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ABSTRACT

This monograph describes briefly five exemplary programs chosen in 1991 by the Technical Assistance for Special Populations Program of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. The first section of the monograph contains background information on the search for exemplary programs, including a discussion of how the framework for identifying such programs was developed. Five of the 20 components that were found to be well developed and particularly strong in the chosen programs are described. (The five components are as follows: assessment of individuals' vocational interests and abilities, financial support, family and parental involvement and support, notification of both students and parents regarding vocational opportunities, and follow-up of graduates and nongraduates.) The second section includes a description of the exemplary programs, emphasizing those components that reviewers rated highly and that were found to be innovative. The five exemplary programs are the following: (1) Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education for Refugee Youth, Catholic Charities of Richmond, Virginia; (2) General Trades/Vocational Experiences for Exceptional Persons, Portland Regional Vocational Technical Center, Maine; (3) Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program, Pinellas Technical Education Center, Florida; (4) Transitioning Vocational Services, Mt. Prospect, Illinois; and (5) The Vocational Education Resource System, Rohnert Park, California. An appendix includes guidelines that reviewers used for rating exemplary programs as well as a description of the 20 components that comprise the framework. (KC)

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National Center for Research in
Vocational Education

University of California, Berkeley

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS
SERVING SPECIAL POPULATIONS
VOLUME II

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**EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS
SERVING SPECIAL POPULATIONS
VOLUME II**

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University of Illinois**

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph presents a brief description of five exemplary programs chosen in 1991 by the Technical Assistance for Special Populations Program (TASPP) of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley. For two years, TASPP has conducted an annual search for exemplary vocational education programs serving special populations. This activity fulfills TASPP's charge of improving vocational programs by disseminating information about exemplary vocational special needs programs.

Designed for educational administrators, state-level personnel, program coordinators, teachers, and researchers, this monograph was developed to

- disseminate information about exemplary programs,
- provide models that can be adapted by those interested in developing programs, and
- provide specific examples of innovative practices and strategies that other programs can emulate.

The first section contains background information on the search for exemplary programs, including a discussion of how the framework for identifying such programs was developed. Five of the twenty components that were found to be well-developed and particularly strong in the chosen programs are described. The second section includes a description of the exemplary programs, emphasizing those components that reviewers rated highly and that were found to be innovative. The five exemplary programs are the following:

- *Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education for Refugee Youth*
Catholic Charities of Richmond, Inc.
Richmond, Virginia
- *General Trades/VEEP (Vocational Experiences for Exceptional Persons)*
Portland Regional Vocational Technical Center
Portland, Maine
- *Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program*
Pinellas Technical Education Center
Clearwater and St. Petersburg Campuses
Florida

- *Transitioning Vocational Services*
Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO)
Mt. Prospect, Illinois
- *The Vocational Education Resource System (VERS)*
California Institute on Human Services
Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, California

Appendix A includes guidelines that reviewers used for rating exemplary programs as well as a description of the twenty components that comprise the framework. Readers are invited to refer to the publication entitled *Effective Vocational Education for Students with Special Needs: A Framework* by NCRVE researchers L. Allen Phelps and Thomas Wermuth (1992) for more information about the framework.

Background

Despite a growing demand for information on exemplary practices, few if any exemplary program searches have been systematic and/or focused on variables or indicators that characterize successful vocational programs serving special populations. In response to this need, Phelps and Wermuth (1992) developed a framework for identifying and evaluating vocational special needs programs. The researchers used a variety of sources to develop the framework, including the following:

- An NCRVE survey of professionals working in the area of vocational education programs that serve students with special needs
- Research studies of effective vocational education programs that serve students with special needs
- Studies of best practices by state boards of education
- Literature on effective instruction
- Legislation
- Textbooks

The emerging framework consisted of twenty components grouped into five clusters by characteristic of exemplary programs serving special populations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

A Framework for Identifying Vocational Special Needs Programs

Program Administration

- Strong administrative leadership and support
- Sufficient financial support
- Staff development
- Formative program evaluation
- Summative program evaluation

Curriculum and Instruction

- Individualized curriculum modifications
- Integration of vocational and academic curricula
- Appropriate instructional settings
- Cooperative learning experiences

Comprehensive Support Services

- Assessment of individuals' vocational interests and abilities
- Instructional support services
- Ongoing career guidance and counseling

Formalized Articulation and Communication

- Family/parent involvement and support
- Notification of both students and parents regarding vocational opportunities
- Vocational educators' involvement in individualized educational planning
- Formalized transition planning
- Intra- and interagency collaboration

Occupational Experience

- Work experience opportunities
- Job placement services
- Follow-up on graduates and nongraduates

An application and evaluation process designed around the framework was developed and pilot tested by TASPP in 1989. Applicants were invited to provide descriptions and documentation for each of the twenty components. After making revisions of the application and the evaluation process, an extensive national search was conducted in the following year. The programs selected are described in a monograph entitled *Exemplary Programs Serving Special Populations, Volume I* (Burac, 1992).

The 1991 search process began in January with announcements and news releases sent to approximately one hundred newsletters and to electronic bulletin boards. TASPP sent applications to state directors of vocational education, state personnel responsible for special needs education, and over sixty individuals who requested applications. Applications were due April 30, and the national review commenced in June. The winners were announced during late August.

Commonalities in 1991 Exemplary Programs

In evaluating applications for the exemplary program search, the reviewers rated framework components, identified programs' strengths, identified areas needing improvement, or requested further clarification. Although none of the identified exemplary programs received a perfect score on *all* components, reviewers believed that the programs selected were truly outstanding and deserved recognition.

TASPP staff reviewed the ratings for each of the components of the exemplary programs and identified components rated high, innovative, or outstanding. The review revealed five components that are well-developed in each of the programs: (1) assessment of individuals' vocational interests and abilities, (2) financial support, (3) family/parental involvement and support, (4) notification of both students and parents regarding vocational opportunities, and (5) follow-up of graduates and nongraduates. These components, which were viewed as critical to the success of these programs, are discussed below.

Assessment of Individuals' Vocational Interests and Abilities

Assessment of individuals' vocational interests and abilities is essential in placing students in programs or courses that will meet their specific needs. The five exemplary programs have structured, formal assessment plans and use techniques that ensure the

appropriate placement of students in curricula or courses that enabled them to succeed. In most cases, assessment instruments, tests, interviews, and reviews of financial need were used.

Financial Support

Stable programs usually operate using diverse funding sources or, if limited to one source, by relying on funding agencies and sources with long-term stability. Of the five programs, Transitioning Vocational Services (TVS) had the most diverse source of funding (see Table 1). Its biggest source of funding (49%) is a variety of grant resources that includes the Northern Cook County Private Industry Council and the Illinois Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education. New services that are located in local businesses are presently co-funded by the local school districts (49%) and the business sector (51%).

The Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education for Refugee Youth (BVE) program was supported by local and federal funding. Local school districts assumed all program costs when federal funds ran out in mid-1992. According to state personnel familiar with BVE, the program continues and is more dynamic and successful than ever.

Instead of having the responsibility fall on a single person, excellent programs involve all staff members in writing grants and searching for additional funds. This was a characteristic shared by the five programs.

Table 1
Exemplary Programs' Sources of Funds, in Percent

	Federal	State	Local	Business	Other
Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education for Refugee Youth (BVE)	69	—	31	—	—
General Trades/Vocational Experiences for Exceptional Persons (GT/VEEP)	36	—	62.5	—	1.5
Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program (SP/DH)	100	—	—	—	—
Transitioning Vocational Services (TVS)*	8	10	29	2	49
Vocational Education Resource System (VERS)	—	98	2	—	—

*Only grant funds are included in the breakdown of TVS funding sources.

Family/Parent Involvement and Support

The optimal secondary school vocational program has strong family support. These exemplary programs not only receive active support from parents and families, but the staff are assertive and proactive in encouraging and recruiting parents and other family members' involvement in the student's educational process. Staff work hard to encourage parents to preview the offered programs and alternatives, make on-site visitations, and investigate adult service providers and job placement services. In addition to regular parent-teacher conferences, the four school-based programs provide activities such as family support nights and teams and offer resources on parental/family involvement. The General Trades program has a parent advisory committee that advocates for increased access to vocational education in the local school district.

Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

Successful programs are continuously marketing their services to students and parents. The most commonly used marketing techniques by the exemplary programs include the following:

- brochures
- handouts
- newsletters
- posters/exhibit boards
- direct mailings
- information booths at job fairs and career nights
- visits to communities or neighborhoods where target populations reside

Since a variety of distribution strategies are used to notify students and parents, a large segment of the target audience is reached. Through networking with previous students, employers, parents, teachers, and advisory board members, the exemplary programs have maintained continuous communication with contact persons who can relay information to the target audiences they represent.

Follow-Up of Graduates and Nongraduates

Follow-up data of both graduates and nongraduates is a good source of information for determining program success or effectiveness. These exemplary programs have extensive follow-up procedures which gives them updated graduate and nongraduate information as well as employer needs assessments and recommendations. Through phone surveys, home visits, follow-up letters and surveys, and work-site visitations, the programs are able to identify the current status of their former students. A follow-up study gathers information on a student's employment status, the student's employer, satisfaction of the student and the employer, and wage-benefit information. In addition to information on the students, exemplary programs also solicit employer suggestions and recommendations pertaining to skills training, new developments in the occupational field, and new technology affecting the workplace. This information gathered from employers is used by vocational programs to continuously improve their services. Exemplary programs recognize the importance of follow-up studies for adjustments and improvement of their

programs. Such adjustments are essential for keeping up with the changing needs of students and employers.

Summary

It should be noted that each of these exemplary programs received high ratings in other components as well as the ones mentioned above. The five components focused on here are viewed as decisive to the success of these programs because reviewers found them to be consistent in each of the exemplary programs. The five exemplary programs are outlined in the following section.

THE 1991 EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

This publication contains information about vocational programs serving special populations that TASPP named exemplary during 1991. Identified by a national panel of reviewers based solely on the criteria (see Appendix A), these programs earned the highest ratings of thirty-one applicants across the country. As in the previous year's search, TASPP did not have a predetermined number of awards to be given. Five exemplary programs are described emphasizing their strongest and most innovative elements. Three programs serve secondary students, one program serves postsecondary and adult students, and one program is a state technical assistance and information referral service organization. The programs serve students who belong to one or more categories of special needs as identified by the Carl D. Perkins Act and other relevant laws.

Information about each program is presented in the following order: program name, location and contact persons, abstract, program objectives, populations served, program settings, program services, and program components.

PROGRAM NAME

**Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education
for Refugee Youth (BVE)**

LOCATION

Catholic Charities of Richmond, Inc.
1010 N. Thompson Street
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 354-0720
Jan McCarthy, Program Manager

Jane Cox, Educational Specialist for Foreign Languages
and English as a Second Language
Henrico County Public Schools
(804) 226-3742

Jane Baskerville, Instructional Specialist for Foreign
Languages and English as a Second Language
Chesterfield County Public Schools
(804) 560-2758

ABSTRACT

BVE serves at-risk limited-English proficient (LEP) youth in Henrico and Chesterfield Counties in Virginia. BVE provides a two-year program of instruction which includes a half day of intensive English as a second language (ESL) instruction, a half day of vocational training with bilingual assistance, and three hours per week of training in job readiness and independent living skills. In its first year of operation, the program significantly decreased the dropout rate among LEP students in the two county school systems being served. Henrico County's LEP dropout rate dropped from 20% to 4% and Chesterfield County's LEP dropout rate decreased from 35% to 0%.

**PROGRAM
OBJECTIVES**

1. Reduce the dropout rate among at-risk LEP youth in Richmond.
2. Increase the English language skills of these students to the degree necessary for independent functioning in the United States.
3. Provide training in a vocational area in conjunction with employment acquisition and retention skills.
4. Increase self-esteem and goal-directed behavior among students involved in the program.

POPULATIONS SERVED

Refugee youth who meet the following criteria

- are functionally illiterate in their native languages,
- are overage for their grade level and not able to fulfill requirements necessary for high school graduation before their twenty-first birthday, and
- experience little success in regular ESL programs and are considered at risk of dropping out.

PROGRAM SETTINGS

These students are mainstreamed into vocational classes in Hermitage Technical Center in Henrico School District and Chesterfield Technical Center in Chesterfield School District. Bilingual aides assist students during vocational classes and provide transition and tutoring services on an individual basis.

PROGRAM SERVICES

The two-year program of instruction consists of the following components:

- half day of intensive ESL instruction,
- half day of vocational training with bilingual assistance, and
- three hours per week of training in job readiness and independent living skills.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Integration of Vocational and Academic Curricula

ESL teachers work with vocational instructors to identify math, communications, vocabulary, and content skills that students must learn. Students are mainstreamed into other courses necessary for graduation as their English skills permit.

Instructional Support Services

Instructional support services are provided by the program to both teachers and students. Services include instructional assistance in the classroom, individual tutoring, and the assistance of teachers in understanding cultural diversity.

Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

- Brochures describing the BVE program are distributed to guidance counselors, ESL teachers, and refugee agencies. These brochures are printed in the languages of groups served by the program.
- Posters and brochures are also placed in ethnic restaurants and grocery stores to encourage program participation by teens not already in the county school systems.
- Program staff conduct visits to neighborhoods with high refugee populations to provide program information.
- Staff make presentations to church and civic groups which have contact with the refugee community.

Vocational 'Educators' Involvement in Individualized Educational Planning

Vocational instructors are a part of the team that develops an individualized instruction plan for each BVE student. This team includes the ESL teacher, a vocational teacher, a job readiness/independent living teacher, and bilingual aides.

Work Experience Opportunities

Students are encouraged to gain part-time employment in their area of vocational study. Those who choose to avail of this opportunity are matched by their instructors with prospective employers. Their job performance is then tracked and evaluated. Several vocational classes (e.g., diesel mechanics and child care) require supervised employment.

The Comprehensive Bilingual Vocational Education Program for Refugee Youth was funded by the U.S. Department of Education through June 30, 1992. Henrico and Chesterfield County Public Schools continue to provide bilingual assistance to refugee youth enrolled in vocational programs in the counties.

PROGRAM NAME**THE GENERAL TRADES/VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS (VEEP)****LOCATION**

Portland Regional Vocational Technical Center
196 Allen Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
(207) 833-8165
Carolyn Chaplin, Program Director

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the General Trades program is to prepare students with special needs for integration into mainstream programs and/or appropriate work situations. The program primarily serves students with visual, hearing, speech, orthopedic, and other impairments; students with disabilities; and students with limited-English proficiency.

Students receive an array of services, including (1) prevocational exploration and assessment, (2) vocational and academic assessment, (3) vocational educators' participation in all-pupil evaluation team (PET) meetings, (4) individualized vocational education plans, (5) continuous career planning and guidance support, (6) work experience programs arranged by a full-time job developer and a job coach, and (7) tutorial assistance within the vocational class/shop environment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Provide the best possible vocational and academic education.
2. Expand parent involvement, vocational and academic integration, elementary and middle school exploration, nontraditional placements, and transition.

POPULATIONS SERVED

Students with mild and moderate disabilities, disadvantaged students, dropouts, nontraditional enrollees, and LEP students/immigrants.

PROGRAM SETTINGS

The program is located at an area vocational technical center and serves mainstreamed, self-contained, and resource room students.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Administrative Leadership and Support

Two Portland Regional Vocational Technical Center (PRVTC) administrators (one director and one assistant director) function in leadership roles in the agency. Their support, in terms of budget, curriculum, and physical facilities improvement, is crucial to the success of the program.

Staff Development

All instructors in the General Trades program are certified in special needs and in a specific trade or academic subject area. In addition, further training and educational opportunities are available for staff members.

- Workshops are organized and delivered to the region's teachers by vocational special education instructors and guidance counselors at PRVTC.
- Workshops and courses offered at PRVTC are specifically designed for the special services support staff.

Individualized Curriculum Modifications

Strategies used by staff to individualize instruction include

- prevocational exploration and assessment,
- situational assessments,
- vocational participation in PET meetings,
- writing individualized education plans and individualized vocational education plans,
- curriculum modifications,
- supplemental services,
- tutorial and monitoring services, and
- progress reviews.

Instructional Support Services

Tutors/assistants are assigned to individual students or small groups of students according to PET recommendations. Tutors meet with regular education instructors to examine upcoming units of instruction and to predict the need for additional support. Staff needs are determined during weekly meetings with instructors and coordinators.

Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

Prior to students' entry into the ninth grade, the General Trades program staff, in coordination with other school district personnel, inform all parents and guardians of the availability of vocational programs. This is done through various activities, including vocational presentations to elementary students at PRVTC, an eighth-grade career fair, an open house, a parents' night, the PRVTC family festival day, and transition seminars for parents.

**Vocational Educators'
Involvement in
Individualized
Educational Planning
(IEP)**

Vocational instructors participate in all PET meetings where vocational education is being considered as a part of a student's IEP.

PROGRAM NAME

**SINGLE PARENT/DISPLACED
HOMEMAKER PROGRAM**

LOCATION

Pinellas Technical Education Center
6100 154th Avenue N.
Clearwater, FL 34620
(813) 531-3531 Ext. 261
Victoria Butler, Coordinator

Pinellas Technical Education Center
901 34th Street S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33711
(813) 327-3671, Ext. 244
Barbara Giffin, Coordinator

ABSTRACT

The Pinellas County Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program serves individuals who are single, separated, divorced, and widowed; in need of training in basic skills and GED preparation; or in need of financial assistance. Program participants are encouraged to enroll in technical training programs with higher-than-average wages and potential for advancement. The program offers career information and counseling, appropriate preparatory courses, and job placement services. Childcare funding, gasoline allowances, bus passes, tutorial assistance, and school supplies are among the available support services.

**PROGRAM
OBJECTIVES**

Provide relevant labor market information and support resources to eligible participants for the purpose of enrollment, training, and employment of them in high wage/high placement careers.

**POPULATIONS
SERVED**

Single parents (women and men) and displaced homemakers in need of basic skills training, GED preparation, and financial assistance.

PROGRAM SETTINGS

The program, located at both Pinellas Technical Education Center campuses, provides postsecondary vocational training. Students select from over fifty possible vocational programs and are provided vocational assessment, counseling, career planning, and financial need analysis. If qualified, they receive financial aid for childcare, tuition, books, and so on. Mentoring, job placement, networking, and weekly support meetings are provided individually or in groups.

**STUDENT AND
PROGRAM OUTCOMES
(SCHOOL YEAR [SY]
1989-1990)**

One hundred seventy-six participants from the Clearwater campus and 171 from the St. Petersburg campus attended and completed a two-hour orientation program. The orientation program included a film on nontraditional career opportunities for women, community resource information, and an explanation of the local and federal financial aid programs that are available to single parents and displaced homemakers.

Enrollment Data

Clearwater: One hundred thirteen single parents and homemakers were enrolled in 1989-1990.

St. Petersburg: One hundred thirty students were enrolled. Forty-three students graduated in high wage/high placement programs. Three students graduated from nontraditional high wage programs.

Placement Data

Clearwater: Fifty students graduated in 1990.

St. Petersburg: Of 43 graduates, thirty were placed in jobs paying at least \$5.25 per hour. Five participants elected to continue their education at a local junior college.

**PROGRAM
COMPONENTS**

**Notification of Both
Students and Parents
Regarding Vocational
Opportunities**

Clearwater

- letters and program information mailed to 150 community programs and agencies,
- announcement of orientation program published in ten newspapers,
- coordinator appeared on a radio public service program aired three different times reaching a variety of populations, and
- coordinator appeared on a community television program.

St. Petersburg

- two thousand brochures and informational pamphlets were distributed during the year,
- coordinator made formal presentations to at least thirteen community organizations and agencies,
- at least six public releases about the program appeared in various Pinellas County periodicals during the year, and
- coordinator guested on a radio show which was aired four times and on a television talk show which was aired twice.

Cooperative Learning Experiences

The program conducts weekly support group meetings for all participants. Participants provide input regarding discussion topics, including balancing work and family, imaging, improving self-esteem, codependent relationships, and disciplining children. For SY 1989-1990, 89 students from Clearwater campus and 64 students from St. Petersburg campus participated in weekly meetings.

Assessment of Individuals' Interests and Abilities

A variety of instruments are used by program coordinators to assess vocational interests and abilities. Instruments used have included COPS, COPES, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, CHOICES, and GATB. Test results, interviews, financial need, and personal preference serve as the basis for selecting a student's technical training program.

Instructional Support Services

Instructional support is provided by school-based personnel, including instructors, guidance counselors, sex equity coordinators, financial aid specialists, remedial education instructors, diversified cooperative education coordinators, JTPA personnel, and Job Service of Florida personnel. Those students demonstrating the greatest financial need are provided further assistance, including

- tuition;
- loan of books, tools, and supplies; and
- transportation funds.

PROGRAM NAME	TRANSITIONING VOCATIONAL SERVICES (TVS)
LOCATION	799 W. Kensington Road Mt. Prospect, IL 60056 (708) 577-7749 Kenneth S. Kozin and Don Minor, Technical Assistance Coordinators
ABSTRACT	TVS programs meet the career exploration, training, and placement needs of Illinois High School Districts 211 and 214 disadvantaged and dropout students and students who have behavior disorders, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, visual impairments, and limited English proficiency. Through assessment, work behavior training, work skill training, and vocational counseling, TVS facilitates successful transition from school to community. Eighty-five percent of TVS programs are delivered in mainstream and community-based settings. Fifteen percent of the services are provided in a special education day school program because of the severity of students' needs.
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	Meet the career exploration, training, and placement needs of special education students and to assist them in making a successful transition from school to productive participation in their communities.
POPULATIONS SERVED	Disadvantaged and dropout students, LEP/immigrants, and those with disabilities.
PROGRAM SETTINGS	TVS is one of the programs of the Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO), located outside of Chicago. It serves mainstreamed students and students who are in cooperative education work programs.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Staff Development

Staff development is a continuous process at TVS. Its objective is to assist staff in understanding legislative issues, to discuss possible ramifications of new laws, and to provide direct support in the implementation of new ideas or program services. In order to accomplish this objective, several opportunities (some mandatory) are available:

- Teacher contracts require seven extended-day workshops.
- Staff members are encouraged to attend related conferences on vocational-career education and transition services.
- Inservice or informational meetings are conducted regularly.
- Teams meet weekly to discuss student progress and problems.

Assessment of Individual's Vocational Interests and Abilities

TVS staff uses the NSSEO Vocational Assessment Program for determining an individual's vocational, career, and training needs. This assessment model has a three-level format:

Level 1 — Assessment: A review of available information (e.g., previous testing, case study evaluation components, medical records, academic achievement, work history, and other vocationally relevant information) aimed at recommending appropriate vocational options for special education students.

Level 2 — Vocational Screening: A formal vocational assessment conducted by school staff as a result of the Level 1 review. At this level, standardized assessment instruments are administered by counselors and teachers.

Level 3 — Vocational Evaluation: A comprehensive vocational evaluation may be requested. This evaluation is conducted at the NSSEO Vocational Assessment Center where the student participates in a simulated work setting for approximately two weeks on a half-day basis. Level 3 assessments are conducted by certified evaluators.

Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

A variety of methods are used by TVS to inform students and their parents of vocational and educational options available through the TVS programs. They include

- brochures,
- parent conferences,
- districtwide annual parent inservices,
- information booths at college/career nights and job fairs,
- annual review conferences for parents and students,
- continuous communication with special education staff and counselors, and
- NSSEO's direct involvement with local Chambers of Commerce.

Formalized Transition Planning

A transition planning guide is used in the high schools to assist students in planning for the transition from school to postsecondary training/work. The guide helps staff identify needed services and resources for the successful transition of the students.

Work Experience Opportunities

TVS offers a work experience program that gives students the opportunity to work at a variety of training sites in the community. The program provides students with marketable skills to make them productive employees.

Job Placement Services

As students approach graduation and are considered job ready, job placement activities are initiated. Job search and development is performed by the vocational adjustment counselors and their assistants. This process is expected to lead to direct competitive or supportive employment in the community.

PROGRAM NAME**THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
RESOURCE SYSTEM (VERS)****LOCATION**

Sonoma State University
1801 E. Cotati Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 664-2416

ABSTRACT

VERS is designed to assist career-vocational educators, counselors, and administrators in improving and expanding programs and services for students with special needs. VERS provides technical assistance to educators in areas such as program administration, instructional strategies, finances, accountability, and grant writing. In addition, VERS provides regional workshops, inservice training, and telephone consultation. VERS prepares and distributes a variety of publications, including a newsletter, handbooks, resource manuals, and various checklists. In addition, VERS' statewide special needs advisory committee holds meetings to recommend state directions in career-vocational education.

**PROGRAM
OBJECTIVES**

1. Improve the extent to which California's special needs students have equal access to comprehensive, balanced, and appropriate instruction relevant to their mastery of a core curriculum.
2. Improve the quality and availability of support services that provide California's special needs students with skills needed to be successful in a regular curriculum.
3. Improve the state's support of efforts by local administrators, instructors, and specialists to certify local career-vocational education programs.
4. Increase the academic and career success for California's special needs students.

**POPULATIONS
SERVED**

VERS has assisted California's career-vocational teachers, counselors, and administrators in improving and expanding programs and services for students with special needs (disadvantaged students, LEP students, or students with disabling conditions).

PROGRAM SETTINGS

VERS is a project of the California Institute on Human Services located at a state university. It provides services to teachers, counselors, and administrators.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Staff Development

VERS staff have offered regional workshops on learning styles in vocational education (preparing career-vocational educators to improve services to LEP students) and methods and strategies for succeeding with special needs students. At the local level, staff development activities have provided teachers opportunities to provide input, learn from one another, and discuss mutual concerns they may have. The staff has also developed materials such as *Teaching Disadvantaged Students: Successful Strategies in Career-Vocational Education* and the *VERS Handbook for Administrators on Career-Vocational Education Services*.

VERS regional workshops have included "Strategies for Accommodating Special Needs Students' Varied Learning Styles in Career-Vocational Education Programs," "Preparing Career-Vocational Educators to Serve LEP Students," and "Making it Work: Methods and Strategies for Succeeding with Special Needs Students."

Formative Program Evaluation

VERS meetings are evaluated using an evaluation form developed for that purpose. VERS also prepares quarterly reports documenting the program's progress and identifying objectives met.

Summative Program Evaluation

VERS has annually prepared a final report summarizing the quarterly reports for the year. External agencies have evaluated the whole program and prepared reports including *VERS (Vocational Education Resource System), Evaluation of VERS (Vocational Education Resource System), and Impact Programs: Evaluation and Participant Profile Report 1989-1990 Regional Workshops*.

The *VERS Self-Assessment Checklist* is a flexible instrument schools can adapt to their needs. An additional resource, *Career-Vocational Education Special Populations Impact Plan: An Approach for Planning Self-Improvement*, was prepared to facilitate the efforts of secondary schools in planning improvements in their career education programs and activities.

Integration of Vocational and Academic Education

VERS subscribes to the idea of integration. This is manifested in their technical assistance activities, seminars, and in resources that they produce. One publication, *Teaching Disadvantaged Students: Successful Strategies in Career-Vocational Education*, contains a whole section on "Integration of Core Curriculum and Vocational Content." *Specially Yours* is a resource manual for facilitating the integration of students with special needs into regular vocational education and services.

Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

A packet of information that provides a model of how to notify students and parents of vocational opportunities is sent by VERS to schools that request it.

Vocational Educators' Involvement in Individualized Educational Planning

VERS has actively provided vocational administrators with information related to the development of the IEP through its publication *Preparing for the Future: A Practical Guide for Developing Individual Transition Plans*. In addition, VERS consultants have conducted various inservice training sessions that have provided information on this topic.

Formalized Transition Planning

A VERS checklist is available to assist with formalized transition planning activities. This checklist is incorporated in a publication entitled *Preparing for the Future: A Practical Guide for Developing Individual Transition Plans*. Resource consultants have provided technical assistance to schools in facilitating the transition process.

Work Experience Opportunities

VERS has worked closely with Project Workability, a statewide program that provides work experience opportunities to students with special needs. VERS provided schools with technical assistance in developing work experience activities.

Job Placement Services

VERS has developed a handbook and checklist which focuses on job placement and job development.

REFERENCES

- Burac, Z. T. (1992). *Exemplary programs serving special populations, Volume 1* (MDS-303). Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley.
- Phelps, L. A., & Wermuth, T. R. (1992). *Effective vocational education for students with special needs: A framework* (MDS-112). Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley.

APPENDIX

**GUIDELINES USED BY REVIEWERS FOR EVALUATING
APPLICATIONS**

Below are the instructions provided to applicants for program recognition. Reviewers used a version of these instructions in evaluating programs.

PART 1: General Information (2 points)

This section should be complete, containing all of the required information.

PART 2: Demographic Information (12 points)

This section should be complete, containing all of the required information. The reviewer should focus on measures of effectiveness, comparing the information supplied to other programs or extant knowledge of the field.

PART 3: Program Information (6 points)

This section asks applicants to provide a brief program abstract and to describe the program's history and operation. Please rate each of these elements according to the descriptions given below.

Program Abstract (2 points)

The abstract should be a single page description of the program, not to exceed 300 words. The abstract should describe the mission and legal status (e.g., school district or nonprofit organization) of the applicant agency, the purpose of the program, and how that purpose relates to the needs of the special population served, the goals of the program, the method used to achieve those goals, and the observable outcomes attained by program participants.

Program History (2 points)

The program history should be a single page description of the background and theoretical framework of the program, not to exceed 300 words. The program history should include the names and titles of the developers of the program, why the program was developed, the date the program was developed, the dates of program operation, the dates and personnel who have conducted previous evaluations (cite reports and attach in appendix), previous formal recognitions of program effectiveness, and the role of the program within the larger agency or organization.

Program Operation (2 points)

This should be a single page description of how the program operates, not to exceed 300 words. The description should include program staffing patterns and responsibilities, the number and diversity of program participants served, the link between program completion and outcomes attained, the scope of the program, the instructional approach utilized, the instructional materials utilized, the innovativeness of the program, and the outside agencies that cooperate and collaborate with the program.

PART 4: Components of Effective Vocational Education Programs (80 points)

This section asks applicants to describe twenty programmatic components, each is worth a possible 4 points. Please rate each of these components according to the descriptions given below.

1. Strong Administrative Leadership and Support

This section should describe (1) how administrators of both the program and the larger agency or organization function in a leadership role within the program and (2) the support those administrators offer to the program. This description should include a list of the program administrators and their roles within the program, qualitative descriptions of administrative support, and examples of hands-on leadership and support provided to the program by administrators.

2. Sufficient Financial Support

This section should present a brief explanation of the recurring and nonrecurring costs associated with the program, including personnel salaries, staff training costs, equipment and material costs, and any other special costs required to successfully implement and maintain the program. The sources of funding for the program should be listed. Budgets may be cited and attached as appendices.

3. Staff Development

This section contains a description of the staff development activities obtained or conducted by the program. This description should include any preservice, inservice, and continuing education obtained by program staff. Additionally, a description of the staff development activities conducted by program staff for others such as other teachers, programs, or educational agencies should be provided.

4. Formative Program Evaluation

The formative evaluation procedure utilized by the program should be described in this section. This description should include information on how formative evaluation procedures are conducted, who leads the evaluations, who has access to the evaluation results, and how those results are used to guide the program. Any available formative evaluation reports may be cited and attached as appendices.

5. Summative Program Evaluation

This section should contain a description of the summative evaluation procedure utilized by the program. This description should include the agency or staff conducting the evaluation, the ways the evaluation relates to the program purpose and goals, the design of the evaluation, the instruments and procedures used during the evaluation, the data collected, analysis of that data, and the ways the summative evaluation results are utilized. Summative evaluation reports may be cited and attached as appendices.

6. Individualized Curriculum Modifications

The principles of individualized instruction utilized within the program should be described in this section. This description should include the individualized educational planning process utilized within the program, persons involved in that planning process, and the methods used by program staff to provide and ensure that the principles of individualized instruction are maintained to benefit program participants.

7. Integration of Vocational and Academic Curricula

This section should provide a description of how the program provides instruction in both appropriate vocational skills and basic academic skills. This description should include a sequential list of courses taken and the skills attained by program completers, the ways the program meets local graduation requirements, the ways the teachers integrate vocational and academic instruction, the length of the program for special population participants, and the specific vocational options available to special population program participants.

8. Appropriate Instructional Settings

This section should contain a description of the diversity of the special population participants served by the program and the extent to which the program operates in mainstream settings. This description should detail the needs, backgrounds, abilities, and interests of program participants and the ways that diversity is represented and fostered in courses and support services offered by the program. The number and classification of special population participants served in separate vocational education programs should be indicated, if appropriate.

9. Cooperative Learning Experiences

This section should contain a description of the cooperative learning experiences (e.g., students learning from other students) provided within the program. This description should include the scope and extent of cooperative learning experiences offered to program participants and the ways those cooperative learning experiences relate to the purpose and goals of the program.

10. Assessment of Individuals' Vocational Interests and Abilities

A description of the procedures utilized by program staff to assess program participants' vocational interests and abilities and the ways that assessment is utilized in individual program planning should be presented in this section. This description should include the process, resources, and materials used to assess the vocational interests, aptitudes, and abilities of program participants. Cite and attach teacher developed and commercially purchased assessment forms and materials as appendices.

11. Instructional Support Services

This section should provide a description of the instructional support services utilized within the program to meet the purpose and goals of the program. This section can cover any resources, special materials, and/or personnel (e.g., teacher aides) involved in the program that uniquely assist in achieving the stated goals of the program.

12. Ongoing Career Guidance and Counseling

The career guidance and counseling services offered to program participants should be described in this section. This description should include the amount and extent of career guidance and counseling services offered to program participants, instances when it is usually provided, qualifications of the counselors, and any involvement counselors have in the general operation of the program.

13. Family/Parent Involvement and Support

This section should contain a description of the ways that this program involves the parents of participants, if applicable. This description should include information regarding the involvement of parents in general program planning and development, in planning for their specific children, and in advisory roles.

14. Notification of Both Students and Parents Regarding Vocational Opportunities

A description of the procedures utilized by program staff to inform potential special population students and their parents of vocational and educational options available through the program should be presented in this section. This description should include the methods, procedures, and resources utilized by program staff to notify prospective participants and their parents, if applicable, of vocational education program options and support services available.

15. Vocational Educators Involvement in Individualized Educational Planning

A description of how vocational educators are involved in the individual instruction planning process utilized by the program should be presented in this section. This description should detail the individualized instructional planning process utilized by the program, the persons involved in that process, and the specific ways vocational educators are involved in the process. Relevant documents and planning forms may be cited and attached as appendices.

16. Formalized Transition Planning

This section describes the procedure utilized by the program to provide individual program participants with formalized transition planning. Transition can be defined as the movement of a completing special population student from one level or program to the next appropriate level or program (e.g., from a secondary school setting to postsecondary vocational education program, a community-based rehabilitation program, or work). The description should include the program staff involved in the transition process, outside agencies involved in the transition process, and the transitional options that generally exist for special population participants as they exit the program. Transition planning forms and other pertinent documents may be cited and attached as appendices.

17. Intra- and Interagency Collaboration

A description of both the intra- and interagency collaboration arrangements developed and maintained by program staff should be presented in this section. The description of intra-agency cooperative arrangements should include (1) departments and programs within the educational institution that provide support services, resources, and general assistance to either the special population students or the staff of the vocational special needs program; (2) the coordination activities conducted; and (3) the benefits of this collaboration. The description of the interagency cooperative arrangements should (1) name the external agencies and organizations (the contact personnel) that provide assistance to program staff and/or participants, (2) detail the services and resources provided, and (3) outline the benefits occurring from these collaborative efforts. Appropriate cooperative agreements may be cited and attached.

18. Work Experience Opportunities

A description of the work experience opportunities that are available to program participants during their enrollment within the program should be provided in this section. This description should include the type and nature of work experiences that are available to program participants, how those experiences relate to the instructional objectives of the program, and the extent to which the experiences are specific to the vocational education and training received by the special population students.

19. Job Placement Services

This section should present a description of the job placement services received by program participants. This description should include (1) the methods used to identify available jobs (including full-time, part-time, and summer jobs) for special population students enrolled in the program and (2) the procedures used to assist students in acquiring appropriate jobs during or following program completion. Job placement data and other relevant documents may be cited and attached as appendices.

20. Follow-Up of Graduates and Nongraduates

A description of the data and information collected by program staff from program graduates and those who do not complete the program should be presented in this section. This description should include (1) the procedure utilized by program staff to collect follow-up information, (2) ways that information is analyzed and reported, and (3) ways that information is used to improve the program and services. Previously conducted follow-up reports may be cited and attached as appendices.