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TEXT: Today's graduating or beginning vocational teachers will spend most of their teaching lives in the twenty-first century. Although it is little more than a decade away, the twenty-first century carries some connotation of a time when our lives (and our schools) will be very different from what they are now. This digest discusses some of the duties teachers will face in and out of the future classroom. It also covers the recommendations of the Holmes Group report, "Tomorrow's Teachers," and the Carnegie Forum paper, "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century," and discusses the implications of these reports for vocational teacher education.

## FUTURE DUTIES OF VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

Vocational teachers in today's classrooms have multiple responsibilities that continually require more knowledge and experience than was needed in earlier years. According to Milanovich (1986), being an effective vocational teacher today means having knowledge and/or experience in four areas: a specific skill area; instructional planning, implementation, and evaluation; classroom and laboratory management; and occupational experience. Tomorrow's vocational teachers will need to have competency in all of these areas; they will also need to develop skills in areas seemingly distant from their primary duty, teaching. What kinds of duties will teachers have in the year 2000?

First, vocational teachers will be expected to teach, but what will be the content? Clearly, job-specific skills for entry-level employment will continue to be a learning need. It may be less obvious that employability concepts (for example, promptness, neatness) and basic skills are also learning needs, and for many students they are best taught in vocational classes where they can immediately be applied to work. Increasingly, teachers are told that students must also acquire higher order thinking skills (Crain 1987).

Second, vocational instructors must address individual needs in the classroom. They will need to work with special educators and administrators to help students with disabilities learn alongside their peers. Some students without outward disabilities will also require remedial help. In addition, vocational teachers must meet the needs of academic-track students who may take vocational classes. The teacher must be sensitive to the need to challenge, but not overwhelm, all students.

Vocational teachers will also manage experiential learning programs in the future. Some programs will be internal--such as operating a small store or a simulated office--and will require extensive coordination. Others will be external and may require teachers to recruit employers, set up contractual agreements, or coach students in interview techniques. Teachers will need similar skills as advisors to vocational student groups.

The public image of vocational education will be of great concern to vocational teachers as it affects both student recruitment and job placement. Public relations work for teachers may include speaking before community groups, preparing press releases, and organizing a program-wide open house.

Another responsibility that will fall heavily on vocational teachers is keeping up to date. Advances in instructional technology are not difficult to follow--in-service workshops frequently focus on this topic--but technological changes in the workplace are more important to vocational education. If teachers do not keep current with these changes, programs quickly become dated and graduates must be retrained--or worse, they cannot find employment. In addition to technology, teachers must keep up with workplace trends and customs (for example, women in nontraditional occupations,

entrepreneurship) (Milanovich 1986).

All teachers will be increasingly responsible for their own professional development. Although many in-service education opportunities exist, the vocational teacher must choose not only what best fits a busy schedule but also what fits his or her development needs (Adams and others 1987).

## THE TEACHER EDUCATION REPORTS

"Accountability" is the buzzword of the national call for educational reform. The demand for accountability means that instructors must work toward improved performance. Their education should help them with this task.

Two recent reports attempting to plan the reform of teacher education are TOMORROW'S TEACHERS (Holmes Group 1986) and A NATION PREPARED: TEACHERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (Carnegie Forum 1986). Recommendations from these two reports attempt to reintroduce "excellence" into teacher education in all content areas. The Holmes Group, in particular, has invited several major teacher education institutions to join in implementing these recommendations (Miller 1987).

The goals of the Holmes Group report include the following:

- Teacher proficiency in subjects and skills taught
- Recognizing differences in knowledge, skill, and commitment
- Creating entry standards
- Connecting teacher education programs to schools
- Improving the work environment.

The following Carnegie Forum goals are very similar:

- Creating a national board of standards
- Making the school a more professional environment
- Restructuring the teaching force
- Requiring a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite to professional teaching programs
- Developing a professional curriculum for the master of teaching degree
- Preparing minority youth as teachers
- Relating teacher incentives to student performance and providing necessary resources
- Making teacher salaries competitive with those of other professionals (Adams and others 1987).

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE REPORTS FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Implementation of recommendations from the Holmes and Carnegie reports would mean that teachers would have a master's degree (and thus would have completed five years of postsecondary education) before they would be fully certified professionals. A mandatory five-year certification program will affect teacher education student recruitment greatly.

A survey of 715 member institutions, undertaken by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, found that fewer than 30 percent of those reporting made attempts at student recruitment. The schools that did recruit students limited their contacts almost entirely to high school students (Lynch 1986). College student recruitment may have been considered too late in the past, since those pursuing education must start taking classes early to fit in all requirements in four years.

Under the revised program, students' decisions to teach would not have to be made so early, since most teaching classes would take place in the fifth year. Thus, recruitment by teacher education programs in general might take place later, when student commitment to teaching may be stronger and retention may be improved.

However, in the area of vocational teacher education, the best students--those who know vocational content--may choose a well-paying industrial job after a one- or two-year postsecondary vocational program instead of going to college, especially for five years. If all recruitment efforts are deferred until college, this important population will be entirely missed. It has been found that those who enter vocational teacher education seem to have been attracted to that subject by a perceived option to enter industry if they find teaching unsatisfactory; a positive early experience with a vocational program; or the opportunity to be associated with vocational youth organizations. This information may be useful in recruiting high quality students to be vocational teachers (Lynch 1986).

The work experience requirement is the major difference between general and vocational-technical teacher education (Milanovich 1986). The importance of occupational experience must not be undervalued when considering implementation of the report recommendations. In fact, several vocational subject areas (for example, health education) do not currently rely on university teacher education programs for teachers, but use teachers educated through worksite-based programs (Lynch 1986).

Vocational education is an applied area; thus, teachers must be able to apply their knowledge. Milanovich (1986) states that the current trend is to document students' work experience by having previous (or current) employers verify hours of work and job responsibilities. It has not yet been determined when is the best time to complete work experience within the teacher's educational experience. It will be important to resolve this issue before implementing a five-year program (Crain 1987).

A final issue that must be addressed is whether it is appropriate for vocational teacher education to limit itself to one educational delivery and certification model. Traditionally, teachers have been certified after completing a required course of study, generally leading to a bachelor's degree. More recently, in some states, prospective teachers have been required to pass tests that prove their competency before they can be certified. With their emphasis on competency tests and professional standards, the reform reports seem to advocate decreasing flexibility in the model for teacher education.

Finch (1986) points out that aspiring vocational teachers do not always come directly from school to teaching and recommends that some flexibility be built into the system. Keeping entry options somewhat open will be extremely important to avoid a teacher shortage, especially if teacher education programs stretch to five years and enrollment rates decrease.

## A FUTURE VISION

It is likely that change in vocational teacher education will come about as a result of the reform reports and other pressures within the education community. The final effects of this movement will probably be felt within the next decade. According to Miller (1987), most vocational teacher educators are dedicated to reform but do not wish to lose enrollments; thus, they have decided to wait and see what will happen. Miller predicts that one attractive option could include a "noncertificate" bachelor's degree that would allow some limited teaching experience before the teaching certificate is obtained. However, he concludes that there are many workable alternative responses to educational reform and that future research should concentrate on identifying these.

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