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**THE VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATOR  
AND CAREER EDUCATION**

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**Career Education--Emerging: Not New**

Career education is not a new concept for those in vocational education. Vocational educators, including teacher educators, have been deeply involved in career education, especially the preparation phase, for more than fifty years. Teachers of vocational agriculture have also long been involved in career guidance activities; the awareness and exploration phases of career education.

New and strong emphasis is being given to career education, a concept long considered necessary by vocational educators and by many other teachers. Many successful mathematics teachers, for

example, have related their teaching to the world of work. Alert and dedicated elementary and junior high school teachers have included career awareness and exploration as a part of their teaching and guidance activities.

### Career Education Misconceptions

Career education has often been referred to as a program with the implication that courses in career education would be taught in elementary and secondary schools. Career education is rather a philosophy or concept--a philosophy that pervades all of education at all levels and in all fields.

Vocational education, a part of career education, has been referred to synonymously with career education. A reply to this contention is well stated by Parnell, "Let it be emphasized that Career Education is not synonymous with vocational education, although the latter is a significant aspect of Career Education."<sup>1</sup>

### Vocational Education in Career Education

If career and vocational education are not synonymous--then what is the place of vocational education in this career concept?

Since the primary aim of vocational education is preparation for employment, either as wage-earner or entrepreneur, this preparation phase is the primary focus of vocational education in career education. Although the awareness and exploration phases are usually indicated as being located in the elementary and junior high school, it is evident that for many these phases extend to much later stages of life for many persons. Hence--vocational education does actually include elements of the awareness and preparation phases of career education.

Vocational education must take an active part in furthering this emerging concept if career education is to continue to grow and develop in a useful and effective manner. The expertise and unique position of those in vocational education mandates that they assume some of the leadership roles in career education.

Vocational educators must not dominate the career education movement. If expanded and meaningful development of the concept is to continue, it must have the enthusiastic leadership and support of school administrators, elementary and junior high teachers, guidance counselors, and other educators outside the vocational realm.

We, in vocational education, must enthusiastically provide active and vigorous support for career education as a partner or team member with other educators.

### Implications for Teacher Education

The career education movement poses questions and suggests implications for vocational Teacher Education, including Agricultural Education.

Since agriculture teachers should be able to assist with career education components in other classes in their school system, it is imperative that they be conversant with the concept and the roles needed to implement the concept. Preparation should then be provided in teacher education programs.

In some institutions of teacher education courses in career education have been established. Since career education itself is a concept rather than a program, it may be more suitable to integrate a career education emphasis into other courses rather than offering separate courses.

Vocational teacher educators, like their counterparts in the secondary and post-secondary schools, occupy a unique position as resource personnel to assist in planning and integrating career education components in the preparation of non-vocational teachers.

### Opportunity and Responsibility

We in vocational Teacher Education occupy a unique role in career education which provides us with the opportunity to contribute even more effectively to student growth and development through the career education concept.

This accentuated responsibility in career education for vocational teacher educators can be better met if we:

1. Assume an active role in implementing the career education concept;
2. Lead, but do not dominate;
3. Integrate career education concepts into teacher preparation courses; and
4. Serve as resource persons for other teacher educators.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dale Parnell. "Career Education and the School Curriculum," Essays on Career Education, Editors, Larry McClure and Carolyn Buan, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon.

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