Growing occupational identity: the use of agricultural entrepreneurship for young adults with disabilities to successfully enter, adapt, or inhabit the role of worker

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Growing Occupational Identity: The Use of Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Young Adults with Disabilities to Successfully Enter, Adapt or Inhabit the Worker Role
GROWING OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY: THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES TO SUCCESSFULLY ENTER, ADAPT, OR INHABIT THE ROLE OF WORKER

by

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A Scholarly Project Submitted to the Occupational Therapy Department

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master’s of Occupational Therapy

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This Scholarly Project Paper, submitted by Nicole Likewise and Theresa Podio in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master’s of Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Title: Growing Occupational Identity: The Use of Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Young Adults with Disabilities to Successfully Enter, Adapt or Inhabit the Worker Role

Department     Occupational Therapy

Degree     Master’s of Occupational Therapy

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ABSTRACT

“We know what we are, but not what we may be.” – William Shakespeare

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project was to develop a grant proposal in order to obtain funding for the development of an entrepreneurial program for young adults with disabilities transitioning into adulthood in rural Wyoming. Through participation in the program young adults would have the opportunity to pursue entrepreneurship in sustainable agriculture while concurrently developing an occupational identity.

**Methods:** A selected literature review was conducted to identify the scope of the problem and identify what, if any, programs are currently being offered to assist youth transition to the worker role. Partnerships were developed with key stakeholders in developing the proposal; resulting in a grant application to the Western Sustainable Agriculture, Research, and Education program.

**Conclusions:** There are limited opportunities for young adults with disabilities transitioning to adulthood in rural Wyoming to develop a meaningful occupational identity in a worker role. Entrepreneurial endeavors in sustainable agriculture are a viable alternative to establish this identity, promote economic independence and promote community wellness.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Young adults with a disability transitioning into adulthood have been a population that has traditionally been underserved and who have experienced increased difficulty developing an occupational identity. Young adults in rural communities are at a particular disadvantage to transition into a worker role. There is a decrease in job opportunities, transportation, and funding to explore personal interests in the development of occupational identity. Self-employment or entrepreneurship is a viable option for young adults seeking to develop their place within society’s workforce.

The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) provides graduate student grants that would fund programs seeking to improve farmers’ and ranchers’ quality of life and the economic situation in rural communities. Occupational therapy is in a unique position to develop a program to enrich the lives of farmers/ranchers and improve participation in meaningful activities. Occupational therapy students developed a grant proposal to fund a program within the state of Wyoming that would promote young people with disabilities to pursue entrepreneurship utilizing sustainable agriculture techniques. The program would allow young adults to explore their interests and take part in meaningful occupational endeavors.

The Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) by Charles Christiansen is the guide for the grant proposal. PEOP supports the development of
occupational identity and the importance that this places on an individual’s life experiences. PEOP is designed to incorporate an individual’s environment and community when considering their occupational engagement. The ability to examine the interactions between people, their occupations, and their community made the model a guiding principal for the scholarly project. PEOP is a practical tool which can be applied not only to individuals but also to entire populations. Further, the scholarly project will be discussed in a literature review, a methodology for creating the product will be explained, the product will be available for survey, and a summary follows that discusses limitations and future actions.
According to Christiansen (1999):

Occupations are key not just to being a person, but to being a particular person, and thus creating and maintaining an identity. Occupations come together within the contexts of our relationships with others to provide us with a sense of purpose and structure in our day-to-day activities, as well as over time. When we build our identities through occupations, we provide ourselves with the contexts necessary for creating meaningful lives, and life meaning helps us to be well (p.576).

When meeting a person for the first time within the traditional United States society individuals frequently will ask one another, “What do you do?” Individuals develop perceptions of a person at the beginning of the first interaction and the answer provided (Christiansen, 1999; Unruh, 2004). People most likely perceive this exchange as constituting what an individual does as their job, without exploring the term occupation fully and how the occupations one does relate to self-identity.

Thus, the term occupation may be misunderstood and many people might believe that it only relates to working and employment. However, Christiansen and Baum (2005)
define occupation as “human pursuits that are goal-directed or purposeful are performed in situations or contexts that influence them, can be identified by the doer and others, and are meaningful to the individual” (pg. 2). Thus an occupation is not merely a means to an end, but instead may become the end in itself. This is a concept many young adults transitioning into the world of adult responsibilities might also have difficulty comprehending as they begin the pursuit of establishing their identity in particular spaces, place, and occupations in the larger society.

According to Cole and Tufano (2008) as adolescents are focusing on issues from earlier years, such as self-identity, they begin facing new challenges when establishing new adult roles such as work, home maintenance, social, community and family. As young adults are transitioning from adolescence into adulthood they have a need to discover and inhabit an occupational identity as a worker (Christiansen & Matsuka, 2004; Unruh, 2004). These challenges are faced by all individuals at some point during the transition, but can be more difficult for individuals that are faced with the extra challenges of having a disability. All aspects of occupation, specifically employment opportunities and availability may be further limited by many factors including the type of employment opportunities in the region, institutional or organizational attitudes by both the employers and employees, as well as the training and preparation necessary to enter a job. Unruh (2004) notes how productivity or work can lead to a sense of stability or instability if the person does not experience a degree of competence and satisfaction with the work.

An article published by Rudman and Dennhardt (2008) in the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal describes the following, “occupation is a basic human
need of central importance to health and well-being” (p.154). An emerging concept known as occupational identity is also important in understanding the overall role that occupation plays in human life. Kielhofner (2002) describes occupational identity as a component of occupational adaptation that reflects accumulated experience, provides a sense of who one is and provides a value-based vision of desired directions. Kielhofner (2002) also finds other aspects are involved in occupational identity, such as the things an individual finds to do that are satisfying or meaningful; includes how one inhabits roles and responsibilities; and the press and perceptions of environmental expectations. Commonly occupational identity is something that many individuals obtain through their role as a worker, but Kielhofner (2002) states that occupational identity is constructed over time and occurs during various times throughout the course of human development.

Charles Christiansen, another occupational therapy scholar, identified and discussed the importance of occupational identity during the 1999 Eleanor Clark Slagle address. During his speech Christiansen illustrated how a person’s occupational identity is critical to being accepted by society, developing purpose, and achieving a higher quality life (Christiansen, 1999). He then outlined the important role occupational therapists have to fulfill in assisting people discover, explore, and inhabit an occupational identity.

During the lecture Christiansen highlighted four propositions to support his theory regarding the importance of occupational identity. Proposition one stated “identity is an overarching concept that shapes and is shaped by our relationship with others” (Christiansen, 1999, p. 577). Typically individuals develop their own self-concept influenced by the perceptions and feedback from others. Proposition two states that
“identities are closely tied to what we do and our interpretations of those actions in the context of our relationships with others” (Christiansen, 1999, p. 579). The development of identities will be influenced by the experiences, interactions, and environments that a person develops within. The third proposition asserts “identities provide an important central figure in a self-narrative or life-story that provides coherence and meaning for everyday events and life itself” (Christiansen, 1999, p. 580). An individual’s insight into their actions and events that are meaningful to them help to form sense from their everyday life. The fourth and final proposition affirms that “because life meaning is derived in the context of identity, it is an essential element in promoting well-being and life satisfaction” (Christiansen, 1999, p. 580). The development of an occupational identity is a necessary step in living fulfilling lives that consist of meaning and purpose.

Though the construct of adult identity is well identified, less is known about how the process of constructing identity occurs for adolescents (Burrow & Hill, 2011). Burrow and Hill (2011) studied the process of youth to adult development and the factors that promote success in the lives of adolescents as they transition into adulthood. In their study the authors based their hypotheses on Eric Erikson’s theories of adolescence which are comprised of the transitional stages of: autonomy seeking, identity exploration, and a period of emotional instability. According to Burrow and Hill (2011) Eric Erikson believed that by the time of adolescence, having a sense of purpose would aid in overcoming identity crises. Burrow and Hill (2011) use the “identity capital” model developed by the sociologist Côté to examine how identity and purpose are correlated with well-being among adolescent high school students and emerging adults. The identity capital model posits that a stable sense of self enables a person to successfully negotiate
through most life experiences. The purpose of the two separate studies incorporated by
the authors is stated as “Using the identity capital model as a theoretical framework…[to]
examine purpose as a mediator in the relationship between identity and well-being among
adolescents and emerging adults” (Burrow & Hill, 2011, p. 1). Throughout the study it
showed there was a positive correlation between purpose, identity, and well-being.

The two studies conducted by Burrow and Hill (2011) examined and defined the
importance of establishing a direction to live life. The purpose of life’s direction must be
determined internally based on the goals, behaviors, and an individual’s sense of
meaning. “Consistent with [the] hypothesis, greater purpose commitment was found to
mediate the associations between identity commitment and well-being across each study”
(Burrow & Hill, 2011, p. 8). This was true for both adolescents and emerging adults and
purpose can be applied to the occupations participated in by both. Thus, transitioning
populations are better able to develop meaning and purposeful direction in their lives
through engagement in carefully selected activities and occupations (Burrow & Hill,
2011). However, the general effectiveness of the transition process in creating
opportunity for occupation is, at best mixed, and will be taken up in the next section.

Little is known about the development of identity by youth with disabilities,
however, Herbert, Lorenz, and Trusty (2010), studied the limitations of the post-
secondary education system in transitioning students with a disability into adulthood.
They were interested in identifying limiting factors in order to develop a more efficient
process for high school students with disabilities transitioning into post secondary
education and employment as they enter adulthood. In their review of the literature the
authors report the transition from high school for students with disabilities is often not as
successful as compared to the students without disabilities. They stress that high school is a critical period since students at this age make important decisions about transitioning into further education or employment. One may surmise that failure to successfully negotiate transition has the potential to seriously derail the students’ entry into adulthood, and by extension; impair the development of occupational identity. Therefore, effective intervention is necessary to assist students in improving decisions resulting in optimal outcomes.

Some of the limitations acknowledged in the current interventions provided during high school include; “ineffective interventions that provided limited opportunities to explore careers to promote job related self-knowledge, lack of awareness regarding how career efficacy beliefs impact career exploration experiences, societal beliefs regarding career potential, work site accommodations and barriers, and lack of participation and cooperation among professionals who develop and implement the transition plan.

There are many individuals involved in the transition plan for students with disabilities including; guidance counselors, special education teachers, transitions counselors, and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Unfortunately, many members of these transition teams lack understanding of each other’s roles resulting in not creating a smooth transition into adulthood by students (Herbert, Lorenz, & Trusty, 2010).

The authors aim at reviewing literature was to determine what career assessment methods are used, level of understanding by transitional professionals in regard to services needed, how beneficial they feel current interventions are, levels of collaboration
between team members, and how helpful they feel career services are that students are receiving.

To assess these concepts Herbert, Lorenz, and Trusty (2010) produced an on-line survey that contained questions examining demographic information, career assessment practices, type of services available, and career areas assessed. Open ended questions targeted gaining a greater understanding of career service needs, levels of collaboration that exists, perceived usefulness of career services that the school currently provides, and impacts these services have overall. The 433 survey respondents recruited through convenience sampling included; vocational rehabilitation counselors, special education teachers, transition counselors, high school counselors, high school teachers, and high school administrators; along with others that did not fit into a specific category.

Results of the survey indicate that most of the students with disabilities are in fact receiving career assessment services in high school by the 10th grade, thus increasing more opportunity for vocation. However, it was shown that students not receiving these services until later in their school career were not as successful in transitioning. Herbert, Lorenz, and Trusty (2010), believe that students who received these assessments earlier in their schooling have a greater opportunity for career exploration (p.23). It was noted that possible reasons for the percentage of students who are not receiving these services are related to team members either seeing no need or not having the adequate resources to do so. “Failure to provide career services as part of a transition plan constitutes non-compliance with federal legislation.” (Herbert, Lorenz, & Trusty, 2010 p. 23). Adequate transition services are critical to every young person’s transition from student to adult.
The results further indicated that all the individuals involved in the transition process were unaware of each other’s roles and how collaboration can maximally be attained. A significant portion of respondents felt that further training was necessary in order to achieve the most efficient outcomes. This information demonstrates how imperative it is to work as team when assisting these students in their transitions process. If each member of the team is lacking insight into each others’ roles it is impossible to have a clear understanding of what services the students have received and where additional guidance is necessary.

The information produced in this study will be beneficial to student authors when selecting individuals to provide training of program plan to. In addition it demonstrates the importance of not only training all individuals in the transition process, but encourages those trained to train other professionals along with the students with disabilities.

Another article, published by Lindsay (2011), examined characteristics of the youth with disabilities who were employed and how employment varied from teen years into adulthood; along with what types of employment they were most often engaging in compared to adults. The author concluded that life skills training programs for youth and providing rehabilitation counselors with evidence based research can help prepare both partners in ensuring youth are transitioning to adulthood and the workforce.

Lindsay (2011) indicated that youth and young adults transitioning into adulthood remain under-represented in the workforce. Findings produced in the study specifically showed that the greatest negative influences impacting young adult’s ability to fully engage in the workforce were the geographic location, their transportation options, and
the type of disability they were diagnosed with. Geographic location hindered employment significantly in youth and young adults living in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The limited access that people with or without disabilities face regarding transportation due to an overall lack of public transportation in rural areas. Individuals were found to be employed less often if they had mobility or vision impairments, compared to other impairments such as hearing.

Included with the results, the author suggests that educational programs are to assist in the transition into adulthood for youth with disabilities. Lindsay (2011) mentions the need for specific workshops for youth to help them explore employment options. It is suggested that support needs to be offered in pursuing self-employment along with education on the benefits of doing so and how to go about it. One option of employment for individuals with disabilities has been to become involved in entrepreneurial practices.

Of course a central question is: “Do non-employed people with disabilities want to work, and if so, what types of jobs do they want?” (Mohammad, Schur & Blanck, 2010, p. 199). This is the question that researchers investigated to explain why unemployment rates are so high among those with a disability. In an annual survey carried out every year since 1972 by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago for individuals over 18 years of age, seven questions were added in 2006 to address those with disabilities. Of the 2,777 respondents 590 were identified as having a disability. The survey showed that employment rates were at 51% for those with a disability as compared to 75% for those without a disability; employment rates continued to decrease for individuals with mental or mobility limitations. Strikingly, the survey reports that 80% of un-employed people with a disability want to work, and 90% of those
with a cognitive disability want to work (Mohammad, Schur & Blanck, 2010). One can deduce, that individuals with a disability have an innate desire to work and contribute to the larger society.

Being employed is a key to becoming socially acceptable and valued in today’s culture; however social biases and an individual’s lack of experience may be aversive barriers when seeking employment. Mohammad, Schur and Blanck (2010) highlighted that those with disabilities may have difficulty actively looking for employment, which could be attributed to feelings of hopelessness related to a good job fit and biases of an employer. Another concern for individuals with a disability is that their low employment rates contribute to higher poverty rates. “For people with disabilities, employment is not just economic value, but important social, civic, and psychological value as well” (Mohammad et al., 2010). People with disabilities, Mohammed concludes, need to be viewed as a viable resource to society and the economy. With simple adaptations to work environments, they can participate in both personally and socially meaningful occupations. Yet, people with disabilities remain significantly under or unemployed.

Unfortunately, across the United States the rates of unemployment in the last decade have reached peaks that have not been seen for years. Although, the rates in Wyoming have not reached the high rates that other states have seen, the limited accessibility to obtaining employment has been challenging. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics the average unemployment rate for May 2011 in the United States was 9.1% compared to 6.4% in Wyoming. However, in Wyoming many of the employment opportunities differ than those compared to other states because of the difference of population living in rural settings versus urban.
The Idealist Career Center places rural issues regarding employment at the forefront. As indicated by the 2000 US Census, in Wyoming 172,000 people in rural areas are with limited job opportunities. “Many of the challenges facing rural communities lie in the scarcity of businesses in sparsely populated areas, lack of public transportation, limited manpower and a small voice in government at all levels (Disability Statistics, 2011).

Many people living in rural areas are also facing other adversities such as having to live with one or more disabilities. A study done at the University of Montana (2007) stated that in Wyoming alone 33.7% of the rural population living in Wyoming reported having a disability, as well as having significant difficulty in preparing for, entering, and maintaining employment. According to the Wyoming 2008 Disability Status Report, 12.7% of individuals in Wyoming reported having a disability. Of the 67,000 individuals with disabilities, approximately 2,000 of them were adolescents between the ages of 16 and 20 (Enders & Brandt, 2007).

Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities

One potential employment solution for individuals with disabilities has been to become involved in entrepreneurial practices (Rural Institute, 2011). According to Griffin, Flaherty, Hammis, Marsha, Maxson, and Shelley (2002) entrepreneurship and self-employment are a viable option for people with disabilities living in rural areas. According to Griffin, et al. (2002), sources such as vocational rehabilitation and Social Security provide services and funds for people with disabilities pursuing a small business; however, these entities are most often more concerned about testing the progress and success of a business rather than the client’s desire and self-efficacy. Often limits are put
on the process that does not allow for the entrepreneur to have enough time and support to become successful.

It is important to consider the self-employment process as dynamic and ever changing. However, there are basic steps that should be included in every business plan. According to the *Rural Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Expansion Design Project* (RESEED) located in Montana, there are three phases in creating a successful business. The first phase involves development of a business plan, completing a financial management workshop, and creating appropriate marketing or promotional materials. The second phase consists of having meetings with the vocational rehabilitation counselors and other partners, as well as completing a thorough self-evaluation of one’s capacities for entrepreneurship. The third and final phase consists of learning the trade or skills needed, production or manufacture of the products, and selling the products (Griffin et al., 2002). The RESEED project is an effective and concise map to follow for those in rural communities seeking to develop entrepreneurship.

The effort in Montana to restructure the way services are provided in rural rehabilitation makes for an excellent reference when considering the promotion of self-employment in rural Wyoming. The RESEED project and the individual stories of success provide evidence of the benefits and struggles involved with both traditional employment and non-traditional self-employment.

Entrepreneurship also creates a unique environment for people with disabilities to make their own accommodations (Weiss-Doyel, 2000). The business owner can set their own work hours, determine the appropriate workload, design the work environment, share job responsibilities with other employees, and design a benefit package to meet the
individual’s needs (Weiss-Doyel, 2000). In a chapter article by Weiss-Doyel (Doyel, 2002) the risks involved in entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities and the benefits are discussed. According to Weiss-Doyel, the benefits outweigh the perceived barriers and difficulties. Weiss-Doyel also notes that vocational rehabilitation counselors play a significant role in supporting entrepreneurial experiences by people with disabilities, but also how vocational counselors can both positively and negatively influence the outcomes depending on biases or beliefs in the person’s capacity for self-agency.

Weiss-Doyel breaks risk into three distinct categories: business risk, risk for vocational counselors, and risk for consumers receiving vocational rehabilitation services. Business risk is defined as an inherent part of the process when trying to accomplish the tasks of starting and maintaining a successful business. In order to eliminate, or at minimum, control these risks, one must have a detailed analysis or business plan with concrete objectives to identify and prevent potential risks (Doyel, 2002). The business plan is a critical step when embarking on any entrepreneurial endeavor.

Weiss-Doyel (Doyel, 2002), states that often it is the vocational rehabilitation counselor’s fear which interferes with the potential for self-employment outcomes. It is acknowledged that their fears can stem from experiencing a prior substandard incident, or hearing about another counselor’s bad experience with a client, in addition to the various fears pertaining to finances and the trust that public resources will be used in cost-effective and efficient ways. An immense risk for many consumers contemplating employment is the risk of losing both Social Security and health insurance benefits only to discover that self-employment does not provide a sufficient income.
Weiss-Doyel continues by describing the many different advantages of self-employment for people with disabilities. The advantages are not solely focused on acquiring employment and financial stability, but also on personal gains for the individual psychologically and emotionally. (Doyel, 2002) Self-employment is an alternative option for individuals with disabilities, she emphasizes, however it should be entered into by completing thorough research and vigilant contemplation.

The examples of entrepreneurship advantages provided in the chapter are convincing, because it is backed by experience as well as extensive and rigorous research conducted by the Rural Institute at the University of Montana. Finally, Weiss-Doyel herself had encountered a disability later in her career and had to find a means to financially contribute to her family’s income, as well as gain a new identity in the worker role. Thus, she speaks from the voice of experience.

Of course, the success of enterprise depends on the collaboration of many different partners and stakeholders. Some articles have focused on the need for collaborative partnerships between diverse organizations from business and government. In a study by Ipsen, Arnold and Colling (2005) a description of how Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs work together to offer self-employment services to persons with disabilities is discussed. The study focused on the current collaboration between the two programs and how the directors would like to see the collaboration develop. The authors hypothesized that both formal and informal agreements between the two programs would increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to successfully engage in self-employment.
A survey was developed by focus groups to assess the current connections between SBDC’s and VR. The completed survey assessed demographic characteristics, SBDC perceptions about how VR could assist SBDC’s, the currents connections between the two programs, and the SBDC abilities to serve individuals with disabilities seeking to engage in self-employment. The survey was then given to the SBDCs located throughout the country. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that all states were represented and 571 directors at SBDC were sent surveys. Of the surveys disbursed 346 were completed and returned. All data was analyzed using SPSS version 11.0, between group comparisons were evaluated using an independent samples t tests and chi-square tests (Ipsen, Arnold & Colling, 2005). The study collected a random sample to illustrate the current characteristics regarding the two organizations.

Results of the study indicated that the majority of SBDC employees who responded felt that it was extremely beneficial for each program to have a clear understanding of one another’s roles, responsibilities and expectations. It was shown that although links between the two agencies existed there was a lack of referrals SBDC received from VR. It was shown that only 9% of the SBDC respondents stated having a formal agreement with VR (Ipsen, Arnold & Colling, 2005). This study highlights the importance of communication and consistent measures to ensure that the needs of the consumers and clients are being met.

From the results, it was noted that SBDC respondents would have a better collaboration with VR, along with training from VR counselors, on how to work suitably alongside individuals with disabilities. Barriers for SBDC in working with people with disabilities largely had to do with limited financial resources and their lack of knowledge
in serving individuals with disabilities. However, those who were able to establish a connective network with VR demonstrated the ability to assist in locating and receiving funds from additional programs (Ipsen, Arnold & Colling, 2005). The findings are significant that strong partnerships can enhance the goals of both VR and SBDC to serve people with disabilities enter business.

The study offers evidence based research on the importance of collaboration between agencies and those within the agencies who are working in the company of individuals with disabilities seeking to become self-employed. It demonstrates how training on many different levels are needed to all agencies involved in assisting these individuals. Further it offers information on programs that may potentially be beneficial to individuals receiving training through the proposed program plan.

In an effort to consolidate knowledge and experiences of collaborations, June Holley (2005) worked with The National Rural Funders Coalition to develop a guide for building entrepreneurship networks based on regional areas. A regional network is a necessary instrument to keep entrepreneurs connected and engaged with one another. Many entrepreneurs are connected through their community; therefore their business and market are all intertwined. Through collaboration within the community the economic viability of the area is improved.

Since rural areas can be at a disadvantage for networking due to geographic isolation, a regional network would create a source to collaborate and share ideas to improve small business. In turn, the regional economy depends on a variety of businesses to be successful. These businesses may vary from the dining and hospitality industry to agriculture and tourism. Secondly, rural areas also are at risk for losing the youth
population; therefore regional networks can involve young people transitioning from student to worker about the benefits of entrepreneurship (Holley, 2005), including those with disabilities.

Community plays an intricate component in the opportunities available to both the citizens and overall vitality. A study by a national organization and occupational therapists from the University of Cape Town in South Africa (Van Niekerek, Lorenzo, & Mdllokolo, 2006) looked at a community disability entrepreneurship project in three areas of South Africa using participatory action research methods. Participatory action research allows for members of the study to take an active role in order to advocate and become more aware of their context. The project’s aim was to achieve economic empowerment of people with disabilities through establishing micro-enterprises with them.

The sample of participants in the study included 75 individuals with disabilities divided into three groups. All individuals were currently engaged in an entrepreneurship development program that was part of a group known as the South African Christian Leadership Assembly Health Project (SACLA). The participants took part in three once monthly workshops to discuss developments, reflect on progress being made, and plan for the next month. Indicators of positive outcome were measured using a content analysis from all the transcripts of interviews, focus groups, and workshops that had been conducted. The thematic categories that emerged were: earning money, being a member of a group, contributing to their community, skills development, personal development, and being able to do something meaningful and useful.

The main challenges identified by participants in the study were starting out with no resources and lack of capacity. Individuals expressed having concerns in limited
funding for growing seeds, having a place to work, and travel to different areas. Further concerns that were expressed regarding capacity were; lack of responsibility and accountability, inability to manage a business, money management and time management. Through monthly group meetings researchers used two main strategies to address challenges; building group identity and developing capacity together (Van Niekerek, Lorenzo & Mdlokolo, 2006). The study allowed the researchers to produce an understanding of the both resources and challenges faced by those with disabilities in entrepreneurship.

Results of the study indicated that the program was able to effectively train forty five individuals, though there were a significant number of drop outs from the project. Successful participants were able to become productive members of their communities, while at the same time increasing financial independence to assist their families. Researchers explained that the scope of the project became broader than they had initially anticipated, leading to limitations in their study. It was believed that additional training needed to be focused on disability awareness and personal development (Van Niekerek, Lorenzo & Mdlokolo, 2006). The study describes the benefits of entrepreneurship when individuals are ready to venture into unknown areas to meet niche markets and consumer needs. This study also provides examples of what indicators need to be considered when conducting participatory action research with a vulnerable population who are engaging in entrepreneurship. Further, the article examines the needs that people with disabilities possess in wanting to establish a worker role, being engaged in their community, and contributing to their family’s sustenance.
In the US, there has been a decline of youth entering agriculture, which continues to be a concern for rural areas. A program developed in conjunction with Ohio State University provided resources for beginning farmers and ranchers. The *Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program* was established to promote sustainable and profitable small farm business endeavors. The program sought to recruit young individuals who were considered “socially disadvantaged”. This group consisted of minorities, immigrants and people with disabilities. The program utilized workshops and mentorships to provide education. Participants attended formal classroom settings and farm seminars. The proposed end outcomes of the program are to improve food security and quality of life progress. (Barni, 2010) The project is a unique perspective on providing an opportunity for the development of occupational identity and participation in meaningful work.

Another program improving access to work for people with disabilities is AgrAbility. AgrAbility has established a network to provide resources, information, and assistive technology devices to those affected by an injury or disability. Those that work within the AgrAbility network conduct various workshops and resources at the state and local levels to meet the needs of farmers and ranchers with disabilities, as well as those with disabilities who would like to enter agriculture (Field, 2008). The National AgrAbility Project supports continued participation in meaningful work and promotes individuals with a disability to develop an occupational identity.

Thus, in rural communities farming and ranching are typically the dominant lifestyle. Many individuals choose to make their living by producing crops or raising animals, whether they own the land or lease it. Agriculture is not an easy way to make a
living and is known for the continued commitment and tribulations related to working with weather, the environment, and livestock. Even with the difficulties associated with agriculture, it is noted to be a rural lifestyle with many benefits and contributing to a sense of well-being.

One type of agricultural production that could be adapted to the needs of people with disabilities includes the growing of small livestock and market gardens using sustainable practices. Sustainable agriculture is a system of growing emphasizing environmental health, economic profitability, and economic equity (Feenstra, Ingels, & Campbell, n.d.). According to Feenstra, Ingels, and Campbell (n.d.), principles of sustainable agriculture can be used on macro and micro scales of production, and simply emphasizes stewardship of natural and human resources.

Ekarius (1999) believes successful small-scale livestock is a manageable and profitable for those interested in raising animals. The author provides an efficient holistic model to follow when starting a small-scale operation. It is important to remember that a farm or ranch must be managed from many different perspectives. The bottom line is a constant consideration; however the health of the livestock must be the first priority. Ekarius (1999) explains the importance of planning:

In the holistic management model, planning is not simply a process to be completed once. It is a continuous process that involves multiple parts: setting realistic, broad goals; developing plans and making decisions that move you toward those goals; continually monitoring what is happening with appropriate adjustments to your plans if things are not working out the way you thought they would. (p. 15)
Thus, maintaining goal orientation is an important aspect to becoming successful within the livestock industry. There are multiple external factors that will impact outcomes, therefore it is even more critical to focus on the skills of the individual and how decisions will impact the outcomes (Ekarius, 1999). Agriculture provides the opportunity to choose a unique path to economic stability that can be rewarding financially and emotionally.

“No matter what you’re selling from your farm, if you’re going to direct-market it you need to think about how it will best fit into a niche” (Ekarius, 1999, p. 104). This ability to find a need within the market is the best way to ensure profitability for an individual operating on a small-scale. Many consumers today are looking for organic or naturally raised beef, poultry, or dairy. Creating a clientele and reaching interested individuals within the community is the best way for a farmer to create a direct line from producer to consumer (Ekarius, 1999). There are many aspects that are entailed in the development and selling of a product. It is a process that requires planning and goal setting. Ultimately, according to Ekarius, small-scale livestock operations provide a source of income for growers that is both rewarding and challenging. Presumably the rewards for growing fresh produce, fruit, or fibers are the same.

It makes sense to the authors, that participation in agricultural production may be one way to meet the needs of rural youth with disabilities in entering employment and exploring the worker role; and in turn, further develop an occupational identity as a worker.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) and Relationship to the Occupational Therapy

With prior interest and background in agricultural practices in Wyoming the authors saw an opportunity to creatively incorporate occupational therapy skills to improve worker identity for individuals with disabilities in rural settings. Through our literature review and previous experience it was discovered that there are many limiting factors to developing a worker identity in rural Wyoming. By prospecting grants in sustainable agriculture, it was determined the graduate students qualified to apply for a grant that targeted the quality of life for farmers and ranchers in agricultural communities through Western Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (WSARE). The grants officer at WSARE felt the proposal fell within the guidelines of the grant. Both authors plan to remain in and practice as licensed and registered occupational therapists in Wyoming and were driven to gain a greater understanding of the needs that pertain to the population in rural Wyoming. This grant proposal became the author’s opportunity to establish and implement an entrepreneurial program in sustainable agriculture for individuals with disabilities. The proposal was created through use of a logic model and community based participatory research.

“Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), as an approach to enhance both research and population outcomes, has received increased attention as the academic and public health communities struggle to address the persistent problem of disparities in the use of health care and health outcomes for several populations, including those as identified by diagnosis, socioeconomic status, lack of health insurance, and membership
in various racial and ethnic groups” (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2004, p. 1). Individuals with disabilities in rural settings could be considered as being at a disadvantage when seeking employment. Investigators proposed a grant to the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research Education to initiate a CBPR program to enhance entrepreneurship in sustainable agriculture practice for individuals with a disability.

In combination with CPBR a program logic model was utilized as a means to organize and design the proposed plan of action. “The program logic model is defined as a picture of how your organization does its work – the theory and assumptions underlying the program. A program logic model links outcomes (both short- and long- term) with program activities/processes and theoretical assumptions/principles of the program” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p.3). The logic model provides an outline for the situation in question and assists in determining the priorities of the proposed project. This format clearly defines the need, purpose, necessary requirements, expected outcomes, and continued plans for future evaluation.

The logic model begins by focusing on the situation the program proposal will improve. In this case, the situation states as follows: that rural Wyoming is in need of economic development and improved quality of life. Those living in this environment with a physical disability are at an increased risk for poorer quality of life, lack of role identity, and decreased independence. Wyoming has an existing agricultural infrastructure that would promote continued participation in the majority of communities. The priority of the logic model focuses on how Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education can improve the economic and quality of life in agricultural
communities. Occupational therapy provides a unique set of skills to implement a program to improve quality of life and enhance independence.

The first step in development of a logic model is determining appropriate inputs; this phase required the graduate students and their advisor to devote time and energy into review of literature, as well as, developing partnerships with organizations statewide. These organizations consisted of AgrAbility, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, University of Wyoming SARE Services, Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC, and the Wyoming Farmer’s Market (see Appendix A for letters of support). The second stage then involved the development of outputs. This consisted of both activities and participation. The activities required the graduate students to contact and meet with potential partners, design the entrepreneurship program, apply for Western SARE grant, receive the grant, and implement the proposed plan. The participation aspect consisted of input from graduate students, the University of North Dakota, partnering agencies, and future students interested in continued development.

The logic model proceeds to the outcomes-impact stage, which is broken down into short/medium/long term results. The short term results ensure that participants are informed and educated about entrepreneurial/sustainable agriculture opportunities in the state of Wyoming. Second, participants learn about vocation supports and work incentives. Third, current views on quality of life in home communities are obtained. The medium term outcomes involve program participants making informed choices about pursuing agriculture business development, and engaging in activities to promote improved quality of life in their community. The long term impacts increase the number of people with disabilities working in sustainable agriculture, continued improvement in
quality of life for individuals in Wyoming communities as a whole, and finally improve economic viability in small rural communities.

The logic model also outlines assumptions made by the graduate students upon obtaining a grant. This step consists of implementation of funding, participants will be identified, and will experience access to enter employment, develop an occupational identity, and gain support from partners to carry out the program.

The logic model explains the importance of external factors on the implementation and outcomes of the proposed project. External factors will consist of the short growing season in Wyoming, farmer’s market infrastructure, availability of grant funding for entrepreneurship, laws/regulations, and food safety concerns. These factors will be considered and dealt with as they arise in order to ensure the progress and success of the occupational identity program.

The final step of the logic model involves the evaluation of the project. Following implementation of grant funding and the entrepreneurship program participant interviews will be conducted to understand the quality of life experienced. A program survey would be dispersed following the workshop to discover if the program is meeting needs and expectations. The long term evaluation would be concerned with the number of successful business ventures, contributions, and self-sustenance.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRODUCT

The product is a grant proposal for the Western SARE graduate student grant to request funding for a program supporting entrepreneurial opportunities in sustainable agriculture for individuals with disabilities in rural Wyoming. The grant proposal is the final product the occupational therapy students produced to encourage a place for occupational therapy in creating community programs supporting occupational justice for socially disadvantaged individuals residing in rural Wyoming. The proposed program would have encouraged worker role identification and helped establish entrepreneurial network in the state of Wyoming.

The model chosen to guide the development of the program plan and grant proposal was Person-Environment-Occupation and Performance (PEOP) by Charles Christiansen and Carolyn Baum. This model was chosen because of its focus on occupational identity and its orientation to the community. The PEOP is “a client centered practice approach that can be applied to individuals, organizations, and population groups” (Cole & Tufano, p. 127). Authors found that as adolescents are transitioning to adulthood their need for an occupational identity becomes necessary and is often established through educational choices and worker roles. PEOP provides a model that encourages occupation in worker roles as an identity. “The domain of practice is predominately selected by the client, who is asked to identify the most important
occupational performance issue within the areas work/productive activities, personal care, home maintenance, sleep, recreation, and leisure” (Cole & Tufano, 2008. p.127).

PEOP is an applicable model in many situations where dysfunction has occurred. The emphasis placed on occupational identity makes for a natural fit within the program development. To develop the proposal the authors had established partnerships with Wyoming Farmer’s Market Association, AgrAbility, & Western SARE affiliate at the University of Wyoming to establish a population in need or interest of the proposed entrepreneurial program.

The following text is the proposal to SARE: Western SARE Graduate Student Grant

**Abstract:**

The proposed graduate student project will encourage entrepreneurship in sustainable agriculture for people with disabilities living in rural Wyoming, and subsequently increase the availability of locally and safely grown vegetables, crops, and animals needed for food security, nutrition, and health. The project will benefit growers with disabilities by assisting them in becoming owners, employers, and contributors to the rural and regional economy. This proposal is unique because it brings the knowledge, technology, and practices of ecologically sustainable agricultural practices, as well as the application of assistive technologies and disability accommodations, to bear on the disparities in employment experienced by people with disabilities or socially disadvantaged agricultural producers with chronic health conditions.

The project is also timely, since Wyoming stakeholders are endeavoring through cooperative extension’s efforts in research and education, state government entities, as well as the efforts of local growers; to improve the development of infrastructure for local
food production and markets. This graduate project will link the disability community to this movement, and expand the opportunities of youth and others with disabilities to become more self-sufficient, as they contribute to a better ecology of food production in Wyoming.

The context of agriculture in Wyoming represents a geographic area where locally grown food infrastructure is embryonic and emerging, and represents both a challenge and opportunity for implementing sustainable agricultural practices and increasing entrepreneurship for people with disabilities. Most fresh food products must travel hundreds of miles to reach Wyoming markets, and this is not a satisfactory or sustainable long term solution for food security. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (2010), over 11% of Wyoming residents do not have adequate food to meet daily nutritional nutrition requirements, and one in ten households struggle to find enough food on a daily basis. Increasing the number of food growers and the availability of locally grown food has the potential to alleviate this problem.

Although Wyoming has a short growing season (average Zone 4 and 140 day growing season) (USDA Hardiness Zone, 2011), as well as the highest mean elevation in the US and clay bearing soils (Ag in the Classroom, 2010); the use of sustainable practices and technology, such as permaculture, cover crops, low tunnels, and water conserving irrigation can create thriving micro-growing conditions in much of Wyoming. For example, sustainable agricultural methods would benefit all growers through education, technology, and application in using practices such as mulching, natural amendment of soil conditions for growing fresh food, improving pasturage for small livestock, integrated pest management, and extending growing seasons. Thus, the
purpose of this project, with the assistance of key consultants, is twofold: to provide training and education that will develop the capacity of organizations in the rural community who are involved in sustainable agriculture to be inclusive of people with disabilities. The second purpose of the project is to provide disability specific information, education, advocacy, and assistance to young persons with disabilities, and others with disabilities, about entrepreneurship in sustainable agriculture, assistive technology resources and modifications that enable participation in work tasks, and vocational rehabilitation and disability resources that would potentially support their working in sustainable agriculture.

The model being followed is a train-the-trainer educational model. Selected trainers will be educated on a curriculum emphasizing sustainable agriculture ventures and technology, business start-up and marketing, assistive technology for growers to accommodate disability, and resources to support beginning sustainable growing operations for people with disabilities. In turn, the trainers will hold a training event in their rural community which will be attended by the target audience of potential growers with disabilities, their advocates, and disability community stakeholders. Participants will be followed, and data will identify those who initiate the process of starting sustainable agriculture ventures, as well as increased efforts in growing food to increase their own food security.

Lastly, the most important outcome is the benefit that accrues to quality of life in rural communities through improving social conditions, social connections, economic effort, and preservation of green space, food security, local eco-environment, and availability of fresh, locally grown food.
The development of this project is a voluntary collaboration of individual growers with and without disabilities, Wyoming Farmers Market, Wyoming AgrAbility, University of Wyoming Extension Services, and others. University of Wyoming’s SARE Center manager is aware of this proposed project and if the grant is awarded, is agreeable to participating in the project as an advisor and consultant.

**Literature Review:**

People with disabilities living in rural areas face adversity in employment and participation in productive activities (University of Montana-RTC, 2007). In Wyoming, 33.7% of the rural population report having a disability, as well as having significant difficulty in preparing for, entering, and maintaining employment. For example, it is crucial that young adults transitioning from adolescence into adulthood discover and inhabit an occupational identity as a worker. (Christiansen & Matsuka, 2004, p. 3). Participation in productive tasks, activities, and occupations is a way to explore and interact in worker roles that establish the enduring patterns, habits, routines, and rituals of work life needed to be accepted in society and also to contribute to the quality of life and economic viability of rural communities. However, “Young adults with health conditions may find barriers to competitive employment and their choices may be limited by societal attitudes as well” (Cole & Tufano, 2008, p. 220). Also, many adults with disabilities (including socially disadvantaged agricultural producers) may face adversity in obtaining or maintaining employment, and may benefit from developing or seeking alternative farm enterprises (Breaking New Ground-Enterprising Ideas, 1995).

According to the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, entrepreneurship is a means of achieving economic independence for people with
disabilities, and is a practical option for working. The proposed project will build capacity of rural communities to develop changed attitudes and encourage working relationships with entrepreneurs with disabilities through the participation of extension educators, 4-H, farmers market groups, Master Gardeners, and sustainable agriculture experts to develop and train new growers who have disabling conditions. A review of the National SARE, National Agricultural Library, and CRIS research databases document similar efforts to promote youth’s participation in agriculture, rural community development, and assisting individuals with socially disadvantaged backgrounds, however this has not generalized to people with disabilities to assist them in successfully engaging in entrepreneurial agriculture (See reference list). This proposal is unique because no other program, thus far, has directly targeted youth with disabilities, and other people with disabilities, in rural areas to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to work and/or develop businesses in sustainable agriculture.

**Objective and Performance Targets:**

**Pre-Program Planning Steps**

1. Occupational therapy graduate students will develop an extensive body of evidence based information in order to develop the proposed education and training program needed by young adults with disabilities, and others, to support participation and work in sustainable agricultural ventures, prior to October 1, 2011.

2. Occupational therapy graduate students will collaborate with local sustainable growers and agricultural and disability consultants in preparing the training and educational curriculum and content by October 1, 2011.
Program Implementation Steps

1. Graduate students, the advisory council, and the coordinator will develop accessible educational materials in sustainable agriculture for people with disabilities, to be disseminated to agricultural educators, extension agents, or other trainers in a train-the-trainer format by March 2012.

2. Quarterly meetings with project advisors will be conducted to report on progress and discuss input, revisions, feedback, and recommendations regarding the educational program from Oct. 2011 to Nov. 2012.

3. The graduate students will market and promote the dates of the workshops, locations, and educational materials within the state of Wyoming. The marketing and promotion information will be distributed through University of Wyoming Extension service, Wyoming AgrAbility, Wyoming Farmers Market Association, public service announcement, and other organizations and entities. The marketing and promotion strategies will target train-the-trainer educators willing to work with young people and others with disabilities, by November 30, 2012; as well as the training sessions by the trainers.

4. By September 2012, graduate students, the principal investigator, and key advisors/consultants will conduct a workshop at the University of Wyoming’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Lingle, Wyoming for the selected trainers.

5. Graduate students and the project coordinator will collect Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program Outreach Survey and other data collection following the workshop to generate data regarding the efficacy and perceptions of
participants by September 31, 2012. The results will be reported to SARE. A three-month post workshop survey will document efforts by potential growers to enter, scale up, convert, or begin sustainable growing.

6. The trainers in attendance of the workshop will return to their communities to implement the educational program to educate young adults with disabilities and others about the opportunities for entrepreneurship in sustainable agriculture by October 31, 2012.

7. The Principal investigator and graduate students will collect data after the workshops to determine how many grower ventures and growing efforts are started after the trainings, by Nov. 2012.

8. The principal investigator’s findings of the study will be reported to SARE and disseminated in selected peer-reviewed publications, posters, or paper presentations.

**Material and Methods:**

Community-Based Participatory Research is the project method that will be utilized to design, carry out, and evaluate the outcomes of the educational program. This approach will be most effective because it incorporates the energy and input of stakeholders into every aspect of design, implementation, and assessment; as well as to share in the benefits of the project’s findings. The project design is a mixed method research study using pre-post survey instruments designed to capture quantifiable data and qualitative information. The materials necessary to carry out the program include a laptop for graduate students to store and utilize project information and secure data. The project will require the printing of educational materials for the conducted workshops and survey materials during workshop, along with a follow-up two-three months post grower workshops. Alternative formats (meeting section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation
Act of 1973, as amended) of workshop materials will be prepared in large text as well as audio, video, or braille alternative formats if requested.

The project intervention is a “train-the-trainer” workshop utilizing demonstration, didactic, hands on, and discussion based educational strategies targeted at increasing participation of people with disabilities in sustainable agriculture. The trainers will replicate the program for community members with disabilities who are interested in entrepreneurship. The train-the-trainer workshop will take place at the University of Wyoming Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center in September 2012. The trainers will then carry out at least one program during the study timeframe in a variety of rural communities in counties with Extension Services, fairgrounds, or demonstration farms with adequate handicap accessible meeting space, parking, and room for teaching and demonstrating growing techniques and assistive technologies for growers.

The evaluation utilizes a pre-post survey that will be determining the efficacy of the workshop with results provided to SARE, the CBPR group, and external audiences. The pre-workshop survey will query participants about current knowledge of sustainable agriculture, employment barriers, knowledge or resources, and quality of life. After the workshop information regarding the efficacy of the workshop and educational materials an exit survey will be conducted at the conclusion of the workshop. The post-workshop survey will query participants about actions taken after the workshop indicating an increase in participation in sustainable agriculture, use of work incentive resources or vocational rehabilitation services, acquisition of assistive technology for growing, and improved quality of life. The surveys will be based on Likert scales using interval data.
The data will be coded, categorized, and themed to determine whether change has occurred.

The trainers at the initial workshop at the University of Wyoming Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center will then implement the education program within their home community. The graduate students will assist the trainers in setting up workshops and register participants. If the program is successful, trainers will be encouraged to continue the programs, and securing additional non-profit foundation funding will be prospected to support their activities.

**Impacts and Outcomes**

It is anticipated that the program will improve the overall quality of life for young adults with disabilities and other people with disabilities living in rural Wyoming, and continue to support sustainable agriculture practices. The following are the expected future outcomes:

1) Increase the number of people with disabilities taking part in sustainable agriculture endeavors
2) Develop an enduring program to educate and enhance individuals with disabilities participation in sustainable agriculture
3) Promote sustainable agriculture practices in Wyoming
4) Contribute to the local and state agricultural economy in Wyoming
5) Improve the quality of life for adults with disabilities
6) Improve global food security on the local and state level
7) Support rural community development
8) Increase the knowledge of sustainable agriculture practices within the state of Wyoming
9) Increase the availability of locally grown food
10) Increase awareness and utilization of resources to support working with a disability.
Approximately 33.7% of the rural population in Wyoming identifies as having a disability and having disparities in employment and quality of life; a significant number of them could benefit from using the program to increase knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for employment, business planning, and increasing nutrition through growing food for home use or for selling.

**Publications and Educational Material**

The journals that will be targeted for publication of the proposed project will be 1) Journal of Sustainable Agriculture 2) Journal of Extension 3) American Journal of Occupational Therapy 4) Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 5) Occupational Therapy Practice 6) Poster presentations at Priester National Extension Health Conference or American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference.

Educational materials that will be developed and distributed will include a train the trainer work notebook for educators working in Wyoming. It will also include a workshop notebook for consumer participants with articles, handouts, and worksheets needed to make an informed decision about starting a growing venture using sustainability practices. The program will provide participants training and education in the principles and philosophy of sustainable agriculture; the need for the economical, ecological, and nutritional benefits of sustainable methods within communities in Wyoming; information and demonstration on specific sustainable technologies and practices in teaching skills such as: soil and soil amendments, mulching, water/irrigation conservation methods, planting/harvesting on a small and/micro scale, small live stock, integrated pest control, and creating venues where items could be sold or participating in
local farmers market organizations. A variety of assistive technologies to support working and completing tasks by people with disabilities will be demonstrated. Additional information for utilizing available funding resources for employment, self-employment, assistive technologies, job supports, or job coaching through Wyoming vocational rehabilitation programs in the state, as well as Social Security work incentives like Ticket to Work and Plan for Achieving Self Sufficiency (PASS).

Included in the program will be all the basic information for business planning and start-up, with specific attention to utilization of a SWOT analysis, marketing, financial considerations, necessary insurance, start-up costs of specific enterprises, and the pros/cons of taking part in these enterprises. There will be self-evaluation tools to properly identify personal strengths of the individuals and the support system they have in order to assess their readiness for entrepreneurship. Lastly, the program will contain an extensive resource section for gathering further information (i.e. ATTRA, University of Wyoming Extension, Master Gardeners, Value-Added production, etc.)

Dissemination of results includes: targeting publication of papers emanating from the project programming; uploading the entire education workbook for publically accessible download in Word, large text, and Adobe PDF for interested parties, from state AgrAbility websites. The program would also be marketed via AgrAbility Facebook sites and production of a 3 minute short You Tube video of people with disabilities from the project growing and/or selling food.

Outreach Plans:

Press releases to all Wyoming Newspapers will be disseminated once the grant is obtained to increase awareness by producer/potential producers and general audiences.
The trainers will be assisted to publicize their training events to local producers as well as register participants for the free workshops. Specific statewide newspapers will be approached for local feature stories/success stories as opportunities evolve. Also, the information will be disseminated to disability and agriculture groups and organizations throughout Wyoming.

List of Education and Outreach Events:

1. Train the Trainer Workshop in “Sustainable Futures” Program in Lingle, Wyoming.

2. Up to twelve county producer education and demonstration sessions, to be determined, reaching a range of participants (80-120).

**Producer Adoption/Changes:**

After completing the training course in September 2012, the trained educators in Wyoming will be able to identify and implement the training program for individuals with disabilities living in rural Wyoming who would likely benefit from support to begin or continue practices in sustainable agriculture. Once the trainers have the educational materials and knowledge of available resources it is expected that they will then disseminate the knowledge to individuals in their local area. People with disabilities who are growers, or want to become growers, will have enhanced knowledge, skills, and resources to engage in sustainable agriculture practices. As a result, it is expected that those people with disabilities who engage in the actual program will increase their overall quality of life by having improved food security for themselves, and for others within the state, by contributing to the local and state agricultural economy. They will also have the
necessary information to adopt sustainable practices and profit economically from bringing agricultural products to market.

For educators attending the workshops in September 2012, the Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program Outreach Survey will be utilized to assess participant opinions on how beneficial they feel the program was and how they plan to implement and carry out the program to individuals within their community. Producers that are educated by the trainers attending the workshop will be asked to complete a survey prior to receiving the program and one immediately following to measure a change in perceived competency in entrepreneurship using sustainable agriculture practices. Three months post workshop, the participants will once again be asked to complete a final survey in order to determine the successfulness of the program at encouraging entrepreneurship. The surveys will be devised using a mixed method design; quantitatively using a Likert scale to determine perceptions of their quality of life, their overall skills in sustainable agriculture practices and knowledge of available resources. Open ended questions will be utilized to determine what participants felt was beneficial and what changes could be made to enhance the program if necessary.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

As all adolescents are transitioning into new roles of adulthood they begin facing many new challenges in trying to establish themselves in their community, family, social environment and worker roles. Literature has shown that these transitions can be difficult for all individuals, especially those who have disabilities. Rural communities are at an even higher disadvantage for having the opportunities to explore occupational prospects. Entrepreneurship has proven to be a viable option as means to obtain occupational identity for these adolescents with disabilities living in rural communities.

Through a selected literature review it was shown that using sustainable agriculture techniques and/or niche markets as an entrepreneurial endeavor can offer these individuals with disabilities various opportunities to obtain employment that allows participation in meaningful work. This type of employment will allow the individuals to set their own hours, develop their own benefits package, and define their job duties around limitations they may experience as a result of the disability.

A Western SARE graduate student grant was prospected as a viable funding source to assist student researchers in creating, designing, and implementing a program plan that would educate entrepreneurial opportunities for adolescents in rural Wyoming pertaining to sustainable agriculture techniques. The biggest limitation encountered in being able to carry out the proposed program plan was not being awarded with grant approval and funding from the Western SARE program. Feedback from the grant review
committee supported the program, but suggested further investigation into specific population data of the adolescents interested in agriculture as an entrepreneurial endeavor (See Appendix E for specific feedback and suggestions).

Another limitation identified was that few programs exist to provide transitional services to adolescents with disabilities in Wyoming. This at-risk population is difficult to obtain demographic data or contact information. This limitation affected the projected outcome of the grant proposal and program plan. Continued research and transitional programming is necessary regarding adolescents with a disability transitioning out of school systems and into the workforce.

The grant and proposed program plan was completed and submitted on May 24, 2011. On July 29, 2011 student authors were notified of their program not being selected for funding. Had the program plan been selected the student authors would have conducted a train the trainer workshop at the Western SARE Experimental Farm in Lingle, Wyoming to educate current extension agents and high school agriculture teachers on training youth with disabilities in sustainable agriculture and providing them with resources necessary to explore self-employment options.

It is the author’s recommendations that further investigation into obtaining specific statistics of how many adolescents with disabilities living in rural Wyoming are interested in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors in sustainable agriculture. Once statistics are determined to support the need for the project it is anticipated that the program can be resubmitted in the future to Western SARE for approval and implementation.
Appendix A

Letters of Support
May 24, 2011

To: Western SARE Grant Review Committee

Fr: Randy R. Weigel, Ph.D.  Randolph R. Weigel

Re: Letter of Support and Commitment

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support and commitment to participate in the SARE project: **Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Agriculture for People with Disabilities.** I currently serve as project director for Wyoming AgrAbility. In addition, I am a specialist with the University of Wyoming (UW) Cooperative Extension and professor in the UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. We will be able to utilize the expertise of these three entities in support of this project:

- Assistive technology and accommodation for agriculture
- Entrepreneurship and small acreage initiative
- Production agriculture and agricultural business planning

When a rancher or farmer sustains an injury or limitation leading to disability, they are often counseled to find a different occupation. However, ranching and farming is not an occupation; it is a way of life. They are not interested in finding something different; they want to continue in agriculture. They may not be able to resume their previous agricultural practice; but they can still be a vibrant contributor to the agriculture industry and Wyoming’s economy.

Throughout the nation’s agriculture industry, there is an increasing movement of ranchers and farmers with disability who are developing alternative, sustainable agricultural enterprises. This project will allow both Wyoming agriculture to participate in this movement and Wyoming ranchers, farmers and their families to continue to be active contributors to agriculture.

I strongly support this proposal and commit to be an active resource to it.
Dear Carla:

Griffin-Hammis Associates is happy to offer this letter of support regarding your application to the USDA to firmly establish self-employment and business ownership for individuals with disabilities across Wyoming. We fully endorse your proposal and will collaborate in any way possible.

As you know, Griffin-Hammis Associates published the first how-to book of national significance on the employment of individuals with significant disabilities in 2003 (now in revision), which was in-part informed by our work in many rural states while we were still employed with the Rural Institute at the University of Montana, and specifically through several years of intense work across Wyoming creating self-employment opportunities using US Dept. of Labor funds. Prior to that we worked on multi-year disability-employment projects across Wyoming, and also worked nationally helping AgrAbility integrate self-employment strategies in several states.

This project will benefit growers with disabilities by assisting them in becoming owners, employers, and contributors to the rural and regional economy. This proposal is unique because it brings the knowledge, technology, and practices of ecologically sustainable agricultural practices, as well as the application of assistive technologies and disability accommodations, to bear in employment for people with disabilities or socially disadvantaged agricultural producers with chronic health conditions.

As someone who grew up working on farms, who worked extensively with migrant families, and who believes self-employment is a strong and viable option, I am glad to see you continue your work in this area. We stand ready to assist with materials, we also have a new on-line asynchronous course on self-employment that may help with you train-the-trainer's efforts, and of course we are available for individualized consultations.

All the best with your proposal, it certainly deserves funding.

Sincerely,

Cary Griffin
Senior Partner
Appendix B

Logic Model
**Program Action – Logic Model**

**Situation:** WILR does not currently have the funding for a licensed occupational therapist and would like to collaborate with local occupational therapy students to enhance current and future programs. A loan closet being utilized by WILR is lacking consumer information when distributing equipment, they currently have no educational protocol to follow when loaning equipment to consumers. WILR currently uses over twenty different intake forms and are in need of a holistic rapport building assessment that follows an occupation based model.

**Priorities:** 1) Designing consumer guides to provide comprehensive usage information to the consumers of WILR. 2) Implement a holistic intake assessment using the Ecological Human Performance model.

**Inputs**
- Graduate Students (time, energy)
- Advisor’s (time, energy)
- WILR staff
- Literature Review
- Developing Partnerships

**Outputs**
- Activities
  - Contacting and meeting with potential WILR staff
  - Designing the guides & holistic intake
  - Implementing proposed plan
  - In service training to WILR employees
- Participation
  - Graduate students
  - Student advisor
  - WILR executive director
  - WILR employees
  - Future students

**Outcomes – Impact**
- Consumer Guide
- EHP holistic intake guide

**Short Term**
- Delivery of an in-service training regarding the Ecological Human Performance Model to guide in-take procedures
- Delivery of training to WILR on proper selection, usage and education on independent living devices

**Medium Term**
- Safe and comprehensive use of loan closet items.
- Utilization of holistic intake form for all assessments

**Long Term**
- Future students

**Assumptions**
- WILR is receptive to our services.
- WILR will successfully implement the services provided by occupational therapy students.

**External Factors**
- Time constraints of both graduate students and WILR employees
- Job demands inhibiting follow through.

**Evaluation**
Employee Interview: Follow up interviews with WILR employees to assess the efficacy of the occupational therapy students consumer guide and holistic in-take form.

Program Survey: Did the guides to consumers help with selection, education and safe use

Long-term: Continued use of services suggested and a continued partnership with UND/CC in future classes.
Appendix C

Surveys
Pre-Workshop Survey

Please tell us a little bit more about yourself!

Your initials: ________________

Age: ________________

Gender: ____________

County of residence: ____________________

Identify current disability: (please check all that apply)

☐ Developmental
☐ Learning
☐ Physical
☐ Sensory (i.e. vision, hearing, etc.)
☐ Mental Health
☐ Advocate for persons with disabilities.

How would you rate your current knowledge in sustainable agriculture?

No knowledge  Little knowledge  Some knowledge  Significant amount  Extensive amount

1  2  3  4  5

Do you currently grow food or raise animals?  Yes  No

If yes, what do you grow or raise?

Do you currently receive income from growing food or raising animals?

None  Little  Some  Quite a bit  Ag is primary source of income

1  2  3  4  5

Rate your current skills in technology for sustainable agriculture.

No skills  Little skills  Some skills  Significant skills  Extensive skills

1  2  3  4  5

Rate your personal opinion of you current abilities in business planning and marketing.

No skills  Little skills  Some skills  Significant skills  Extensive skills

1  2  3  4  5

Do you feel your ability to work is limited in any way?
What limits you from being able to do your work? (please check all that apply)

☐ Impairment in function or body structure (physical, sensory, cognitive, etc.)
☐ Built environment (access to buildings, tools, equipment, accommodations)
☐ Societal barriers (attitudes, discrimination, etc.)
☐ Limited job availability/opportunity for people with disabilities
☐ Limitations in transportation/access to community
☐ Other (please list) _____________________________________________________

Rate your awareness of resources to increase participation in sustainable agriculture.

None    Small amount    Some awareness    Significant amount    Extensive amount
1        2               3                  4                       5

Rate your awareness of assistive technology to increase participation in sustainable agriculture.

None    Small amount    Some awareness    Significant amount    Extensive amount
1        2               3                  4                       5

Rate your awareness of funding options to assist in participating in sustainable agriculture.

None    Small amount    Some awareness    Significant amount    Extensive amount
1        2               3                  4                       5

Overall how would you describe your quality of life, taking into account physical, emotional, social, spiritual and financial?

Very bad 0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   excellent

Please describe below what you would personally like to get out of today’s workshop.
Post-Workshop Survey

Your initials: __________________

Age: __________________

Gender: ________________

County: __________________

How would you rate your changes in your overall knowledge of sustainable agriculture?

No changes  Limited changes  Some changes  Significant amount  Extensive amount

1  2  3  4  5

Please rate your ability to find information and resources to participate in sustainable agriculture.

No changes  Limited changes  Some changes  Significant amount  Extensive amount

1  2  3  4  5

Rate the change in your current abilities in business planning and marketing after the workshop

No change  Little change  Some change  Significant change  Extensive change

1  2  3  4  5

Rate the change in your awareness of assistive technology to increase participation in sustainable agriculture after the workshop

No change  Little change  Some change  Significant change  Extensive change

1  2  3  4  5

Rate the change in your understanding of skills in technology for sustainable agriculture after the workshop.

No change  Little change  Some change  Significant change  Extensive change

1  2  3  4  5

Overall how beneficial do you feel the workshop has been?

Not beneficial  A little bit  Somewhat  Significantly beneficial  Extensively beneficial

1  2  3  4  5

What was the best part of this workshop?
What could we do better next time?

What are your future plans for using sustainable agriculture practices?
Three Month Follow-Up Survey

Your initials: ________________

Age: ________________

Gender: ________________

County: ________________

How would you rate your current knowledge in sustainable agriculture since attending the workshop?

No knowledge   Little knowledge  Some knowledge  Significant amount  Extensive amount
1               2                   3                       4                     5

Do you currently grow food or raise animals?  Yes  No

If yes, what do you grow or raise?

If no, are you planning on growing food or raising animals? What do you plan to grow or raise?

Do you currently receive income from growing food or raising animals?

None   Little   Some   Quite a bit   Ag is primary source of income

Since you have received training offered in the workshop and were provided with resources, do you feel your limitations to engage in work have changed in any way?

None   Little   Some   Quite a bit   Extensive changes

On a scale of 1-10 please rate how beneficial you believe the training and program plan was to you personally.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Please describe your rating:

Overall how would you describe your quality of life, taking into account physical, emotional, social, spiritual and financial?

Very bad  0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  excellent
### 2011 Timeline

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### 2012 Timeline

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Appendix E

Budget
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Budget Justification for Sustainable Futures:

A. Salaries and Wages

*Sustainable Futures* will require the efforts of one Principal Investigator (PI) supervising and assisting graduate students carry out the work plan with emphasis on data collection, data analysis, fiscal oversight, and required university and project reporting. The two graduate students will oversee and carry out of the project’s educational programming, scheduling, communications, marketing, and other activities that culminate in completing the work plan.

One Principal Investigator @ .5 FTE for 16 months = $2,500
Two Graduate Students @ .25 FTE @ $9.00 wage per hour for 16 months = $12,240

B. Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits will be provided to the Principal Investigator 25% of the proposed salary for the duration of 16 months. The graduate students will each receive a $750 allowance for the duration of the first year and a pro-rated cost for the second year.

One Principal Investigator @ 25% Fringe for 16 months = $625
Two Graduate Students @ $750 Fringe for 16 months = $1,875

C. Total Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits (A plus B)

Year One: Principal Investigator salary plus fringe = $2,344
Year Two: Principal Investigator salary plus fringe = $781
Year One: Two graduate students’ salary plus fringe = $10,860
Year Two: Two graduate students’ salary plus fringe = $3,255

Total: $17,240

D. Nonexpendable Equipment

No funding for nonexpendable equipment necessary

E. Materials and Supplies

The materials and supplies that will be necessary to carry out the proposed project will be all general miscellaneous office supplies @ $100 per person X 3 for 16 months, three toner cartridge for laser printer @ $67 each, six boxes printer paper @ $20 each, $322 in postage = Total: $943
F. Travel

It is anticipated that approximately twelve trainers will attend the training session in Sept. 2012 along with 3 project staff and two volunteer instructors (Randy Weigel and Jim Freeburn) for a total of 17 people being reimbursed for travel expenses. All 17 individuals will be provided with a $77 for hotel accommodations for one night. They will further be provided with $46 for one day of per diem, as well as $50 gas cards to assist in fuel costs for traveling.

17 travelers with hotel accommodations for one night stay @ $77 = $1309

17 travelers @ $46 Per Diem for one day = $782

$50 dollar gas cards to assist in cost of fuel for 12 trainers = $600

Mileage at $0.51 per mile for project staff and instructors (Total miles @ 526, RT Casper, RT Laramie) = $268

Total travel cost for year one: $2,959

Additional travel costs included in budget are for one graduate student to attend the yearly annual extension (?) conference in the destination still to be announced in the Spring of 2013. The student will travel to and present the projects program plan and the findings received from all participants.

Round trip airfare for one student traveler to annual conference = $1000

Registration fee for attendance to annual conference = $280

Hotel accommodations for 4 nights to attend conference = $360

Per Diem for five days to attend conference = $230

Total travel cost for year two: $1,870

G. Publication Costs/Page Charges

There will be no money necessary for publication costs during the first year of the proposed program. The second year $300 is requested for poster and manuscript preparation.

Total=$300

H. Computer (ADPE) Costs

No funding requested at this time for computer costs.

I. All Other Direct Costs

All educational materials that will be presented at the training session in Lingle, as well as the materials that will be provided to educators to take back to their communities will be printed at Kinko’s in Casper, WY. The educational booklets will be no more than 300
pages with black and white printing, coil binding, and cover tabs at 150 educational packages @ $9.00 apiece; $363 prepared catered lunch for trainer workshop to maintain the continuity of the meeting.

\[ \text{Total} = 1,688 \]

J. **Total Direct costs (C through I)**

- Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits: \( = 17,240 \)
- Non expendable equipment \( = 0 \)
- Materials and supplies \( = 943 \)
- Travel \( = 4,829 \)
- Publication costs/page charges \( = 300 \)
- Other Direct costs \( = 1,688 \)

K. **Indirect Costs/Tuition Reimbursement**

No indirect costs or tuitions reimbursement requested.

L. **Total amount of this request**

In order to adequately produce and implement the proposed program work plan the full amount of $25,000 is requested at this time.
Appendix F

SARE Feedback
Dear Nicole,

Thank you for submitting your Graduate Student proposal to the Western SARE Program. This proposal - Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Agriculture for People with Disabilities - has been reviewed by our Review Committee and was not selected for funding at this time. Please know of our sincere appreciation for your efforts. We realize that the creation of an application takes valuable time and effort.

A summary of reviewer comments will be sent in a separate mailing. We encourage you to reapply under the parameters of the 2012 Call for Proposals (CFP). All new CFPs will be on the Western SARE website - http://westernsare.org - in April of 2012.

Sincerely,

Robert Newhall, Deputy Coordinator
Western SARE Program
Phone: 435.797.2183
Email: bob.newhall@usu.edu
GW12-039 - Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Agriculture for People with Disabilities
Nicole Likewise

ABSTRACT
- There is a lot of information in here. I see the link between training people with disabilities in sustainable ag practices and increasing the amount of locally grown food. But there is also information on barriers to growing more locally in WY that these trainings can't address. And there isn't information on need --- are there people with disabilities who wish to farm? How many? Are they in areas with consumer demand for local foods?
- Sounds really unique

LITERATURE REVIEW
- Ok review. I don't understand "socially disadvantaged" -- are they considered disabled? Or are you saying disable people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds? If so, does your project target all people with disabilities or those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds?
- Good. Shows originality

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE TARGETS
- Ambitious project. I'm still unclear of target audience beyond the trainers. How many people with disabilities would be reached? With any disability or specific ones? Is the idea that they'd start farming right away? Is this feasible -- access to land and capital?? Or is the idea that they could start working on existing farms?
- Ok
- Good layout of performance targets. Clear objective statements lacking.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
- Good.
- Curious as to estimate of how many folks with disabilities are interested in ag.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES
- I think that this is too broad. Will training a few trainers get so many new farmers that the regional food system will be impacted? And how are sustainable ag practices defined?
- You answered part of my question above.
- Potential for high impact project. Statement of outcomes is comprehensive.

PUBLICATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
- Good.
- Good
- Work notebook for training others will be a valuable addition.

OUTREACH PLAN

- Ok. What is the purpose of #2?
- Evaluation plan?
- Broad reach with the train the trainer workshop and the multiple county producer education sessions.

PRODUCER ADOPTION/REACTION

- Good
- Pre-, post- and follow up surveys will provide a powerful tool to assess changes.

BUDGET

- Hits the $25,000 mark exactly.
- Good

GENERAL COMMENTS

Could be a good project. I think it needs to be more thought out or clearer in how many potential new growers are there, are there people with disabilities who want and can start their own farm, how that may or may not impact the local food system and how existing farmers are involved in the training. Really unique.
References

Ag in the classroom. (2010). A look at Wyoming agriculture. Retrieved from:


http://agrability.org/About-AgrAbility/index.cfm


http://www.sare.org/


