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AUTHOR	Bobbitt, Frank; Letwin, Linda
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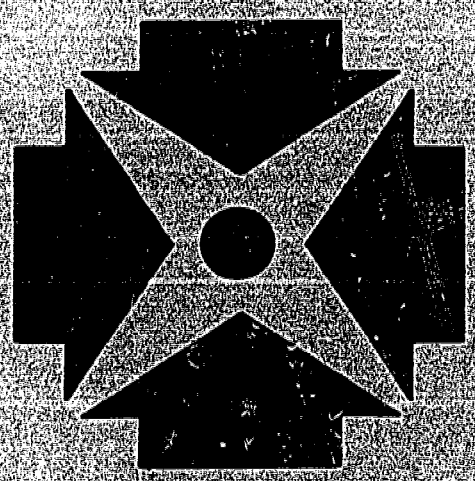
ABSTRACT

Developed through a college curriculum department, this publication provides vocational teachers with a practical reference on problems relating to educating disadvantaged students. The underlying theme is that the teacher is the major factor in the success of any program for the disadvantaged. Several aspects of the problem are considered, including: (1) identification of the disadvantaged and their needs, (2) motivation, (3) teacher student relationship, (4) counseling, (5) grouping disadvantaged students, (6) curriculum, (7) teaching methods, (8) program evaluation, and (9) available federal resources. (BH)



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TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Frank Bobbitt
Linda Letwin
Secondary Education and
Curriculum Department
College of Education

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
East Lansing

INTRODUCTION

This publication is an attempt to provide the busy teacher with a practical reference on problems related to educating disadvantaged students. After consulting with teachers and reviewing the literature on the subject, we have attempted to answer some of the questions most frequently asked by vocational teachers and university personnel.

The theme underlying the publication is that the teacher is the key element in the education of disadvantaged youth. Grouping, funding, and other considerations are important; however, the teacher's ultimate effectiveness is the crucial element that makes or breaks a program.

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We wish to express our appreciation to the many people who made this publication possible.

The inspiration stems from Project REMEDY (Rural Education in Michigan Especially for Disadvantaged Youth), an experimental study to determine the effectiveness of in-service education in assisting vocational educators in teaching disadvantaged students in rural high schools.

A special thank you to Lyndon Preston and David Houston for their assistance in conducting Project REMEDY and for their input of ideas for this publication.

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And finally we express appreciation to the nine teachers in Michigan who participated in the experimental group receiving the in-service education. Special thanks for their interest, enthusiasm and commitment to reaching and teaching the disadvantaged. Their many questions and ideas made it possible to write about what vocational teachers really want and need to know. These nine teachers and their respective schools are:

Eunice Peterson, Baldwin High School
Thelma DeMoss, McBain High School
George Fox, Lake City High School
Dennis Switalski, Mesick High School
Jack Adams, Bear Lake High School
Marie Weaver, Freesoil High School
James Decker, Hesperia High School
Mary Reid, Mason County Eastern High School
Carol Brown, Pentwater High School

IDENTIFYING THE DISADVANTAGED IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. What is a disadvantaged student?
2. Why should teachers identify the disadvantaged?
3. When should the disadvantaged be identified?
4. Who should be involved in identifying the disadvantaged?
5. How can a disadvantaged student be identified?
6. How can an economically disadvantaged student be identified?
7. How can a socially disadvantaged student be identified?
8. How can a culturally disadvantaged student be identified?
9. How can an academically or intellectually disadvantaged student be identified?

Identification is the first step toward reaching and teaching the disadvantaged students in vocational classes. It is not only important to know who a disadvantaged student is, but how and why he is disadvantaged so you may better understand the reasons for his lack of success in school.

What Is A Disadvantaged Student?

It is impossible to draw a composite picture of a disadvantaged boy or girl. Just as each middle-class* student is an individual with his own unique characteristics and manner of acting, so is each disadvantaged child unique. Each is a person, an individual.

When considering disadvantaged students a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, aptitudes, interests, and capabilities are encountered. The kinds of jobs they expect to get, the things they expect to do, and the means they intend to use to reach these ends are as different as the number of students in the school. The ways in which they see people, objects, and events and the ways in which they act differ from one student to another.

Idiomatically speaking, we can define a disadvantaged student as anyone who is not "making it" in school. There are a variety of reasons why students

*It should be kept in mind that all disadvantaged students are not lower-class. Middle-class students can also be disadvantaged.

don't succeed in school. These reasons will be discussed later. For the present, consider a disadvantaged student as any student who isn't "making it" in school.

Why Should Teachers Identify the Disadvantaged?

The disadvantaged student isn't "making it" in school because of circumstances beyond his control. Teachers need to identify these students because no one else seems to care. Vocational teachers, as professional educators, are in one of the best positions to help the disadvantaged. If they can identify why a student is disadvantaged, they are better able to attempt to meet his individual needs. Each of us has different individual needs. Gaining insight into a disadvantaged student's needs can help us determine why he does poorly in school.

When Should Disadvantaged Students Be Identified?

The answer to this question can be stated in one word - IMMEDIATELY. The sooner you identify the disadvantaged students in your classroom, the sooner you can begin planning methods and techniques to help reach them. It is preferable to know who these students are before school starts in the fall, or when you receive the roster for a new class. It is important that you identify them before you plan the year's curriculum.

However, if you are already into the school year, IMMEDIATELY is still the word. The aggressive, noisy and disruptive students are easy to identify, and some are disadvantaged. But what about quiet, shy students who never participate in class and who you hardly notice when they are absent? Are they disadvantaged?

When you do identify them, be careful not to classify them and make them fit that classification. We are well aware of the studies which prove

this can happen, often referred to as the "self-fulfilling prophecy". This assumes that:

a. defining a situation is also making a prophecy, and

b. making a prophecy is also a way of creating a condition through which the prophecy is realized (8).

Who Should Be Involved in Identifying the Disadvantaged?

Teachers should initially identify the disadvantaged students he or she will have in each class. However, it is not a task you should undertake alone.

The school files may be one place to begin, but don't end your investigation there. Make a special appointment to talk with your school counselor(s), if you have one. If your school does not have a counselor, the principal would probably be the next best source for helping identify the disadvantaged students in your classes. Even if you have met with a counselor, it may be a good idea to consult your principal as well. He may have some important insight beneficial to you in planning methods and techniques for teaching the disadvantaged. And he may have had experience concerning the student's background, home life, and probably has met the student's parents. These experiences can all serve to help you better understand the student.

Don't forget to include the student's past teachers. They may be able to relate instances which give you an idea of the types of things the students are interested in or respond to with the most enthusiasm. Past teachers may also be able to give you an idea of the student's social and emotional nature, how the other students react to him, and his reaction to other students. (When talking to teachers and counselors, be sure to remain as professional as possible.)

Another source is the school or area social worker. If he or she has had contact with any of your students, call on her to expand your understanding of the student and his family.

How Can a Disadvantaged Student Be Identified?

The next step seems to be discovering HOW we go about identifying the disadvantaged. What criteria do we use?

Using our original definition, a disadvantaged student is any student who, for some reason, is not "making it" in school. The "for some reason" part of our definition should be examined more closely. If a student isn't "making it" in school, there must be a reason. And each student's reason is different from every other's. The most frequent are economic, social, cultural, intellectual, or academic. The next step is defining each of these categories so that all endeavors are begun with a common concept.

The Economically Disadvantaged Student

This is probably the category with which teachers are most familiar. All too often it has been the only means for determining whether or not a student is disadvantaged. The following are some criteria which can be used to determine who is economically disadvantaged:

1. Income at or below subsistence level. (OEO guidelines can be used as a reference.)
2. Members of marginal, unstable income groups or persons residentially or geographically restricted or isolated.
3. Members of families or individuals affected by long term, chronic unemployment.
4. Members of unusually large families which tax the resources of the family breadwinner.
5. Members of families or individuals supported by public assistance.
6. Members of families of itinerant or migratory workers.

You may not know a family's exact income and this is not important. By using the resources mentioned, you should be able to gather information such as address, place and kind of employment of head of house, number in family. These and other details can give you an indication of the student's economic conditions.

The Socially Disadvantaged Student

Students who are socially disadvantaged may often be isolated from other class members. They usually have extremely limited opportunities to participate in school and community functions individually or with their families. A student may be socially disadvantaged if he:

1. belongs to an ethnic or minority group,
2. is a member of a disrupted family and/or broken home,
3. is a member of a family when it or individuals within it have a record of adult or juvenile delinquency,
4. is an immigrant unadjusted to the new culture and mores,
5. is a member of a family of migratory or itinerant workers,
6. is a person who maintains a constant mental attitude of alienation from society and is difficult to assimilate into regular instruction,
7. lacks positive social concepts,
8. is unable to carry on satisfactory interpersonal relations,
9. is a resident of a so-called "undesirable" environment,
10. is indifferent to responsibility and respect for law, or
11. shows evidence of a failure syndrome resulting from apathy and lack of self-confidence.

These are not the only criteria which make a student disadvantaged socially, and any one category is sufficient to identify a student as socially disadvantaged. (It is important to remember, however, that if a student is a member of an ethnic or minority group it does not necessarily mean he is socially disadvantaged.)

One way for a teacher to discover the socially disadvantaged within the classroom is through the use of a sociogram. To do this, ask your students to write on a slip of paper the name of the student they would most like to sit by, or work with, or be friends with (or any other criteria which involves social activity), and the name of the person they would least like to sit by, or work with, or be friends with, etc. With this information you can draw up a sociogram and easily identify the socially isolated students in the classroom.

The Culturally Disadvantaged Student

Determining which students are culturally disadvantaged is difficult for most teachers. It is hard to define as well as hard to identify a culturally disadvantaged student. They usually have had few of the home experiences schools assume their students have had. For instance, very little or no contact with social, cultural, and governmental institutions. A culturally disadvantaged child might lack the cultural patterns of:

1. elaborated language,
2. curiosity about selected aspects of their world,
3. the disposition to challenge authority with their questions, or
4. a drive to achieve in an intellectual sense (29).

Also included as culturally disadvantaged can be:

5. Students who have not been exposed to accepted minimum standards of enlightenment and refinement of taste in matters of behavior, manners, and respect for the integrity and dignity of the individual.
6. Students who have failed to master accepted and polite forms of interpersonal relationships.
7. Students who are lacking in perception of accepted modes of human relations in a modern civilization.
8. Students whose parents have limited educational backgrounds.

Admittedly, some of these criteria are hard to understand and identify in an individual student. You must get to know the student as a person -- as human being rather than a body in a seat or a name on a class roll.

The Academically or Intellectually Disadvantaged Student

The academically or intellectually disadvantaged student is relatively easy to identify. The school files carry much information in this area. Files include such things as past grades, achievement test scores, IQ, etc. The following are some criteria you might use; however, they are not arbitrary and you may want to adjust some of the conditions to better suit your situation.

The academically disadvantaged can be described as:

1. A student with a "D" or less grade average.
2. Those students who scored one standard deviation below the mean on a recent achievement test.
3. A student with measured intelligence above Emotional-Mental Retardation (EMR) level of 50-70 IQ and below 90 IQ.
4. A student with major deficiencies in communication skills.
5. A student in need of remedial or compensatory educational services.
6. A student who is a school dropout or a potential school dropout (defined later in this report).

Economic, social, cultural, and academic are the four basic criteria used to identify a disadvantaged student. At times other criteria or the same with different names have been used.

A student need not fit all these criteria in order to be identified as disadvantaged. Many students are only academically disadvantaged; others are only socially disadvantaged and still others only culturally disadvantaged. On the other hand, you may have some students who are disadvantaged in every way (economically, socially, culturally, and academically). The point is,

there may only be one or there may be several reasons why a student is not "making it" in school. Identifying how they are disadvantaged is only a starting point.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. What is a need?
2. Why identify the needs of the disadvantaged?
3. When should these needs be identified?
4. What are some of these needs?
5. How are needs different from wants?
6. How are the needs of the disadvantaged different from needs of the non-disadvantaged?
7. How can each disadvantaged student's particular need(s) be identified?
8. How can teachers help students meet these needs?
9. How are instructional programs developed to meet needs?

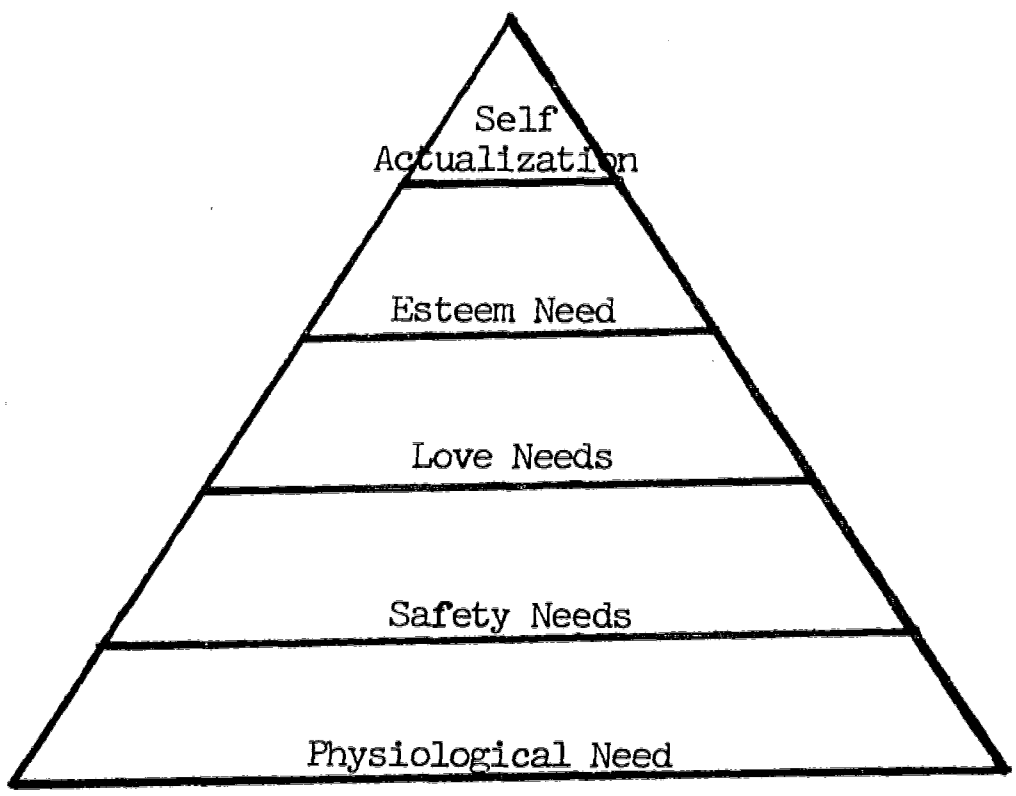
In recent years vocational education has received increased emphasis. This is, in part, because we have begun to realize that the needs of society do not demand that everyone receive a college degree.

Educators are becoming increasingly conscious of "needs" in providing instruction. The purpose of education is to "better" an individual and society. Ignoring the needs of the individual and society creates inefficiency in education and tends to inhibit self-actualization.

What Is a Need?

A need is a deficiency or condition requiring supply or relief. The definition seems simple, but the understanding, involvement, action, and especially commitment on the part of the teacher (or anyone) to help a student meet his needs is not at all simple.

A hierarchy, or ordering, of needs has been developed by A. H. Maslow. An adaption of Maslow's hierarchy is shown below.



According to Maslow a "lower" need must be adequately satisfied before a "higher" need can emerge. Maslow has proposed that the needs of man develop in the following order.

1. Physiological needs, e.g. hunger, thirst, activity, rest, clothing, shelter.

2. Safety needs, e.g. security, order.

3. Belongingness and love needs, e.g. affection, identification.

4. Esteem needs, e.g. prestige, success, self-respect.

5. Need for self-actualization, i.e. the desire for self-fulfillment.

The following may further explain Maslow's hierarchy:

> "It is quite true that man lives by bread alone - when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread, and when his belly is chronically filled? At once other (and "higher") needs emerge, and these rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied new (and still "higher") needs emerge, and so on."

When one's lower needs are satisfied and he moves on to a higher level, the lower level needs assume a less important role in his total system of

needs. They may, of course, become temporarily dominant again as a result of deprivation (28).

Applying Maslow's theory, if you have a student suffering from lack of food (or another physiological need), you could not expect him to succeed in school until his hunger is satisfied. To continue applying Maslow's theory, let's assume that a student's physiological needs are met. As an example, Elizabeth has a home, nice clothing, and enough food to eat. However, her father is an alcoholic and takes to raging wildly quite frequently. Elizabeth, her mother, and two younger sisters are often victims of her father's behavior. Their safety is constantly on her mind. Going home after school is always a painful experience, as she never knows what condition her father will be in. It goes without saying that Elizabeth does poorly in school.

Where on Maslow's scale is the need that teachers most often supply students? Another way of asking the question is - What do teachers often rely on to get students to perform in their classes? The answer most often given is grades. What need do grades satisfy on Maslow's hierarchy? The answer, of course, is esteem -- the desire to go a good job in order to win approval and prestige from teachers and fellow class members. Following Maslow's theory, it can readily be seen that three more basic needs must be met rather satisfactorily before a student will be concerned about success in the classroom. He must satisfy his physiological needs (e.g. hunger, thirst, clothing, shelter, etc.), his safety needs (security, order, etc.), and his belongingness or love needs (e.g. affection, identification, etc.) before he will be concerned about achieving good grades in class. A concerned teacher determines the needs of his students and

attempts to help meet those needs so the student can take greater advantage of the learning experiences provided in class.

Why Identify the Needs of the Disadvantaged?

Because it is the most direct route to reaching the disadvantaged student. The disadvantaged student has some important need that is not being met. By identifying this particular need (or needs), teachers may be able to find some way to alleviate it, and thus help the student toward more successful school experiences.

When Should These Needs Be Identified?

This question hardly needs to be asked. Obviously the sooner each disadvantaged student's individual need(s) can be identified and some kind of relief supplied, the better it will be for the student. A teacher's duty is to educate, but if there is an obstacle preventing a student from reaping the benefits of the learning experiences provided, little learning takes place.

What Are Some of These Needs?

Obviously, we all have the basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. Unfortunately, sometimes these very basic needs are unmet among many of the disadvantaged.

Food, shelter, and clothing are economic needs. Some others a disadvantaged person might experience are:

a feeling of personal worth
acceptance
success
trust
understanding
security
attention
friends
money
intellectual stimulus
cultural orientation

A teacher is in a position to help a student meet every one of these needs.

At first glance this list seems to assume that teachers possess superhuman powers. No such thing is being assumed. Consider each need individually as you think about the disadvantaged students in your classes. Isn't there a way you could make a student feel he is a worthy person? Accepted? Trusted? Couldn't you provide a learning experience whereby he encounters success?

As a vocational teacher you may be in the best position for finding or providing work experiences, thus enabling a student to earn money. If you are not a vocational teacher and are at a loss for providing a means for easing a student's money needs, try talking with one of the vocational teachers in your school. Together with the guidance counselor and/or the principal you may be able to make some kind of arrangement for your student.

How Are Needs Different From Wants?

A want is a definable need such as wanting a new car, a new dress, or a transistor radio. We can usually live without a want, while needs deprive one from being a whole person, at least until those needs are met.

How Are the Needs of the Disadvantaged Different From Needs of the Non-Disadvantaged?

They aren't. Non-disadvantaged students have the same needs as disadvantaged students. Teachers have the same needs, too. However, in most non-disadvantaged students, these needs are readily met. In fact, they may never even think about them. They have good clothes and shoes, a home, and plenty of food for snacks as well as at meal time. Most non-disadvantaged students get some of all of the needs listed above and large portions of most. In essence, the needs themselves don't differ, but the fulfillment of them does.

How Can Each Disadvantaged Student's Particular Need(s) Be Identified?

The needs of the disadvantaged can be summarized as those things necessary for them to fit into the mainstream of society. It is not always easy to identify the needs of a student who sits in a classroom. Teachers may have many students each day. With a large number, it is difficult to get to know each individually and, hence to identify his needs.

The following are some ways of identifying an individual student's needs.

Review of school records

Administration of diagnostic tests

Evaluations by counselors, principals, teachers, social workers, and others

Completion of checklists by the individual

Visits to the home

Interview key persons in the community

Observation

Conferences with the student

Others

No single way will provide an instant answer. In identifying needs, teachers are, in effect, comparing an individual or family with a model or stereotype. The model is the way of life of the majority in society. Those "things" which keep an individual from being similar to the model are the things which make him disadvantaged.

School files, principals, guidance counselors, past teachers, and social workers will be able to give you some idea of a student's needs. But these are subjective opinions and care must be taken to keep your mind open to all other possibilities. Diagnostic tests are especially beneficial in determining the needs of an academically disadvantaged student. Checklists can

reveal much about a student, sometimes providing insights and information which could not be obtained in any other way. (Checklists and other such devices designed to help discover the needs of a disadvantaged student should be administered to the entire class in order to avoid singling out and labeling the disadvantaged as such to the other students.) Effectively designed checklists can be most useful in uncovering the needs of the economically, socially, and culturally disadvantaged.

Home visits seem to be very difficult for many teachers, primarily because of the time-consuming factor. To others, visiting the home of a disadvantaged student seems formidable. Teachers fear that parents may be difficult to communicate with or defensive about the visit. They may feel you are only there to see how they live and what possessions they have. Concerned parents will be responsive to a teacher's sincerely displayed interest in and commitment to helping their child "make it" in school. Explain to the parents that you need their cooperation in this matter.

If the parents are not responsive or are defensive, this may be an indication of your student's home life. Whether the results of a home visit are positive or negative, the needs and problems of your students are often easier to understand.

Interviewing key people in the community who have had close contact with a particular student may be very advantageous. Such key people may be the garage mechanic (Bobby hangs around him an hour or two every day after school) or the lady that Cheryl babysits for three or four times a week. If there are youth employment or recreation centers nearby, you might check with the director to see if he has had any contact with your students.

Simple observation of a student in the classroom, corridors, and lunchroom may help to identify his needs. Conferences with a student are effective

in indicating your desire to help him be successful. Through conferences you may be able to establish a relationship of trust. If a student feels he can trust you, he may not be as reluctant to discuss his personal life and needs with you. However, it is true that some students are not aware of their needs and you may have to pick them out from bits of conversation with him.

How Can Teachers Help Students Meet These Needs?

The first thing that comes to mind is a student who needs food, shelter, or clothing. A teacher can't provide this, and is not expected to. Nevertheless, teachers can do something. They can act as referral agents. Most communities have several agencies or organizations which deal with just such problems. Making these groups aware of a student's need for clothing or food is a necessary first step in helping meet his needs.

Most schools know which students cannot afford lunches and provide them with meal tickets. If you have a student with a food need, you might check to see that the school is aware of his need. Some schools have breakfast wagons. Tickets are bought in the school office and then traded for food items from the breakfast wagon. School clubs or outside charities often pay for the tickets of those who can't afford to buy them. They receive their tickets from the office and trade them just like the other students.

If a student has a money need, what can a teacher do? As stated, there is always the possibility of finding a part-time job for the student so he can remain in school and still meet his money needs. But your school may be in a small rural town and where there aren't many jobs available, especially for students. Don't give up! There are lots of other ways to help. One home economics teacher in a Michigan rural school had two boys in her

class who needed money to buy lunches and go to the football games. They were most willing to work for the money. Her solution was actually quite simple. The boys had learned in class to take advantage of fruits when they were in season, and apples were in season. The boys began staying after school every Friday to make carmel apples to sell at the football games. From this activity they made enough money to buy lunches for the week, attend the game and even buy some clothes. This is only one idea for meeting a student's money needs. Undoubtedly, there are many other possibilities along these same lines in other areas of vocational education.

Let's go back to Elizabeth, the girl whose father is an alcoholic. What can a teacher do to help her? If there is evidence that a student is being abused, you might consider contacting the appropriate agency. Many times, though, it is better to try and help the student understand why his parents act the way they do. Consider the necessity of informing a student about what to do in an emergency. For Elizabeth, this approach may be better than taking her and her small sisters out of the home and separating them from one another.

An important point is that a teacher may not always be able to solve a student's problems or meet his needs. However, knowing what his needs or problems are can go a long way toward understanding and working with him in the classroom. Talking with each disadvantaged student individually about his progress can help meet his needs for acceptance, attention, and understanding.

By setting short-range goals to insure a student's success you may also be building a feeling of personal worth. Each time he achieves a short-range goal his confidence is strengthened. As his self-confidence grows, his achievements should grow.

How Are Instructional Programs Developed to Meet Needs?

It is not easy to develop instructional programs that will meet the needs of disadvantaged persons. Several considerations should be observed in developing such programs:

1. Know your clientele - To develop vocational education programs that will meet the needs of those enrolled, the needs of the enrollees must be known.
2. Grouping - Grouping is accomplished by placing students in classes, sections, or subgroups, on the basis of one or more criteria. Where possible, disadvantaged students should remain in the regular vocational education program. Our goal is to aid the disadvantaged in moving into the mainstream of society. This cannot be achieved by separating them into special classes.
3. What to name the classes - Names which attach a stigma to vocational education classes and the students in them should be avoided. Use meaningful, sophisticated, prestige-building names.
4. Individualized instruction - Instruction should be designed so that each student, regardless of his present knowledge and skill, can have successful experiences and develop a positive self-concept. Classes need to be small. Some of the more advanced students may be used to tutor those who have not made as much progress.
5. Facilities and equipment - Disadvantaged students should be taught in the best facilities available and with the most up-to-date equipment. In the past, unfortunately, programs for the disadvantaged have often been scuttled into inferior facilities with inadequate and dilapidated equipment.

6. Instructional planning - Lesson or teaching plans are just as important in teaching the disadvantaged as in teaching other students. In fact, teaching the disadvantaged will probably require more detailed planning and creativity on the part of the teacher.
7. Instructional aids - One of the characteristics of the disadvantaged is that they frequently have difficulty with abstractions. The disadvantaged often learn manipulative skills very rapidly. Models, specimens, audiovisual media, etc., enhance learning. Realistic participatory types of activities should be part of all instruction.

To repeat, any instructional program in vocational education should be designed to meet the needs of the enrollees, particularly if they have special needs. Educational activities and experiences which will aid the disadvantaged in moving into the mainstream of society should be provided. Where possible it is preferable to keep disadvantaged persons in the regular vocational education classes. If vocational educators are aware at all times of the fact that they are obligated to provide for the needs of all students in their classes and have command of existing techniques for meeting the individual needs of students, great progress can be made with disadvantaged students.

MOTIVATING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. Why do teachers need to motivate disadvantaged students?
2. When should disadvantaged students be motivated?
3. How can teachers motivate disadvantaged students?
4. How can teachers get students to learn to like to learn?
5. How can teachers motivate students to study something they have never seen?
6. What are some techniques that worked to motivate disadvantaged students?

All too often our efforts for motivating and stimulating our classes are concentrated toward a mythical "middle line". We teach toward the middle realizing that those above the average will usually understand the material without our instruction. But what about those below the average? What about those disadvantaged students who are so quiet we hardly know they are there; or those who are so disruptive we wish they weren't there?

Why Do Teachers Need to Motivate Disadvantaged Students?

We don't! We need to find out what motivates them. Obviously, some students aren't motivated to achieve in school because very little interests them. Nothing (or very little) seems to pertain to his needs, his future, his life.

We need to find out what interests a student does have and plan a program relevant to his life. A student isn't going to school to put in time. He's there to get an education so that he can improve his lot and also make a positive contribution to society. We as teachers are duty bound to provide that kind of education.

When Should Disadvantaged Students Be Motivated?

The question should be rephrased to ask when should we find out what motivates students? The answer -- as soon as possible. The first time we have a student in our class, we should work to discover his interests. If we have a particular student for the first time in the eleventh grade, then that is the time to discover what motivates him. If we have him for the first time in the ninth grade, then that is the time to begin.

How Can Teachers Motivate Disadvantaged Students?

Again it must be said, teachers don't motivate -- they find out what motivates students. Every student is interested in something. That "something"

might be thought of as his "hot button". If you can discover what a student is interested in, you have the button for "turning him on".

Now the question becomes "how do we find out where his hot button is?". Be observant. Notice what the disadvantaged students who aren't succeeding in class are doing.

For example, a vocational teacher in one of the rural schools in Michigan noticed that one of the disadvantaged girls in his class had completely "tuned out" anything happening in the classroom and was thoroughly engrossed in reading True Confessions magazine. Without thinking he immediately asked her to get rid of it, and said he never wanted to see that kind of thing in his classroom again. The girl showed a great interest in a particular article in the magazine and indicated a desire to show the article to him and discuss it with him.

Later the teacher realized this may have been an opportunity for him to discover what her interests were. Perhaps the contents of True Confessions may not have been applicable to Business Education, but it was a starting point. Through showing interest in her and the things that were important to her, he may have been able to find other interests, goals, and aspirations.

As teachers we must be constantly alert and searching for these little sparks of interest. One technique is to have all students list things they want in order of their importance. Or you may ask them what they would do if they had $10,000 given to them on the condition that they spend it all within six months. Still another alternative would be to ask them to list things they would like to be in order of preference. You may think of other questions to give you the same kind of results. A good time to use these techniques (interest inventories) is at the beginning of the year or semester. Give the exercise to all students, so as not to single out the disadvantaged.

(Besides, it doesn't hurt to have this kind of insight to all your students' interests.)

How Can Teachers Get Students to Learn to Like to Learn?

The answer to this goes back to the "hot button". In order to motivate there must be a desire, an interest. A student needs to see a purpose for what the teacher wants him to learn and must be able to see how it relates to his future. By playing upon a student's interests and relating meaningful learning experiences to those interests, students begin to enjoy learning. Provide a variety of learning experience, and be flexible — allow students to pursue their interests in depth. You can teach students to like learning, when learning doesn't seem like learning (at least not in the traditional sense; such as reading the chapter and answering the questions at the end, and having a quiz every Friday).

How Can Teachers Motivate Students to Study Something They Have Never Seen?

Let your student explore the things he is interested in and knows about. You may find you have some disadvantaged students who are near-experts on a particular individual interest. By letting him explore what he knows first, you can often encourage him to expand his exploration to unknown areas which relate to the known.

In vocational education we are concerned with preparing students for the world of work. This seems to present a problem for the rural areas as some of their students leave for the city. If the job is to train them for the work world, how can teachers train them for an urban life and a job they've never seen? With the basic skills of employer-employee relationships, interviewing, etc., and we can equip them with the basic skills in a general

category of work. For example, if a student is interested in any type of work in food service, there are many basic skills applicable to this area.

Generally, though, no amount of telling them what something they have never seen is like will help -- they must discover it for themselves. There are a few things teachers can do to help them discover the unseen and unknown. These include:

1. Subtle directing - don't force a student to explore something he has never seen. Mention it to him and give him just enough information to arouse his interest.

2. Opening doors - if a student indicates a desire in knowing about something, but doesn't know where, what, or how to go about exploring it then by all means give him some assistance!

3. Awareness - make students aware of many things. Then let them choose to explore those things which interest each the most. True, students in rural areas haven't <u>seen</u> many things (jobs or ways of life, etc.); but there are also <u>many</u> of these kinds of things students <u>don't even know exist</u>.

4. Follow his interest out. If a student shows an interest, encourage him to carry it out. Don't discourage him from his interest area, as this may "turn him off" to many other things.

In summary, if you can find a student's interest, you will not have a problem in getting him to like learning. And use other teaching techniques to keep students interested. Field trips, class activities, interest approaches, and group and individual projects can broaden his interests. <u>Above all, try to show a "relationship" between each student's interest areas and the topics at hand</u>. Learning to like to learn is a process of satisfaction. Teachers are instrumental to this process. Start where they are and work with that until you've covered what they are interested in or know about. Expand from there. Take them as far as you can with what they want to know and then build on top of that. Get your disadvantaged students involved. This will take time, and at first this involvement may not necessarily be

connected to school work, but you can gradually work up to that point. Finally, it is important to work on a one-to-one basis with these students in order to discover their interests and build on them. If a teacher is enthusiastic about a student's interests and in helping him carry out these interests, his enthusiasm and excitement can generate excitement in his students as well.

What Are Some Techniques That Worked to Motivate Disadvantaged Students?

The following is an extraction from a paper written by a Michigan vocational teacher relating some of her experiences with disadvantaged students. She describes the students of a small rural high school. Most of the students in her home economics classes were disadvantaged. This teacher discovered many techniques that worked to motivate disadvantaged students.

> "My students warned me the first day of school things wouldn't be smooth. They asked me what I came to this school for. They were sure I had made a grave mistake.
>
> 'The people here are crazy, Miss Peterson.
> They get worse in the spring.'
>
> I asked them what they meant by that, and they just said, 'Oh, you'll see.' I stood in front of them. I began to see. I wasn't sure what I was aware of, but there was something very different, and very explosive to deal with. I felt as though I was sitting on a pile of dynamite with a very short fuse. The students came into the classroom, immediately told me about my mistake in coming here, divided themselves into neat little groups of black and white, and went about their business of showing their lack of self pride, anger, suspicion, and dissatisfaction. They are not a very patient lot, and don't even try to cover up their emotional feelings. Somehow I got the idea, they really didn't expect much good to come from this classroom, or any other classroom in this school. They had a few questions about me too, and began to get some answers. I kind of expected the regular, about what college I attended, marital status, where I was from, how long I'd taught, and what we were going to do this year. Instead I got:
>
> 'Do you cry easy? Last year our teacher was crying all the time. We'd make her so mad she'd start crying and have to leave the room. Then we told her that what we needed was a new teacher. She left.

> The next one we got was just as bad. She didn't stay long either. Finally the last one stayed all the rest of the year. She cried a lot, too. Homemaking teachers are too emotional. Are you going to let us cook? You owe us two dinners from last year. She promised us dinners and never let us have them. So you better give us two dinners. We better get them too.'

They wanted to know if I cried easy and just how shock proof I was. They even gave me a few tests. Apparently my reaction satisfied their curiosity. I may not have liked what I saw, but it was very real. These young people didn't like themselves very much, they didn't have much love for school, for middle class standards, for rules or books. They had a lot of energy and were going to do something to get through the day. Their energy was spent with racial difficulties, getting out of class, expressing their hostilities, and physical movement. They love to dance, and push and shove each other; talking loud is another favorite pastime. With 50 percent white, and 50 percent black, there is a constant tug of war for who rules. A game taken very seriously by some. They also spend much energy avoiding doing things that might be uncomfortable, that reinforces their already strong feeling of inadequacy. They don't like books, and hate taking notes.

Most of my students are from very low income homes. This is an extreme poverty area. Large families, in crowded houses. Not much outside educational experiences, intellectual, and cultural background less than adequate. Little hope for tomorrow. If school is bad, home isn't much better. Nearly one-third of my girl students are pregnant, or have children at home of their own. Many students are living with aunts or grandparents or in some way not with their original families. Many students have extremely low reading ability. They are angry and dissatisfied, and they carry their heavy problems into the classroom. Much of schooling seems totally worthless to them, for they have real difficulty seeing beyond today. Today's needs are immediate, and urgent. They will face tomorrow when they get to it.

This time I would have to use a little different approach to this 'big deal' school. It would have to be interesting and fun, and telling them that it was important for that far out tomorrow wouldn't work. It would have to be now and it would have to be good. Something to apply to today, and build that self-image. Self pride among these students, so low. I looked around the room and saw some things that might have given them the feeling that this school was somehow different, and that they are different too. Different in a negative way. The room was depressing. The cabinets were locked. All the knives were collected and stored in one drawer, locked and opened only when knives were needed for a special lesson. The food supplies were locked up too, as was all sewing equipment. It amused me to know there was a chain to fit around the refrigerator with a padlock.

It seemed that there was a mutual agreement here that no one could be trusted, and if all movable objects were not bolted down, they would disappear. I unlocked cabinets and sorted through equipment. I found not even the bare essentials, and a very limited amount of anything. None of the sewing machines were in working order. Parts were missing or broken. There were books, lots and lots of books. Mostly textbooks, and various pamphlets. They were in a cabinet without a lock.

I locked and unlocked, locked and unlocked, and finally decided to throw away the keys. One of the first essential lessons these students were going to have to learn is that they can be trusted, and that equipment, such as it was, is to be used, cared for and put away. We certainly did not have time to fool around with locks and keys, not if we were going to get any learning done.

We checked our limited supply of tools and equipment, and ordered those things necessary for food and clothing laboratories, and put them out in areas where they could be easily used for the lessons and replaced. Remarkably enough, when the materials were unlocked and put in designated areas where they were used hour after hour, they returned. I had no more, perhaps less loss of equipment here, than in any other school I'd been in. When I informed the students that they were not thieves, and that our equipment was still there, they continued to tell me that 'folks around here couldn't be trusted.' I did find, however, that these students need to learn a great deal about proper use of equipment, and how to put things back in the proper place. They have a tendency to be quite careless. They are especially careless with a piece of equipment when they do not quite understand its function and importance. An example of this was in home furnishings when I brought my staple gun for upholstering. It was great fun to experiment on books, the desk, and often thoughts of trying it out on each other. But when they actually began to use the gun for fabric, and could see how useful the gun was in getting their job done, they suddenly began to treat it as though it was a useful tool, nothing to mess with. The same thing went with the sewing machines, which when I got there, were pretty well dissembled. Parts were missing, or out of adjustment. We began by taking the machine apart, and carefully putting it back together; they were to understand the function of all the parts, how to remove them, and how to put them back. They adjusted various screws, and levers, so that the machine would perform for them. Now, they can fool around with the machine. I'm not worried; they know how to put it back too, and help each other keep them running.

Food was their first interest, so that was where we began. Although we had limited supplies and equipment, they were put to use immediately. The textbook didn't work very well. There was no way to scare or threaten them into wanting to read that book.

They would use the book when there was something they needed to know. What did work was activity. When we studied how to bake pies, the students were restless, and naughty. They hate that book work. However, when I showed them how to make a crust, and explained what I was doing, and why, they watched and listened. Then, when each student went to his center, and made his own crust the wheels turned, and they learned. What's more they were excited about what they had learned, and moved around like proud little 'devils', and exhibited their crust to others. I found they did not like working in groups on their food projects. They wanted to do their own. When they had completed a food project such as an apple pie, they would take it home. I didn't even cut into it for a sample, as is often done in homemaking for grading purposes. Instead, they would grade their own, explaining why it was good or bad. Their interest in food preparation was great, and almost every day was an activity day. They seemed to never tire of cooking. We used a lot of surplus foods, and foods in season. One thing that often irritated me was that in other schools I always had a very graded program. The first year class made one thing, the second year class another, and the third year class still another, but not this time. When one class made bread, for example, the other class demanded they learn how to make bread too. Perhaps this is due to their very limited experiences in laboratory cooking, and a fear that they would not have the opportunity another year. Whatever the case, I could see no reason to delay the experience if they truly wanted it.

It was easy to teach these young people how to cook, because they wanted to learn. The locks remained off, and there was the normal loss of a cookie now and then, and sometimes things had finger prints in them. I would tell them over and over again, that that's the kind of thing to expect when food looks so yummy. In most cases, students were relieved to know that 'those folks could be trusted'. Especially important when you are one of 'those folks'.

Food, sex, a comfortable home, and clothes -- I'm not sure what order of importance these come in, but with the disadvantaged they are important. Fortunately, in homemaking these are all areas where much can be done. There is a lot of difficulty with sexuality among my students. It's a strong force, and babies seem to pop out everywhere. This is one area we could sit and talk about, one area where all the information I could give wasn't enough. They wanted to know about venereal disease, crabs, how you get pregnant, what are wet dreams, how come boys act the way they do, and why girls get all emotional. We used films, dittoed sheets, records from the Family Life Bureau, and our own emotional feelings as educational materials. There is a lot of good material available, and most of the time just having it there was all the motivation they needed. There was a lot of real listening, and talking. This is a real immediate need, and

they are hungry for accurate information. There were a lot of after class sessions, questions about themselves, and there still are questions now and then. The biggest gain here, I hope, is student understanding of himself, awareness that he or she is normal and good. I'm not so sure birth control should not be taught. My unwed mothers and pregnant young ladies are not thrilled with their condition, and raising that small child alone is a heavy load.

Another extremely successful experience with these people was in home furnishings. One thing poverty people have plenty of is furniture that needs repair. This again was an individual project type of experience, where each student brought a piece of furniture which was in bad shape and we made it look new again. They learned by first watching a demonstration of how it was done, and then proceeded to do their own. All supplies and equipment were available in the classroom, and they learned how to take the old rickety chair apart, put it back together so it was strong, and made a beautiful finish. When they would get started, this student who ordinarily wiggles and squirms and hates school, would work the whole hour and barely look up. He would ask if he could stay after school. Girls had the same reaction. Two of my boys who are noted for doing absolutely nothing in any other class, completely upholstered an overstuffed couch. (This is a terrific accomplishment for an adult.) Ronald said he wanted to know how to do it so that when he had his own house he wouldn't have to get new furniture, he could just keep doing the same couch or chair over. These fellows had never sewn before, yet because they needed to sew together the pieces of fabric for their chairs, sat down at the machine, and with a few questions learned to sew in one hour. If I had begun with the sewing machine and tried to teach them how to operate it, and methods of construction, first, before they had a purpose, they would have rejected it.

Sewing construction is much the same way; the best teaching goes on when the student has a question and wants to know the answers so that he can proceed. It takes a lot of energy to teach this kind of student, for they all have questions and they want their answers now. They don't often want to quit when the bell rings and they don't like to wait when they are interested. They anger quickly and are reluctant to clean up a mess they might have created. It takes patience, understanding, and a lot of positive reinforcement, but it is possible. It would help to have lots of equipment and supplies, and field trips. They need to get out into the world of work so they can see some hope for the future. They need experiences that prove to them that learning is fun and valuable, to see how school applies to their lives. In working with the disadvantaged, I found some techniques that work. First, find out what they want to know. Show them about it, let them try it, let them use it. If they can see, or touch, or feel what they are learning and it is good, they will demand more. What they don't need is more pressure, ridicule, or embarrassment.

> Some of the unique traits of the disadvantaged student can be assets. I think in terms of the honesty and emotional freedom of expression of either disapproval or approval they contribute. It could make you angry if you didn't listen. It might sound like bad behavior, yet it might be they are telling you how they can learn. We can channel this energy into an exciting active project, or we can let it explode in a destructive manner."

BUILDING RAPPORT WITH DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. How can a teacher establish rapport with a disadvantaged student?
2. How can a teacher help develop a positive self-concept in a disadvantaged student?

Teachers working with disadvantaged students have found that these students have a low self-image. This can be attributed to many things including a poor environment, low measures of intellect and achievement and resulting personality disorders. This disoriented self-concept is often reinforced by failure in school, early dropping out of school, lack of employment opportunity, unwed motherhood, and delinquency.

How Can a Teacher Establish Rapport With a Disadvantaged Student?

You must use the same principles of building rapport with disadvantaged youth as you do with other students. However, to accomplish this effectively will require a somewhat specialized extension of your efforts. Certain factors may predetermine a unique approach. You must show an empathetic awareness of the underlying dynamics of disadvantaged youth behavior. Equally important, you must examine and analyze your own attitudes. Every teacher who works with disadvantaged students should understand to what extent his teaching is an expression of his own self-concept. Far too often teachers are unaware of what their attitudes really are, unaware of how they verbalize them, and unaware of the actions they take with their disadvantaged students (25).

Basic to the development of effective interpersonal relations is a warm, honest and open approach. This approach eludes concrete description but is a feeling of acceptance and human warmth, easily sensed, and often communicated without words.

Another element is the maintenance of an atmosphere that is free of judgement and criticism, and one that encourages and sustains free student expression of his negative as well as positive feelings. A supportive attitude furthers student's self-analysis and realistic development within the limitations of his assets and liabilities.

Disadvantaged youth have keen perception; it usually works best in judging the character of adults. They are seldom fooled, at least for long, by feigned concern, pseudo-acceptance, and a facade of general over-friendliness and effort.

But in the presence of sustained and consistent sincere and objectively displayed attitudes, these students will sense it and respond in a positive fashion.

How Can a Teacher Help Develop a Positive Self-Concept in a Disadvantaged Student?

Pride in one's self is directly related to his self-concept. Self-concept is a composite of numerous self-precepts, a hypothetical construct encompassing all the values, attitudes and beliefs towards one's self in relation to the environment. The self-concept influences and, to a great degree, determines perception and behavior.

Development of a positive self-concept is highly important for all of us. Research shows that while self-concept is resistant to change, modifications can be made. The problem lies in affecting positive movement in self-image, improving chances of adequate school, personal, social, and career

adjustment through group interaction among students and significant adults. Teachers must look at what is going on inside the student. It is not only experience itself that is important, but, more crucial, is what the student thinks about experience. If self-concept is to be changed, the mechanisms which maintain that concept must be examined. Teachers must learn and study what the student tells himself, for this is the emotion-arousing stimulus. If a student is telling himself that he is no good, you must convince him that you don't believe it.

An individual's self-image is usually developed in the following ways:

1. In the process of socializing - certain concepts are built up which affect the way a person learns and acts.

2. As a person (especially a child) is made to feel wanted or unwanted by adults or other children, his conception of himself is favorable or unfavorable.

3. Schools must provide extra stimulation and encouragement. Too often, low expectations and standards weak in educational stimulation have reinforced a sense of failure.

4. To the extent that a student's feelings or acceptance by a teacher raises his estimate of himself, teacher responses to pupils might play a stronger part than expected in the development of self-concept (25).

All too often, we stamp the disadvantaged student with the label "low (or negative) self-concept" and then attribute any misbehavior, poor academic performance or unacceptable characteristics to the fact that he is disadvantaged and has a negative self-image. We then accept this and even come to expect it. And our reaction or lack of reaction to the disadvantaged leaves its mark.

By contrast, we must provide some learning experiences whereby he can achieve success. A little success goes a long way toward improving a student's self-image, giving him something to be proud of. A teacher's attitude and encouragement can induce a student to try for even more success. Set

up short-range goals so that he may achieve success without much frustration. Acknowledge his success and praise him. Then set up another objective or short-range goal for him to reach.

COUNSELING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. Should vocational teachers assume a guidance role?
2. Should the same guidance techniques be used with disadvantaged students as those used with non-disadvantaged students?
3. When does a vocational teacher have time for guidance?
4. Can "career guidance" and "personal guidance" be separated?
5. What are some of the guidance techniques a vocational teacher can use?
6. How can we assist disadvantaged students to develop goals?
7. Can the image of vocational education be improved?
8. Can something be done to divert the dropout?
9. What aids are available to help the vocational teacher in this role?

Vocational guidance is one of the most important parts of education today while at the same time it is one of the weakest parts. Much time and cooperation must be spent among vocational teachers and guidance counselors. At the present time it appears that in most schools it will be up to the vocational teacher to instigate a more serious emphasis on guidance for vocational students, especially for disadvantaged vocational students. The vocational teacher can't do the job alone, but he can supply many pieces of the guidance process in the classroom and in his own behavior and attitudes.

Should Vocational Teachers Assume a Guidance Role?

Yes! Vocational teachers are uniquely qualified to guide vocational students. In fact, better qualified than any other teacher in the school. Who spends more time with vocational students than vocational teachers? Who comes more in contact with them as individuals? with their personal traits? with their physical and mental skills? The very nature of the vocational teacher's instructional duties brings him face to face with each student.

More often than not the vocational teacher may even be better prepared in some areas of vocational guidance than the school guidance counselor. Depending on the number of students in the school, the school guidance counselor has at most two hours a year for each student. In this allotted time for each student, he must:

- assess his weak and strong points.
- solve all his problems.
- suggest to him the type of occupation in which he might expect to find the greatest satisfaction and success.
- keep up-to-date with about 20,000 occupations that are constantly changing (10).

Most counselors are understandably weak in their knowledge of occupational information as it relates to non-professional pursuits and at least half of their charges are in need of precisely this type of information (10).

Rapport, so important to successful counseling, can often be easily established in a vocational instruction setting. Many vocational teachers have sat through a disadvantaged student's painful account of family problems or encountered and discussed other such problems with students. We must not fail to recognize that satisfactory resolution of these problems is as important to the full development of the student as is his learning of occupational skills and, in fact, a prerequisite to his optimum learning. If the vocational teacher is in such a promising setting for counseling and frequently finds himself in "counseling" situations, does it not follow that a tremendous potential exists for him to be of immeasurable assistance to the counselor and the student in this crucial aspect of the guidance program?

Before the full potential of this hidden resource can be realized, teachers must do these four things:

- Learn more about the counseling process.
- Involve themselves in the guidance program.
- Overcome any negative bias towards guidance.
- Establish rapport with the school guidance counselor and cooperate to provide students with the best and most up-to-date personal and career guidance (10).

The brief and frequently out-of-date occupational monograph and the once-a-year Career Day are inadequate to meet the voracious needs of the inquiring adolescent mind. Much information could be made available if teachers would visit with counselors and volunteer to meet with any students he might refer to them. Or they could offer the services of their students who are members of vocational youth organizations, for this purpose. The vocational teacher can go far in creating a good relationship by making available to the counselor the graduate follow-up data he routinely collects for his state reports. The guidance counselor can in turn submit this data to the administration (10).

Other ways of cooperating will readily suggest themselves to the imaginative teacher who is willing to help. To provide these services is an excellent way to acquaint the counselor with the characteristics required of potential students in the occupations taught in the vocational program (10).

Should the Same Guidance Techniques Be Used With Disadvantaged Students As Those Used With Non-Disadvantaged Students?

Unfortunately, when the matter of counseling the disadvantaged student is discussed, there is all too frequently the expectation to hear of new counseling techniques, of new methods, and of new skills. Those methods and techniques (to be discussed later) used for non-disadvantaged youth are adequate for working with the disadvantaged boy or girl. A sense of

timing, and acquiring and understanding the facts and feelings of his life, his family, his desires and dislikes, the way he is and why he is as he is, and how he perceives the world have been given too little attention, to too few, for too short a time.

Counseling the disadvantaged student is extremely delicate. Sensing when to vary techniques, knowing when to speak, when not to speak, and understanding the language of the student can make the difference between successful counseling and alienation and discouraging confusion. There is no one and only way to counsel this student; it takes a sensitive individual to know which variations are optional, which are dangerous, and when and how to vary them. Guidance should always be focused on the student, but it should be eclectic in approach and ideas that are helpful and useful in working with each of these students.

Without doubt, the disadvantaged student needs individual guidance and counseling. He needs to be able to share the time of an interested adult in a quiet, private situation. It provides a listener, someone interested in him and things that are important to him and an adult to have all to himself.

One important point brought out in an earlier chapter must be mentioned again. Before any real personal counseling or career guidance can take place, rapport must be established between you and the student. Students, especially disadvantaged students, don't relate to just anyone. They are very protective and possessive of their personal problems, feelings, wants, and goals. And they aren't willing to share them with just anyone. A disadvantaged student needs to sense your sincere and honest desire to help him understand and solve his problems as well as set and attain career

goals. If this honest commitment on your part is felt, the establishment of a trust relationship will come naturally.

When Does a Vocational Teacher Have Time For Guidance?

Vocational teachers often seem to be the busiest teachers in the school. Suggesting that vocational teachers assume a guidance role may be received negatively by many teachers because of this time factor. First of all, it may not be necessary to counsel every student, as many are quite capable of handling their own problems and establishing their career goals. However, disadvantaged students often need guidance in both these areas. Therefore, it is imperative that the vocational teacher make a special effort to reach these students.

Because it is so imperative that teachers reach these students, the following are possible avenues for the vocational teacher to take.

1. Discuss with both the principal and guidance counselor the importance of reaching these students. Work to convince him that you are sincerely interested in helping the disadvantaged students and that you need time provided in your busy schedule to work with these students individually in order to help them realize and establish career goals.

2. You may want to consider applying for funds provided by the government to use in teaching the disadvantaged. These funds can be used to hire a teacher aide. This would help to free you to talk and work individually with the disadvantaged students. This is a time when guidance can take place within the classroom. It does not have to be a formal appointment-type situation. Disadvantaged students are usually more at ease in an informal situation.

3. Or you and your school principal may find it more beneficial and workable to hire a substitute one or two days a month so that you may spend this time counseling with disadvantaged students and helping them to establish career goals.

4. You may also find it useful and meaningful to arrange a few hours or half a day release from school in order to allow students to observe occupations first hand. All too often disadvantaged students have only heard the name of an occupation but have no idea what it is like or what it involves. If, after you've given them

some idea of the occupation and its requirements and they still indicate to you an interest in observing it first hand, you should make arrangements for this learning experience. It seems much more practical and worthwhile to take two or three interested students to observe individuals working in an occupation rather than taking a whole bus load of students of which only a few have indicated any interest in that particular occupational field.

5. In addition, you may consider working more closely with the guidance counselor in order to avoid repetition or overlapping guidance techniques. This will make more efficient use of both your own and the counselor's time.

6. Another workable idea is to establish a specific time each week when you will be available for any career or personal guidance. For example, you may make yourself available one-half hour before school and one hour after school and/or during lunch hour every Tuesday of every week. Then make sure that all students are aware of the fact that you are available at this time. If disadvantaged students seem reluctant to come, work to establish rapport with them within the classroom and then invite them to come and talk with you about their personal problems or career goals.

Can "Career Guidance" and "Personal Guidance" Be Separated?

The counseling task would be simple if career guidance and personal guidance could be separated. The school counselor could solve all personal problems while the vocational teachers assume the responsibilities for vocational career guidance. Unfortunately, it is not that easy. Career guidance and personal guidance can't be separated because one of the goals of vocational education is to develop individuals as well as skilled workers.

Career guidance and personal guidance seem to go hand in hand. This is particularly true for disadvantaged students. As defined a disadvantaged student is a student who, for some reason, isn't "making it" in school. That reason can also be referred to as a personal problem, often requiring personal guidance. Earlier, it was stated that until an individual student's problems or needs are met (or at least eased) it is not very likely that he will achieve in academic and career programs. This, indeed, indicates that personal and career guidance are interrelated. One cannot work with a

student to establish career goals without considering his personal attributes, situation, abilities, and desires.

What Are Some of the Guidance Techniques a Vocational Teacher Can Use?

At this point, it is safe to assume that it is one of the responsibilities of the vocational teacher to help a student choose a career. Once a student has decided which occupation or occupational field he would like to pursue, the next step is to help him plan a program toward that career. For a disadvantaged student that program is often more easily accomplished if broken into short-term goals. This is another reason why vocational teachers are uniquely qualified to assume a guidance role. Not only can they help a student choose a career and plan a program toward that career, but they are also in a position to see that the program is carried out most effectively.

In order to serve in a guidance capacity, vocational teachers need to:

1. Know what motivates each student.
2. Know what interests individual students.
3. Display warmth and understanding.
4. Display sincerity and honesty.
5. Possess a positive attitude toward working with disadvantaged students.
6. Be ever willing to recognize positive attributes of individual students.
7. Show respect for each student as an individual, as well as his culture, background, and parents.

In addition to the above, you may want to consider cooperating with the guidance counselor to set up a "career" or "occupations" room. This could even be a corner of a room or part of the library. It should include a carrel for listening to tapes and viewing films and filmstrips as well as up-to-date pamphlets and booklets. Another technique is to introduce

students to occupations with which they are unfamiliar. Today there are many occupations which disadvantaged students are very capable of doing but are unaware of their existence. Another interesting technique is the "willing file". This file is organized by occupations. Under each occupation is the name, address, and place of employment of one or more employees who have volunteered and are "willing" to discuss with students anything concerning his occupation. Students are welcome to write, call, or visit them.

How Can We Assist Disadvantaged Students to Develop Goals?

Some teachers feel that many disadvantaged students don't have goals. And this may be true. Some disadvantaged students may not have goals because they have never been successful. By providing some guaranteed success experiences for these students, they will eventually become goal oriented.

Help students establish goals by using their interests as a starting point. Have them list things they are interested in. After a series of answers such as airplane pilot, ball player, etc. some deepseated usable interests will usually surface. Also be observant of the student and his interests within the classroom. Once a student's interests are brought out in the open it is important to discuss with him occupational possibilities which relate to his interests. It is also wise to discuss with the student his plans for the future. However, if he has no goals, he may not have plans for his future either. If he does plan to remain in the community, be cautious that he does not choose an occupation in which employment is not available.

Once a student has experienced success and realizes he has ability and is capable, he will begin to become concerned with goals. When you have

worked together to establish realistic and attainable goals, the next step is to set up a path or program which will enable him to reach that goal. Break a complex goal down to simple parts which can be achieved successfully.

Some teachers have found that when disadvantaged students do have goals they are unrealistic and unattainable in relation to the student's abilities. Wise teachers again set up a program which clearly shows the student what it would take to achieve his goal. Do not discourage him by telling him he does not have the ability. Instead, be sure that other occupations or goals can be reached by taking the same path.

Can the Image of Vocational Education Be Improved?

For many years now teachers of vocational programs have been working to improve their image. Unfortunately, vocational education has been stigmatized as a program for the dummies or disadvantaged who wouldn't be able to make it in college. There also seems to be a trend that disadvantaged students are only placed in vocational programs. But is this right?

Most of the disadvantaged students have excellent gray matter. Educators need to develop this potential. If a disadvantaged student has the ability and desire to go on to higher education, he should be encouraged to do so. At the same time, if a non-disadvantaged student indicates a desire to participate in one of the programs offered by the vocational department, he should also be encouraged to do so. Much of the instruction in vocational education is directly concerned with life, living, and relating to other human beings. This is important to all individuals, disadvantaged or not.

It is up to those involved in vocational education to improve its image. Creating a program and curriculum which attracts students from all walks

of life is a beginning. "Talking-up" your program, its offerings, and advantages to the school board and administration is a must. They must be made to see that college is not the answer for every individual or for our society. Make your program, the students within it, and their achievements known to the community. This can be done through newspapers, other advertising, clubs within the community. Keep news of achievement and coming events ever before the public.

Can Something Be Done to Divert the Dropout?

Again, vocational education programs and vocational teachers are uniquely qualified for this task. It seems society is well aware of the growing number of dropouts in our country. There are many studies which compare numbers of dropouts in particular areas with other areas or with the past. Much is said about the talents lost and the increased number of welfare recipients. There is also much ado about the rehabilitation endeavors which must be primed and promoted to get those who drop out back into the educational and occupational mainstream. The point is all of these studies, statistics, opinions, and criticisms are all after-the-fact. Instead, we need directions for action to prevent dropping out before it happens.

In order to take some preventative action, we need to seriously consider a student's reason(s) for leaving school. It may be a reflection of personal inability to find a meaningful avenue to adult competence or to accommodate to those pathways to constructive adulthood which do exist. Or, it is a signal that the educational options to which the dropout has been exposed have not been sufficiently relevant to his needs and characteristics to justify his persisting in them (23).

Although specific reasons for an individual's withdrawal from school are often obscured by classifications which tend to lump all dropouts

together in a faceless mass, it is important to recognize the characteristics which indicate a potential dropout. The following are the major factors found in the personal histories of those who leave school before graduation.

1. Two years behind in reading or arithmetic at seventh grade level. Majority of grades below average.
2. Failure of one or more school years.
3. Irregular attendance and frequent tardiness.
4. Performance consistently below potential.
5. No participation in extra-curricular activities.
6. Frequent change of schools.
7. Behavior problems requiring disciplinary measures.
8. Feeling of "not belonging".
9. More children in family than parents can readily control.
10. Parents inconsistent in affection and discipline.
11. Unhappy family situation.
12. Father figure weak or absent.
13. Education of parents at eighth grade level.
14. Few family friends; among these few, many problem units.
15. Friends not approved by parents.
16. Friends not school-oriented.
17. Friends much older or much younger.
18. Resentful of all authority.
19. Deferred gratification pattern weak.
20. Weak self-image (23).

Every student does not have all these characteristics, but many have more than one. Many disadvantaged students do not complete high school. Because their school experiences are unsuccessful, they drop out. Until a

student actually leaves the control of the school, he is not a dropout -- but a "potential dropout". (There is also what can be referred to as the "drop-in" -- the student who remains in school physically but leaves mentally or psychologically.)

Research has shown that dropping out is a gradual process, taking place over a long period of time. In many cases it often begins in the early years of schooling. As time passes, the individual's self-image becomes increasingly self-defeating. Negativeness towards school and thoughts of dropping out grow and grow until some traumatic or disruptive event provokes him to make the actual withdrawal. Another important point is the fact that not all students who leave school before graduation do so because of a dissatisfaction or negative feelings toward school. There are cases of those who drop out because something else becomes more important. For some it may be necessary to quit school to go to work to help support the family. One vocational teacher in Michigan reported that several students who had bought cars later dropped out of school in order to support them. It was necessary to earn money for payments, gas, insurance, and other essentials. And since there is no public transportation in the rural areas, a car is an extremely important item.

If the individual has clearly set himself to drop out of school, last minute attempts to divert him are not likely to be highly successful. Nevertheless, vocational teachers and guidance counselors can develop a system of exit interviews designed to meet objectives such as the following:

1. Cause him to look at the vocational implications or future limitations which leaving school before graduation represent.

2. Assist him to examine alternatives which he might pursue in looking for available work.

3. Provide him information about jobs known to be available in the community for which he might qualify.

4. Refer him to the local office of the State Employment Service.

5. Assist him to consider ways by which he can further his education outside the formal school context through correspondence courses, evening courses, or by preparing for or by passing the General Educational Development Test (G.E.D.) or a similar examination to qualify for a secondary school equivalence diploma.

6. Invite him to return from time to time so that the school can follow up on his job-seeking progress.

7. Assure him that the school will welcome him back when he is ready to return to the educational mainstream (23).

The preceeding objectives for exit interviews and vocational guidance are contingent upon: (1) knowing that the student is going to drop out; (2) having an established system of contacting him before he disappears physically; (3) having information about job possibilities and employment contacts; (4) the student's possessing some marketable skills that he can use in the world outside; and (5) making sure that if the student chooses to return to school, the experiences available to him will be more flexible and relevant than they were before he withdrew.

It can be further stated that efforts to persuade a student to remain in school are rather pointless if nothing is done to change the conditions that prompted him to withdraw. On the other hand, such a concentrated effort on the part of teachers and counselors to persuade him to remain in school just may have the desired effect.

To wait until the student is actually on the edge of leaving school is not only to gamble on the success of the effort, it is also an inefficient way to use the professional energies of teachers and counselors and the potential of the student involved. What then are the more constructive alternatives? All professional persons in the school have a part in increasing the holding power of the school and in providing vocational guidance for those who are potential dropouts.

The vocational teacher cannot do the job alone; but he can, in his own right, do many significant things. If he is committed to working with the dropout or the potential dropout, he must first work with others to identify students who fall into this classification.

To help divert the potential dropout:

1. Inventory your own course expectations, instructional techniques, and attitudes. Ask yourself these questions:

   a. Do you mirror some of the persisting attitudes that vocational students are second rate?

   b. Do you behave defensively about vocational education being a "dumping ground" as if you are just babysitting students who are going to drop out anyway?

   c. Do you indicate to students with certain characteristics that they are not good enough to be in vocational education?

   d. Do you conceive of standards or course expectations as blocks over which students must hurdle?

   e. Are you tied to a premise that specified hours and duration of training are so sacred that the student who takes longer to acquire a skill must be punished by rejection or failure?

2. Remember that what you say and do has significant influence on student behavior. Consider yourself as a point of reference, a role model -- for each student. Foster the "can do" syndrome by expecting that each student can and will succeed by insuring that experiences in success exceed failures; by continuously reinforcing the attitude that it is all right to try, fail, and try again; by displaying enthusiasm for the importance of the learning that is taking place and its relevance to the real world; by making it plain that vocational education is not only an acceptable program but critical to the maintenance of our present technological movement; and by developing problem-centered learning experiences to heighten student interest and make functionally visible the application of learning.

3. Set up realistic learning conditions. Realism in the classroom can help students understand:

   a. Why employers develop standards and what they imply for personal responsibility.

   b. Why it is necessary to get along with others on the job.

   c. That personality traits such as responsibility, punctuality, follow-through, and initiative contribute to job satisfaction and success.

4. Become a part of a team effort. Work with guidance counselors and others on the faculty to promote vocational guidance as well as improve it. Work with administrators, curriculum committees, and counselors to develop work-study or work-experience programs.

There are many other interactions the vocational educator can promote or contribute to in the interests of keeping the potential dropout in school. Some of these may include recognizing the fact that students are individuals and have problems which must be treated individually. Getting parents interested might also help keep children in school. An interested parent providing encouragement at home can have a great influence. Students should be offered a wider selection of courses in tune with the times. Special study rooms and periods should be provided at school for students who don't have a quiet place in which to study at home. More opportunities should be sought for work study. More of these programs should be set up for students who must leave school for monetary reasons. Counselors and vocational teachers should seek more training in guiding and working with disadvantaged students. More flexible graduation requirements is another consideration. Encourage potential dropouts and disadvantaged students to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Schools must become places where pupils want to spend time. Teachers and administrators must do some soul searching to determine if their own views are furthering education for all students or only for the ones who are already education prone. Teachers must be secured who have a true desire to teach and help all students. Those who only teach because of a paycheck cannot truly help the dropout. Within the school, educators must develop a healthy attitude, a true desire to help all who attend.

What Aids Are Available to Help the Vocational Teacher in This Role?

There are volumes and volumes of printed vocational guidance material (both commercial and non-commercial) to serve a wide range of consumers.

Charts, encyclopedias, pamphlets, periodicals, collections of readings, audio tapes, motion pictures, filmstrips, comic books, workbooks, games, puzzles, and multi-media packages with multisensory appeal are among the alternatives. In choosing materials for your vocational guidance program, some criteria should be used to insure selection of quality materials. One which must be included is the degree to which it considers the student's reading skills. Additional criteria could be timeliness of the publication and innovative approach. The vocational teachers and counselors in your school should cooperate to set up other criteria for selecting guidance materials. The following are available sources:

Government Publications

Order from: Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Generally available at a nominal cost, and many pamphlets and bulletins free.

Collections of Readings

1. Man in a World of Work, edited by Henry Borow.

2. Readings in Vocational Guidance, edited by George D. Demos and Bruce Grant.

Encyclopedia

1. The Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance, edited by William E. Hopke.

Other Publications

1. The MacMillian Job Guide to American Corporations, by Ernest McKay.

2. Occupation Guidance, a series by the Finney Company.

3. Planning My Future. National Forums Guidance and Personal Development Texts, charts, and filmstrips.

4. The Teacher's Role in Career Development, by W. Wesley Tennyson, Thomas Soldarl, and Charlotte Mueller.

5. Occupational Information: Where To Get It and How To Use It In Counseling and Teaching, by Robert Hoppock.

6. You and Your Child's Career: A Guidance Handbook for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors, by David Sinick.

7. Occupational Literature, by Gertrude Forrester.

8. Keys to Vocational Decisions, by Walter M. Lifton.

9. Money, Jobs, and Futures, by Roesch.

10. Jobs in Your Future, by Miriam Lei, Scholarship Book Services.

Comic Books

Specifically designed for visual orientation of minority youth. Produced by American Visuals Corporation in cooperation with Behavioral Science Center. Maximum of 16 pages each and ten cents per copy.

Audiovisuals

1. Filmstrip. FOM High School Guidance Club package, available with accompanying teacher's guide from Popular Science Publishing Company.

2. Records. Concerning job interviews, first job, etc. Available from Guidance Associate of Pleasantville, New York.

3. Records. A Man's Work series (on-the-job interviews) by McGraw Hill.

4. Filmstrips and records. Health Careers 1 and 2, San Francisco Medical Society.

5. Other. Films available from Kodak, Bell Telephone Company, General Electric, Audiovisual Communications, Encyclopedia Brittanica and others.

These are just a few of the many excellent materials available. Some are especially intended for the vocational teacher or guidance counselor, while others are made especially for student use.

GROUPING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. Should disadvantaged students be grouped heterogeneously or homogeneously?
2. Why?

Quite typically the response teachers make in initial discussion on teaching disadvantaged youth is to recommend the grouping of students into homogeneous groups. Their suggestion is often to get the disadvantaged out of the heterogeneous environment of the normal classroom. "Somebody" with adequate time and resources can deal with them. One often wonders whether this response is designed to aid the student by "providing a better environment" or to aid the teacher by "provid ng a better environment".

Should Disadvantaged Students Be Grouped Heterogeneously or Homogeneously?

There are a number of arguments both for and against homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping. Both types of grouping have their places. However, the enormous problems of the disadvantaged student population are not going to be solved through reliance on homogeneous grouping systems. There are not enough funds or commitment likely to become available for such a thrust. Effective teaching of disadvantaged students in a heterogeneous environment offers much more hope for success.

Why?

Research has provided us with a number of studies indicating that success or failure of programs for the disadvantaged are much more related to the teacher's competency than physical arrangement of students. These studies conclude that generally if a teacher does a good job of teaching disadvantaged students in a heterogeneous atmosphere, he will also do a good job in a homogeneous setting. A teacher who does a poor job of teaching disadvantaged students in a heterogeneous atmosphere will very likely do a poor job in a homogeneous atmosphere. Thus, it should be evident that the knowledge and attitude of the individual vocational teacher is much more important for effective teaching of disadvantaged students than is the physical arrangement of these students.

Another confounding feature of homogeneous grouping of disadvantaged is that in reality it is almost impossible to gather a group of students who are homogeneous for a single trait. Usually so-called homogeneously grouped students are actually a group of disadvantaged students as different from one another as any normal classroom group.

Disadvantaged student problems generally originate from a poor home environment. They come to school with fewer of the skills the rest of society accepts as a matter of course. To segregate these students, who come to school inadequately prepared, into groups that reinforce rather than expand their social skills, is not furthering their development.

The goal of vocational education is to prepare students for life and the world of work. To do this, the classroom situation and instruction must be as realistic as possible. A homogeneous setting is not comparable to a real life situation. It is imperative that all students have the opportunity to relate to students of other cultural, social, economic, and intellectual backgrounds. It follows, then, that if physical arrangement is not as important as effective teachers, rather than using grouping as a tool for teaching disadvantaged youth we need to use effective teachers.

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. What should be included in a curricula for disadvantaged students?
2. Should there be a separate curricula for the disadvantaged student?
3. Which comes first, the subject matter or the student?
4. How do you develop a relevant curriculum?
5. Should work experiences or co-op be included?
6. How can small schools provide work experience programs for their students?
7. How do you start programs for disadvantaged students without the handicap of the "disadvantaged" label?
8. How do Area Vocational Skill Centers fit into programs for the disadvantaged?

What Should Be Included in a Curricula For Disadvantaged Students?

A vocational curriculum should expose a disadvantaged student to a variety of jobs, since many disadvantaged students are aware of only a handful of possibilities. It should provide for attitudinal development and change, and should include some means for diagnosing an individual's strengths and weaknesses for various occupations. Caution should be taken to insure that the curriculum does not lock a student into a particular occupation or prepare him for a dead-end job. When developing a curriculum for disadvantaged students, attempt to link vocational and general education in terms of the student's needs and interests.

Some goals for a curriculum for a disadvantaged youth should include:

1. Improving the disadvantaged youth's self-concept.
2. Providing youth with multi-cultural experiences.
3. Improving communication skills of disadvantaged youth.
4. Expanding the school-community communication network so that the disadvantaged student is able to cope with the mainstream as well as be accepted by it.
5. Providing information concerning occupation preparation.
6. Developing salable skills for the world of work.

When planning curricula for the disadvantaged, the following general guidelines might be helpful.

1. The content of the subject area should be essential to the student now and in his future.
2. The content should be chosen because of its relevancy to the background, interest, and motivation of each student.
3. The structure of the curriculum should be flexible. This is especially important so the disadvantaged student can work at a speed most beneficial to his learning.
4. All activities should, in some way, broaden the student's interest and perception of his environment and increase his feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (1).

For many reasons vocational offerings in rural areas are extremely limited. Many rural students seek urban jobs; therefore, curricula offerings must be broad enough to prepare them for urban employment and urban life. A vocational curriculum should include skills and techniques necessary for obtaining and keeping a job, but it should also include skills for life: buying a car, mending a leaky faucet, filling out income tax forms, etc. If not learned in school, the only other methods of learning are hearsay, trial and error, or simple avoidance.

Each disadvantaged student has special needs and planning a curriculum to meet the needs for each student is extremely demanding. But it provides the only hope he has of ever overcoming his disadvantaged situation. One of the underlying functions of the personalized curriculum is to help the student build a more positive self-image through successful experiences and to view the school as a non-threatening environment. By relating the curriculum to what is important in the student's world and encouraging mastery of basic learning the student is able to see that achievement is possible and is, therefore, motivated to learn.

The personalized curriculum places responsibility for his education upon the student, with the guidance of the teacher. Through this the student develops an understanding of his own needs and educational goals then become more relevant and reachable.

The following recipe for creating a curriculum for disadvantaged students is to the point:

> Take a bunch of students, add a cupful of opportunity and a quarter pound of individual success, mix with a dash of program flexibility, throw in a pinch of missionary zeal and a generous handful of skills and techniques. Combine the above with the aid of state and federal funds. Add a touch of community service, a little bark from the tree of knowledge and stir well in the caldron of experience. Serve daily, topped with relevancy.

Should There Be a Separate Curricula For the Disadvantaged Students?

It is preferable to keep disadvantaged students in the regular vocational education classes if they can benefit from such instruction. Obviously, though, something different must be done if disadvantaged students aren't "making it" in the present situation. The curriculum may need to be more detailed and intense than that used for non-disadvantaged students. A sincere and constant effort must be made to keep the curriculum relevant to the disadvantaged student. Constantly show the disadvantaged student the relationship between what he is being asked to learn and his life outside of school. Utilize any and as many techniques as will enable a disadvantaged student to learn as well as enjoy learning.

Which Comes First, the Subject Matter or the Student?

The first and perhaps most important idea that must be established is that professional vocational personnel must become more concerned with people and less concerned with program. This is not to infer that program is unimportant, as programs for persons who have special needs (the disadvantaged) are of major importance.

Ideally, program form and content should be based upon the needs of the student. To ascertain needs, we must fully understand the cultural, social, and personality systems of disadvantaged students. If this understanding is not achieved, the needs (physical, psychological, social, etc.) of these students will remain hidden and, therefore, program development will be inadequate.

How Do You Develop a Relevant Curriculum?

In developing a vocational education curriculum for disadvantaged youth, consideration must also be given to the needs of the business community.

Vocational education programs should train students for occupations in which employment is available. Meeting the needs of the disadvantaged cannot be isolated from the needs of the community. A student will be disillusioned and disappointed if he becomes interested in and prepares for a job which does not exist or is becoming obsolete. Instruction must lead to real and achievable goals.

What makes a curriculum relevant? The students must see a relation between what they are asked to learn, their own daily lives, and expected future. This gives content to its meaning. They must see usefulness in it. What they are asked to learn must be seen as a way to help solve <u>their</u> problems.

A thought that might be kept in mind when attempting to develop a relevant curriculum is as follows:

> "There is only one subject matter in education and that is life and all its manifestations."

<u>Should Work Experiences or Co-op Be Included?</u>

Most definitely, if possible. On-the-job experience seems to be more relevant to students. They can actually relate to the real world of work, which most of them anxiously look forward to doing.

The best of all possible programs would be one where students get on-the-job experience relating to "in class" learning. However, this is very seldom possible in small rural schools. Before students are placed on a job it is necessary that they have successfully completed a pre-employment course or program. This could consist of filling out applications, interviews, appropriate dress, responsibility, punctuality, following directions, honesty, fellow employee relationships, employee-employer relationships, etc.

Work experience or co-op programs are often crucial for keeping disadvantaged students in school. Many of these students have gone without money (or with very little) for so long they often quit school to find a job as soon as they are of age. Part-time jobs through work experience, or co-op programs usually provide enough money to enable them to remain in school for one or two more years.

How Can Small Schools Provide Work Experience Programs For Their Students?

Schools located in rural communities are often limited in the number of jobs available to students. The few businesses and the few employees needed to maintain the businesses leave little room for student work experience. Some employers are most willing to hire high school students; however, one employer can't hire all the students who want work experience. What is the solution? There are several, to be chosen on the basis of your students, your school situation, and your administration. The administration must be convinced that work experience is crucial for some students in order to keep them in school, as well as beneficial to them after graduation. Hopefully, they will see the importance of this and budget some monies to pay students for work.

Some of the jobs which might be found for students in small schools are:

Secretarial
Custodial
Teacher aide for elementary grades
Food Service worker
Lunch room supervisor in elementary or junior high
Library Aide

Another idea which might be considered is setting up a "short-term employment" service with the cooperation of the community. Students who are interested in working at various jobs for members of the community would file an application with the employment service. The employment service

would be a part of the vocational education department. Members of the community would call the employment service when they needed a student to help them. Such jobs might include:

Babysitting
Yard work
Painting
Housework
Snow shoveling
Harvesting fruits or vegetables
Moving
Changing screens and storm windows
Washing windows
Washing cars
Gardening
Building a garage or porch
Putting in steps or a sidewalk
Cleaning garage or basement
Caring for animals

Still another idea which might be put into operation is setting up a school store. With this type of set-up it may not be possible to pay the students who work in the store; however, it would provide an excellent opportunity to gain experience. The following is an account of how a teacher in a high school of only 325 students was able to develop a w experience program for his students.

> "Can an effective and practical distributive education prog am providing work experience be initiated in a school with 325 students in a town of 1100? At the beginning of this year I would have said no, but one semester later I can happily say the answer is yes. All one needs is a cooperative administration, an old teacher's lounge, and, of course, that all important necessity money.
>
> At the beginning of this school year I was given two books and 20 students and told to teach them about retailing and selling. The class started off with the usual reading assignments and activities rarely deviated from this pattern through the first semester. Originally the class was to be two semester courses, but because of the monotony of the material, we tried to combine the two. Each class period seemed to be longer than the previous one.

I believe there were two reasons for the monotonous attitude in the class. First, the students did not know anything about retailing, nor selling for that matter. A store was a store. It was not a place where goods exchange hands, nor was it a place where competition takes place. The owner of a gas station was just that, the owner. He was not a retailer nor was he a salesman. He just pumped gas and took in the money. This was not relevant to the students because they were not directly involved.

Secondly, and most important, the students could not relate to the activities that they were learning or reading about in their books. The students, especially the lower ability or disadvantaged, must be able to reach out and touch what they are to learn. They cannot just sit in the classroom and read a book and know the actual experience. These students have to be shown what selling and retailing are in actual use. This is where I am fortunate in being able to give them a life-size example.

At the time we began thinking of new ideas, as far as a project is concerned, we considered a cooperative program. Practically speaking, this is the best way for students to get first hand experience in the world of business. But because of the size of our town and the number of students involved, a cooperative program was not practical.

Our second idea was trying to start a school store. The only trouble was where do we get the money, where do we get a room, and was this venture legal. With our newly passed legislation, the school cannot sell paper and supplies to the students. But we found out as long as the activity is not solely for the support of the school, a school store would be legal.

Not feeling overly confident of the idea I entered the principal's office with our plan. To my surprise he was all for the idea. He suggested that we could use an old teacher's lounge (that I didn't know existed) for the store. I also found out that there were funds available for our use. With all of this good news, I had a hundred ideas going through my head at once.

From this point the class had some heavy planning to do. How do we start a store? What do we sell and who will run it? All of these questions had to be planned over a period of weeks.

First of all, we had to inspect the room and find out how much space we had. There were actually two rooms, with one smaller than the other. It must have been used for the coffee maker and ditto machine. It was ideal for a stock room. The outer room was a little larger, just large enough for our store.

Secondly, we had to decide what to sell. The class scoured catalogues to find merchandise to buy with the school name and mascot on it. Finally, they agreed on a number of items that they could order. The items consisted of pens, notebooks, clothing items, and similar low cost goods.

Third, we had to decide how the store operation would be worked. To utilize the three basic operations of a business, the class was broken down into three groups. Group one takes care of advertising and display. They make up posters that are put up throughout the school. Also, this group does one display in a display case made available to the class. By using the books as a guideline, the group can do an effective job.

Group two is involved with the job of merchandising and inventory control. The group decided upon a simple card file inventory system. We also purchased inventory sheets to be used at the end of each week. This group also puts the stock in the storeroom and keeps a continuous check on it.

Group three is involved with the actual store operation. This group must make a work schedule for a two-week period. They also must keep the store clean and keep the shelves stocked. We do not have a cash register as yet, but a local store is going to donate a register to the school and class. This group is learning basic selling techniques as well as store operation.

Each group is assigned one job for a period of two weeks, or each group will do each job once during a six-week period. In this way I feel that the students can learn at least the basic store operations.

From the beginning each student has known that cooperation is a necessity. To be successful the store has to be run as a unit. Each student must get involved to the best of his or her ability. The store must be a success this year for it to open again in the fall. The students know this and are working toward making it a success.

It is easy for me to sit back and watch the wheels of progress in motion, each person contributing to the operation and success of the store. The students who could not comprehend the material in the chapters of the book, can now see how things are done. Basically, the store operation is real to them, and not a chapter out of a book. These students must be able to touch what is real and not see it through the words of a book or a teacher. The store is providing students with 'The Real Thing'."

How Do You Start Programs For Disadvantaged Students Without the Handicap of the "Disadvantaged" Label?

There are two points to this problem. First of all, if the program for the disadvantaged is incorporated into a classroom containing both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged, there is rarely any problem with stigma or labels. The program of methods and techniques for the disadvantaged are incorporated into the total curriculum and made available to all.

For those programs set up for a homogeneous classroom of disadvantaged students, caution must be taken. Do not let a stigma become attached that will hurt the individual students as well as the program. To begin with, when naming the class, avoid names which attach a stigma to students or the teacher, such as disadvantaged, handicapped, special needs, etc. Use meaningful, sophisticated, prestige-building names. Disadvantaged students should be taught in the best facilities available and with the most up-to-date equipment. This will also help to build the prestige of the program.

Advisory committees can be a useful model for achieving practical participation of industry and business in training the disadvantaged. It is recommended that special advisory committees be organized to focus exclusively on training and hiring disadvantaged students.

Work with various groups in the community such as:

- Any community group which has devoted its continuous energies to school problems.
- Student organizations seeking a relationship with the administration of vocational education programs.
- Civil rights groups (CORE, Urban League, NAACP, La Rasa, etc.) which can be helpful in identifying persons and groups with the community whose chief concerns are education.
- Parents, either singly or as a group (3).

How Do Area Vocational Skill Centers Fit Into Programs For the Disadvantaged?

The first thought that comes to mind is that area vocational skill centers are more capable and better equipped to offer a greater variety than small rural schools. However, at the present time, disadvantaged students have a somewhat limited access to the vocational skill centers. Part of this is due to the fact that administrators are somewhat selective

as to which students attend some skill centers. Usually the disadvantaged students are not among those selected.

Vocational teachers from the schools surrounding the vocational skill center must join together to convince skill centers to provide opportunities for the disadvantaged youth. It is crucial that disadvantaged youth be equipped with a salable skill when they leave high school to enter the world of work.

A preparatory or exploratory program might be designed and offered in the high schools for disadvantaged youth. This program could provide students with the opportunity to explore various occupations. Actually visiting the vocational skill center and becoming acquainted with the vocations for which training is provided is essential. Include visits to places of employment as well. Prepare them to meet the requirements necessary for selection and attendance at the skill center. This program can be a separate semester or nine-week course, or it could be part of a general course in vocational education. Since vocational skill centers usually admit eleventh and twelfth graders, this preparatory program should be offered to ninth and tenth graders.

Do not demand or force students to choose one of the training programs offered at the skill center. However, do emphasize the importance of leaving school with a salable skill that he may rely on for support should he choose to train for another occupation or job.

Disadvantaged students may have some difficulties at a skill center. Some type of provision should be made for these students should they need counseling, clarification, or encouragement. One possibility may be to offer a "related" class that meets once or twice a week at the student's home school. Another possibility may be for the disadvantaged students to

meet with the vocational counselor or teacher once a week. The purpose of these classes or meetings would be to smooth over or help students understand problems and difficulties encountered at the skill center. The person conducting these meetings or classes should make it a point to keep in contact with the instructors at the skill center as to the progress of the students, especially the disadvantaged students. This person should also have established rapport with these students so that something worthwhile can be accomplished.

SUCCESSFUL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. What kinds of techniques are effective?
2. Why have special techniques for disadvantaged students?
3. How do you use the techniques in a heterogeneous classroom?
4. How do you gain support for these techniques in a school system?
5. What equipment is needed?
6. How much more trouble is it going to be to use these techniques?
7. What are these techniques?
8. Where do you find these methods and techniques?
9. How do these techniques differ from what teachers are already doing?
10. How do you insure that the disadvantaged develop the skills for working with fellow employees?

Special methods and materials <u>are necessary</u> in designing effective vocational programs for students with special needs. This point should be firmly established. Methods of instruction will vary with each particular student involved. Some students will respond to and benefit from certain techniques while others will not.

What Kinds of Techniques Are Effective?

The techniques you use must meet individual needs and appeal to personal desires and interests. Obviously then, the same techniques may not be effective with every disadvantaged student. Choosing the right method and

technique(s) for each student requires that you know your students well; that you know their needs, desires, and interests. This brings us to the point of individualizing instruction for each disadvantaged student.

Individualized learning techniques and methods require that you start where the student is. Unless you hold to this, learning experiences via various techniques will not be effective. When considering which techniques and methods to use for a particular student, also consider that student's "hot button". (If you will recall, a student's "hot button" is that which interests him the most or motivates him to action.) Learning experiences related to a particular student's interests have proven most successful. And some methods and techniques are more effective with some students than others. Above all, don't forget to include the element of success. It increases self-pride and provides confidence to continue.

The following are some of the major learning characteristics of the disadvantaged. Not all these characteristics apply to all disadvantaged students. In the same sense, none of them may apply to some of your students. In order to determine appropriate and effective methods of instruction, it is necessary to be aware of these learning characteristics of the disadvantaged.

1. The disadvantaged seem to be oriented to the physical and visual rather than the aural.
2. The disadvantaged show more interest in content (content-centered) rather than form.
3. The disadvantaged are externally-oriented rather than introspective.
4. The disadvantaged exhibit problem-centered rather than abstract-centered learning characteristics.
5. The disadvantaged use inductive rather than deductive reasoning.
6. The disadvantaged are spatial rather than temporal oriented. In other words, they do not allow themselves to become limited by time.

7. The disadvantaged are slow, careful, patient, and persevering (in areas of importance to them) rather than quiet, clever, facile, and flexible.

8. Often the disadvantaged are inclined to communicate through actions rather than words.

9. Many disadvantaged youth are found to be deficient in auditory attention and interpretation skills.

10. The disadvantaged are also very oriented toward concrete application of what is learned.

11. Disadvantaged youth are found to be short in attention span, experiencing difficulty in following orders.

12. At times, disadvantaged youth are characterized by significant gaps in knowledge and learning.

13. All too often disadvantaged youth are lacking the experience of receiving approval for success in tasks (8).

As stated before, it is essential to be aware of and consider these characteristics when searching for effective methods of instruction. But you, as a teacher, must go one step further; considering the particular strengths of the disadvantaged. They are as follows:

1. Experiencing family cooperation and mutual aid.

2. A tendency to have collective (family and group) rather than individual values.

3. Being less susceptible to status and prestige factors; therefore, being more genuinely equalitarian in values.

4. Accepting responsibility at an early age.

5. Possessing superior coordination and physical skills.

6. Being physically and visually oriented.

7. Relating well to concrete experiences.

8. Having a lack of learning sets (8).

How Do You Use the Techniques in a Heterogeneous Classroom?

Any special methods, techniques, or materials you use for the disadvantaged in your classroom should be made available to all students. Don't

single out the disadvantaged by saying that "only Jimmy, Sally, Jean, and Billy may use the learning carrel in the back of the room." Set up special materials as if they are there for everyone's use, but especially encourage the disadvantaged to use them.

At times, have a non-disadvantaged student who has a good knowledge of the subject matter work with a disadvantaged student to explain how a particular piece of equipment is used or to demonstrate a skill. Vary this procedure so that occasionally a disadvantaged student is explaining and working with another disadvantaged student. Take advantage of opportunities to have disadvantaged students demonstrating or explaining various techniques or skills to non-disadvantaged students. This opportunity may arise when a non-disadvantaged student has been absent from school or when a disadvantaged student has a special interest or a special skill.

How Do You Gain Support For These Techniques in a School System?

Winning support for developing and implementing a vocational program for disadvantaged youth may necessitate the use of a specific plan of action. Essentially this plan involves educating the administration and faculty. The following are some suggestions for winning this support.

1. Have a written plan for the program you want to implement. Be sure to include purpose, objectives, and goal for the program. Tell what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, when, where, and why.

2. Share these plans with administration and other key people. Once you have begun your program you can always refer them to your written plan should they question your endeavors.

3. When implementing such a program, do so in an approved way. Be open about what you are planning. Invite others to give opinions and suggestions. Do not try to sneak it past someone you feel may be difficult to convince.

4. Develop skill and strategy for talking with administrators. Never ask them a question which can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no". It is too easy for an administrator to say "no". Present your program plans in a way that you get agreement from them.

5. Get key people involved in your program. Enlist aid from members of the community, other faculty members, etc.

6. Develop a strategy for getting people to tell you to do what you want to. If they think it was their idea, they will be most ready and eager to give you and your program their support.

7. Plan visibility -- show progress and results of your program. Let others see what your disadvantaged students have achieved.

What Equipment Is Needed?

The equipment needed, of course, depends upon the particular techniques you have decided to use. Although it is important for teachers to establish the concept in their minds that special techniques, methods, and materials are necessary in designing effective vocational programs for students with special needs, this does not indicate that lots of expensive equipment is necessary. For business programs, you want business machines that are as up-to-date as possible, and for shop or mechanical programs, you also want up-to-date machines and equipment. Admittedly, these are expensive. But aren't they also the same machines you would want for all your students and not just the disadvantaged? Most schools already have this kind of equipment. The object is to find or create techniques for understanding and learning to use this equipment rather than the number of expensive machines and equipment provided.

Continue to keep in mind that the most important equipment a teacher can obtain is sensitivity to the needs and interests of the student. Other equipment necessary is imagination and flexibility, in order to create new and innovative techniques and methods. Flexibility counts when you can bend an old technique to fit a new situation.

Other equipment such as visual materials (slides, filmstrips, films, film loops, transparencies, etc.) and tapes and records are also effective. These too are relatively inexpensive and most schools already have recorders, phonographs, and projectors.

How Much More Trouble Is It Going To Be To Use These Techniques?

There is no way to soften the answer to this question. It will take much more time, energy, and creative imagination to develop and use these techniques. This is one reason why you must have a real desire to teach the disadvantaged. Creative and innovative methods and techniques take much planning and preparation.

What Are These Techniques?

There are a vast number of effective techniques. Again, the technique you use and the degree of its effectiveness depends upon the individual youth and his particular needs and interests. Because it is so vital that we closely correlate techniques with individuals, we might appropriately refer to this method as "personalized instruction". Personalized instruction is another of the keys to reaching and teaching the disadvantaged youth in vocational classes. Sensitivity to an individual student's need and interests plays an important part when using techniques.

The following are suggested methods and techniques for teaching the disadvantaged. When reading through the descriptions of each, try to do so with an open mind. If, for some reason, a particular techniques does not appeal to you or does not appear to be feasible for your situation -- do not discard it, please. Consider it again! Here is where creativity and imagination play an important part. Perhaps as described that technique can't be used in your particular situation -- so be flexible, creative,

and imaginative. Change it, reform it, revise it, bend it. One segment of a technique may give you inspiration to create a completely new technique to personalize instruction for one of your disadvantaged students. Tear each technique down into parts and put various parts together in a new way.

Personalized Instruction

"Personalized instruction" offers a variety of alternatives and experiences, and is geared to the particular needs of each student. Another important asset of personalized instruction is that it allows the student to learn at his own pace.

Discovery Learning (inquiry)

This involves setting up a situation(s) whereby the student discovers through his own efforts of investigation or experimentation. For example, in a home economics class the topic was "color" -- its composition and relation to one another. Rather than tell the students the various principles of color, the teacher provided each with clear plastic cups, water and food coloring and let them experiment individually to discover solutions to the various problems they had posed.

Supervised Study

Don't lecture. Give the students sources for finding the answers to various questions, then provide enough time for this research. Students learn to locate information efficiently and may retain it longer. Make yourself available to assist and advise.

Project Method

Students work individually or in small groups on projects of special interest in a particular subject or element of that subject. Encourage

further exploration into an interest. If it is related to the subject at hand, great. If not, look for ways it could be related. Whatever the case, don't discourage him, don't stifle this interest.

Team Teaching

Using this technique provides a perfect opportunity for teachers to best use their special talents. Teachers, just as students, have special interests. Through team teaching teachers can share their special talents and interests to the best advantage. Topics that teachers are very familiar with and enjoy can often be made exciting and enjoyable for the student as well. Team teaching also provides an opportunity for students to become acquainted with other teachers.

Field Trips

This is an excellent way to help disadvantaged students, not only to become aware of, but to better understand various occupations. Many times disadvantaged students make a career choice from a very narrow field. Field trips also provide an excellent opportunity for students to become better acquainted with the community, its needs and the services it provides. There should be a purpose and objective for all field trips. Don't let them become thought of as a half-day off from school. If planned carefully and purposefully a field trip can be a very enlightening experience for all students, but especially for the disadvantaged.

Competition

Certainly this technique may be frowned upon by many educators. The rationale that disadvantaged students are already behind or below average and competition would only serve to intensify this gap is quite valid.

However, there are ways in which competition can be used very effectively. If you know your disadvantaged students well, you will also know that there are some areas in which they are talented and knowledgeable. Use these, if appropriate, in a competitive situation. Winning does wonders for confidence and self-concept. Once a student has experienced this kind of success, he may have the confidence and courage to participate in competition in an area in which he is less talented. There is also the technique of competing against one's self. Working with the student to set up goals for achievement provides an opportunity for this kind of competition.

Visibility

This simply means take advantage of your disadvantaged students' personal assets by making them visible to other teachers and students in the school. Show off your students' skills and achievements. This will not only help to improve the image of your vocational program but will also improve the individual student's image in the eyes of his teachers and other students (as well as himself). This can be done through the use of displays, special programs, newspaper write-ups, contests, etc.

Textbooks

Ban textbooks in your classroom. Use them only as a resource. There is nothing that "turns students off" more than reading from a textbook each day.

Multi-media

You will be surprised by the acceptance of this by your students. For some reason media other than textbooks seem most appealing to students. Use paperbacks, magazines, commercial television, newspapers, etc. Many

times learning activities can be based upon TV programs or articles and stories that are relevant and meaningful to the students.

Resource Center

If possible, set up a resource center at the back or to one side of your classroom. Besides various textbooks, choose several magazines appropriate to your special area of vocational education. Also include cartoons and newspaper clippings. These might be arranged on a wall, a bulletin board, or in a scrapbook. Include as much student work as possible. If space permits, display various student projects from previous classes. Also articles and essays of special interest written by students should be included. Any pamphlets and brochures which are available from commercial and governmental agencies and apply to vocational education or the subject matter included in your program should be displayed in the resource center.

Occupational Exploration Center

The teachers from all the vocational areas in your school may want to consider working together to set up an "occupational exploration center". The best place for this would probably be the library. However, it may be possible to convert a small unused room for this purpose. Whatever the case, make it a practice to introduce your students to it at the beginning of each year or semester. Then continue to refer to it often.

Within the exploration center display the following:

1. Booklets, brochures, pamphlets, etc., describing various occupations.
2. Films, filmstrips, and tapes describing various occupations. Try to see that a projector is available at all times so that students may view media individually or in small groups. You may also consider renting films or filmstrips for short periods of time. You

may also be able to make arrangements with nearby schools to borrow filmstrips and films. Set up a schedule so that a new film or filmstrip arrives every week. Post this schedule where students will see it and announce the arrival of a new film to your classes, or over the school public address system.

3. Keep a file of the various occupations found in the surrounding communities and the address and telephone number of any employee in that specific occupation who is willing to talk with students. You may also want to file the addresses and telephone numbers of employers who are willing to talk with students about a particular occupation.

4. A suggestion or request box might be appropriate. Students are usually pretty good at coming up with suggestions for improvement.

5. Rather than have students visit employees or employers individually you may consider inviting them to your center when several students indicate an interest in a specific occupation. If release time from class is not available to the students, invite your guest to come to the center before school, during lunch hour, or after school. Set up a system whereby students who are interested in a particular job or occupation and would like to talk to an employer or employee involved with that occupation can make it known to you. Once a resource person has been invited to the school and has accepted, be sure the students who indicated an interest are aware of this. Also make a general announcement so that any other students who are interested have an opportunity to visit and ask questions. Sessions with the guest may be as formal or informal as you wish. Check with the guest to see which would be most comfortable for him. Let him know that pictures, slides, and brochures are most welcome. You may want to put one student in charge of hosting the guest -- show him the school, introduce him to the other students, show him the Occupational Exploration Center, and extend a written, as well as verbal, "thank you" for his time.

6. Work with your disadvantaged students individually. Get them interested in the Occupational Exploration Center. Encourage them to visit with guest employees or employers. Get them involved. If there is an occupation they are particularly interested in, ask them to be the guide or escort for the guest representing that occupation.

7. Make the center physically attractive and comfortable.

8. Make the Occupational Exploration Center available to adults, drop-outs, past graduates, and parents.

Student Aides

This is a technique capable of providing one of the most memorable experiences of a student's life. It also may be the one experience which

helps him to make a career choice and gives him the courage and confidence to see it through.

Vocational education is such an activity-oriented program that an aide is often very necessary. Go through the proper channels in your particular school to arrange credit for students who serve as student aides. An aide should be a student who has previously successfully completed the class. Encourage a few of your disadvantaged students to apply for this position. Seeing that a disadvantaged student can meet the criteria to be a student aide can serve as an inspiration to other disadvantaged students.

Student aides serve a dual purpose as a technique for teaching the disadvantaged. It not only improves self-concept, but also provides an example for other disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged student aides are often able to communicate with other disadvantaged students when the teacher has been unable to. This is a technique packed full of possibilities -- take advantage of them!

Tests

Attempt to use tests in a non-threatening way. Tests don't always have to be used for evaluating students. Use them as pre-tests or student self-evaluation. Let the student come to know the test as a way of determining the areas in which he is weak or lacks understanding. Then let him come to you with the "areas of weakness" he has identified and together devise a schedule or program for individual study or instruction. Be sure to make the goal very clear.

Tape Recorder

The tape recorder has unlimited possibilities. Exploit it! A tape recorder with a headset in one corner of the room is a must for classrooms

containing disadvantaged students. If at all possible, secure a couple of cassettes. These are portable and should be made available for students to sign out so that they may take them home overnight.

For those disadvantaged students who are slow readers, the tape recorder can be a most efficient and enjoyable device for getting information. Record or have one of your student aides record the material to be read. Allow the slow reader to listen to the tape as he follows along in the book, pamphlet, or other source.

Explanation of a particular idea or concept can be made in more detail using the recorder. This can be used as a review for those students who were absent or for the disadvantaged student who needs a second and third chance in order to grasp and retain various facets of the concept.

Another excellent way the tape recorder may be used is as a form of student self-evaluation or testing. Often limited or low reading ability keeps students from doing well on a test. Record each question on tape with a long enough pause after each for the student to answer. The student can replay the questions as often as necessary. Make the answers to the questions available on the other side of the tape or on a separate tape. With each answer give an explanation for it and possibly another resource to refer to for further explanation if the student is still confused. This immediate feedback is most beneficial to disadvantaged students. Students might also use the tape recorder to listen to themselves explain certain techniques or concepts, and thus improve their verbalization abilities.

Games

Games serve well as motivational devices. They provide learning experiences while taking away the drudgery of reading. This also acts as a

socializing catalyst in that most games require a partner or teams. There are many commercial games available which are appropriate to various areas of vocational education. However, games become even more exciting when they are invented and constructed by class members. Perhaps an agreement could be set up whereby the student invents the game and the vocational department provides the materials needed to construct the equipment for playing the game. Encourage the student to make the game equipment as professional as possible.

Models

Models and mock-ups of various machines, room designs, etc., are most appealing to disadvantaged students. When at all possible, use the real thing. Where this is not possible, use models and mock-ups so students can touch, handle, and maneuver. Anything a disadvantaged student can see and touch seems to arouse his interest and motivation. It is also more efficient than readings or lectures in helping him understand a concept, purpose, or use.

Community Resources

Do not overlook community resources as teaching techniques. Always be alert for ways to bring the community to the classroom or the classroom to the community, a form of "transfer of training". You must be sure that you are constantly helping the disadvantaged student relate the skills and concepts learned in school to the environment outside school.

Learning Carrels

This technique seems to be one of the most useful to disadvantaged students. It provides some of the extra equipment needed to help the

disadvantaged student learn at the same pace as most of the other students. Each room should have two or three learning carrels, simply a table or desk with the sides and front built up so the learner will not distract the others in class and vice-versa. Records, tape recorders, and filmstrip viewers should be available for use in the learning carrel. It can also be used for undistracted reading from books, pamphlets, etc. (Non-disadvantaged students should also be allowed to use the carrels.)

Rewards and Praise

The use of rewards or praise, even for the most minute success, may serve as a key to starting a disadvantaged student on the road to progress. A characteristic of the disadvantaged is his inability to accept delayed gratification. Divide long-range goals into sub-goals to be achieved on a daily or weekly basis. Gratification takes place each time you praise a student for successful achievement of a sub-goal.

Pass-Fail Grading

There are many pros and cons connected with this approach; however, it is a technique that must be seriously considered when working with disadvantaged students. Many times the threat of grades inhibits a disadvantaged student and keeps him from doing his best. The thought that he can only make a C or D in the course makes him feel inferior to other students and hence he fails to do the quality of work of which he is capable.

Resource Persons

Resource persons often provide an exciting and stimulating experience for students. They seem to bring the real world to the students. This can be especially important and interesting for disadvantaged youth. Try

to set up the resource person's presentation on an informal basis so that students feel free to ask questions. Encourage the resource person to bring visuals, models, or other equipment which might make his presentation clearer and more meaningful. Make him feel welcome and show appreciation so he will be willing to come again.

Standards

Do not dilute standards so that disadvantaged students are assured of meeting them. They are aware when standards are lowered and this only serves to create or reinforce the feeling that you don't think they are capable. Through objective evaluation you can adjust unrealistic, outdated, or irrelevant standards. Use the techniques and methods described here to help them reach the same standards expected of all students.

Extra-curricular Activities and Transportation

Make an attempt to get disadvantaged students involved in after school or extra-curricular activities. To do this, it may be necessary to relate after-school activities to class activities. Be alert for clues which reveal a disadvantaged student's interests. Then get them involved in the extra-curricular activity that can develop that interest. It might also be beneficial to consider developing a new extra-curricular activity when enough students (especially disadvantaged) are interested.

More schools today are providing a late bus for students who want to stay after school for extra-curricular activities. This is an excellent idea. (Many times transportation is the main obstacle barring disadvantaged students from participating in after-school activities.) Discuss this with the proper people in your school system. Propose that a late bus be made available for students at least one or two days a week.

Programmed Learning

Most teachers are quite familiar with programmed learning. For some disadvantaged students programmed units or texts may be particularly effective. But this should not be the sole technique employed. Programmed materials introduce and teach the subject matter a small detail or segment at a time. Don't forget that students need to see the concept as a whole as well.

Most vocational teachers are aware that there really aren't many good programmed materials available. Those we have are often too difficult for disadvantaged students with low reading ability. Of the few others available, much of the subject matter does not fit the situation for which it is needed. An alternative to this dilemma is to write your own programmed material. This, of course, takes time, but may prove to be well worth it.

Vocabulary

Use the idea of "Word of the Week" (or day). Instead of a single word, a phrase might also be used. Exhibit this on the chalkboard, bulletin board, or in poster form. Include a cartoon or picture to emphasize the word or phrase. Use words or phrases connected with the skills or concepts the students are learning.

Learning Packages

There are several formats for learning packages. They are prepared by teachers to teach one concept. The learning package is in written form and consists of a pre-test, a post-test, and several learning experiences. One purpose of a learning package is to allow a student to advance at his own rate. Learning packages are not meant to be used every day, but only now and then to teach or clarify a detailed concept.

Learning packages provide an opportunity for teachers to write and prepare materials at a lower reading level, thus making them usable for those disadvantaged students who experience reading difficulties.

If you are not familiar with learning package formats, contact the home economics teacher in your school. She will probably be able to provide the format used to develop Home Economics Learning Packages (HELPs) or at least an address where it may be obtained. Consult other teachers in your school for information on other learning packages.

Mini Courses

Mini courses are actually short courses within a course or program. They are basically concerned with one concept, idea, skill, technique, or method. The length of a mini course varies with the content to be included, could last from two days to a week, or two weeks at the most. Usually two or three different mini courses are offered at one time so that the number of students in each is small. Students are allowed to choose the one in which they are most interested. Or they may choose the order in which they would like to take the mini courses if it is advisable or required that they take all that are offered. Mini courses may be taught by teacher aides, student aides, parents, resource persons, other faculty members, even the principal or guidance counselor. Mini courses enhance education for the disadvantaged for two reasons: (1) Students are able to choose what they will learn, and (2) Smaller groups enable the instructor to work on a more personal basis with students.

Immediate Feedback

Immediate feedback is a technique that must be employed when teaching the disadvantaged. They need to know immediately how well they did on a

project, a test, an assignment, etc. To give the information a week or even a day later is often meaningless; by that time the student has forgotten and is interested in something else. Try to give disadvantaged students feedback immediately to motivate them to continue.

Sharing Equipment

For small rural schools it is often impossible to buy all the up-to-date equipment needed for vocational courses. For this reason many schools often go without. Consult with the proper administrators in your school and those in nearby schools to work out an arrangement whereby a few small schools may jointly purchase and share the equipment needed for vocational courses. Some schools have done this and have set up the equipment in a mobile trailer which can be pulled from one school to another. The equipment is usually used in the trailer and can be thought of as a learning laboratory. (The type of equipment and its uses would determine if this kind of set-up is appropriate.)

Sharing Faculty

This might also serve to be economical and efficient as well as beneficial to the students. Some small schools only have enough students interested in a particular occupation or vocation to make up one class. Many times schools don't offer the class rather than try to find someone to teach only one hour a day. Sharing personnel among schools would be an excellent way to improve quality and relevance of programs offered.

Work Stations

This is another technique that is especially effective for teaching disadvantaged youth. If the unit being studied is appropriate, divide it

into sub-units. Then set up work stations around the classroom. At each work station a different sub-unit should be explored, studied or experimented with. The type of learning experience to be encountered at each work station depends on the subject matter. At each work station there should only be room enough for two or three students at one time. A student can work at his own rate to accomplish the objectives set for each work station. Once he has completed the work he may move on to another work station. A disadvantaged student may still be working at a station when a non-disadvantaged student arrives. It would then be the disadvantaged student's job to explain to the other student what must be accomplished at that station. This would give the disadvantaged student verbalization practice as well as help him better understand and remember what he is learning.

8 mm. Film and Video Tape Recorder

One of the best ways for a student to learn or remember a technique, skill, or concept is to tell or show someone else. Why not do it on camera? An 8 mm. film made by a group of students can be a dynamic, exciting, and long-remembered learning experience. A video-taped presentation might be used as a form of evaluation, or review. It might also be shown at an open house, P.T.A. meeting, or board meeting as a form of public relations as well as visibility for disadvantaged students.

Where Do You Find These Methods and Techniques?

Many techniques are already described above, but there are many more. Techniques prove to be most successful when they are created by the vocational teacher to be used by a particular student to learn a particular thing. All the techniques previously described can be adapted to suit your needs. Where can you get other special techniques? Here, there, and everywhere!

Vocational teachers must constantly be looking for techniques and methods for teaching the disadvantaged. Develop a sixth sense for this. Many ideas can be obtained by reading or looking through magazines, both professional and non-professional, talking with other faculty members and teachers from other schools, watching television, shopping in the supermarket or department stores, looking through the "junk" mail you receive, cleaning out department files, etc. You must have imagination and creativity to turn unsuspecting ideas or things into effective techniques. Methods and techniques created by a teacher to suit a particular situation are usually just as effective or even more effective than those that can be purchased commercially.

How Do These Techniques Differ From What Teachers Are Already Doing?

They don't. None of the techniques described are anything new. You have read about them and may have used some of them. The point is that disadvantaged students should be taught via these special techniques. Other students can learn by reading a book or listening to the teacher's lecture, but disadvantaged students can't. The only way they can "make it" is through the use of the techniques and methods previously described. These techniques differ in the sense that they are not optional but rather an absolute must for use with disadvantaged students.

How Do You Insure That the Disadvantaged Develop the Skills For Working With Fellow Employees?

It may not be possible to insure that disadvantaged students develop the skills for working with fellow employees but vocational teachers can go a long way to help students understand and realize the importance of this. The disadvantaged student isn't "making it" according to the majority's standards. He often doesn't participate in the mainstream of society, and

that mainstream, of course, is established by the majority. As a vocational teacher, there are many things you can do to prepare the disadvantaged student for the world of work in society. If he is going tó cope in this world, he will have to learn to cope with the dominate society. He doesn't have to change his values* or even like society's values — just cope with them in order to get and keep a job.

Thus, just as it is important for the teacher of disadvantaged youth to understand the values of his students in order to work with them most effectively, the student must be made aware of the values of the dominant society. He doesn't have to agree with them, but he should know what they are so he can understand and react with employers and co-workers.

EVALUATING PROGRAMS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1. What is evaluation?
2. How is the performance of disadvantaged students evaluated?
3. What evaluation strategies are available?
4. How can we plan for program evaluation?
5. Why was the program initiated?
6. Who is the program designed to serve?
7. What is the program trying to accomplish?
8. What are we going to do differently to facilitate the desired outcomes of the program?
9. How will we know whether or not the program has made a difference?

Evaluation should be a continuous process as we attempt to help disadvantaged students to succeed. Without a well-planned evaluation procedure, we will have little evidence that our program for the disadvantaged has been a success. More important, without evaluation, our students will have little or no realization of what they or the program have accomplished. The need for evaluation is evident as we discover the role it has to play in helping our students succeed.

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*Don't do anything to lead him to believe you think there is something wrong with his value system.

What Is Evaluation?

Evaluation is a process in which those responsible for a program use information derived from many sources to arrive at a value judgment. The information collected can help the teacher determine the degree to which the intent or the goals of the program have been achieved. Evaluation serves as a basis for determining the degree to which we are achieving what we set out to accomplish as a result of the program.

Evaluation is needed to substantiate whether or not we are helping our students achieve. It is essential because it can provide the needed information for program improvement, program modification, and program planning. Evaluation should be seen as an integral part of the program of education for the disadvantaged.

Program evaluation is initiated when we identify our disadvantaged students. As we identify the characteristics that make the student disadvantaged, as we become aware of his needs, as we help him formulate his objectives, as we structure activities that will help him attain his objectives, and as we make other decisions about the student and what is best for him, we are engaged in evaluation. This initial evaluation of the student as a person is extremely important. The attitude that we convey to him regarding our evaluation will have much to do with our success in working with him in the future.

From our first association, we should show interest and respect for the student and we should reflect that we expect him to succeed. Every effort should be made to gain his confidence and to increase his confidence, self-concept, and sense of security.

We should involve as many people as necessary in making our initial evaluation. Parents, other teachers, guidance counselors, social workers,

and the principal may have important inputs into the evaluation of the student's needs, interests, and aptitudes. Their cooperation should be solicited in helping determine the status of the student as we begin to work with him.

After we have collected the initial information about the student, we are in a better position to evaluate where he wants to go and is capable of going. This evaluation should be done cooperatively by the student and teacher. Together, attainable goals should be established, based upon the student's interests, needs, and capabilities. Attempts to reach the goals should be divided into a carefully planned sequence of short-range objectives. The identification of realistic goals by the student, and the feeling that he can attain the goals, is a major step in helping him succeed.

The next step is to help the student decide how to reach his goals. As mentioned, a carefully planned sequence of short-range objectives should be established cooperatively with the student. This constitutes the plan of action. The objectives developed should be attainable, yet relevant. Successful accomplishment of what may seem initially to the minor objectives may be large steps of progress for the student. If he can have some success experiences, if he can encounter positive results of his work, and if he can learn that he has control of his situation, both he and the teacher will have accomplished a major task.

As we can readily see, evaluations of the student by the teacher are being made throughout the process. Evaluations are made of where the student is initially, where he is capable and interested in going, and how he can best get there. Teachers are making value judgments. However, the student's cooperative involvement in the decision making process lends validity to the procedure. The major evaluation is the judgment about the degree to which he has attained the goals and objectives specified.

As stated, program evaluation should be considered as the program is being derived. Evaluation procedures should be planned just as other teaching and learning activities are planned. Consideration of how to evaluate the program should not be left until the end.

How Is the Performance of Disadvantaged Students Evaluated?

It has been implied that the disadvantaged student would be evaluated upon the degree to which he attained the goals and objectives specified. These goals and objectives should be developed cooperatively by the student and the teacher through individualized instruction. The goals and objectives should be developed in areas that tend to render the student disadvantaged. Special emphasis and assistance should be given to students who are economically, socially, culturally, or academically disadvantaged.

Individualized instruction is essential for progress to take place. Evaluation of student progress toward the goals and objectives developed in the areas of economic, social, or cultural disadvantagement will many times be value judgments on the part of the teacher. However, objective evidence of progress through the attainment of the objectives should be presented and charted by the student and recorded by the teacher whenever possible.

As indicated previously, economic, social, or cultural disadvantagement is many times the underlying reason for academic disadvantagement. Objectives regarding basic needs must be attained before we can reasonably expect attainment of academic objectives. In individualizing our instruction for disadvantaged students, we must show progress in the areas of economic, social, and cultural disadvantagement along with our efforts to relieve students of academic disadvantages.

How then, is the disadvantaged student to be evaluated academically in the classroom? Here the objectives are many times not as well defined and established objectives are usually beyond the capability of the disadvantaged student. Again, individual attention and instruction will be required for each disadvantaged student. Just as the instruction is individualized, so must the evaluation be individualized. Progress in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, as measured by knowledges, attitudes, and skills should be evaluated.

In evaluating student progress, it is helpful to have a brief written description of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor characteristics of the disadvantaged student when he comes into your program. Such a description of his characteristics will help provide a basis for determining periodically in what areas your program has helped make a difference.

Increased interest in reading, improved reading skills, increased understanding and comprehension of technical subject matter, and ability to apply concepts learned are evidences of success in the cognitive domain. Improvements in punctuality, dress, school attendance, relations with peers, self-confidence, and manners are examples of successes in the affective domain. Ability to operate, repair, construct, and maintain tools, machinery, and equipment are examples of successes in the psychomotor domain. Progress made in each of these areas is evaluated by the teacher. These evaluations may be precise or they may consist merely of value judgments. Attempts should be made to build preciseness and objectivity into your evaluations and at the same time, show interest and concern to each student as he progresses.

What Evaluation Strategies Are Available?

Teachers commonly use information from many sources in making an evaluation. One of the chief sources of information regarding the academic performance of disadvantaged students is measurement. Through educational measurement, we try to obtain a quantified representation of the degree to which a trait is possessed by a student. Evaluation is a more inclusive term than measurement. Measurement is, however, a substantial part of evaluation. Properly conducted, measurement provides the important information upon which evaluation can be based.

The most common method of obtaining quantitative measurement of academic process is through educational testing. A test is a group of questions or tasks to which a student is to respond. The questions or tasks are called test items. The test items should be representative of the domain of knowledge or skill that the student is expected to possess. Responses of the students to the test items should be scored in such a way that, ideally, the results indicate the degree to which he possesses the specified trait. The real purpose of the test is to produce a quantitative representation of the trait it is designed to measure.

There are several types of tests from which a teacher of the disadvantaged can choose. The type of test chosen will have to be adapted to the individual instruction provided for each disadvantaged student. Some tests will be more appropriate than others. Following are several types of tests available.

Individual Tests and Group Tests

An individual test can be administered to only one student at a time. Because much of the instruction for the disadvantaged must be individualized,

teacher-made individualized tests should be used extensively. Although they require more time than do group tests, individual tests with immediate feedback can be an important factor in the progress of disadvantaged students.

Group tests are usually administered to more than one student at a time. They are popular with teachers because they are simple and convenient to administer. However, in testing other than basic information, group tests are rarely well suited to the individual needs of the disadvantaged.

Informal Tests and Standardized Tests

Informal tests are commonly developed by the teacher for use in a particular class. They can be adapted to the needs of each student and they can be administered individually or in groups. Informal tests are essential in measuring the individual differences of the disadvantaged.

Standardized tests can be used advantageously by teachers of the disadvantaged to assess realistically how individual students compare on certain traits with their peers. Used in this manner, standardized tests or test results can provide the teacher with important information regarding where the student is in relation to others in his age group and what special instruction is needed. For disadvantaged students, standardized tests may be somewhat diagnostic in nature and should be used accordingly.

Oral Tests, Essay Tests, and Objective Tests

The oral test may be one of the best ways in which the teacher can assess the knowledge of the disadvantaged student. Many times disadvantaged students are capable of verbalizing answers far superior to those they can write. For disadvantaged students preparing for occupations which require little written response, oral tests may be appropriate.

Oral tests can also be diagnostic in nature. By thorough questioning, the teacher may be able to identify underlying causes of student failure. A closer teacher-student relationship can be developed. Through use of oral tests the testing session will be more of a learning situation for the student than other types of tests.

There are several disadvantages to oral testing. They tend to be unplanned; they take a considerable portion of time to administer. There is also no written record of the student's responses. These factors must be considered as the decision is made regarding the extent to which oral tests will be administered to disadvantaged students.

In essay tests, the student is requested to write his answer. All students can be tested in a group. Individual questions pertinent to the individualized needs of disadvantaged students can be added to questions common to the total class. Essay tests do not isolate the disadvantaged student into an uncomfortable testing situation. However, the ability of the disadvantaged student to express his knowledge of the given subject in writing must be presumed.

Objective tests are another type common to the classroom teacher. Objective tests are scored so that the subjective judgment of the scorer is eliminated in determining the accuracy of the student's responses. Common types of objective tests are matching, multiple-choice, and true-false tests. Objective tests can be used appropriately in classes with or without disadvantaged students.

Speed Tests, Power Tests, and Mastery Tests

In a speed test, a student must answer a series of questions or complete a series of tasks of a uniformly low level of difficulty in a limited amount

of time. The test is constructed so that rarely will a student complete the entire test. Emphasis is placed on speed. In preparing for jobs in which speed is important, speed tests may be appropriate for disadvantaged students.

In a power test, the items have different levels of difficulty and are arranged in the order of increasing difficulty. No rigid time limits for administration of the test are set. The intent of a power test is to determine in depth the achievement of the student. For students who are academically disadvantaged, power tests are of little importance.

Mastery tests combine the elements of speed and power tests. It is designed to measure the minimum level of knowledges and skills which all students should have acquired. For disadvantaged students who are preparing for entry into low-level competency jobs, mastery tests are important to assess whether or not they can perform at the minimum level required.

Verbal Tests and Performance Tests

Students must respond in written or spoken language on verbal tests. It is the most common type of test used. Several of the tests mentioned previously require either written or spoken communication. Certainly verbal tests are appropriate for disadvantaged students.

Performance tests are constructed to determine the degree to which a skill has been achieved. The quantity and quality of work produced is measured during a specified period of time. Ability of disadvantaged students to pass performance tests related to their occupational area provides teachers with valid information upon which recommendations for specific jobs can be made. Performance tests, closely related to the occupational areas in which disadvantaged students are interested, can be used extensively as objective measures of the abilities of the disadvantaged.

Readiness Tests and Diagnostic Tests

Readiness tests are constructed to determine whether or not a student is ready to undertake certain types of learning. They are administered to students prior to instruction in an attempt to forecast the level of achievement expected if appropriate educational experiences were provided. Readiness tests in the areas of reading, mathematics, and languages may be given. Sometimes readiness tests are called aptitude or prognostic tests.

Readiness tests can play an important role in helping the teacher of the disadvantaged plan appropriate objectives and learning activities for students in their classes. Teachers of the disadvantaged should become familiar with the results of the readiness tests administered to the disadvantaged in their classes.

Diagnostic tests are administered after formal instruction has taken place. Diagnostic tests are designed to identify specific deficiencies in the student's background. Each item on a diagnostic test is used as a measure of student's ability. Diagnostic testing can be used continuously by the teacher of the disadvantaged as teaching progresses.

Each of the above testing situations involves an element of measurement which can contribute significantly to the total evaluation process of each disadvantaged student. Accurate measurements should be obtained in the evaluation of the disadvantaged to the extent possible. However, there are many other indicators of success that the teacher of the disadvantaged can use. By observation and interaction in the classroom every day, teachers are in an excellent position to evaluate disadvantaged students. Teachers who have disadvantaged students mixed heterogeneously in the regular classroom may not have the time to obtain as many of the objective measures of

student progress as they would like. Therefore, they must rely more heavily on subjective evaluation. In doing so, they should attempt to specify to the extent possible the indicators of success upon which they are basing such evaluations. The indicators of success expected should then be communicated to the students so they will know what is expected of them.

How Can We Plan For Program Evaluation?

Program improvement takes place when those responsible for, involved with, and affected by the program critically evaluate its outcomes. Modification of programs can be facilitated more easily if everyone concerned will take the time periodically to discuss the program's basic purposes and objectives. Programs of high standards for the disadvantaged can be maintained if those responsible for the program will discuss the following questions.

Why Was the Program Initiated?

In evaluation we should try to determine the reasons why the program was first initiated. If we can answer that question, then we must consider this question. If a similar program were being initiated to meet the needs today, what kind of program would be established?

If we are still teaching to obtain the goals established when the program was established, we are more than likely on the wrong track. Teachers of the disadvantaged must continue to adjust their programs to the changing needs of society. An interesting task for a teacher, a teacher and his citizens advisory committee, or a group of teachers might be to set aside a period of time to wrestle with the problem, "If we could develop an ideal program for the disadvantaged, what would it be?"

Who Is the Program Designed to Serve?

In maintaining, modifying, and improving our programs of vocational education, we must be cognizant of the total population we have a mandate to serve. We must consider everyone in our communities and determine whether or not we are offering a comprehensive program.

In our high school classes, are we serving all the regular students who want, need, and can profit from courses in vocational education? Are we serving the disadvantaged and the handicapped? How and how well? What special techniques are we using to insure the success of each student enrolled in our classes? We must always be cognizant of the population we are serving if we are to help each student succeed.

What Is the Program Trying to Accomplish? What Do We Want the Outcomes of Our Programs to Be?

These questions are related directly to the first question which we attempted to answer, "Why was the program initiated?" This is a hard question to answer. For the most part, we, as teachers, inherit programs. We continue to operate the programs, many times without considering seriously just what we are trying to accomplish as a result of the program.

Do we really know what the desired results of our classes are? If we can come to some consensus regarding our desired outcomes, we will be in a better position to attain those outcomes. The first step is to describe the general goals of the program. Then we should state the program objectives in performance terms. At the same time, we should help each student formulate certain realistic long-range goals which they can strive to attain. Using the long-range goals as a basis, short-range objectives should be developed. If we can then show evidence that both the program goals and objectives and the student's goals and objectives have been attained, we can describe in some detail what the program has accomplished.

How well is our program equipping the disadvantaged student with the knowledges, skills, and attitudes necessary to be commensurate with his interests, aptitudes, and aspirations? These are basic considerations for discussion as we attempt to identify what the program for the disadvantaged is trying to accomplish.

What Are We Going to Do Differently to Facilitate the Desired Outcomes of the Program?

After the desired outcomes have been established, what are we going to do to attain them? We have programs in operation. We have been involved in certain teaching and supervisory activities and we have been getting certain results. Once we establish new goals, identify the desired program objectives, and assist the students in specifying objectives, we can consider new ways and means for attaining the program and individual objectives specified. Different strategies may be employed to help each individual attain the desired level of performance. Attempts should be made to identify all possible alternatives and to select the one most feasible in terms of time, cost, and performance. Resources needed to attain the objectives specified should also be identified.

How Will We Know Whether or Not the Program Has Made a Difference? What Evidence Will Be Collected to Show That the Program Has Made a Difference?

These are crucial questions in evaluation. As educators plan and develop new programs or as they revise and modify existing programs, they should specify which evidence they are willing to accept as indicators of the success of the program.

The indicators may be such things as decreased truancy, a lower drop-out rate, an improved attitude of students as evidenced by teachers' perceptions, or an increased number of students continuing their education or

attaining immediate employment as evidenced by follow-up studies. Other indicators of success may be a larger percentage of students reaching their occupational objectives or positive measurable improvements in knowledges, skills, and attitudes. In any event, the evidence acceptable as an indicator of the success of the program should be specified.

After these five questions regarding the program for the disadvantaged have been discussed thoroughly, those responsible for maintaining quality programs should possess some valid indicators of the kind of program to be offered. Free discussion of these questions by all concerned with the future of the program can lead to successful planning and implementation. Based upon the results of the discussions, teachers should be in a better position to offer and maintain a program which will meet the individualized needs of disadvantaged students in their classes.

FEDERAL RESOURCES AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

1. How do the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments relate to the disadvantaged?

Reaching and teaching the disadvantaged requires much time, energy, imagination and patience. The government realized the importance of reaching and teaching the disadvantaged and amended the Vocational Education Act of 1963 to provide funds specifically for this purpose. Vocational educators should familiarize themselves with these amendments.

How Do the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments Relate to the Disadvantaged?

In enacting the Vocational Education Act of 1963, Congress redirected vocational educators to provide vocational education oriented to the needs of people instead of being aimed at rigid categories in a limited number of occupations.

The concept of the Act was twofold:

1. To change vocational education from training in selected occupational categories to helping to prepare all groups of the community for their place in the world of work.

2. To make vocational education more responsive to the urgent needs of persons with special difficulties preventing them from succeeding in a regular vocational program.

Thus, the 1963 Act recognized the important role vocational education should play for students having academic, socioeconomic, or other handicaps, and made federal funds available for these students with special needs. It also created an Advisory Council on Vocational Education to evaluate the administration of the legislation and its impact.

Although enrollment in vocational education programs for students with special needs has increased, the high rate of student dropouts and youth unemployment reinforces the urgency of vocational education's role in meeting the special needs of this group. The Council, in its 1968 report, The Bridge Between Man and His Work, states that "the Act has fallen short of fulfilling its . . . major purposes." It recommended that a substantial portion of vocational education funds be reserved for the "hard-to-reach" and the "hard-to-teach".

In 1968, Congress held hearings on the amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963. At the hearings, held by the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, one witness urged: "It is socially and economically sound that we give attention to the growing number of students who do not 'fit the system' or are 'failed' and leave school. We are well acquainted with recent events of social unrest. In part, this unrest is caused by the lack of vocational education that can encourage students to seek and hold a job. Education can help by doing something early in the educational life of a student so that he does not fall into the clutches

of events that cause him to depart significantly from acceptable social goals."

Congress was critical of the practices of vocational education, some of which were built into the legislation, which rejected students with low levels of motivation and poor preparation, even though vocational education can potentially cope well with such problems. Many disadvantaged students come from families whose members are weak in verbal skills. Vocational education places an emphasis on performance which offers a more effective method for learning to read and write.

In the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments, Congress indicated its clear intent that top priority go to the disadvantaged. Instead of being permissive, the law requires that at least 15 percent of the basic federal allotment shall be used only for those persons.

In the Rules and Regulations for the 1968 Amendments the term "disadvantaged persons" is defined as "persons who have academic, socioeconomic, cultural, or other handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in vocational education or consumer and homemaking programs designed for persons without such handicaps." All persons from ethnic minority groups or residing in certain geographical locations are not automatically "disadvantaged". Many students from this background will succeed in the regular programs.

Consideration is made for the individual needs of each student to prevent tracking them into lower level vocational education and to prevent any stigma from being attached to the student because of his special needs.

Educational services required to enable disadvantaged persons to benefit from vocational education programs may take the form of modifications of such programs or of supplementary special education services. Federal funds available for vocational education may only be used to pay that part

of such additional cost of the program modifications or supplementary special education services as is reasonably attributable to disadvantaged persons.

The 1968 Amendments state that vocational education programs and services for disadvantaged persons shall be planned, developed, established, administered and evaluated by State boards and local education agencies in consultation with State advisory councils, which shall include representatives of the disadvantaged. Congress also mandated cooperation with other public or private agencies, organizations and institutions having responsibility for the education of disadvantaged persons in the area or community served by such programs or services, such as community agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, special educational departments of State and local educational agencies, and other agencies, organizations, and institutions, public or private, concerned with the problems of such persons.

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 call for important changes of emphasis in American education. The educational experience should be devoid of the artificial barriers between academic, general, and vocational curricula and be flexible for each individual. The legislation provides the opportunity for State and local educators to tailor their programs to the needs of people. But the intent of the 1968 Amendments might very well be subverted if the special funds for the disadvantaged are used largely for students presently enrolled in vocational education courses who do not have special needs. The opportunity must be seized to enroll persons new to vocational education, such as those living in poverty or those hitherto excluded because of race or other unjustifiable reasons. Consistent also with the intent of Congress is the need to select occupations for training the disadvantaged that provide genuine opportunities for employment and advancement rather than menial and dead-end jobs (3).

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