaluation.

This bias against efficiency is compounded when student manpower is cheap manpower for the institution. As noted above, students are generally paid less than regular employees. Even these wages are often subsidized. For example, students employed with Federal College Work-Study funds, currently in excess of $500,000,000 annually, cost the institution only 20 cents on the dollar. With this favorable cost-sharing, a lack of concern for efficiency is compounded. If a student is half or a fourth as productive as regular employees, it is thought that the institution is still at an advantage for the funds it expends for student wages.

A final condition to be remembered when considering the state of student employment programs is the cultural perception of the student. By definition, to be a student is to be immature. Formal education, in providing work-related skills and knowledge, is the means to the competence of adults, with the associate or baccalaureate degree the certificate of competence. Student employment programs are victims of this cultural perception, the assumption being that students, not having completed a degree, are qualified for only menial tasks. In reality, most students can be competent at a technician level with a minimum of training. However, as employment is often limited to menial tasks, students do poor work even in these tasks from the boredom of under-employment. The cultural perception of the student as an incompetent worker becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This short explication of the conditions and values which provide a context for student employment can be prescriptive. To know the roots of a problem is to suggest solutions. The other section of the manual suggests new approaches which can provide a student-employment program more satisfying to the student as an employee, more productive to the institution as an employer, and more consistent with the mission of an institution to enhance the education and development of students through extracurricular as well as formal instructional activities.

**Students Are Different**

Students are diverse, and caution must be exercised when they are characterized as a unique, homogeneous population. Yet, in significant ways, students do differ from regular employees. Some differences have a basis in their youth and limited work experience, and other differences are from their mixed roles of student and part-time worker. These differences provide both challenges and opportunities to students, their work supervisors, and program administrators. These differences, if appreciated, can provide for common expectations, greater productivity, fewer administrative and personnel difficulties, and more satisfaction for students from their employment.

Students, as younger workers, can differ from older workers in perception of time. Young people think in the short time frame of days and weeks. For many, the weekend is the distant horizon. Older adults, from greater experience, think in a time frame of months and years. These different perceptions cause differences in expectations from work activity.

Young workers think much can be accomplished in a short time period. When this does not prove true, they can become inattentive or discouraged, lose motivation, or look for shortcuts to reduce the time required for a task. Conversely, older workers can underestimate what is possible in a short time. This predisposition is
even more pronounced in the case of routine tasks.

From repetition, any job becomes routine, acquiring extraneous elements. Parkinson’s Law comes into play. Work expands to fill the time allotted. Operating from this framework, work supervisors, in scheduling student work, can give the students so little to do that they are seriously under-employed.

Another difference between young and adult workers is concern for impact. Older workers tend to think of work as an extended sequence of related activities designed to accomplish a task eventually. No one activity is considered of particular consequence. Change, if it occurs, is an evolutionary process. Younger workers can have a different orientation—one captured in the phrase, the “idealism of youth.” They believe they can make a difference, that real change is possible with each action being significant in itself. This idealism presents a challenge to supervisors in structuring work assignments. Work assignments must have significant objectives, and the contribution of individual tasks in meeting objectives should be obvious. These requirements preclude tasks which are obviously “make work.” They make clear the necessity of supervisors indicating to students what is being accomplished and its importance. For example, if students are to do circulation counts for the university library, it is important to their satisfaction and motivation to know that library circulation figures are the primary index for measuring effectiveness and documenting needed fiscal resources.

Another characteristic of young workers is their inquisitiveness. They want to know “what,” “why,” and “how.” This characteristic should be cherished and supported by colleges and universities from their responsibility for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. To anticipate, welcome, and respond to the questions of student workers are appropriate supervisory responsibilities. The more knowledgeable the student of the work activity and the context in which it is performed, the more competent the performance and the greater the satisfaction.

There is another outcome which may be of greater long-term significance for the institution. Colleges and universities have become very complex systems. Students see but a small part of the enterprise (classroom instruction) and are unaware of other activities and the support systems necessary for all activities. From the perspective of many students, the institution is a large bureaucracy of wasted resources in which individual students are unimportant. This is hardly a desirable perception to be held by alumni and taxpayers. Accordingly, responding to students’ questions can be considered by supervisors as an investment in the future of the institution.

Other differences between student workers and regular employees have bases in the temporary, part-time, and short-term nature of student employment. These three conditions have serious implications for structuring and managing student employment. An obvious implication is that a student employed for only ten to fifteen hours per week for nine months, usually less, needs a carefully defined position whose task can be learned in a short training period. If a position is not well defined, the employment period will be over before a student experientially knows what to do and how.

There is an inverse relationship between the complexity of a job and the requirement of timely definition. There is a direct relationship between the complexity of a job and the challenge it provides. Typically, supervisors facing this dilemma decide on jobs requiring relatively simple tasks which can be quickly learned. However, students desire work which challenges their skills and abilities. An alternative to simplicity, and the resulting boredom and limited job satisfaction, is job rotation. In job rotation, a common device for job enrichment in industry, an employee performs a number of distinctly different tasks in the same general work environment. In this arrangement, there is continuity of work environment, personalities, work rules, both formal and informal, but variety in the work itself. For example, a student employee in the library can have four or five different jobs, but still have the same work rules and many of the same interpersonal relationships.
The temporary nature of student employment has implications for student motivation and personnel management. For regular employees, their employment is one step in a career of different work experiences, each providing increasingly greater responsibilities, challenges, and recognition. With this future orientation, the limitations of a current position can be overlooked in the promise of a brighter future. Moreover, for regular employees, since work is a primary life activity, security in employment is an important consideration. Others depend on their livelihood. Conditions of employment which are less than desirable are accepted for the security the employment provides.

Students employed on a temporary basis have a different perspective. On-campus employment is not seen as a step in a career path. Their careers will likely be pursued outside the institution. Lost earnings from on-campus employment can be replaced by parents, educational loans, or off-campus employment. The possibilities of the student economy are much greater than students care to describe. In short, job security or job advancement are much less a concern for students than for regular employees. Supervisors cannot depend on termination as a sanction to prompt motivation. A different set of positive motivators is required for better performance. (See the section, “Motivation of Student Employees,” for suggestions on positive means of motivation.)

A final difference between students and regular employees is the relative importance of employment for each. For the regular employee, employment is a primary activity. Other interests and activities are understood in our culture as being less important or to be pursued after work responsibilities have been met. For student workers, their role as a worker is perceived as secondary to their role as a student. When work responsibilities conflict with student responsibilities, it is the work responsibilities which must be accommodated. This perception by the student is understandable. College going is an expensive proposition. The financial sacrifices of parents and the money borrowed against future earnings exact great pressure for performance. The competition among students for recognition in what is increasingly seen as a world of limited possibilities is a reality, prompting a new seriousness for the student tasks.

The supervisor must be sensitive to the potential of role conflict in student workers and the differences of role perception between student and regular workers. At those times, such as examination periods, when the role conflict may be most acute, supervisors should accommodate changes in work schedules and reduce production. Moreover, the supervisor must be an interpreter. Regular employees should be made aware of the needs of the students so that they are not seen as slackers or irresponsible. Student employees should be challenged to manage both work and study responsibilities. Life is not so much a choice of either-or but of creatively structuring role conflicts, with maturation including an increased ability to make accommodations between conflicting claims of high priority.

Differences between students and regular workers are significant. They call for understanding, empathy, and creativity in all aspects of work program administration, including work assignment, scheduling, training, and supervision. Without attention to differences, the work place can become a theatre for generational conflict and, possibly, class conflict. With attention, the work activity can be a drama, communicating to all parties the richness of cultural pluralism in differences of values and roles.

**Motivation Of Student Employees**

Workers, both students and regular employees, differ in attitude and approach to their work. Without being workaholics or work addicts, many workers realize a significant degree of personal satisfaction from work. They accomplish their work tasks and assignments with self-direction and efficiency. Other employees, perhaps in the same office, are genuinely frustrated. The work period drags because of the boredom they associate with monotonous tasks. They receive virtually no real feeling of satisfaction or personal accomplishment in what they do.

Positive motivation for employees—and how to improve it—are important priorities for any
supervisor. In theory, motivation has to do with the needs and drives of an individual—those forward-moving, propelling energies which keep that person moving efficiently toward a desired goal. In the work context, motivation has to do with getting the job done with the most efficient outlay of materials, personnel, time, and financial resources, while at the same time providing satisfaction to the worker.

In student employment programs, are there ways of building and nurturing positive motivation in student employees? Some constraints are obvious. It is the reality of these constraints which makes supervisors’ efforts to improve motivation even more imperative. For example, one constraint is the federal minimum wage pay of many on-campus jobs. Pay increases or bonuses are hardly feasible for greater motivation. At some institutions, student employment is so related to financial aid that student wages are applied directly to tuition and other expenses. The student is paid without receiving a paycheck and having discretion in the use of earnings.

Some constraints are in the nature of the job itself. Whether in the library, cafeteria, print shop, bookstore, or departmental offices, many on-campus jobs do not provide a challenge to student abilities and interests. Filing, typing, mimeographing, collating, and stapling are necessary but hardly inspirational activities. Even if all positions provided a personal challenge, motivation is not assured. For younger students particularly, personal interest—a key element in motivation—may be so ill-defined from limited experience that it is difficult to arrange an appropriate job match. Given all these constraints, some supervisors may wonder what realistically can be done to enhance motivation.

An obvious, but often forgotten, reality of the workplace is that the supervisor is the primary motivator. It is a given of the supervisor-worker relationship that the supervisor is the role model for other workers. The personal motivation of the supervisor is transparent to every employee under his or her charge. No motivational strategy or technique will approach the supervisor’s own investment of self and energy in motivating others. This is particularly true in student employment where, in many cases, supervisors also have the deference accorded to adults by youth.

Beyond the role model of the supervisor, strategies for motivation follow from the needs of student employees. A most common description of needs to be satisfied from work is that of Maslow. He suggests a hierarchy of needs, including provision of physical needs (food, clothing, shelter), economic security, safety, acceptance within a group, intellectual curiosity, personal achievement, recognition, prestige, and fulfillment of life’s goals.

Provision of physical needs, economic security, and safety have limited motivating power for student employees. The income from student employment is usually insufficient in itself to provide for physical needs. If lost, it can be made up from other sources, e.g., off-campus employment, bank loans, reducing expenditures. Economic security is hardly applicable as student employment is not seen as a long-term activity. Safety concerns do not apply to most on-campus jobs.

Although environmental conditions in most on-campus positions do not compromise safety, they are often overlooked as a source of student motivation. Adequate light, ventilation, minimal noise levels, desk space, and a place for personal possessions are taken for granted for regular employees. Too often, they are seen as luxuries for student employees, apparently on the basis that students are second class workers. Students are given work stations in corners or separate from other workers. They are assigned tasks not required of regular employees because work environments are noisier, colder, hotter, dirtier, and more humid.

There is also a tendency for students to be provided less in work tools and equipment than regular employees. Students in building maintenance are given hand tools; regular employees are provided power tools. Student employees walk and regular employees ride. Student typists work from card tables; regular employees have typing desks. Examples of discrimination
in the name of economy are endless at many institutions. The economics realized from inadequate equipment for student employees is quickly cancelled out in the loss of student motivation for productive work.

Group acceptance, intellectual curiosity, personal achievement, and recognition are student needs which, when met, can provide motivation. Group acceptance involves recognition of the student as an individual. As an individual, the student has interests, values, behavior, goals, friends, relationships, a past, present, and future. Motivation of the student requires cognizance of these realities both by the supervisor and by other workers. The supervisor has a responsibility in seeing the student worker as a unique person and introducing this unique person to his or her peers.

Personal achievement and recognition of that achievement are very much dependent on a placement process for employing students in positions which complement their work-related interests and skills. Decades of occupational research have shown this complement to be the most powerful influence on worker motivation. Because of the importance of the placement process, a section of this guide is concerned with this topic. It is mentioned here as a reminder that strategies for motivation which do not include a conceptually solid, rational placement process have, at best, but limited potential for effectiveness.

Intellectual curiosity, personal achievement, and recognition relate to the student as worker and the work setting. They are possible in on-campus employment because higher education institutions are complex organizations. Even the smallest college is involved in myriad tasks including marketing, budgeting, health care, planning, counseling, public relations, policy analysis, and security. Students employed in these areas who are given tasks appropriate to their abilities and knowledge have intellectual stimulation in the work activity itself. For jobs which have limited potential for intellectual stimulation, the work setting is the laboratory for learning. For example, typing book orders for the college library is not in itself stimulating for most students. However, book orders are an expression of the universe of knowledge and society’s values at a particular point in time. As a topic attains importance, professors order books on that topic. The supervisor responsible for library acquisitions who informs students of this relationship can provide intellectual stimulation in a most mundane work activity.

For a supervisor to provide for the exercise of intellectual curiosity in making connections between the student’s work and the products of the work is the mark of a professional. It is the role of the teacher to a student, the master to the apprentice. It requires ongoing attention and the “second mile” over what might be considered the usual tasks of supervision.

Like the other motivational strategies noted above, the exercise of intellectual curiosity is grounded in positive valuing of the individual and not in extrinsic rewards such as wages or power. This is an important consideration in higher education work programs. Motivational strategies should promote self-directedness, intrinsic motivation instead of extrinsic motivation. Students should be paid a fair wage. However, a motivational strategy which communicates that work is valuable primarily in monetary compensation shortchanges the importance of creativity in the individual and its exercise as a key measure of personal fulfillment.

The Art Of Supervision

The greatest jugglers in the world are neither circus clowns nor court jesters. Their unique balancing act is deadly serious. They are supervisors. Keeping production on schedule within cost limits while maintaining employee harmony has to be the world’s master balancing act. Life for this person is complicated, especially if he or she supervises students. Why is this so? Many supervisors of students have never had specific training in the art of supervision. This is understandable. A professor of chemistry or literature has probably not had a course in personnel management or group
dynamics. Others may have been promoted to the role with only the model of their own immediate supervisors for guidance. These persons are not unintelligent or unskilled in dealing with people. Far from it! Most have had years of valuable, people-related experience, but few have integrated their experience with the multifaceted role of supervision.

Another factor is that, for many student supervisors, supervision is a secondary or even tertiary responsibility. The first concern of the print shop manager is to meet production. A professor may supervise students in an academic practicum, but the student typing and mimeographing a reading list in the departmental office will probably not receive similar intentional and purposeful supervision.

Perceptions of students as part-time employees may also influence the quality of supervision. Another section of this guide is concerned with characteristics of student workers but a few popular stereotypes can be noted here.

Students are perceived as enthusiastic and idealistic. They rush into a myriad of activities and responsibilities, believing they can manage them all. Often they believe they can change methods of work operations—or even whole institutions—with “one brilliant suggestion.” Other students are procrastinators who pace themselves in only two ways—laziness and hyperactivity. Some are so undecided and unmotivated about being in college that getting out of bed each morning is a major achievement. As part-time employees, they may be perceived, and accurately so, as having a lesser commitment to their work than to their classes. With all of these behaviors, supervisors may wonder from the very beginning whether it is worth the effort to include and treat student workers as regular employees.

Complicating supervision is the popular negative image of supervisors. From the employee’s point of view, the supervisor is seen primarily as a disciplinarian or parent-like authority figure concerned only with production. Practically any supervisor can recall working under a person who did not treat workers with respect, had little rapport with the staff, seemed heavy-handed in decision making, and did little to boost office morale. Cartoonists caricature these realities with images of the slave driver with whip in hand, the executioner cloaked in a black hood wielding a double-edged ax, the angry old man glaring out from a dark cave, the supervisor peering through a gigantic magnifying glass over employees’ shoulders. Sensitive to these images, a concerned student supervisor can inadvertently ignore some necessary aspects of the role in attempting to act in a more positive manner.

Just what is supervision? What does it mean to be a leader of people working toward a goal? Are there ways of leading that are more effective than others? Are there roles to be assumed as well as particular responsibilities, responsibilities sufficiently general to fit a variety of situations but specific enough to deal with part-time student employees?

Formal definitions of supervision are a place to begin, but they tease more than they clarify. In a definition by the Department of Labor, supervising is “Determining or interpreting work procedures for a group of workers, assigning specific duties to them, maintaining harmonious relations among them, and promoting efficiently. A variety of responsibilities is involved in this function.” Just what is meant by a “variety of responsibilities”? Nothing is more frustrating for a newly-appointed supervisor, or any new worker, than to be told, “Your job includes a variety of responsibilities. But don’t worry; you’ll pick them up as you go along.”

Personnel management and human relations are only one of many areas of responsibility. Even in this one area, the number of tasks is overwhelming. Following is a representative list from a corporation personnel office; the same tasks are required of on-campus job supervisors:

- Request additional employees as needed
- Make final employee-selection decision
- Orient new employees to their environment, the requirements of the organization, and their rights and privileges
Train employees
Provide face-to-face leadership
Appraise performance
Coach and correct
Counsel employees
Recommend pay increases, promotion, transfers, layoffs, and discharges
Enforce rules and maintain discipline
Settle complaints and grievances
Interpret and communicate management policies and directions to subordinates
Interpret and communicate employee suggestions and criticism to higher management
Motivate subordinates: provide rewards for good performance and behavior
Eliminate hazards and insure safe working practices
Develop own skills and abilities through self-development activities and participation in company training programs
Cooperate and coordinate with personnel department in administering the company personnel program within own program

It is not possible in this short section to suggest strategies for effective performance in all these tasks. What is possible and may be helpful is to present different models of supervisory roles in personnel and human relations, models chosen to bring the range of functions into clearer focus. Popular and, hopefully, positive images will be suggested as characterizations for role development. None are independent or exclusive; there is interchange and interdependence among them all. They are offered as a mosaic or composite profile of “The Complete Supervisor,” one striving for balance in both production and human relations skills. Consider these images: Teacher, Coach, Counselor, and Judge.

The goals of every Teacher include widening the student’s awareness and perception through the introduction of new knowledge, and encouraging creativity and self-improvement by the student’s appropriation of knowledge. These goals are pursued in a range of academic courses from introductory and survey to postgraduate and specialized. A supervisor using the teacher role model can see responsibilities similarly. Student employees need “New Worker Orientation 101.” Students need to know what is expected of them. These expectations should be stated in precise terms, much like an outline of course requirements. Descriptions of the work tasks, work schedule, production deadlines, proper dress, evaluation procedures, policies, payroll details, supervisory structure are all necessary items. Equally important are introductions to co-workers, opportunities for “hands-on” trials with equipment, and a chance for students to ask any questions related to settling in as a new employee.

Beyond the introductory courses in the college curriculum are those to develop particular skills such as counseling, accounting, and graphic designing. At the work site, students’ more advanced skills are important for increased productivity. A most important skill, regardless of the work site, is time management. Many new workers have difficulty deciding which tasks are most important to tackle first or which ones will consume the most time. Simple suggestions such as handling each piece of office correspondence only once, arranging work tasks in A-B-C priority, and assigning time requirements and time limits to an activity help develop a skill useful for a lifetime.

The highest level of teacher-student transaction is for the student to be a self-directed learner with the teacher serving in a mentor role. In a campus work setting, the supervisor can promote a similar objective. Any work position has elements of flexibility. The supervisor should
allow students to pursue particular interests and develop skills by structuring work assignments for these developmental outcomes. For example, students in the financial aid office who start out providing basic clerical services can be given responsibility for a research or data collection project in which general clerical skills can be enhanced.

The Coach has another set of associations surrounding the role. The Coach is often perceived as motivator, morale booster, builder of team spirit, encourager. He or she is involved with the life of his team in diagramming strategy on the dressing room blackboard, giving pep talks during half-time, cheering players while the game is in progress, reviewing films of the last game in preparing for the next. There is another side in being the Coach—demanding performance. The name of the game is winning. Practices are tough. Players must run the plays correctly; they must be challenged to get that “second wind” needed for success. Team hot shots are usually shot down as the Coach explains that “we win as a team or not at all.”

The role model of Coach in many ways most nearly approximates the ideal balance between concern for work production and concern for employee harmony. Like the Coach, the supervisor is also a motivator and morale booster. Posted production deadlines and work schedules are not the only ways for supervisors to assist students in making adjustments to their work pace and efficiency. More effective motivational techniques used by the competent supervisor will vary according to differences in personalities of both supervisor and student, and work environments, inventories, praise, recognition, and opportunities for friendship are a few strategies worth considering.

Another characteristic of a competent Coach is the ability to start the right player in the right position. This requires an understanding of each team member’s abilities as well as how different abilities fit into a total team effort. The Coach sees the big picture while keeping in view the separate colors on the canvas. For the supervisor, this means interpreting to each employee precisely where he or she fits into the organization. Even the most menial tasks can lose much of their tedium if a worker sees how this small activity is required for the total product.

The third model for a supervisor, in addition to Teacher and Coach, is the Counselor. The Counselor is a listener, one who can respond with positive warmth and regard to another. The listening is not passive but marked by a high degree of involvement in reflecting feelings, checking perceptions, clarifying confusing issues, summarizing content, confronting, clarifying values, sharing information, and suggesting alternatives. The Counselor is, in short, a valued and trusted friend. Approachability, a sense of humor, warmth, and openness are perceptions to be nurtured in being effective in the Counselor role.

Some supervisors are cautious of the Counselor role. A recurring old wives’ tale in management suggests that the best way for a supervisor to get along with employees is to “maintain distance to maintain respect.” Leadership studies have shown that employee respect for supervisory authority can be built as effectively on a positive basis. Sophisticated skill or clinical training in counseling is not the issue. Personalism, humanism, trust, and concern can be a part of every supervisor’s style. Employees respect a supervisor who listens. Not everyone will come running to unload grievances or problems on the supervisor; an open-door policy and practice simply create a climate where concerns can be defused before crises develop from inattention.

Teacher, Coach, Counselor are positive images. A final image, the Judge, is not as popular. Perhaps the most difficult role of all, this one is often avoided for its potential negative association in the eyes of employees. Again, free association with this role in a larger society can be helpful. A good Judge has a reputation for fairness. He listens to both sides, rulings are based on pre-established laws and conditions, and verdicts can be appealed. The concern is justice. Discipline is proportionate to the offense, the long-term goal being rehabilitation.

What are the implications of the image of the Judge for the student work supervisor?
Evaluation of both a worker's productivity and work attitudes is a necessary and regular responsibility of the supervisor. To maintain objectivity and fairness the supervisor should not delegate evaluation. Secondly, employees need to know in advance the basic criteria by which work performance will be judged. These criteria should be used impartially. Below are suggested criteria: each should be used with a rating scale to show different degrees of performance:

1. Ability to learn and perform work responsibilities
2. Quality of work
3. Amount of work accomplished
4. Cooperation with other workers and supervisor
5. Time lost from illness, absenteeism, tardiness
6. Individual strengths and weaknesses

Where evaluation requires discipline or reprimand, such actions should be proportionate to the situation and administered in a private conference. There is more on this supervisory responsibility in the section of this guide on intervention. If the roles of Teacher, Coach, and Counselor are present in the supervisor's interaction with student workers, the rapport of student and supervisor will be sufficient to maintain employee trust and respect even in the most confrontive situations.

Intervention In Personnel Management

John is late for work again, the third time this week. The computer center is already behind schedule in preparing mailing labels, which is John's assignment. During the last four weeks, Jennifer had carelessly broken three expensive pieces of laboratory equipment. Debbie is staring at her typewriter again today. She has two days of work backed up in addition to a departmental reading list due tomorrow. She seems distracted and listless.

Each of these situations is a cause of tension which, left unresolved, will adversely affect both employees and production. These tensions need to be met head-on, confronted, challenged, and responded to in a purposeful manner. Intervention is the traditional term in personnel management for addressing these situations to reduce this tension. More accurately, this might be called remedial intervention. Of equal importance are actions which, in getting to the root causes of tensions, can eliminate or reduce the incidence of crisis situations, i.e., preventive intervention.

Preventive intervention or preventive maintenance in supervision has the goal of creating a positive environment of trust and respect among persons working together. Every work community is unique. Persons with different personalities, temperaments, ages, interests, and abilities rub shoulders each day like an extended family. Effective relationships within that work family are critical to productive work. Eight conditions necessary for an effective work group can be considered as goals of all employees, with the supervisor having primary responsibility. An effective group (a) knows why it exists, (b) has created an atmosphere in which its work can be done, (c) has developed guidelines for making decisions, (d) has established conditions under which each member can make his unique contributions, (e) has achieved communication among its members, (f) has informed members how to give and receive help, (g) has taught members how to cope with conflict, and (h) has learned to diagnose its processes and improve its functioning.

One supervisory strategy for preventive intervention is a self-assessment of the full range of activities and responsibilities. The total range might include interviewing potential employees, defining tasks, training, delegation and follow-up, employee development, discipline and reprimand, implementing new policies and procedures, performance appraisal, advising, promoting, transferring, terminating. Each activity has the potential to produce stress for some one employee. But people are unique; what produces stress in one stimulates challenge in another. This complicates the supervisor's lot. Supervisors must balance their supervisory tasks.
against knowledge of how different employees respond to stressful situations. A supervisor who knows that a particular student responds poorly to stress may reprimand that student in a different way than another student who has strong coping skills.

Job entry for new or inexperienced workers is stressful. Any employee, but especially a student working for the first time, has a number of concerns. Preventive intervention ideally begins on or before that first work day. Anticipating job-entry anxiety, a competent supervisor will explain face-to-face (a) the work of the department; (b) the student’s specific duties; (c) the work schedule—starting time, breaks, closing time; (d) the supervisory structure, including introducing the student to a designated supervisor; (e) the procedures for operation and care of equipment; (f) work performance assessment procedures; (g) payroll procedures; and (h) other policies related to employee rights and responsibilities, e.g., grievance procedures. The student should have ample time to ask questions as well as an opportunity to meet other employees. When available, students should be provided a written copy of all policies and procedures.

A second source of tension for new student employees is a strong desire to make a good impression or noticeable impact upon the organization, i.e., the “New Worker Syndrome.” It is particularly acute for younger employees—the idealism of youth being a common characteristic. Students with the syndrome show alternate periods of frantic activity followed by a period of listlessness. The problem is that from lack of experience, new workers do not know what can be achieved and what can be expected in a given work period. In preventive intervention, the supervisor can give a careful explanation of the regular production schedule as well as what is considered a “day’s work” in that location. The supervisor can also ask more experienced workers to share estimates of time required for particular tasks. For example, knowing how long it takes to shelve a full cart of library books can help a new student employees pace themselves in this activity. These strategies not only reduce anxiety and frustration, they enhance productivity. The tortoise and hare fable that “jackrabbit starts do not win races” is certainly applicable to management of student employees.

Preventive intervention extends well beyond the first few days for new employees. Time management is an ongoing strategy for preventive intervention. Where production tasks are simple and sequential in nature, time management may not be a major source of tension, but for workers confronted with a complex assortment of related activities, some assistance by supervisors in setting priorities is in order. The more complex the job, the more important is the skill. Take, for example, the production of brochures in the campus print shop. Production can involve art work, material composition, editing, layout, photo-engraving, printing, collating, and binding. When a student is assigned more than one of these tasks, he/she needs to know the order of priorities for a particular day.

To appreciate that preventive intervention is an ongoing responsibility of supervisors is to realize that a most important function is the establishment of procedures for communication between all employees and the supervisor. Some offices choose staff conferences. Others simply agree to spend time together weekly after a coffee break. Whether formal or informal, the objective is candid, two-way communication. This is much more than a one-way monologue by a supervisor to subordinates. Employee feedback is necessary to head off rumors and identify sources of discontent.

Preventive intervention requires one-to-one communication between student and supervisor. These sessions should be routinely and regularly scheduled. If not, the tendency of both student and supervisor is to avoid meeting if either is dissatisfied. In avoiding a possible conflict situation, intervention is delayed, frustrations and disappointment build to crisis proportions. A situation which could be easily mediated with simple information festers to a conflict-ridden situation with deep emotions of both student and supervisor.

Preventive intervention involves all personnel functions of the supervisor. The purpose of this
section is not an exhaustive treatment but to emphasize the importance of preventive intervention. Preventive intervention is similar to preventive automobile maintenance. Checking a 50-dollar tire weekly for correct air pressure costs nothing and takes little time. That single activity, however, extends tire life dramatically while saving gasoline costs as well.

Remedial intervention is necessary to confront typical problems such as tardiness, absenteeism, habitual loafing, repeated carelessness, reactions to a change in policy or procedures, interoffice grumbling, and lower echelon power struggles. The list seems endless. The first step, before considering any action strategy, is for the supervisor to look for root causes of the problem. Disruptive work behavior is often only the tip of a much larger iceberg. Each month of a developing semester seems to bring a predictable onslaught of student worries. Tardiness and loafing may be caused by any number of factors—lack of sleep, worry about grades, peer relationships, or parental pressure to succeed.

Students deal every day with a number of large and small responsibilities. In most instances, their normal personal resources (logic, realistic perception, decision-making skills, physical health, interpersonal skills) enable responsibilities to be met without undue stress. Where a responsibility becomes a problem is in the substitution of inadequate coping mechanisms for normal personal resources. A deadline may cause a procrastinating person to panic rather than use logic and information. Alcohol and other substances may replace food and sleep. With these misplaced coping mechanisms, an acceptable responsibility becomes a nightmare. Tension and panic mount as everything seems to cave in on the individual.

Understanding the roots of a problem provides a basis for developing an appropriate response to the crisis. A first step in crisis intervention is simply the commitment by the supervisor to immediate, here-and-now, intervention of some form. Making time for a student employee with troubles may mean disregarding the work schedule of the day. The next step is for the supervisor to take responsibility for directing the identification of the problem. The student may feel so overwhelmed, frustrated, angry, and confused that he cannot coherently discuss all aspects of the problem. With courtesy, tact, and understanding, the supervisor should initiate and guide the discussion.

The next suggested strategy is to set a limited, short-term goal once the problem has been identified. A short-range goal provides a platform upon which students can formulate a solution based on their normal personal resources. The student who is near panic with a term paper due can be encouraged to take several possible actions—talk to the professor, take a temporary leave from work, rearrange a work schedule to provide more library research time, get more sleep. A final step is to build the student’s self-reliance and self-image. The situation may seem overwhelming, at least in the mind of the student. For the supervisor, it is important to communicate confidence in the ability of the student to work things out. The nurture of self-reliance and self-image is critical to any restoration of personal day-to-day equilibrium.

Discipline and reprimand are often unavoidable in the case of absenteeism, loafing, power struggles, or outright defiance. When discipline becomes necessary, a fair and well publicized policy of progressive penalties for work infractions should be implemented. A list of progressive penalties might include the following:

1. Simple oral warning
2. Oral warning noted in student’s employment record
3. Written warning noted in employment record
4. Suspension from job, from one day to two weeks
5. Termination

The object of any discipline is to correct behavior in short order and restore the employee to productive employment. Discipline should be
firm; it must not be delivered with hostility or
anger. The student may express anger, frustra-
tion, and disappointment; the supervisor should
keep a cool head. Paramount in importance is
privacy. Nothing is more degrading or humili-
atizing to a worker than to be disciplined in front
of his peers. A public reprimand can only de-
stroy the carefully cultivated and desirable rap-
port between employee and supervisor.

Remedial intervention is not pleasant and is
probably the least liked responsibility of any
supervisor. Attention to an ongoing program of
preventive intervention can substantially reduce
the need for remedial intervention. Both reme-
dial and preventive intervention are means to
personal growth and development. As such
they are certainly appropriate for student work-
ers and supervisors in educational institutions.

Student Employment And Vocational
Development

There is great agreement among students that
going to college is the means of getting a good
job. Currently, enhanced employment opportu-

nity is the primary motivation reported by 85%
of entering students for attending college. What
is poorly understood, not only by students but
also by college personnel, is the nature of voca-
tional selection and preparation in the educa-
tion-to-work transition.

The general perception is that students enter
college with a specific occupational choice, se-
lect and pursue a course of study required for
that occupation, graduate, and secure and con-
tinue employment in that occupation. The pro-
cess is seen as static and mechanistic, with class-
room study being the essential activity.

Research on the actual vocational selection and
preparation process of college students provides
a very different picture. Three differences with
the general perception are so striking that what
emerges is a picture of the college years as a
time of personal crisis and revolution in student
vocational development.

A first difference from actual research findings is
that most students enter college with pat, superfi-
cial “pseudo-plans,” more influenced by the ex-
pectations of parents and peers than by careful
personal assessment. Secondly, students move
away from these pre-entry vocational choices to
an extended period of indecisiveness and genu-
ine exploration. For example, studies indicate
only three very broad college curricular areas
(pre-medicine, pre-law, biological sciences) in
which as many as half of the entering students
persist through graduation.

Finally, research shows that it is the totality of
the college experience and environment, not just
academic study and the classroom, which influ-
ences vocational decision making and prepara-
tion. Particular activities and environments will
differ by institution and, to some degree, for
each individual student. Together, activities
and environments for successful vocational de-
velopment of late adolescents and young adults
must do the following:

♦ Enhance self-awareness and self-esteem;

♦ Provide information about personal
strengths and weaknesses;

♦ Offer opportunities to experience a vari-
yety of significant relationships with
people in a wide range of role situations.

Student vocational development is receiving in-
creased attention and more resources from col-
leges and universities. Placement offices are add-
ing information and guidance services for in-
formed decision making. In the rush to new pro-
grams, existing programs and activities with vo-
cational development potential can be easily
overlooked. The student employment programs
at most institutions are a case in point. Studies
by the National Advisory Council for Career
Education conclude that work experience itself,
as compared with information and counseling
services, is the most effective means for promot-
ing student vocational development at the post-
secondary level. The challenge is to better realize
the potential for vocational development of exist-
ing on-campus student employment programs.

The potential of student employment in voca-
tional development is clear from the component
tasks of the developmental process. Briefly, vocational development includes awareness, skill development, reality testing, and experience translation.

Awareness includes both knowledge of the work tasks of an occupation, the environment where practiced, and the personal characteristics required of workers for effectiveness and satisfaction in the work. The sheer variety of on-campus occupations, both of student and regular employees, constitutes an occupational education laboratory. Relative to student positions, a study at five Virginia institutions indicated as many as 200 distinct on-campus jobs. Including all employees provides a microcosm of the general work force with persons employed in hundreds of institutional tasks. A major university has the complexity of a city, and even small colleges are involved in numerous, non-instructional tasks, e.g., marketing, planning, security, housing, financial management.

An accurate picture of an occupation requires differentiation of tasks, environments, and characteristics required of workers. For good understanding, differentiation is required of a single position and between positions; i.e., good understanding comes from careful analysis of individual positions and comparison between different positions.

There are many ways to promote vocational awareness in the administration of student employment programs, including the following:

- Job descriptions using a classification system based on differentiating definitions, e.g., the Department of Labor’s Work Trait Groups; John Holland’s scheme of Realistic, Intellectual, Social, Conventional, Enterprising, and Artistic categories;
- A guide to student employment which lists positions by occupational families using the categories of a differentiating scheme;
- Oral and media introductions to large work-site activities such as the library and student union which show the variety of positions at one site;
- A placement process which considers the complementary nature of position and student characteristics;
- An institutional policy of providing students a variety of work experiences;
- A student work evaluation grounded in performance in distinguishing characteristics, e.g., skill level in data functions;
- A compensation schedule based on a hierarchy of skill levels; i.e., students are more likely to appreciate differences between positions if compensation has a basis in the job itself instead of in some extrinsic factor such as academic classification;

Skill development is the growth dimension of vocational development. Knowledge of what an occupation requires is insufficient unless one has mastery of the skills required in that occupation. In thinking about skills, it is useful to consider the typology which defines skills as either adaptive, functional, or content in nature.

Adaptive skills are so taken for granted that not to have them is to be considered deviant. Their importance is recognized only in their absence. They comprise what is defined as acceptable social and personal behavior. They include managing oneself in relationship to authority, dress, time, property, and one’s own impulses. These skills are typically learned early in life, primarily through the acceptance of parental authority and trying out different behavior among one’s peers.

Functional skills are those abilities required for living in an urbanized, technological, and mass society. They are not specific to one work task but are general skills needed in many occupations and in non-work activities. They describe active relationships with data, people and things. Functional skills are so essential to any work task that we forget their number, variety,
and importance. A very short list makes obvious their significance; viz,

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Student employment has great potential for skill acquisition. Some students, particularly younger students with limited work experience, lack adaptive skills, e.g., time management and relating to authority. On-campus employment can provide for development of adaptive skills in a supportive and non-threatening atmosphere. Behavior which would be the basis for termination in off-campus employment can be tolerated in an on-campus position in the understanding that student development is the educational mission of the institution. The mode is active toleration, acceptance with counseling to prompt improved work behavior.

The primary focus on skill development in on-campus employment should be on functional skills: Classroom study will provide for development of content skills. Student employment programs can promote functional skill development by providing a sequence of work experiences requiring increasingly greater functional competence.

Reality testing is the crucible in vocational development whereby knowledge and experience become internalized for informed decision making. It may be defined as a student’s participation in work activity, coupled with reflection on the meaning of that experience.

Reflection on actual work experience helps the student determine his or her “likes” or “dislikes” about the work position. “Like” or “dislike” becomes clearer when experience gets a variety of perspectives. First, what is the actual nature of the work? Is it fairly routine and prescribed, or does it involve variety? Can it be done with limited mental involvement, or is it intellectually challenging, requiring creativity and providing opportunity for self-expression? What is the nature of the environment? What is attractive or unlikable about the noise level, ventilation, light, location? What is the supervision structure? Is the supervisor at the next desk, in the next room, in another building? What is the style of supervision? What decisions can be made by employees? Is there team structure, or do employees work independently?

What are the hours of regular employees? Are they rigid or flexible? What training and skill levels are required for full-time employment? How much are they paid? Does the work provide opportunity for recognition, acknowledgment of achievement, a chance for advancement? Does this work directly benefit others? Is this important in what I do?

Reflection, a necessary condition for reality testing in vocational development, is not easy to promote in student employment. Our culture stresses action, not reflection. Moreover, in separating education and work in our lives, reflection is usually seen as the domain of formal education. The inherent potential of learning from structured reflection on work activities will seem to be a strange notion to many adults, particularly students.

Reflection can be promoted in student employment at several points. Placement is an obvious activity for promoting reflection. If student interest inventories are used in placement, the finding of the inventory should be shared with the student. Counseling for placement provides a great opportunity for students to inventory work values derived from previous work and vocational activities. During the work experience itself many supervisors, as a matter of course, adopt a healthy mentor role, providing scheduled and casual time for student reflection on what is being learned experientially. More supervisors would structure the same opportunities if they were so encouraged.
The final element in vocational development through student employment is translating on-campus work experiences into the language of the external job market. Graduates with thousands of hours of on-campus employment too often lament to potential employers that they “have no experience,” or they will list only off-campus employment.

Every activity which uses a skill or ability to achieve a goal should be considered as a genuine work experience, fit for any resume. A student in on-campus employment may have researched library material on mental health agencies, analyzed water samples in a research laboratory, supervised other students in the dining hall, maintained inventories in the bookstore, or operated an intramural program.

In reporting on-campus work experiences, particular attention should be on the responsibilities involved, the skills developed, and the degree of difficulty. Job titles are insufficient as they often have no parallel in the general economy of goods and services. The emphasis should be on identification of specific work functions which are understandable to any potential employer.

A work function means a concise description of a work activity which indicates the degree of difficulty of that task. A statement of work function includes an action verb, an object, and the purpose of that action, either stated or understood, e.g., construct sets for theatrical productions. Each function is in relationship to information, people, or equipment. The complexity is obvious in comparison. For example, copying statistics in a column is not as difficult as analyzing those same statistics in a report. The job descriptions in the Appendix are in terms of functional activities, with each job including a number of such actions. Below are some examples of functional skills, with each verb describing both the activity and the level of difficulty:

- **Inventory** office equipment and materials
- **Operate** telephone switchboard equipment
- **Reproduce** written materials on copy machines
- **Interview** persons for information
- **Organize** playground activities for children
- **Analyze** water and milk samples
- **Construct** television program props

Documenting the functional abilities of students can be accomplished in several ways. Students should be provided copies of job descriptions written in functional terminology. Students can share these with potential employers in job interviews. Students, working with the career planning and placement office, can use these job descriptions as reference information in preparing a functional skills resume of all their work experiences. (The functional resume is becoming the preferred resume format for younger workers.) Finally, the student employment office, when asked by potential employers for references, should respond in functional terminology. This is much more informative than the summary judgment that the student was a “good” or “unproductive” worker.