

Occupational Education in Career Development

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A WELL developed occupational preparation program is something each student should be exposed to during his 13 years of public education. The saying, "vocational education is nice for someone else's child," must be changed to "occupational education is of value to all children." This change will not occur unless the curriculum planners at the local level exert an honest effort to develop some form of awareness of occupational education in Board of Education members, administrators, parents, and, most important, the teachers in the local school system.

A logical first step at the local level would be to answer the basic questions: (a) How well are we meeting the occupational goals indicated in our statement of philosophy and/or objectives? (b) How well are our graduates, who do not go on to post-secondary education, doing in the world of work? (c) If we release a statement to the press regarding the number of graduates who are accepted into college, do we do likewise for the students who enter the world of work immediately after graduation?

The members of a school district seriously concerned about developing a total program of occupational education for all the children of the district must first review what

is presently available for the children. After this review, the next step will be to develop a model program of occupational education suitable to the characteristics of the district and the needs of the children. Well spelled-out objectives should be included as a part of the model. The total curriculum development leadership for such a project must come from the person responsible for curriculum development for the district. A piecemeal fragmentation, with each level going its own way, will not result in a total program of occupational education.

Planning should also involve representatives from the "area" vocational school and the community college or colleges so that a total program of occupational education might result. The model program would involve objectives and appropriate curriculum content starting with kindergarten and continuing through grade 12, with articulation with the programs of grades 13 and 14 in the community colleges. A logical division would be as follows: Kindergarten to grade 5; grades 6 to 9; grades 10 to 12; grades 13 and

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14 in the community colleges. The model would reflect articulation between and among the various levels. Modification of the model would be necessary based upon the organizational structure at the local level.

Why?

Most people will work for a living at some time during their life span. Gainful employment is essential for most people in order to provide the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. The U.S. Department of Labor, in *U.S. Manpower in the 1970's*, reports the following:

Labor force participation of married women with children has increased sharply—even for those with very young children.

White-collar workers will continue to outnumber blue-collar by more than 50 percent in 1980. However, 31 million workers will be employed in blue-collar jobs, an increase of more than 2 million over 1970.

The number of service workers will continue to increase in the 70's. The number of farm workers will decline still further.

Jobs in craft skills are increasingly well rewarded financially, reflecting a continuing need for highly skilled workers in the economy.¹

What are the implications, if any, of these projections for your local educational program?

Some form of occupational education is necessary for all children in the public schools. The form does not have to be the traditional hands-on type of experience for all children. One aspect of occupational education should be to develop an awareness in children of the contemporary and future world of work. Such a task falls to all the professionals in teaching and not just the small groups of educators in home economics, business and office occupations, industrial arts, trade and technical, agricultural, and the distributive education specializations. The total staff or a cross section of staff members must be involved in the planning if a meaningful program is to result.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, *U.S. Manpower in the 1970's*. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

When?

The curriculum coordinator, superintendent, principal, teacher, or board member really concerned with a total program of occupational education should attempt to develop a program starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade 12, with close articulation with the community colleges in the area. Such a program might stress *awareness* of the world of work in grades K to 5. One simple unit dealing with the world of work might be included during each of the six years.

In grades 6 to 9 or 10, the program might stress the theme of *introduction* to the world of work. At this level, a good amount of input would be expected from the guidance staff of the school. The introduction to the world of work might involve a study of occupations as well as the tools, processes, and materials associated with the various occupations. Such a program might be patterned after the Introduction to Vocations program which has been operational in New Jersey for a number of years.

The problem area remains the program at the upper secondary level. Specializations such as those available in the area vocational schools in New York State are perhaps suited to the needs of many students. Yet the problem of career decision at the end of grade 9 or 10 remains a serious concern. Any occupational or vocational program that blocks a student from post-secondary education at the community college or college level should be of serious concern to all educators. The greatest degree of caution must be taken in planning a meaningful program of occupational education at this level.

Specialization for many students might take place in high school, but for others the most appropriate place may be the programs in the community colleges. Communication and articulation must exist between the public school and the local community college or colleges in regard to the occupational education program.

The school staff really concerned about occupational education will attempt to develop a model program to best serve the

students in the district. To be most effective, it should be a K-12 effort and not something left to the high school staff alone.

How? and Where?

The "how" and "where" questions might best be answered by those designing the program at the local level. What follows is an attempt to present a number of operational programs with some of their respective characteristics which may be of value in planning a program for your school district. Many other types of program organization are also in operation in various school districts. Additional research on the local level would be desirable before a decision is made on the "model" for the local program.

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 6

Technology for Children. There exists in New Jersey a new curriculum called Technology for Children, which is designed for the best interest of the child. In four short years it has caught the attention of New Jersey educators and received widespread acceptance. Sponsored by the Division of Vocational Education, New Jersey State Department of Education, and co-funded by the Ford Foundation, its adoption by educators is mushrooming because the child is given "prime time." The supporters, who commend the assistance of the staff of Technology for Children Project, are teachers who have long sought ways to make school interesting, knowing that learning can actually be entertaining and should be pleasant and intriguing.²

For more information, contact: Fred Dreves, Director, Technology for Children, Vocational Division, New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey.

Elementary School Industrial Arts Center. The primary function of this program at the McDonald School is to "provide a richness of

² Fred J. Dreves. "Emphasis on the Child." *Man Society Technology* 30: 116-19; January 1971.

"Some form of occupational education is necessary for all children in the public schools."

experience" for the children. The Industrial Arts Center is considered a laboratory where students are given an opportunity to explore and experiment with the technological and esthetic aspects of their experiences in the classroom. The interrelationships among the various materials, processes, and crafts in every phase of industrial production can be adapted to the endeavors of the elementary school child.

Contact: Donald Hoffman, Centennial School District, Warminster, Pennsylvania.

Georgia Plan. This plan is an organizational structure for a kindergarten through grade 12 program of providing occupational education. At the elementary grades level, industrial arts is an important part of the program. The concern at this level is with occupations and the products of industry. Informal construction activities and a study of the world of work occur. Students are involved in reading, writing, and speaking about people and the work that they do.

Contact: Donald Hackett, Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, Georgia.

GRADES 6 TO 9

Introduction to Vocations. This program was started in 1965 by the Division of Vocational Education of the New Jersey Department of Education. The program is designed to aid the student in gaining occupational awareness. It is a year-long program divided into cycles—periods of two or three weeks' duration based upon one period per day. Time allotments are flexible, and vary with the needs of the individual, the group, and the available facilities. Cycling units include a minimum of four areas, such as home economics, industrial arts, business education, and science.

Contact: Margaret Blair, Director, Intro-

Future ASCD Annual Conferences

1973	March 17-21	Minneapolis	Minneapolis Auditorium
1974	March 9-13	Anaheim	Anaheim Convention Center
1975	March 15-19	New Orleans	Rivergate
1976	March 14-17	Miami Beach	Convention Center

duction to Vocations, Vocational Division, New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey.

Maryland Plan. This is a program of Industrial Arts developed by Donald Maley in cooperation with the Montgomery County (Maryland) School System. The plan is operational and functional in grades 7, 8, and 9. In the seventh grade, an *anthropological* approach to the study of certain basic elements common to all civilized mankind makes use of the unit method of instruction. At the eighth grade level, the *contemporary* approach to the study of American industry uses the group process, group project, and line product technique. At the ninth grade level, the program is an elective and is of a *personal nature*. The content emphasis is on contemporary units of study.

Contact: Donald Maley, Department of Industrial Education, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

Industrial Arts Curriculum Project. The IACP is a two-year industrial program in industrial technology for junior high school age students. The first year of the two-year course is called "The World of Construction," and is a study of man's managed production system which produces society's constructed projects. The second year's course is a study of man's managed production system which produces society's manufactured products.

Contact: Donald Lux, College of Education, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

GRADES 10 TO 12

New York State—BOCES. Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) have become an integral part of the public education structure of New York State. Each of some 60 BOCES in the state helps to serve areas encompassing a group of school districts. Most BOCES sponsor a center designed to provide entry level employment to the students in attendance. The student spends about one-half of his school day in his home school and the other half in the "area" vocational center.

Contact: Division of Occupational Education, State Department of Education, Albany, New York.

Project "ABLE." The principal goal of Project ABLE is to demonstrate increased effectiveness of instruction whose content is explicitly derived from analysis of desired behavior after graduation and which in addition attempts

to apply newly developed educational technology to the design and evaluation of vocational education. The plan is implemented through a curriculum which includes 11 broad occupational families.

Contact: Quincy Public Schools, Quincy, Massachusetts.

Occupational Skills. This is a short-term/after-school, noncredit program in occupational skills. A number of short-term courses are offered each semester during the school term. All students are encouraged to take as many of the courses as they desire and have time for. Classes meet usually for seven or eight weeks, one afternoon per week, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. It is a very flexible type of arrangement and worthy of consideration.

Contact: Robert Moscato, Maryvale High School, Cheektowaga, New York.

As a part of the curriculum planning effort to develop a model occupational education program for the local school district, investigate, visit, and gather as much information as possible from programs already operational. It is doubtful whether one would be able to find in operation a K-12 program which would be operational and suitable to the needs of his own community. Yet one should find many interesting and valuable programs from a number of different areas which, when put together into a model, would form the bases of a total program.

Preparation for and knowledge about the world of work for our students is too important a consideration to be left to chance alone. Occupational education should be a concern of all those associated with the public school. Occupational education should be a part of the program of each student. Do not confuse a K-12 occupational education program with the traditional type of vocational education of the past.

Someone in each school district must show a serious concern for occupational education if a really valuable program is to result. If such an idea and program "turns on" the curriculum coordinator in your school district, great. If not, the leadership and pressure will have to start at the classroom level, with those teachers who believe that some form of occupational education is essential for all children. □

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