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ABSTRACT

One of a series of papers on critical issues in vocational-technical education, this paper examines rural education as it now exists, and some of the diagnostic information available which will assist in identifying some specific needs. Some problems in meeting needs are discussed, and it is noted that data about the students, the adult population, the job market, the state-of-the-art of present programs, the demographic, industrial and economic, and land use information must be a part of planning and decision making. Also emphasized is consideration of the resources and present services available and the concerns of the community about maintaining present programs, or extending and improving them, or implementing new programs. (HD)



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

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DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

for

IMDIVIDUALS IN RURAL AREAS

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DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR

INDIVIDUALS IN RURAL AREAS

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I. Background on Rural America

In order to give consideration to the development of vocational programs in the rural area, it will be worthwhile to take cognizance of the definitions of rural and rural education. The rural population comprises all persons living outside urbanized areas of 2,500 inhibitants or more. More specifically, the rural population consists of all persons living in (a) places of less than 2,500 inhibitants and not incorporated as cities, villages, boroughs (except Alaska) and towns (except in the New England states, New York and Wisconsin) and including those persons living in the rural portions of extended cities and (b) unincorporated places of less than 2,500 inhibitants. Generally, the population not classified as urban constitutes the rural population. (U. S. Census, 1972, App. 1)

Rural education includes:

(1) those phases of education which deal with the peculiar conditions, opportunities, and problems of people living on dispersed farmsteads or in hamlets or villages of less than 2,500 population; (2) the act or art of developing and cultivating, through education, the various physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral faculties and the economic and social welfare of persons living in rural communities; (3) the totality of information and qualities acquired through instruction and training that furthers the physical, mental, moral and social development of persons living in rural communities; and (4) an organized body of knowledge and theory dealing with the principles and practices of learning and teaching in rural communities. (Good, 1973, p. 504)

In considering rural from the standpoint of population density, Swanson notes that the accepted minimum measurement of an urban environment is a population density of 1,000 or more per square mile. The measure of suburbanization is a population of 500 per square mile. (Tamblyn, 1971, p. 1)



When a person visualized the term "rural" he must think in terms of the people of the rural area. Coop (Tamblyn, 1971, p. 2) describes rural people as farmers but also as men and women who live beyond the city limits in housing subdivisions, in towns, and in the open country and who follow every occupation known. Rural people have a strong desire for privacy, living space and self-reliance. He further iterates that rural people are people with pride in home and family and people looking for opportunity who have left the country for the city (for their livelihood).

The change that has taken place in rural America might be considered recent against the background of two hundred years of history. Greissman, in noting that there is definite change, cautions that we should not take lightly the existence of rural America. (1969, p. 3). He numbers some 55.3 million people who are considered rural on the rural-urban continuum. This is roughly twice that of the total population of Canada; more than the population of France; and five times the population of Portugal. (Greissman, 1969, p. 3). Rural America is large enough that it may be classified as the world's ninth largest country. (Tyner, 1971, p. 1)

The accepted point of shift of American population from rural to urban was around 1920. It was at this point that a majority of America's citizens lived in the urban setting. This is a period of approximately 55 years that our nation has experienced being an urban nation. Houser concedes that our present difficulties as a nation in coping with urban problems may be because of this inexperience. (Greissman, 1969, p. 6).

Bogue and Beal note that by 1964, the number of deaths approached and exceeded the number of births in rural counties while by contrast, the cities were recording large increases. (1964, p. 124) They conject that the problem in many rural



areas is to find the economic uses for land that will retard the depopulation, while in urban areas, the problem is often how to choose among the competing demands for land use caused by high population growth.

Greissman (1969, p. 4) details a population pyramid in rural areas which indicates relatively high proportions of the young and the old. This pyramid has a base of young children under nineteem and older people who are 60 to 69 years old. There is a smaller young adult group. This population characteristic is due in part to the heavy outmigration of young adults. This rural population pyramid allows one to surmise that the rural areas have heavy expenses to bear in educating the young, who move to the urban areas during their productive years.

This phenomena of out migration of young adults who receive their education in rural areas has much more intense implications for educational planning for the education of rural youth. Since these youth will move to other areas to earn a living, this education should equip them for this.

Another aspect of the rural population worthy of consideration is its poverty. While differences in definition result in different statistics, it is generally agreed that about 10 million of our rural people are poor and that these constitute one third of the nation's economically disadvantaged. (Tyner, 1971, p. 2.) This figure includes only the farm and rural non-farm outside Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. If rural non-farm inside SMSA's are included, the number of rural poor becomes 11.1 million. The President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty reported that "Rural poverty is so wide spread and so acute as to be a national disgrace, and the consequences have swept into out cities violently"... "Rural poverty is acute in the South, but it is present and serious in the East, West, and the North..." In short, it is scattered throughout the whole country. Most of the rural low income groups are



white, but poverty is particularly acute among the white of Appalachia and the Ozarks, the Negroes of the South and the Spanish speaking the Indians of the Southwest. (Tyner, 1971, pp. 2-3)

Findings of the President's Commission include:

- (a) Close to 14,000,000 Americans are poor with a high proportion of them destitute.
- (b) There is more poverty proportionally in rural American than in our cities. In Metropolitan areas, one person in eight is poor and in the surburbs, the ratio is one to fifteen; in rural areas, one in every four is poor.
- (c) Some 30 percent of our population lives in rural areas, but 40 percent of the nation's poor live there.
- (d) Most rural poor people live in small towns and villages, with only one in four of these families living on a farm....
- (e) In rural America, 70% of the poor struggle on less than \$2,000 per year and one family in four exists on less then \$1,000 per year....

The economic base upon which these rural people depend for a living has undergone change just as the population changed in numbers and composition.

The occupational and industrial composition of the rural labor force has been substantially altered during the present decade. The changes that have occurred may be summarized as follows: (1) extractive industries have declined; (2) manufacturing and various types of trades and services have sharply increased; (3) other industries have increased moderately; (4) farming and laboring occupations have decreased. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1966, p. 14)

The process of agricultural development has been speeded by the adoption of technological improvements in techniques of producing farm products. Large machines have created a need for larger acreages in order to realize their maximum potential in efficiency. Larger farming operations also achieve efficiencies in purchasing inputs and marketing their output. In response to this demand for larger operations, many small farms have been sold or leased to larger units. As the size of farms have increased, the number of them have decreased.



Changes such as these have had profound effects on rural residents. The number of farm operators and farm laborers decreased. The U.S.D.A. index of production per man-hour doubled from 1949 to 1966. As productivity increased, the average number of workers engaged in agricultural production declined by 43% from 1950 to 1965. The report of the National Advisory Commission on Food and Fiber cites a conservative estimate of the need for farm labor in 1980 to drop at least 30% in farm man-hours and probably 40% in the number of people employed in agriculture. (Kurch and Perkins, 1970, p. 9)

Larson and Rogers note that the farmer as well as the rural population are closely tied to the non-farm influences. (1964, pp. 49-50) They comment that "The farm, at the center of the agricultural economy is increasingly linked with other economic systems through the use of purchased inputs...and with non farm marketing services.... The trend to agribusiness is but an illustration of the more complex division of labor that occurs as societies change from traditional to modern."

"The smaller towns and communities suffer as the farm work force declines. Businesses do a lower volume and realize lower incomes. Capital gains in farm land values are offset by capital losses in rural towns and communities."

Another aspect of the changes is in the area of rural development activities and the process of industrialization. Tyner notes that many manufacturing plants have fled the central cities to relocate in rural areas. (1971, pp. 9-10) Unfortunately, much of this movement was undertaken to benefit from lower labor costs in rural areas and where skill requirements were moderate. A report by the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty suggests that, "Rural paople, both male and female, farm and nonfarm, are turning to industry as a primary source of livelihood or as a supplement for income derived from farming." (1967, p. 103) Unfortunately for these people, the industries attracted to rural communities, especially the more remote communities, are low-paying industries.



II. INFORMATION GATHERING

It is generally agreed that there are at least 4 basic phases in decision-making. Namely:

- 1. Problem diagnosis.
- 2. Conceiving of one or more good solutions.
- Projecting and comparing the consequences of alternatives.
- 4. Evaluation

(Will:lam H. Newman, 1963:105)

In each stage of the decision-making process appropriate information must be available. The two prime questions therefore become: (1) What data is required? and (2) How can this data be acquired?

Although there are many typologies available for determining the required data, one of the better ones for our use in this discussion was developed by Dr. Michael Nunnery of the University of Florida. He chose to analyze a community on the basis of 5 areas:

- 1. Demographic
- 2. Industrial or economic
- 3. Land-use
- 4. Community services
- Decision-making or power

A cursory review of these dimensions will show that all of these components are interrelated. By gathering information regarding each of these areas a profile of the community can be composed showing in terms of vocational education:

- 1. What the community may demand.
- 2. What it may need.
- 3. What it will support.
- 4. What it can support.

Since it is felt that the desired information necessary for planning and decision-making can be developed through the use of thes: 5 dimensions lets look at each one in some more detail.

¹Nunnery, Michael. "Sources of Data and Other Information." Speech delivered at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, on February 5, 1970. The ideas presented in this paper are based on the findings in Mr. Nunnery's speech and will not be acknowledged as such hereafter.



Demographic - Included in this area would be much of the information mentioned in the first presentation: population size, age/sex characteristics, source and level of income, educational levels, occupations engaged in by population. These are but a few of the items which might be considered under this heading, but they will serve as an adequate illustration.

Industrial or Economic - What makes up the economic arena of the community?

What are the types of industry within the community: manufacturing, businesses, agriculture, etc.; growth potential: new plants, stabilization of growth, etc.; job availability: types of jobs, skilled/unskilled, educational training required, etc.; and forecasts regarding each of the other areas?

Land-Use - How is the land used: commercial, residential, timber, etc.; land-use forecast: potential for anticipated rate of increases in each of the types of land-uses; and characteristics of the residential dwellings: egg, size, condition, availability?

Community Services - What are the people-nerwing institutions: schools, health agencies, welfare agencies, rehabilitation agencies, etc.? This is a particularly important consideration in rural areas due to limited resources available and the corresponding need to be frugal in the use of money and human resources. In planning vocational programs for rural residents it should be of utmost importance to avoid duplication of services and to supplement other existing or projected efforts.

Power - Anyone who has been in an administrative position in an educational institution fully realizes the importance of a proper evaluation of this dimension. There are 3 basic questions which should be considered in regard to power.

- 1. Who holds the power in the community?
- 2. What is the power structure?
- 3. What are the values of these power sources?

It should be remembered that this is a dynamic area and one that must be under constant surveillance. The two basic methods used in studying this area are the reputational and decision-making techniques. Each of these methods are viable study tools but every available means of evaluation should be employed to obtain a clear and complete picture of the situation. There are two excellent books available on the subject of power that would merit your attention. They are Peter Blau's Exchange and Power in Social Life and Ralph B. Kimbrough's Political Power and Educational Decision-Making. (Refer to Bibliography for additional information).

Seemingly, compiled data on the 5 dimensions (Demographic, Industrial or Economic, Land-Use, Community Services and Power) would yield the important facts which are required for effective vocational education planning in the rural sector. How then, can this vital information be collected?

First, there is a wealth of information available on the national level (census reports, labor department statistics and eduational studies). These reports should certainly be studied and used as input into an analysis even though there may be problems with applying the facts given to a specific area, and also because of the recency of the information.

Second, all available local sources should be reviewed and utilized. This source offers two valuable advantages: the information is localized, and in many cases, up-to-date.

What is the next step after gathering this information? How can it be used to the best advantage in meeting our goal?

Since information or data are of no value unless used, consider now processes of planning and decision-making.



III. PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Rural aducators are confronted with many unique problems all of which effect the planning and decision-making relative to meeting the needs of youth in their communities. As vocational educators we must do our share in proposing solutions to help meet these needs. Proposed is a system which vocational education leaders might consider as a conceptual model for planning and decision-making relating to their strategies for meeting the needs of rural youth.

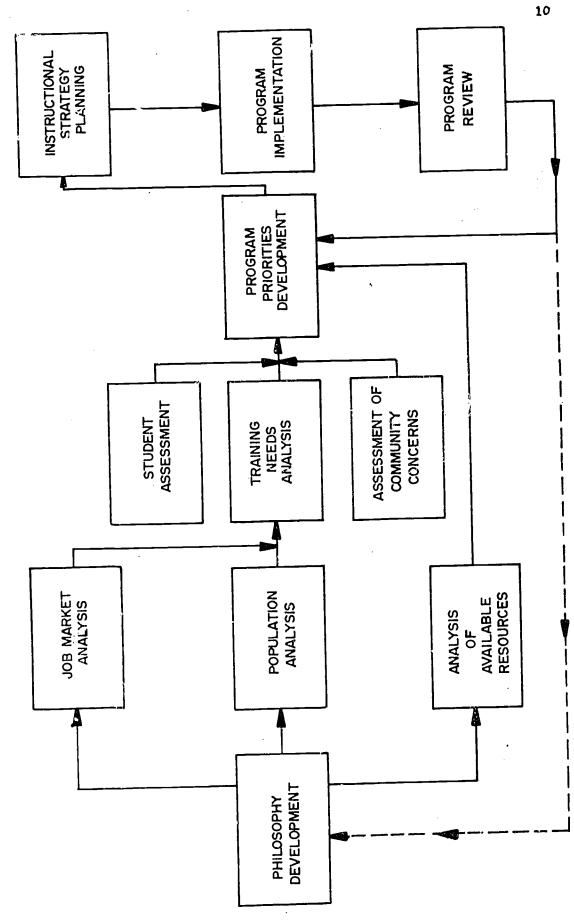
Any conceptual model of this nature must be considered within the framework of the philosophy held by the leaders in the system. The statement of philosophy is the first and probably most important phase in planning vocational education for rural youth. It should define a system's responsibility to its clientele. This philosophy provides a rationale for decision making and a framework within which decisions are made during the process of planning to meet these needs of rural education.

Barlow (1974) in the Fourth Yearbook of AVA suggested that vocational education be viewed as a system of three major components: (1) principles, (2) interpretation, and (3) implementation. He says the principles do not change with times but the interpretation of these principles must be updated in light of the changes in our society. According to Barlow, this was accomplished through the Acts of Congress in 1917, 1929, 1934, 1936, 1946, 1963, 1968, and 1972. These interpretations are made to work through implementation. Look at the implementations made in the 1968 amendments.

The purpose stated in the 1968 amendments was to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education, to develop new programs of vocational education, and to provide part-time employment for youths who need the earnings from such employment to continue their vocational training on a full-time basis, so that persons of all ages in all communities of the state. . . will have ready



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING MODEL





access to vocational training or retraining which is of high quality, which is realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment, and which is suited to their needs, interest, and ability to benefit from such training.

As stated in the purpose of the 1968 amendments, the vocational training or retraining should be realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment. To insure this is accomplished, a job market analysis must be accomplished. Job market analysis is the study of the supply and demand of the labor market as it relates to a local vocational program. This study should reveal how the market looks now (to include where the market is), and how it may reasonably be expected to look in the future. A job market analysis in the rural area presents some unique problems in that it usually involves several communities and in many cases urban centers some distance from the area served by the school system. If the persons migrating to these centers are not trained, it creates additional problems for the urban centers. Information gathered through a job market analysis and combined with data about the population to be served will provide a basis for establishing the training needs.

Stated in the purpose of the 1968 amendments is that persons of <u>all</u> ages in <u>all</u> communities of the state should have access to the vocational training and retraining. The analysis of the population takes into consideration the characteristics of the people living in the rural areas and any trends or changes which occur. This study is done from the viewpoint of the population as a whole and the student population in particular. Combine this with the job market analysis and it provides a basis for determining the vocational education training needs of a community.

The training needs analysis is the process of identifying the most pressing training needs of the rural population to be served. These needs are identified through a systematic combination of job market analysis data, population analysis



data, and other relevant information that might contribute to a more valid decision as to the training needs.

Closely associated with this training needs analysis are student assessments and community concerns. According to the 1968 amendments vocational training or retraining should be suited to their needs, interest, and that which they are able to benefit from. Densley (1967) found that many youth, and especially rural youth, do not have accurate self-estimates of their abilities. With career education becoming a viable part of the educational program, this may change.

What are some potential ways of meeting this need in the rural areas? Some states have used mobile units for counseling services. Utah has used such an approach for guidance and counseling in rural areas and calls its unit "mobile assisted career exploration unit." Another way is to share counselors between schools when one school cannot afford a full-time counselor. Alabama has funded a career education project in a rural county that makes extensive use of the video tape for career exploration. Industry in the area is located some distance from the school system and precludes most field trips as a means of exploratory experiences. To overcome this problem the coordinator of the project visits in the industry and video tapes scenes of the industry and interviews various employees about their work. These video tapes are then used in their school system to acquaint students with work and the industry.

Any educational program must also take into consideration the current environmental conditions in which it must operate. There are political matters, administrative requirements, and occasionally social unrest as a part of the environment which may influence decidons and priorities.

Before goals and objectives are established and program priorities determined resources already available to help meet the vocational education training needs for the rural area must be analyzed. Included in this resource analysis should be facilities, equipment, financial resources, community resources, and professional staff



The scope of the typical rural high school education programs has been narrow in relation to total needs. Balanced offerings or a comprehensive curriculum has not been available in most high schools. Surveys have shown the obvious that as school size decreases, available offerings decrease. Rural schools because most are small have typically been able to give very little consideration to the occupational training needs of the youth who migrate from the rural area to urban centers. The national advisory council or vocational education pointed this out in their 1968 report.

Rural educators are at a particular disadvantage when considering available resources. The lack often cause facilities and equipment for vocational education, to be sub-standard. The financial resources available from the tax base in many rural states, cause rural educators to have two strikes against them in meeting the needs of their clientele. Being rural often means that the opportunities for proper and appropriate job preparation education are limited. Students must go outside the area served by the school to secure such education. This makes the cost for each student greater. But even more important, is the fact that training for a job outside the area contributes to migration. Technological changes and advancements place increased emphasis on specialization. This has placed added burden on vocational educators in rural areas due to the cost of implementing specialized programs and the number of students available to support such programs.

An example of an alternative effort to overcome inadequate rural experiences being made in the distributive education area by developing simulated occupation experiences for students in rural communities. In such communities often regular cooperative distributive education programs are not feasible. A project conducted by Mrs. Lucy Crawford at VPI developed and tested this program of simulated occupational experiences. The conclusion drawn from the evaluation of this project was that simulation model would provide one viable alternative for job preparation programs for many rural school systems.



Being rural may often also mean that a higher proportion of the students need compensatory education to remedy scholastic deficiencies. This generates additional costs.

Frequently rural schools have neither the time nor the expertise that we find in larger systems for writing proposals for federal projects. Being rural also connotes longer distances to travel, and distance causes transportation costs to soar and drain more resources.

All of the previous considerations mentioned must be included when systematically putting the goals and objectives into a logical order for accomplishment.

Of course this priority list may have a different sequence when such factors as urgency of the goal or objective, the time required for accomplishment, the funds and other resources available and required and the capability of the staff are considered.

After program goals, objectives and priorities have been established, a plan of implementation must be devised. The question of "What is the optimum mix of resources and activities for accomplishing these goals."

The program implementation stage represents the action phase of the process. This is the point where the staff for a new program is recruited and assigned and other facets of the program are established. Recruitment of staff to the rural area can often be a separate problem. Many teachers prefer to be in the urban area where they have easy access to more shopping facilities and a wider variety of entertainment activities. Housing for faculty members in the rural area may present problems in some instances. All of these considerations effect the type of staff that can be recruited for rural schools.

This implementation phase culminates with the placement of the students. The follow-up of these students their employers, and other assessments after placement becomes a part of the program review stage.



Program Leview is the continuous process of monitoring programs to determine the extent to which objectives are being accomplished. If the objectives are not being met, do the processes or objectives need changing? Information from such a review becomes input for new program priorities.

The sparse student population residing in the area served by some rural high schools in Alabama as well as many other rural areas precludes the development of comprehensive programs of vocational education in the schools. The major thrust of vocational education for those areas has been the planning and development of area vocational centers which may serve the needs of several schools. These secondary school level area vocational centers make possible the offering of a more comprehensive vocational education program to all persons in a school district. Alabama has 67 area vocational centers in operation and 19 at various stages of the planning phase. Schedules at these centers are usually designed so that a student attends the home high school for approximately one-half of the school day and participates in a vocational program at the area vocational center for the other one-half of the school day. These centers are the result of utilizing the processes outlined in this paper as to background, information gathering and planning and decision-making.

In summary, this presentation has taken a look at rural education as it now exists, and some of the diagnostic information available which will assist in identifying some specific needs. Some of the problems in meeting needs were discussed in the first portion of the presentation. The data about the students, the adult population, the job market, and the state-of-the art of present programs, the demographic, industrial and economic, and land use information must be a part of planning and decision making. This plus consideration of the resources and present services available and the concerns of the community, about maintain present programs, or extending, and improving them, or implementing new programs can be made. The results can and must be quality vocational education for rural America.



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