

## Y-12's Training and Technology – Case Histories

From a report of the Department of Labor designated as the Manpower Research Monograph No. 29 and titled *A model for training the disadvantaged: TAT at Oak Ridge, Tenn.*, comes the following case histories of graduates of TAT.

“One trainee entered TAT in October 1969 under the sponsorship of the Tennessee Rural CEP. Initial testing revealed substantial educational deficiencies, and the requirement for sixth-grade reading and math achievement was waived in his case. His eight grades of formal schooling had not prepared him for reading even simple instruction in the programmed self-help material in the GED (high school equivalency) program.

“He was immediately sent to the company’s medical unit for eye tests and to the University of Tennessee Hearing and Speech Center for hearing tests, but no physical problem was found. A special test, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, indicated a below-average score of 81 and a performance score of 99; but the trained psychologist who administered the test detected Paul’s exceptional desire to learn. He was assigned to the Mechanical Operations course.

“As a next step, a group of instructors and counselors discussed – among themselves and with this trainee – the pros and cons of keeping him in the program. He convinced them of his willingness to educate himself by night study and extra work. His remark, “You ain’t gonna give up on me like the rest of ‘em, are ya?” reinforced the decision to work with him.

“Although TAT is not a program for illiterates, it has been an experimental program; and working with this trainee was regarded as an opportunity to test various methods and approaches which might be used in working with other trainees who are educationally deprived.

“For two months this trainee required a completely individual schedule. His instructor set up a shop curriculum for him and taught him while other trainees were in math classes. Arrangements were made from him to attend adult basic education evening classes in Oak Ridge, and TAT staff instructors supervised his remedial math and reading assignments.

“Learning to read was a major hurdle for this trainee, along with improving his poor listening and writing skills. However, in a short time he learned to recognize more than 200 words, then to read simple books. He was soon able to work under the instruction of an older trainee-teacher, supervised by the reading instructor. Four months after joining TAT, he was enrolled in the special reading class for slow readers.

“His math level rose more rapidly. From minimal competence with addition and subtraction, he progressed to success with the four basic computations in whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. He was able to enter the regular Mechanical Operations math course in just five months.

“This trainee completed the TAT program in 11 months, rather than the usual six months, and was placed with a Nashville firm in a training-related job. Thus the combination of a determined trainee, a highly motivated and qualified staff, and extra time and effort, paid off in ‘turning around’ a seriously disadvantaged young man.

“This was not a typical TAT enrollee. The following are brief accounts of the more nearly representative experiences of three other young people who graduated from TAT.

“George entered TAT in October 1968 and completed the program in a normal six months. When he started training, he was 22 years old, married, and a veteran. He was also unemployed and lacked a high school diploma – a handicap which he overcame through TAT’s program of preparation for the GED diploma.

“George chose to learn welding and chalked up average grades both in shop work and in related academic subjects. Upon completion of training he was hired by Nuclear Division, Union Carbide

Corporation, as a process operator at the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant. Although this initial job was unrelated to his training, he was able to bid successfully on a welding job that opened two years after he joined the company's work force.

"After another two years, the former trainee returned to TAT as a demonstration welder and instructor's aide. Georges sees this latest experience as buttressing this earlier learning and enhancing his usefulness to Union Carbide.

"*Jim* began TAT training in Physical Testing in April 1970 and six months later was hired to work in the Y-12 Plant as a radiographer aide. He had come to Oak Ridge under CEP sponsorship from Chattanooga, where he graduated from high school with better-than-average grades. Like George, he was a veteran. Also like George, he returned to TAT as an instructor's aide in his specialty.

"Upon completion of his six-month assignment, he went back to the plant with a promotion to radiographer, first class. A subsequent transfer to the Mechanical Inspection Department reflects continuing advancement and skill development.

"*Mary*, a young divorcee with a child, was training in Physical Testing, finishing in September 1972. While in TAT, she obtained a GED diploma. She also caught the attention of a visiting IBM recruiter and was hired for the company's customer engineer training program.

"In the IBM program, she placed 10<sup>th</sup> among 8,000 trainees nationwide – and on her new job, has sometimes repaired typewriters for TAT. After some further field experience with IBM, the company's representatives say, she will be trained for a management position."

These are but a snapshot of the many experiences of transformation that was TAT.