Correspondence between Video CD-ROM and Community-Based Job Preferences for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

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Abstract: This study examined correspondence in selections of job preference across a video CD-ROM assessment program, community jobs observed during employment site visits, and photographs of employment sites. For 20 participants ages 18 – 22 with developmental disabilities, the video CD-ROM program was initially administered to identify preferred jobs, followed by community job visits and photographs of employment sites. Some community job visits were ones selected as highly preferred using the video CD-ROM program while other visits were not selected. Results indicated 34 of 40 jobs preferred on the video CD-ROM program were identified as preferred after community observations, and 33 of 40 jobs preferred on the video CD-ROM program were identified as preferred from photographs. Twenty of 40 nonselected jobs were identified as preferred following community visits. Results are discussed as to potential validity of the video CD-ROM program as one method of identifying job preferences for individuals with developmental disabilities.

One of the key components of self-determination is choice making (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998). Choice making has been conceptualized as identifying preferences, making decisions, and expressing autonomy (Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985). Reid, Parsons, and Green (1991) defined choice making as identifying a preference given alternatives by engaging in behaviors involving the action of choosing. Individuals with developmental disabilities typically identify preferences through (a) verbalizations, gestures, or affect; (b) physical selection (e.g., picking up or pointing to) an item; (c) approach toward an object; (d) task performance; (e) amount of time engaged with an item; or (f) activation of a microswitch associated with the preference (Wehmeyer et al.). Job preference may be conceptualized as engaging in behaviors such as verbalizations or gestures to indicate a choice of employment.

Identifying employment preference is important for youth and adults with developmental disabilities for at least three reasons. First, scholars (Wehmeyer et al., 1998) have described consistency between identification of preferences and the principle of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972), the empowerment philosophy (Rappaport, 1987), quality of life (Schalock, 1996), the concept of self-determination (Ward, 1988), and community integration (Bruininks, Chen, Lakin, & McGrew, 1992). Second, determining employment preference is supported by federal legislation on transition of youth with disabilities from school to work (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, 2004). According to the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, transition services must consider a youth’s...
preferences and interests. Third, researchers found identification of preferred employment resulted in improvement of performance including increased work output (Menchetti & Garcia, 2003; Mithaug & Hanawalt, 1978; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003) and reduced problem behaviors (Bambara, Ager, & Koger, 1994; Parsons, Reid, Reynolds, & Bumgarner, 1990; Winking, O’Reilly, & Moon, 1993). For example, Menchetti and Garcia found supported employees with a high or moderate degree of match between their career choice and current employment had higher hourly wages, higher monthly earnings, and longer sustained employment (although the latter relationship was not a strong one). Bambara et al. demonstrated individuals with developmental disabilities performed preferred jobs more efficiently and with less disruptive behavior.

Valid instruments are needed to identify job placements with high prediction of success (Menchetti & Garcia, 2003; Test, 1994). Relatively little research exists on validity of employment preference for individuals with developmental disabilities (Becker, 2000; Ellerd, 1990; Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998; Hughes, Pitkin, & Lorden, 1998; Mithaug & Hanawalt, 1978; Morgan, 2003; Reid, Parsons, & Green, 1998). One commonly used assessment instrument, The Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory, Second Edition (RFVII: 2; Becker) identifies high vocational interest areas (e.g., automotive, building trades) for individuals with low reading skills. The RFVII: 2 uses sets of three line drawings depicting people working at different jobs. For each set of drawings, participants draw a circle around the picture they prefer. Results are expressed as T scores and percentile ranks in general vocational interest areas. Becker reports criterion-related and construct validity research on the RFVII: 2 using the Geist Picture Interest Inventory (GPII; Geist, 1988) as the criterion. Administering both instruments to youth and adults with and without disabilities, Becker found statistically significant pair-wise correlations between scales (e.g., Automotive Scale on RFVII: 2 and Mechanical Scale on GPII). Results indicated the RFVII: 2 evidenced high construct validity across indices based on comparisons to the GPII.

Morgan, Gerity, and Ellerd (2000) described a video CD-ROM program. Participants began by identifying preferred working conditions (e.g., outdoor versus indoor work, heavy versus light work, working alone versus working with co-workers or the public). Next, participants selected preferred jobs matching the work conditions. The program presented 2 to 4 min of video on each job. After video of a pair of jobs, the program requested a choice from the participant for Job A, Job B, or neither job in a forced choice format (Ellerd, Morgan, & Salzberg, 2002). Ten pairs of jobs matching work conditions were shown. The outcome was a short list of jobs for the participant and support team to consider in job placement and training efforts. Initial identification of jobs for the video program were based on a survey of transition/supported employment job placements (Morgan, Ellerd, Jensen, & Taylor, 2000) and decisions of state and national task forces (Morgan, Gerity et al., 2000). Morgan (2003) investigated the criterion validity of the video CD-ROM program by comparing participants’ selections of jobs to line drawings selected by participants using the RFVII: 2. Video selections did not correlate highly with the RFVII: 2 line drawing selections, largely because the RFVII: 2 used selections of line drawing as indicators of broader vocational interests (i.e., occupational sample areas) in contrast to the CD-ROM’s use of job choices.

To date, research on the video CD-ROM program has not been conducted on the extent to which results correspond with selected community jobs. Yet, according to Messick (1993), criterion validity is best evaluated by comparing a test score with an external criterion providing a direct measure of the characteristic or behavior in question; in this case, preferred community employment. Messick argued researchers should closely scrutinize data on constructs not directly measurable and be skeptical of validity data unrelated to socially meaningful criteria.

The purpose of this study was to examine the criterion validity of a video CD-ROM job preference program by assessing correspondence of participant selections across video, photograph, and community-based job observations. The CD-ROM program first assessed whether participants could choose preferred
jobs watching motion video. Given selection of preferred CD-ROM jobs, individual participants and a facilitator visited high-preference and nonselected jobs in the community to determine the extent to which CD-ROM selections corresponded with community selections. Following a visit to a community employment site, a photograph was taken of the individual participant in the job environment. The participant selected jobs again from pairs of photographs to determine the extent to which CD-ROM selections corresponded with photo selections. The following research questions were addressed:

1. Can individuals with developmental disabilities select preferred jobs using motion video?
2. How closely do video CD-ROM job preferences correspond to specific jobs selected after community employment visits?
3. Using a paired choice format, how closely do video CD-ROM job preferences correspond with specific jobs selected via photographs of community employment?

Method

Participants

Twenty participants ages 18 – 22 were systematically selected from a suburban school district in Northern Utah. Participants were selected from a group of 70 young adults in a post-high school program based on seven criteria: (a) the participant was between 18 and 22 years of age, (b) the group of selected participants was about 50% male and 50% female, (c) the participant met Utah eligibility criteria for intellectual disability, i.e., measured intelligence quotient (IQ) on a standardized intelligence test of less than 70 existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, (d) the participant’s cumulative history of work experience was less than one year, (e) the participant was currently unemployed, (f) the participant expressed interest in participation, and (g) given reasonable accommodations, the participant had visual and hearing acuity necessary to respond to video, photograph, and community job observations. Selected participants included 10 males and 10 females. Mean age was 19 years (range = 18 to 22 years). In psychological evaluations conducted within the last three years by school district psychologists, participants’ measured intelligence level had been assessed using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Third Edition (WAIS – III: Wechsler, 1997), Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test – Fourth Edition (SB – 4: Thorndike, Hagen, Sattler, Delaney, & Hopkins, 1986), or Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ III: Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001). Intelligence assessment resulted in a mean IQ score of 50 (range = 40 to 63). Adaptive behavior had been assessed using the Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP; Bruininks, Hill, Weatherman, & Woodcock, 1986). Mean adaptive behavior level for participants was 8.9 years (range of 4.9 to 11.0 years).

Settings and Materials

For the video CD-ROM program assessment, a room in the school transition program (approximately 4 m x 7 m) containing a PC laptop computer with the video CD-ROM program, table, and chairs was used. Video program materials included seven CD-ROMs, a facilitator’s manual, and printouts showing jobs selected by participants. Community job observation materials included a “job record form” and procedures checklist. Photograph materials included a Polaroid camera and photographs (approximately 3 cm x 3 cm) of participants taken at job sites following the community job choice assessment.

Facilitator Training and Procedural Fidelity

The first author trained a facilitator, employed by the school district, to assist individual participants. The facilitator received a 2-hour training session on data collection and preference assessment procedures. The first author administered the video CD-ROM program. The facilitator conducted community job observations and photograph assessments. The first author also trained a district transition specialist to collect data on fidelity, i.e., accuracy of planned implementation (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987) of procedures carried out by the facilitator. The transition specialist recorded whether or not the first author administered assessments and whether the facilitator conducted community job visits.
in the manner described. Across 35% of community observations and photograph assessments, fidelity was scored at 100%.

**Assessment Procedures**

The study was conducted in three steps. First, the video CD-ROM was used to select preferred jobs. Second, correspondence was assessed between jobs selected using the video CD-ROM program and jobs chosen in community-based job observations. Third, correspondence was assessed between jobs from video CD-ROM and photographs of job sites. Procedures for video CD-ROM, community-based job observations, and photographs are described below.

**Video CD-ROM procedure.** Participants worked at a computer with assistance of the first author. The first author introduced the program by directing the participant to “Watch these people work.” The entire pool of 120 jobs was not shown to a participant. An initial set of work condition decisions allowed the participant to target a *domain* of 20 jobs. Detailed information on work condition decisions are described by Morgan, Gerity et al. (2000). The participant then watched 10 pairs of jobs from the preferred domain. The program played video on one job, ended with a still frame of the job, and started video on the second job. See Figure 1 for a sample video CD-ROM frame. As each video played, a narrator on the CD-ROM program described critical attributes of the particular job. Video scenes were displayed in the left and right sides of the computer screen. At the end of the second job, the program presented video still-frames of both jobs as the narrator asked, “Which job do you like? Click on the picture of that job.” Participants made selections by clicking a computer mouse on one of two video frames, or by clicking on a symbol between two video frames indicating no preference. Once a job was selected, the next pair of job videos was presented. After 10 pairs of jobs were shown

![Figure 1. One motion video frame of working conditions from the video CD-ROM program.](image-url)
(Pairing 1), the program presented the same 20 jobs but arranged in 10 different pairs (Pairing 2). The software program randomized the job sequence and positions of jobs on the screen (left - right). Participants selected jobs in both Pairings 1 and 2. The video CD-ROM program required about 60 min to complete. Printouts were maintained of each participant’s selections.

Community observations were arranged for two high preference and two nonselected jobs. A job was defined as high-preference if the participant selected it in both Pairings 1 and 2. Each participant selected five to eight high-preference jobs. From a participant’s 5 - 8 high-preference selections, the first author randomly selected two high-preference jobs. For high-preference jobs, the first author then randomly selected two community businesses representing the same jobs and noted address and phone number. Next, the first author randomly identified two jobs the participant had not selected in Pairings 1 or 2 (i.e., nonselected jobs). Nonselected jobs were identified from those not chosen by the participant. For example, if a participant preferred two jobs involving light lifting and working with the public (e.g., Receptionist, Rental Clerk), then two other jobs from the remaining 18 were randomly selected (e.g., Manicurist, Hair Stylist). The first author randomly selected four community businesses representing the nonselected jobs and noted each business address and phone number.

Community-based job observation. Community job observations began one day following video CD-ROM assessment allowing the facilitator time necessary to contact employers and arrange 15 min visits. Community job sites \((N = 52)\) were identified to correspond with participants’ high preference and nonselected jobs from the video CD-ROM assessment. Sites included service, retail, manufacturing, professional, educational, financial/insurance, building/construction, medical, transportation, and hospitality organizations. The facilitator scheduled 15 min visits of high-preference and nonselected jobs with contact personnel at each organization. The facilitator described the visit as an opportunity for the participant to gather information by observing tasks performed on the specific job; however, the contact person was discouraged from making special arrangements or introducing the participant to staff. The specialist communicated the schedule, contact person, and location to the facilitator. The facilitator was experimentally blind regarding identity of high-preference/nonselected jobs and the purpose of the study. The facilitator and individual participant traveled to the first job site to observe three to five required work tasks for 15 min. The facilitator introduced herself and the participant to the contact person. The contact person described and demonstrated work tasks as the participant observed. The facilitator prompted the participant to observe each task and to ask questions of the contact person. Food, refreshments, and other favors were declined. Following the observation, the facilitator asked the participant, “Is this a job you want to do?” and recorded the participant’s verbal response (yes/no) on a Job Record Sheet. At this stage, the facilitator and participant traveled to the second job site.

Paired-choice photograph assessment. After each community observation, the facilitator took a Polaroid photograph of the participant in the job environment. Each photograph showed the participant positioned in the foreground, standing alone, with the job environment in the background. Following the second of two job observations, the facilitator presented photographs of the two jobs (one previously selected as preferred and one nonselected) and asked, “Which job would you want to do? Touch the picture of that job.” The facilitator recorded the participant’s response on a Job Record Sheet. Next, the facilitator and participant traveled to the second pair of job sites and repeated the process. Order of observations for high preference and nonselected jobs was counterbalanced across pairs of jobs to avoid response patterns. Observations continued until the participant observed two high preference and two nonselected jobs.

Inter-observer Agreement

Inter-observer agreement was calculated for video CD-ROM selections, community job selections, and implementation of community observation steps. First, for video CD-ROM selections, the first author manually recorded job selections while the computer recorded
responses using program software. In this procedure, inter-observer agreement was defined as identical selections recorded by the first author and computer. Agreement, computed by dividing agreements by agreements plus disagreements times 100 (Billingsley, White, & Munson, 1980), was 100%. Second, the facilitator recorded data on all job selections. The transition specialist co-recorded 28 of 80 participant selections of community jobs (i.e., 35% of total selections). Observers’ records on participant job selections were compared on a response-by-response basis, and the percentage agreement score was calculated by dividing agreements by agreements plus disagreements, multiplied by 100%. Inter-observer agreement was 100%. Third, inter-observer agreement was recorded by the transition specialist on the facilitator’s implementation steps. Steps were: (a) the facilitator introduced the contact person, (b) contact person demonstrated work tasks, (c) participant observed tasks, (d) facilitator asked participant whether the job was a preferred one, and (e) facilitator recorded participant’s response. The transition specialist recorded whether the facilitator implemented each step correctly. Observers’ agreement on implementation of steps was calculated by dividing correct implementation of each step by correct plus incorrect implementation multiplied by 100. Inter-observer agreement was 100%.

Measures

Three measures used in this study were job preferences based on: (a) video CD-ROM, (b) community job observations, and (c) selection of photographs. Verbal or approach responses were recorded for each measure. A verbal response was defined as a word or statement naming a preferred job or job role (e.g., “carpenter”), a task performed as a part of a job (e.g., “framing house”), or an organization (e.g., “ABC Construction Co.”). An approach response was defined as a physical movement, such as using the computer mouse to click on one video image, a gesture following a job observation (e.g., thumbs up), or touching one photograph of job sites.

A descriptive research design (Fisher et al., 1992; Derby et al., 1995) for identifying choice responses was used to compare video CD-ROM, community, and photograph selections. Descriptive data identified the proportions of identically selected preferences video CD-ROM, community job observations, and photographs. Differences between observed and expected responses were analyzed using the chi-square ($\chi^2$) (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) test and effect size (Howell, 2002). Although responses across job observations and photographs were not independent of video CD-ROM responses, the chi-square test was considered a reasonable approximation for determining statistical significance (Glass & Hopkins).

Results

Each participant selected between five and eight high preference jobs from the video CD-ROM program. Table 1 presents correspondence between video CD-ROM and community observations. High-preference selections from video CD-ROM corresponded with 34 of 40 jobs preferred following community observation. That is, across 20 participants, 85% of jobs selected as preferred using the video CD-ROM program corresponded with community job selections. For example, Participant 1 selected preferred jobs of Dairy Farmer and Recycler/Trash Collector from the video CD-ROM program and selected the same jobs following community observations. Participant 2 selected Floral Designer and Secretary from the video CD-ROM program and selected Floral Designer but not Secretary following community observations.

Participants preferred 20 community jobs (50%) even though these jobs were not selected as high preference ones in the video

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CD-ROM program. The chi-square test was used to determine whether differences existed between observed and expected proportions of high-preference versus nonselected jobs selected in the video CD-ROM assessment compared to community observations (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). The expected proportion was $p = .50$ (40/80). The result was significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 80) = 9.8, p < .002$. Thus, high preference jobs from the video CD-ROM assessment were selected more often in the community than nonselected jobs.

Table 2 presents correspondence between video CD-ROM and photographs of job sites following community observations. High-preference selections from the video CD-ROM program corresponded with 33 of 40 jobs in photograph selections. That is, 83% of jobs selected as preferred using video CD-ROM corresponded with photograph selections. The number of high-preference jobs selected from photographs (33/40) was nearly identical to the number of jobs selected using video CD-ROM (34/40). Overall, in 29 of 40 cases (73%), high-preference jobs from video CD-ROM matched both community observation and photograph selections.

Number of nonselected jobs identified as preferred after community observations (20/40, 50%) was much higher than jobs selected as preferred using video CD-ROM (7/40, 18%). Participants were more likely to select previously nonselected jobs when asked to make a yes/no response to the question: “Is this a job you want to do?” after community observations as compared to photographs. To evaluate the magnitude of difference, an arcsine transformation table (Cohen, 1988) subtracted proportions and calculated an effect size. For high-preference jobs, the effect size was .05 (a small difference). For nonselected jobs, the effect size was .70 (a medium effect).

A chi-square was computed to determine if there was a significant difference between high-preference and nonselected jobs from the video CD-ROM program and those selected in photographs. Results indicated a significant difference between high-preference and nonselected jobs, $\chi^2 (1, N = 40) = 16.90, p < .001$. The effect size was .42, reflecting a medium effect.

**Discussion**

In this study, 20 young adults with developmental disabilities consistently identified preferred jobs using a video CD-ROM assessment program. Most jobs (34 of 40) selected as preferred using video CD-ROM corresponded with jobs selected following community observations. From these data, the video CD-ROM program measured job preferences in a way approximating selections based on community observation. When participants observed high-preference and nonselected jobs in the community, their choices corresponded with jobs selected from video CD-ROM.

Following community observations, participants selected 20 jobs as high preference ones, even though they had not been selected from video CD-ROM. Two alternative explanations are offered for this finding. First, community observations were the only assessment involving a response to a yes/no question (i.e., “Is this a job you want to do?”) as opposed to a paired choice response. Participants may have been more inclined to respond “yes” because of demand characteristics of the situation (Fisher et al., 1992). Second, participants were better informed about the characteristics of the job following community observation, and may have gathered significant information unavailable with video CD-ROM. Further research is needed to analyze the stimuli to which participants respond on video CD-ROM and community observations.

Results of this study supported use of the CD-ROM program by individuals with developmental disabilities because video job preferences corresponded relatively highly with community employment choices. Using community choice as a criterion measure for validation represents a different source of evi-
dence than typically gathered when assessing validity of vocational assessments. It seems logical the criterion of community job preference should be used because one purpose of vocational assessment is to identify preferred employment. As noted by Messick (1995), validity measurement may be compromised by two factors: (a) construct-irrelevant variance and (b) construct underrepresentation. Construct-irrelevant variance invalidates assessments when performance is influenced by factors unrelated to the purpose of the procedure. In the case of a video job preference assessment, if characteristics of specific workers (e.g., uniforms, perceptions of attractiveness) were a focal point rather than required work tasks, participant preference may have been influenced or even misled by incidental factors. However, correspondence between video CD-ROM and community preferences suggests participants in this study were attending to meaningful stimuli. Conversely, construct underrepresentation occurs when assessment fails to capture or underrepresents the intended construct. This may be the primary difference between the video CD-ROM program and line-drawing assessments. That is, actual job tasks and work environment characteristics are complex (i.e., noisy, fast-paced, varied, requiring interpretation of directions, etc.) to the point of challenging portrayal in a line drawing and favoring video CD-ROM.

Findings in this study must be interpreted with caution because of three design/procedural limitations. First, the order of assessment procedures was the same across participants (i.e., video CD-ROM, community observations, paired-choice photographs) and therefore, the potential for order effects exist. While the photograph assessment was dependent on community observations, the order of other assessment procedures could have been varied and may have produced different results. Future research should consider order effects and administer assessments using counterbalanced procedures. Second, the generality of findings is limited; additional research is needed to determine whether results apply to individuals who have characteristics similar to and different from those in this study. Third, video job assessment may inflate the importance of preference and neglect important variables such as speed and quality of task performance, wage, training and qualifications, schedule, hours required, location, and supervision. These variables may become more salient as participants visit community job locations, thus accounting for differences between preferences identified following site visits and those identified in the video CD-ROM program. No data were collected to account for participants’ differing selections. Future research should attempt to account for such differences.

It is important to note video CD-ROM assessment is a measure of preference for specific types of jobs, and does not evaluate the relationship between choice of work and skills considered necessary to perform required tasks. However, once job preferences are known, individuals with disabilities and their planning teams may prioritize skills to be taught or make necessary accommodations so that job seekers can better perform required tasks. Although some research exists (Bambara et al., 1994; Parsons et al., 1990) showing positive effects of job choice on the work performance of adults with severe disabilities, job preference has not been evaluated in relation to performance of multiple job tasks. In some respects, video CD-ROM may again be advantageous because it presents multiple job tasks in a short amount of time, thus providing efficient information to individuals with developmental disabilities. However, performance of certain job tasks may affect later assessment of preference, so additional research is needed to clarify the relationship between preference and performance of tasks.

Practitioners and scholars in career development may view job preference is a transitory phenomenon (Green, Reid, Canipe, & Gardner, 1991) and, therefore, an individual’s preferences may be susceptible to changes over time. Further research needs to examine variables (e.g., work tasks, supervisor relations, promotion opportunities, coworker interactions) affecting job preference over time. Given participants in this study were high school students with less than a year of independent work experience, their job preferences may only be in the formative stage. Future research should explore how preferences change with increasing work experience and exposure to particular work conditions.

This study presents initial data suggesting
the video CD-ROM assessment program corresponds with community job preferences for
a small sample of young adults with developmental disabilities. It evaluates the video CD-
ROM program according to a relevant criterion, i.e., community job choice. Although
considerable research remains to be conducted, these results provide evidence of po-
tential criterion validity and its use as one job preference assessment component. This
research begins to establish the video CD-ROM program as one alternative to allow individ-
uals with developmental disabilities to make informed choices in employment. It may rep-
resent one way to place a job seeker in a functional and empowered role as a decision
maker and a chief determinant of job choice.

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