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Vocational Education: A Success Story
Southern California Regional Occupational Center Among the Nation's Best

Lyle Collins
Anne Just
University of California at Berkeley


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Recently, in a study conducted by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, vocational education programs from nine exemplary schools were reported on, including the Southern California Regional Occupational Center.

A relaxed order pervades classrooms. Students are experiencing success in and enjoyment of learning, some for the first time. Teachers acclaim their good fortune to work here. They willingly spend personal time with their students; their compensation is to see students grow, develop job skills and obtain jobs. One board member says, "In a regular district you see this caring in grammar school. By high school, you've lost it. Teachers see kids only one period a day. At SCROC, you spend more time with them."

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Once admitted, special education students are exposed to all course components and, as with all the center's students, progress at individual rates. Many of the special education students, after completing an introductory one-semester course, continue with the "cooperative" course with classroom training and paid employment if offered in the program. Most of these students, after taking either one or two courses, secure local full-time employment in the appropriate occupational field.

College-bound students also enroll in SCROC courses; the programs of greatest appeal to them include classes in computer skills, graphic design, and technical drafting and computer-aided drafting fields. Medical and dental assisting courses are popular with pre-med, college-bound students. They learn medical terminology and techniques useful in college courses and in securing relevant part-time and summer jobs.

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Characteristics of Success

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1. A safe and orderly environment conducive to teaching and learning.
2. A businesslike attitude on the part of students and teachers which creates an atmosphere of constructive energy in the school.
3. A warm and caring school climate.
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