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Follow-up Study of Vocational Students at Plattsmouth High School

Steve JN. Bernth
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF VOCATIONAL
STUDENTS AT PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty
University of Nebraska
at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Steve JN. Bernth

April 1983

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

Name

Department

Thomas Debra

April 12 1983

Paul Ackerson

April 12, 1983

Darrell Kellams
Chairman

4-12-83

Date

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF VOCATIONAL
STUDENTS AT PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The Plattsmouth Community Schools currently operates a comprehensive high school. A school in which all youths and adults in the district have an opportunity to develop salable skills which are best suited to their individual goals and abilities. The Plattsmouth School District currently operates Vocational Programs in the areas of Business and Office Education, Home Economics, Trades and Industry, and Distributive Education. In addition, the district operates a program designed specifically to serve the needs of the disadvantaged and handicapped youth of the community. These programs serve both junior and senior high students. Even though we receive no funding for this program in the junior high school, we continue to operate the program in order to better serve these students. The vocational program in the senior high provides skill training in the following areas: Automotive Occupation, Metals Occupations

which includes Auto Body, Construction Trades, Upholstery, Health Occupations, Child Care and Food Service. In addition, classes in the following support areas are offered: Math, Communication Skills, Social Studies and Occupational Awareness. The Vocational Department also provides these students with a coordinated Work Experience Program.

District Policy

The Plattsmouth Board of Education has committed itself to the following policy concerning vocational education in our district:

It is the policy of this district to provide occupational education for all youth and adults of the district to the end that no student drops out of school who does not have salable skills; and that no adult is denied an educational opportunity to become properly employable, (Plattsmouth Community Schools, 1983, pp.7).

The Plattsmouth Board of Education also has established specific goals for our vocational education program. It is our goal to:

1. Provide learning opportunities for students which will allow them to develop a salable skill in order that they can enter the work force directly following graduation or pursue advanced training in a post-secondary institution.
2. Provide hands-on training in vocationally designed programs that meet the employment opportunities in the community.
3. Provide support classes in academic areas in order to enhance the vocational training students receive.

4. Provide a learning situation within our vocational classes which will allow each student to develop to the highest potential.
5. Work to increase the number of students who are actively involved in vocational student organizations.
6. Work toward the elimination of sex bias and sex stereotyping, if it does in fact exist, within our vocational classes.

School and Community

Plattsmouth Community Schools is a district located in the community of Plattsmouth in southeastern Nebraska. The community has the following characteristics: (1) it is a town of 6,500 people which is primarily a "bedroom" to the Omaha metropolitan area; (2) a community with little industry; (3) a community with a low tax base and high mill levy; (4) a community located close to a large military installation (Offutt Air Force Base); (5) a community located in Cass County, Nebraska, which according to the 1970 census had 41 percent of their residents over the age of 25 without a high school education; (6) a community located in Cass County, Nebraska, which ranked number 14th for the number of high school dropouts in the 1979-80 census; (7) this community in the 1979-80 census also ranked in the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, thus, the concern for and emphasis on education is sometimes lacking.

Plattsmouth is a school district of approximately 525 students in grades 9-12, possessing the following unique

characteristics: (1) twenty percent of the students in grades 9-12 qualify for free or reduced lunches; (2) a dropout rate which exceeds 24 percent; (3) a youth unemployment rate (ages 16-21) which exceeds 24 percent; (4) forty percent of the student body is in need of modified vocational programs in order that they be assured of the opportunity of receiving a high school diploma.

It is for these reasons that the Plattsmouth Community Schools have developed an extensive vocational education program. The Plattsmouth Community Schools strive to provide a learning environment which places emphasis upon the development of salable skills as well as upon the development of skills within the affective and cognitive domain as opposed to the traditional time and grade-oriented structure. It also strives to develop a learning environment designed to provide training for the disadvantage and/or handicapped youth of the district who are unable to succeed in a traditional classroom.

The Vocational Education Program

The vocational education program at Plattsmouth High School provides skill training in the following areas:

- A. Automotive Occupations-including small motors
- B. Industrial Sewing Machine Operation
 - 1. Upholstery
 - 2. Commercial garment making
- C. Metals Occupations
- D. Auto Body-Auto Restoration
- E. Construction Trades

- F. Child Care
- G. Health Occupations
- H. Food Service
- I. Work Experience
- J. Communication Skills-Grades 9-12
- K. Occupational Awareness
- L. Computational Skills-Grades 9-12
- M. Vocationally Related Social Studies-Grades 9-12
- N. Special Projects

The graduation requirements of the vocational education program offered at Plattsmouth High School is found in Table I.

Table I. Vocational Graduation Requirements.

Courses and Credits	
1.	English - 30 credits
	A. 10 credits-must be Vocational English or English I
	B. 20 credits-may be Communication Skills or any other English courses of your choice
2.	Social Studies - 30 credits
	A. 10 credits-must be 9th Grade Vocational Social Studies or 9th Social Studies
	B. 20 credits-may be Vocational Social Studies or any other Social Studies courses of your choice
3.	Mathematics- 10 credits (can be Vocational Math)
4.	Physical Education - 10 credits
5.	Science - 20 credits
6.	Occupational Awareness - 10 credits
7.	Driver Education - 5 credits
8.	Vocational Skills - 30 credits
	Chosen from:
	A. Auto Mechanics
	B. Metals Occupations
	C. Upholstery
	D. Drafting
	E. Construction Trades
	F. Health Occupations
	G. Child Care
	H. Food Service

The general objectives for the vocational program at Plattsmouth High School are:

A. Upon completion of the 9-12 Vocational Needs Program, the student shall possess sufficient cognitive and psychomotor development in said skill area to enable the student to (a) possess job entry level skills or (b) possess sufficient skill to obtain entry and admission to a post-secondary training institution for further instruction in that area. These skill areas shall include: Automotive Occupations, Metals Occupations, Auto Body and Auto Restoration, Construction Trades, Commercial Machine Operation to include Commercial Garment Making and Upholstery, Teacher Aide Training, Health Occupations and Child Care.

B. Upon completion of the 9-12 Vocational Needs Program auxiliary supporting courses the student shall have acquired sufficient skills in both the affective and cognitive domain to supplement the psychomotor skills developed in the chosen career field to enable that student to be employable at an entry level job or to continue training at the post-secondary level.

Students are selected to become involved in this program by the following procedure:

1. Teacher referrals
2. Requests and recommendations from parents
3. Student requests
4. Achievement scores
5. Grade averages
6. Recommendations from counselors from their personal knowledge of the student
7. Recommendations of school administrators based on their personal knowledge of the students
8. Recommendations from the school psychologist based on evaluations and interviews done with certain students
9. Requests and recommendations from parents
10. Contact with public agencies--police, welfare, probation officers, county and district judges, and the ministerial association

Program Planning

In the area of program development and design, the Plattsmouth Community Schools and its Advisory Council has drawn up a tentative five-year plan. From this plan and the suggestions offered, the Vocational Department will continue to develop our program to meet the needs of our students. The tentative five-year plan is as follows:

1982-83 To streamline our follow-up program into a more efficient system. This information will give us a basis for making changes and deletions in our program. We also hope to begin work on a formalized placement office.

1983-84 To expand our Food Service Program in order to serve additional students. We also plan to have our placement office operational on a more formalized basis.

1984-85 To reflect the needs of businesses our high school curriculum as well as our adult curriculum will have to be cognizant of needs as Plattsmouth attracts small industries.

1985-86 To implement curriculum changes reflecting the results of the information received from our follow-up of the previous four years. One thing that we can be certain of is that Vocational Education will remain strong in Platts-mouth. We have a Board of Education and an Advisory Council who are totally committed to it.

1986-87 To use some phase of microcomputers in all areas of our vocational curriculum. We realize these are the "machines" of the future and our students must understand their potential.

It should be noted here that whether or not the above things take place is somewhat based on funds available and the rapid changes in society. Since we must operate with decreasing federal funds and under a 7 percent lid on local funding, it may be difficult to do all of the things the district would like to do.

Program Evaluation

The administration of the Plattsmouth Schools recognizes that evaluation is a very important and essential part of any program. This is true for two basic reasons: (1) it is necessary to measure the effectiveness of the goals and objectives that have been established; (2) evaluation of any program should identify the areas that need improvement and also those that will be of great value for program development. Evaluation will provide a guide for the administration and staff to improve or eliminate specific areas so as to serve the best interests of our youth.

In the past the Plattsmouth Schools have attempted to assess the overall effectiveness of its program by gathering information and data in the following manner:

- A. Feedback verbally from the total staff of the school district.
- B. Verbal feedback from the Allied Health instructor.

- C. Observation-through interviews with parents.
- D. Observation-through interviews with students.
- E. Observation-through interviews with the people involved.
- F. Written reports from the guidance personnel and instructors concerning conferences that they have had with disadvantaged youth.
- G. Feedback from various social and business organizations within the community.
- H. Feedback from employers of our present as well as past students.
- I. Feedback from visitations from State Department of Education personnel-we have found this to be one of our greatest assets-the administrators of the Special Needs Division have added information, ideas and materials that are invaluable to the program.
- J. The long-term reduction of the unemployment and dropout rate.

The above methods of evaluations show that there is little in the way of an organized and formal evaluation.

The Importance of the Study

Every educational agency collects data at some time in some form. As one can see there is an effort to conduct a follow up of all graduates, but little is done to pinpoint graduates of the vocational program. Follow up is an integral part of any evaluation and decision-making processes in education. In this regard, Iliff (1966,p.35), stated:

One of the major problems facing school administrators today is that of measuring the effectiveness of the educational program. In these times of rapid changes and increasing enrollments, the methods and techniques of the past may no longer provide adequate training for the

graduates of tomorrow. One widely used means of securing data for using in evaluating the educational program is that of the follow-up study...The follow-up study is a direct method by which an institution may evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programs through its product--the graduate.

Follow-up data is extremely important to both local and state educational agencies. Since federal support programs are also involved, such data is equally important to the U.S. Office of Education. The need and importance of follow-up, especially at the local level, is an educational fact of life.

The taxpaying public is questioning the worth and relevance of educational program. The planning and subsequent management of educational programs based on little or no objective data is questionable, to say the least, in an era when justification of actions is called for from all levels of society. Simply stated, follow-up information is a natural by-product, (Hendrich, 1979, p. 102).

Follow-up studies are generally conducted for four major purposes, these purposes are:

1. To improve programs
2. To provide a basis for accountability
3. To aid in planning
4. To aid in decision making

The importance of follow-up information has been well established in the decision making process of programs. The State Department of Education's evaluation of 1981-82 identifies a lack of a formal organized follow-up at Platts-mouth High School. It is evident that a formal follow-up study is needed at Platts-mouth High School so as to provide the needed information as a basis for the important decisions that will effect future programming.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to survey the graduates of Platts-mouth High School's vocational program to provide the necessary follow-up information to validate the goals and objectives as well as determine the successes or failures in the program. This survey consisted of the development of a questionnaire for the graduates to respond to as well as a separate questionnaire for their employers. Data received from these questionnaires provided information to evaluate specific goals and objectives.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the students vocational training and preparation in his chosen field.
2. To determine the students employment and educational status after leaving school.
3. To obtain student/employer feedback and suggestions pertaining to relative pre-paration and improvement of the programs.

Methodology

To accomplish the objectives set forth in this study, the students of the past five graduating classes who were involved in the following areas were surveyed:

1. Auto Body
2. Auto Occupations
3. Child Care
4. Food Service
5. Health Occupations
6. Metals
7. Upholstery

The students were surveyed by the use of a questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed with the cooperation of the vocational staff. Portions of the questionnaire were made up of questions from the state and federal agencies who evaluate our program. The specific questions were designed to provide information so as to allow for the evaluation of the goals set forth by the district. The results from this study provided information to the following questions:

1. How many students are entering the field for which they received training, either as an employee or as a student of higher education?
2. What are some of the possible changes to be made in the various courses in keeping with what is happening in business and industry?
3. What other course of training might better meet the needs of students and the employment needs of the community?

This questionnaire, along with a cover letter that explains the importance of the study, was sent to all graduates and their employers who were involved in our vocational education program during this time frame.

The questionnaire was sent to all students who were enrolled in the vocational program and involved in the above classes. A second questionnaire was sent to the employers of the students involved to obtain information from them concerning the students preparation and skill level. A follow-up letter and another questionnaire was sent to those not responding by a pre-determined date. The data received from those responding was then analyzed and tabulated.

Significance

This study is significant for three major reasons. The first is the Plattsmouth Board of Education will find this information very beneficial. This information should help the Board become better informed when making decisions in the area of program improvement and budgetary matters concerning the vocational program and the expenditure of funds. Secondly, this form of evaluation has long been over do. The Department of Education and its vocational division has in the past indicated the lack of a formalized program evaluation and follow-up study. This project should dispel this area of deficiency. The third reason is that this project will provide the necessary feedback for our staff and administration to measure our progress toward our program goals and objectives.

Limitations

This follow-up study was limited to the information gathered from only graduates of Plattsmouth High School. It is further limited to students who have graduated in the past five years and were involved in the vocational program. Students receiving questionnaires must have taken course work in the following skill areas:

1. Auto Body
2. Auto Occupations
3. Metals
4. Upholstery
5. Food Service
6. Child Care
7. Health Occupations

Organization

This research project was divided into five categories. Chapter I shall serve as an introduction to the area of consideration. A clear statement of the program, its significance, and its historical background was presented. Chapter II will consist of a review of important literature related to the study. Chapter III will explain the design of the study. The sources of data will be identified, and the methods of gathering data will be explained. Also, the data-gathering instruments used will be described and evaluated for validity and reliability. Chapter IV will include the presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter V will consist of the summary and conclusions of the study.

Definitions

Disadvantaged Persons

Means persons who have academic, socio-economic, cultural, or other handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in vocational education or consumer and homemaking programs designed for persons without such handicaps, and who for that reason require specially designed educational programs or related services. The term includes persons whose needs for such programs or services result from poverty, neglect, delinquency, or cultural or linguistic isolation from the community at large, but does not include physically or emotionally handicapped persons.

Handicapped Persons

Means mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled, or other health impaired persons who by reason of their handicapping condition cannot succeed in a vocational or consumer and homemaking education program designed for persons without such handicaps, and who for that reason require special educational assistance or a modified vocational or consumer and homemaking education program.

Vocational Education Programs

Vocational education programs are organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation (upgrading and retraining) for a career requiring less than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Vocational education is drawing more attention and review than ever before. Congress is currently in the process of re-authorizing the Vocational Education Act (VEA). The National Institute of Education has recently completed a multi-million dollar, four year study of vocational education that Congress has requested. The present interest in vocational education is wide spread on both the federal and state levels.

Background of VEA

Most people regard vocational education as a federal program. It is a national program only in the sense that it is a collection of state programs in which there is federal interest. This interest is understandable because expenditures authorized by the VEA are by far the largest federal contributions to secondary schools.

Vocational education programs depend on a combination of federal, state, and local funds for their existence. Federal support for vocational education goes back to the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Both of these Acts were starting points for the

consideration of all recent Federal efforts to expand and improve vocational education. The VEA of 1963 sought to up-date and up-grade vocational courses by requiring the United States Office of Education to fund research, experimental, and developmental programs. Funding was also provided to the States for the construction of area vocational schools and the development of work study programs. The 1975-76 Congressional hearings produced the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482, Title II) and extended the Act through 1982. It also made a number of revisions to the Act, designed to bring about improvements in its operation.

Federal dollars for vocational education account for only 10 percent of the total expenditure for vocational training. The federal support per vocational education student today is \$19.00, roughly half what it was in 1972, \$35.00 (Bottoms and Copa, 1983, pp. 351).

Reviews of State and local funds show that they have remained constant throughout the past decade, not making up for these losses. Expenditures to keep programs current are not luxury, they are necessary if the U.S. intends to enable its citizens to participate efficiently in an increasingly complex economic system.

A recent Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward education confirms the public interest toward vocational education.

The respondents gave top priority to: (1) more emphasis on the basics (2) more practical instruction, and (3) more vocational classes (Gallup, 1982). Americans indicated a close tie between the basics and vocational education.

Congress has expressed a strong interest in knowing more about the system when it re-authorized the VEA in 1976. Thus it mandated the creation of a special Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) along with the four-year National Institute of Education (NIE) study. As a result we now have an impressive array of data and reports on vocational education today.

Vocational Education Today

Recent data suggests that 17.3 million students are currently enrolled in vocational education courses at the secondary, post-secondary or adult level (Benson, 1981). They study at some 20,000 institutions ranging from comprehensive high schools to technical institutes. Of this 17.3 million students, 7.3 million are enrolled in occupationally specific programs that are designed to prepare workers for definite jobs and trades (Benson, 1981).

Slightly more than 10 million vocational education students are 18 years of age or younger and still attending school. More than 40,000 vocational education students have handicaps and most of these students are mainstreamed into regular programs (Bottoms and Copa, 1983, pp. 349).

According to a 1972 study by the Office of Education, 30 percent of vocational education students come from the lowest socio-economic group and 12 percent come from the highest (Bottom and Copa, 1983, pp. 349). The total national expenditures for vocational education is about 6.5 billion dollars, including some 700 million dollars from the VEA (Benson, 1981, pp. 1). Federal contributions have remained constant, while state and local expenditures have doubled (Benson, 1981, pp.1).

Under the 1968 and 1976 VEA Amendments, funds have been set aside for the disadvantaged, the handicapped, minorities, and for activities to promote equity.

The Effectiveness of Vocational Education

Studies concerning the effectiveness of vocational education place a large amount of emphasis on job placement and employer satisfaction as measures of effectiveness.

Studies have shown that most participants in vocational education at the secondary level either go on to employment in a related field or continue their education (National Institute of Education, 1981). A 1979-80 study showed that 71.3 percent of the vocational education graduates had found related employment or were engaged in further education; another 18 percent were employed in other areas or were serving in the military. The unemployment rate was 10 percent, compared with 16.5 percent for members of the general population in this same age group (National Center for Educa-

tion Statistics, 1982).

Studies concerning placement and earnings of graduates have been conducted on a regular basis since 1968. Each state has been required to submit annual placement reports based on follow-up studies of vocational education graduates. These reports have identified whether former students were employed, unemployed, continuing their education, or not seeking employment. Information was also gathered concerning the relatedness of employment to the training received while in a vocational program.

A 1978 study of the New Mexico secondary students who completed vocational education programs in 1977 typifies the research conducted by states during this period of time. The study found that 90 percent of the vocational graduates were employed, with 70 percent employed in fields related to their training (New Mexico State Department of Education, 1978).

Statistics from Nebraska surveys provided similar data. Follow-up studies of 1976 graduates showed that 70 percent of the secondary students available for placement were employed in fields related to their training. Follow-up studies of 1977 graduates revealed that 68.5 percent of that year's graduates were employed in related fields (Nebraska Department of Education, 1980).

Nationwide data compiled by the National Center for

Research in Vocational Education showed that 63 percent of the vocational graduates, secondary and post-secondary, were immediately available for employment and 90 percent of those available became employed (House of Representatives, 1976).

It is apparent, from a review of available data, that a majority of vocational graduates obtain employment in areas related to their training. However, it is not known whether vocational education is solely responsible for the successful placement of these students. Mertens and others (1980), in a research study conducted for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, attempted an identification of studies that used vocational and non-vocational comparison groups in order to clarify the contributions made by vocational education to successful employment.

It seems that most vocational students obtained jobs in the areas in which they were prepared, suggesting that these jobs required specialized preparation. In addition, an abundance of evidence showed that employers were satisfied with vocational graduates and that these graduates were satisfied with their jobs.

A 1980 study by John Tredland and Roger Little (1980, pp. 49-65) examined the effects of vocational education on earnings 35 years after graduation. The results showed that those who used their vocational preparations received signi-

ficant benefits in long-term earnings.

We Lang Li (1981), using the 1970 census found in 1980 that secondary vocational education had a positive effect on the future earnings and success of participants, when compared with non-participants. We Lang Li (1981) found that labor force participation was 10 percent higher and vocational students also had earnings 13 percent higher than those of non-vocational students.

Other studies identify an initial earnings advantage for vocational graduates which dissipates with the passage of time. In a cost-effectiveness study conducted in Pennsylvania, Hu, Lee, Stromsdorfer, and Kaufman (1968) surveyed vocational and academic program graduates approximately seven years after graduation. Results of the study revealed that non-vocational graduates earned less than vocational graduates during the first year following graduation, but, by the end of the sixth year, the difference was no longer statistically significant (Market Opinion Research, 1973). During the six-year interval, however, vocational graduates earned an average of \$3,456 more than non-vocational graduates (Swanson, 1976). Similar studies conducted in Michigan and New York produced similar results.

Evaluation of vocational education programs on the basis of salaries earned by graduates is difficult because of the varying results reported. In addition, the relia-

bility of wage data collected from former students through follow-up surveys has been found to be low, according to Pucel and Luftwig (1975). However, earnings, along with other evaluation criteria, do provide some indication of program effectiveness.

Employer Attitudes

Numerous studies have shown that employers are satisfied with the performance of vocational graduates and prefer them as workers. Personnel directors, overwhelmingly 78 percent of them, said that specific occupational preparation made workers more employable (Nunez and Russell, 1981). A recent survey of members of the National Association of Manufacturers stated that they want more than young people who can read, write, and work independently. They stated that high schools should teach specific occupational skills as well as general work skills (Nunez and Russell, 1981).

Studies of employer satisfaction generally provide data concerning employers' opinions of technical skill and interpersonal skills possessed by former vocational students. Data has also been gathered to provide comparisons of those skills between vocational students and non-vocational students.

A study conducted for the Ohio Advisory Council for Vocational Education (1973) compared employer satisfaction

with vocationally prepared and non-vocationally prepared employees. Vocational graduates were judged better than non-vocational students by their employers in the areas of entry level skills, technical knowledge, willingness to learn new skills or take training, ability to follow suggestions, work habits, attitudes toward company or employer, concern for productivity, and concern for safety. A similar study conducted by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction (1977) produced similar results. In this study, secondary vocational graduates received higher overall ratings than post-secondary vocational program graduates.

It is apparent that studies have been conducted with varying results. Through 1975, no national studies had been conducted on the subject of employer satisfaction levels when comparing vocational and non-vocational program graduates.

Student Attitudes

A number of studies have been conducted concerning former student's perceptions concerning adequacy of the curriculum and training. Most students perceived vocational education as a positive part of their education and a valuable asset in their lives after graduation. The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (Taylor and Stafford, 1981) found that most vocational students felt that their preparation had been important in landing their first

jobs. Vocational graduates seemed more satisfied with their jobs than graduates of other curriculum.

Andrews and Roberts (1974) conducted a study comparing job satisfaction levels of vocational and non-vocational graduates. Results of the study showed both groups were satisfied, but vocational graduates were more satisfied in the areas of pay received, promotions available, work completed, and appreciation received.

Few studies were found that provided data on program quality as perceived by former students. One study of Massachusetts male high school graduates (Conroy, 1975) provided evidence that vocational students evaluate high school as a more positive experience than do general or academic students.

A study of post-secondary students conducted by North and Hanson (1975) revealed that 75 percent of the students who were satisfied with their jobs felt that they could not have acquired the job without the benefit of the vocational program. Even those students who indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs would re-enroll in vocational programs.

It is apparent to this researcher that additional studies are needed in the area of student perceptions of program quality. Particular emphasis is needed on specific components of the program such as quality of instruction, availability of program choices, and availability of modern equipment. These data are needed for program evaluation and

identification of program strengths and weaknesses.

Review of Recent Studies

Two studies were found that directly relate to the subject of this research project. The first study was conducted by the Roanoke Public Schools of Virginia. Lloyd W. Enoch (1977) did a follow-up study of secondary school students who completed vocational education programs in the Roanoke City Public Schools during the 1975-76 school year, students and their employers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the vocational instructional programs in relation to twelve aspects of employment. Questionnaires were sent to 381 students and 59 employers; 51 percent of the students and 68 percent of the employers responded. Findings were that 59 percent of the students employed were full-time employees in fields directly related to their secondary students, and 70 percent of the students rated the vocational education instructional program above average. A highlight of the findings was that 31 percent of the vocational education graduates were now enrolled full time (6 percent part-time) in post-secondary programs, with 59 percent of them enrolled in programs directly related to their secondary vocational education studies. Seventy-seven percent of the employers rated the vocational education instructional program above average.

In a similar study in Springfield, Tennessee, conducted by Henry Rosa (1974), the following information was obtained.

The objectives of the study were: (a) to survey the 1970 through 1973 graduates of the Springfield High School Vocational Office Education program to determine the specific tasks they performed on their jobs, the skills and knowledges required, and the education and training needed (b) to survey employers of these graduates for the purpose of identifying weaknesses and deficiencies in skills, knowledges, and attitudes (c) to evaluate the utilization of vocational office education training received at Springfield High School (d) to evaluate findings of the project and make recommendations for consideration in curriculum planning. Results of the questionnaire were: fifty-one of the 106 students (60 percent) responded to the mailed questionnaires. Forty-two of the 51 employers (82 percent) responded to the questionnaires either through an interview or the mail. The conclusions indicate high ratings of the program by the graduates and that the majority of the graduates were employed in occupations directly related to their high school vocational office education training. Employers rated the overall job performance of the graduates as very good. Recommendations stressed the continuation of program evaluation, further follow-up studies, further communication with business, and improvement of specific areas of training.

Perceptions

It is apparent to the researcher that some evidence suggests that the availability of vocational education programs at the secondary level has kept some students from dropping out. Deborah Perlmutter (1982) concluded from her study that any type of occupational or practical arts program appears to increase retention rates. A recent national study also supports the idea that vocational education keeps potential high school dropouts in school (Mertens, Seitz and Cox, 1982). This would suggest that vocational education broadens the range of opportunities that these youths consider in light of their own goals, abilities, and values. George Copa and Gary Forsberg (1980) stressed the broad range of outcomes that were likely to result from vocational education experiences. They listed as important outcomes such attributes as increased self-confidence and control, creative expression, integrity, basic skills, leadership, a more positive attitude to school, and greater competence in specific skills.

Vocational education seems to provide a positive motivating factor to keeping students in school and interested in achieving some basic skills and knowledge that lead toward obtaining a diploma. With the fact that more than half of all industrial inventions come from those who are in the workforce, the importance of understanding and improving the vocational programs of America becomes even more apparent.

CHAPTER THREE
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to survey the graduates of the Plattsmouth High School's vocational education program. The main objective of the study was to provide the necessary follow-up information to validate the goals and objectives set forth by the vocational department as well as identify the successes or failures in the program.

Questionnaire

Data for this study was obtained through the use of two questionnaires. These questionnaires were developed through the cooperation of the Department of Education, the vocational staff of Plattsmouth High School, and the researcher. The questionnaires used consisted of two types. The first was a Student Follow-up questionnaire which was sent to all 239 graduates meeting certain criteria set forth in this study. This questionnaire consisted of three major parts consisting of 33 questions (Appendix 1). The second questionnaire used was sent to all present employers of students who graduated from this vocational program

(Appendix 2). This questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to the relative preparation of the student for his/her employment, and suggestions for improvement. The questionnaires were designed to investigate the following area:

1. To assess the students vocational training and preparation in his/her chosen field.
2. To determine the students employment and educational status after leaving school.
3. To obtain student/employer feedback and suggestions pertaining to relative preparation and improvement of programs.

Portions of the questionnaires were developed from suggestions made by the State and Federal agencies who evaluate our programs. The questions were designed to provide specific information so as to allow for the evaluation of the goals set forth by the school district and the vocational department. The results from this study provided information to the following questions:

1. How many students are entering the field for which they received training, either as an employee or as a student of higher education?
2. What are some of the possible changes to be made in the various courses in keeping with what is happening in business and industry?
3. What other course of training might better meet the needs of students and the employment needs of the community?

The Sample

To accomplish the objectives set forth in this study, the students of the past five graduating classes will be surveyed. The students who received questionnaires must have been enrolled in one or more of the following vocational classes.

Table II. Classes in which students must have been enrolled in to be surveyed.

Classes
Auto Body
Auto Occupations
Child Care
Food Service
Health Occupations
Metals
Upholstery

The students who were enrolled in the classes listed in Table II totalled 239. Each of these students was sent a questionnaire. In order to obtain the results for this study all 239 students who meet the set criteria of this study were sent questionnaires.

Obtaining Results

The student follow-up questionnaires along with a cover letter that explained the purpose and importance of the study was sent to all graduates meeting the established criteria

(Appendix 3). The second questionnaire consisting of employer follow-up information was then sent to the employers of each student to obtain information from them concerning the students preparation and skill level. The employer follow-up questionnaire was then sent with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and the importance of the information obtained (Appendix 4).

The student follow-up questionnaire was mailed March 1st, 1983, and was to be returned by March 16th. All graduates not responding to the questionnaire by March 14th were then sent a reminder note to respond as soon as possible (Appendix 5). The employer follow-up questionnaire was mailed to all former students who indicated the name and address of their present employer. This questionnaire and cover letter was sent immediately upon receipt of the student follow-up questionnaire. This questionnaire requested a response as soon as possible.

Data Treatment

Responses to the questionnaires were then tabulated in terms of frequency and of percentage. Data from all returned questionnaires were tabulated for each question and percentage or average determined. Any item receiving a response percentage indicating a potential problem area of fifty-one percent will be considered significant for this study.

This significance will not be a statistical inference. There will be no statistical treatment of any data other than mentioned above. This analysis will be followed by a discussion of the respondents comments and a synopsis of the questionnaire in hopes of validating our goals and objectives of the study or pin-pointing potential problem areas.

CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to survey the graduates of Plattsmouth High School's vocational education program and provide the necessary follow-up information to validate the goals and objectives of the program as well as identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Questionnaire

Data for this study was collected through the use of a questionnaire designed by the staff of Plattsmouth High School, the researcher, and with the cooperation of the State Department of Education.

The study involved the mailing of 239 questionnaires to all the graduates of the past five years who were enrolled in classes which were selected by the study. The 239 questionnaires were mailed on March 1st, and 71 students responded, which is a 29.7 percent return rate. Of the five graduating classes surveyed the class of 1980-81 responded the best with a 45 percent return rate. The number of questionnaires mailed and students responding to the survey are indicated in Table III.

Table III. The number and percentage of graduates who responded to the questionnaire by class.

Classes	Number of Graduates	Number Responding	Percent
1977-78	43	10	23.2
1978-79	52	10	19.2
1979-80	36	10	27.7
1980-81	62	28	45.1
1981-82	<u>46</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>28.2</u>
TOTALS	239	71	29.7

Of the 71 students who responded to the questionnaire, only 36 graduates indicated their present employer's name and addresses. The 36 employers indicated were sent an employer questionnaire with a cover letter explaining its purpose. Table IV shows that 36 businesses were notified, 17 responded for a 48 percent return rate for this questionnaire.

Table IV. Number of employer questionnaires sent and received.

Number sent	Number responding	Percent Returned
36	17	47.2

Analysis of Student Questionnaire

The student follow-up questionnaire was divided into three major sections. The first section pertained to the students employment status since leaving school and his/her present employment or educational status. The second section deals with how the student evaluates his/her vocational training received in this program. The final section allows the student to rate the assistance provided by his/her school in obtaining employment after leaving high school. Each of the three sections will be analyzed separately by section and items. The responses to each question were tabulated and percentages for each response were determined. Responses receiving a 51 percent acknowledgment were considered significant for this study. No further statistical or numerical analysis was performed.

The first four questions of the student follow-up questionnaire dealt with the present employment status of the past graduates. The results of questions 1-4 show that 62 percent (48) of the students sought full-time employment after leaving the vocational program, and 33 percent (23) of the students sought part-time employment. This data is summarized in Table V.

Table V. Percentage of students seeking either part-time or full-time employment after leaving the program.

Part-time	Full-time	Not seeking Employment
33	62	5

The responding students also indicated the following reasons for choosing either full-time or part-time employment as indicated in Table VI.

Table VI. Reasons given for not seeking either full-time or part-time employment.

Reason	Number	Percentage
Expected to enter another school	18	25.3
Physical or other handicap	0	0
Not interested in a job	4	5.6
Not interested in a full-time job	5	7
Expected to enter military service	7	9.8
Unable to find full-time job	8	11
Only wanted to work part-time	6	8.4
No comment	<u>23</u>	<u>32.3</u>
TOTAL	71	99.4

The number of full-time jobs, (35 or more hours per week) that these graduates have held since leaving this vocational program averaged 1.61. The types of jobs that these students held varied widely and were very diverse. The respondents did indicate in their response to question number seven that 49 percent (35) were employed in a completely different occupation unrelated to the training that they received. Twenty-seven percent (19) of the students indicated that they were employed in a related occupation. Only 14 percent (10) of the students surveyed indicated that they were employed in an occupation for which they were trained.

The response to the question of how adequately did this program prepare them for their first full-time job (question 8) revealed that 40 percent (29) felt that it did prepare them adequately and 37 percent (26) said it did not. Twenty-three percent (16) of the students surveyed did not comment on this question.

The response to question nine, concerning the current employment status of the graduates surveyed indicated that 56 percent (40) of the graduates were employed, with 75 percent (30) of these full-time, and 25 percent (10) part-time. Sixteen percent (12) of the students indicated that they were unemployed with nine of them looking and only four not looking for work at all. Graduates in the military service

accounted for only 7 percent (5) of the graduates, while 20 percent (14) were continuing there education.

The request for their present employer's name and address (question 15) was completed by nearly all graduates who were employed, with only four students leaving this item blank. The respondents indicated that only 11 percent (8) of them held a job that they were trained for. Thirty-four percent (24) indicated that their occupation is somewhat related to their vocational training program. Twenty-four percent (17) stated that this occupation is not related at all.

The response to question number twelve as to what is your current salary revealed that the responding graduates are averaging \$5.54 an hour. The salary range varied from students making minimum wage to one student with an annual salary of \$42,000.

The response to question 13, of the enrollment in additional education programs since leaving high school produced 57 percent (41) saying they have enrolled in extra classes. Of this 57 percent (41), 15 students enrolled in classes to raise their general education level, nine enrolled in informal, non-credit courses, while 10 went on to up-grade their previous vocational skills. Nine graduates learned a new occupation and one started his own business. Data from this series of questions are summarized in Table VII..

Table VII. The number of students and types of courses that student enrolled in for further education.

Reasons	Number enrolled	Percent
General Education	17	28
To raise my education level	15	25
Informal, non-credit courses	9	15
Vocational programs to upgrade previous skills	10	16
Vocational programs to learn a new occupation	9	15
To start a new business	1	2
TOTAL	61	100

*Ten students did not reply to the question.

In part two of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to rate their vocational training program at Plattsmouth High School. Question number 14 asked if their vocational training program adequately prepared them for their first full-time job after leaving this program. The response was that 34 percent (24) of the students said yes it did, while 41 percent (29) said it did not. Eighteen respondents did not comment on this subject.

The number of separate vocational courses that the re-

spondents were enrolled in during their involvement in the vocational program (question 5) averaged 2.5 courses for all 71 respondents.

When asked if they enrolled in this vocational program with a specific purpose in mind of getting skill training in order to get a job in this field (question 16), 48 percent (41) students replied yes, and 42 percent (30) said no.

Question number 17 asked if the respondents were satisfied with the vocational training they received in this program, they responded by an overwhelming 97 percent (69) saying yes, and only 3 percent (2) saying they were not satisfied.

In rating the quality of the courses offered at Platts-mouth High School (questions 18-21) the following responses are tabulated in Table VIII.

Table VIII. The respondents evaluation of course content in percentage.

Area	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Quality of instruction	46	49	5	0
Instructor interest	56	40	4	0
Content of courses	39	59	2	0
Availability of tools & equipment	<u>40</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	45.25	48	3.75	2.75

In rating the student services provided by our school the graduates responded in the manner summarized in Table IX.

Table IX. The percentage of responses to rating the student services provided.

Area	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Comment
Counseling service	14	53	31	2	0
Financial aid & Scholarship counseling	5	56	24	1	25
Career planning	8	79	10	3	0
Program planning	<u>8</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	8.7	66.75	18	3	6.25

In answering questions 26-28, on how would you rate the assistance provided by your school in obtaining employment after leaving high school, the responses were as summarized in Table X.

Table X. Percent of student satisfaction with the assistance provided by the school in obtaining employment.

Assistance from	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Comment
Vocational teacher	22	37	7	21	13
Guidance counselor	10	57	14	4	14
Public employment service	<u>7</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>41</u>
Average Total	13	43	11	10	23

In evaluation assistance provided from others, the respondents listed relatives, parents, friends, and other family members, with 73 percent (52) of the respondents not commenting.

In evaluating how well did this program prepare you for your present employment (question 30) the responses were: 18 percent (13) very good, 39 percent (28) good, 15 percent (11) poor, 3 percent (2) very poor, and 20 percent (14) not commenting.

The graduates were given the opportunity to respond to

what specific things about their vocational program that they found the most useful, as well as the least useful in their present jobs. The data collected for these two questions (number 31-32) are summarized in Table XI and Table XII.

Table XI. A list of specific things that students found most useful in their present jobs.

Item	Number of responses
Auto mechanics	10
General knowledge of tools	8
Welding	7
Using machines	5
Working with other people	5
General knowledge	4
Auto Body	2
Drafting	2
Everything was good	2
Book work	1
Job information	1
Foods	1
Sheet Metal	1
Patience	1
Working with children	1
No comment	<u>20</u>
TOTAL	71

Table XII. List of specific things that students found least useful in their present job.

Item	Number of responses
None	10
Upholstery	5
Child Care	2
Auto Body	2
Woods	2
Cleaning up afterwards	2
Metals	2
Welding	1
Additional comments:	
Need stronger math program	3
It's all important	3
No comments	<u>39</u>
TOTAL	71

In response to the question of recommending this vocational program to others (question 33) 82 percent said yes they would, 4 percent (3) said no they would not, and 14 percent (10) did not respond.

Analysis of Employer Questionnaire

The employer questionnaire consisted of eight questions with the purpose of obtaining some form of feedback about the entry level skills of students completing the vocational program. The employer follow-up questionnaire was sent to a total of 36 employers, with 48 percent (17) of them returning the questionnaire. Eight other employers sent

letters of response that company policy prohibits the release of personal information regarding employees without written authorization, 11 employers failed to respond.

The employers response to question number one, on how well they felt the vocational program at Plattsmouth High School prepared their employee, resulted in very favorable results. The results of the question are summarized in Table XIII. Question number two asked the employers to rate their employee in comparison to others in his/her work group based on certain characteristics. The results of this question are summarized in Table XIV.

Table XIII. Percentage of employers who felt their employees were well prepared in the following areas from our Vocational Program.

Area	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Specific Occupational skill	0	17	83	0	0	0
Technical knowledge	0	58	42	0	0	0
Basic literacy skills	0	11	89	0	0	0
Problem solving	0	11	89	0	0	0
Decision making	0	70	30	0	0	0
Self-directed learning skill	0	58	42	0	0	0
Acceptable work values	11	58	29	0	0	0
Job application skills	0	57	43	0	0	0
Quality of work	0	51	49	0	0	0
Acceptable work habits	17	47	35	0	0	0
Acceptable work attitudes	17	52	29	0	0	0

Table XIV. Percent of employers who rated their employee in comparison to others by the following characteristics.

Characteristics	Very Good	Good	Aver	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Job skills	0	47	53	0	0	0
Willingness to accept responsibility	12	70	18	0	0	0
Punctuality	12	76	12	0	0	0
Ability to work without supervision	12	82	6	0	0	0
Willingness to learn & improve	12	52	36	0	0	0
Cooperation with co-workers	12	53	35	0	0	0
Cooperation with management	12	59	29	0	0	0
Compliance with policies, rules, practices	12	24	64	0	0	0
Work Attendance	12	65	23	0	0	0

The employers also rated the vocational training received by their employee as it relates to the requirements of his/her job as good. Sixty-four percent (11) of the employers responded to question number three as good and 36 percent (6) as average. In rating the students preparation in relationship to other employees in his/her work group who did not receive such training the employers felt that these individuals are better prepared. Fifty-three percent (9) felt that these individuals are better prepared, 30 percent (5) felt that both are about the same, and 17 percent (3) had no basis for comparison.

The employers had more difficulty in rating the up-to-dateness of the schools course content, physical facilities, and tools and equipment. Seventy percent (12) of the employers didn't know, or could not make a comparison while 30 percent (5) felt that the vocational program is moderately up-to-date. The major suggestions of how to improve the vocational education program at Plattsburgh High School (question 6) was an overwhelming response of "provide more on-the-job training," by almost all respondents.

In responding to question number seven concerning the recommending of graduates of this program to other employers, the employers responded 100 percent (17) yes, they would recommend them.

The final question (number 8) of the questionnaire

asked if any of the employers would be interested in serving on a council to advise the school in operation of this program. Eighty-three percent (14) responded no, and 17 percent (3) responded yes. These employers will be contacted in hopes of becoming a member of the Plattsmouth Advisory Council.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this field project was to conduct a follow-up study of graduates of the Vocational Education Program at Plattsmouth High School. Specifically, the purposes were to assess the students vocational training and preparation in his/her chosen field. Its other objectives were to determine the student's employment and educational status after leaving school, and to obtain student and employer feedback and suggestions pertaining to relative preparation and improvement of programs. To accomplish these objectives, a questionnaire was used to survey a total of 239 students and 36 employers.

From the data collected through the student follow-up survey it was found that 62 percent of the students who graduate from the vocational program had obtained full-time employment, while 33 percent sought part-time employment. Major reasons given were: expecting to enter another school and entering the military service. Only five percent (5) of the students were not interested in a job when they left our program. The survey also showed that 75 percent of these students are presently employed full-time and 25 percent part-

time. The study did show that all students have held at least 1.61 jobs since graduating and were mainly employed in completely different occupations (49 percent) unrelated to their training. Present statistics did show that presently 11 percent are in occupations in which they trained for and another 34 percent are working in a related field. These same students seemed to be divided on the adequacy of their preparation immediately after leaving our program by a 40 percent favorable response, and 37 percent negative.

It was evident that a majority of students continue their education (60 percent). Of this 60 percent, about one-half enroll in general education programs to raise their educational level, while the other half enroll in more vocational training, even though most of them have completed an average of 2.5 courses at the high school, with the largest number of courses being seven. The questionnaires showed satisfaction with the program. Ninety seven percent response favorable. The employer response was also an above average rating for the total program and its participants. The survey did indicate some concern for the establishment of student services and employment assistance. The employers indicated that they would very much like to see more on-the-job training developed in the school. Both respondents recommended the program to others very highly.

Conclusions

On the basis of this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. That most graduates of the vocational program find jobs when leaving the program. These jobs may or may not be specifically related to their training.
2. Most graduates obtain their first job in a completely unrelated occupation than what they received training in.
3. The average salary of these graduates varies from minimum wage and an average of \$5.54 per hour to an annual salary of \$42,000.
4. Most graduates of the vocational program enroll in additional education programs, be it general education or more vocational training.
5. These graduates are employable because they all hold either full-time or part-time jobs
6. At the time of this study most vocational students in our program had a specific purpose in mind of gaining some form of skill training and enrolled in at least 3 or more classes.
7. The graduates were somewhat indecisive on how well this vocational training program had adequately prepared them for their first job. But they did state a 97 percent favorable rating on being satisfied with the training received, recommending it to others.
8. The quality of instruction, instructor interest, course content, and availability of appropriate tools & equipment is rated very highly.

9. The quality and quantity of assistance in the student services area and the area of assistance in obtaining employment rated from good to poor.
10. The area of auto mechanics and general knowledge of tools and usage of machinery is very high. Also, the working with people and the development of patience, good work habits were great assets to the program.
11. Employers rated the program very favorably. They feel that these students are prepared better than other employees in the same work group and were very willing to recommend them to other employers.
12. Most employers are not aware of the course content, physical facilities, and tools & equipment that this program provides to the student. They are not overwhelmingly interested in becoming involved in the program on an advisory capacity.
13. Employers and businesses all expressed a desire for more "on-the-job training."

Recommendations

As a result of the finding in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that the personnel of the vocational department reassess their course offerings and content to validate that they are up-to-date with the needs of today's students and the employment needs of the community. This evaluation should be annually and continuous.
2. It is recommended that more emphasis be placed

on job placement after graduation. The development of a job placement office for assistance and improved guidance or career counseling in the employment field will be of great assistance.

3. It is also recommended that the student services area of the program be evaluated to validate that the needs of all students as well as the goals and objectives of the program are being met.
4. It is recommended that future follow-up studies be conducted every two or three years. There needs to be developed a systematic follow-up and evaluation program for this department that is on-going.
5. It is recommended that the use of computer technology be made available to allow for a more efficient analysis of information about past graduates. This would also provide for better storage and retrieval of this data.
6. It is recommended that the vocational education department continue the development of its on-the-job training program.
7. It is recommended to develop a network of dissemination of information about the vocational program so as involve more of the business and employers in the development program, and to keep them up-dated and informed.

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APPENDIX 1

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE STUDENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY YOUR SCHOOL

	Very			Very
22. Counseling services-----	Good	Good	Poor	Poor
23. Financial aid & scholarship counseling-----	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
24. Career planning-----	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
25. Program planning-----	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY YOUR SCHOOL IN OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT AFTER LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL?

- | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------|------|-----------|
| 26. Assistance from vocational teacher-- | Very Good | Good | Poor | Very Poor |
| 27. Assistance from guidance counselor-- | Very Good | Good | Poor | Very Poor |
| 28. Assistance from public employment service-- | Very Good | Good | Poor | Very Poor |
| 29. Assistance from others _____ (Specify) | | | | |
| 30. How well did the program prepare you for your present employment? | Very Good | Good | Poor | Very Poor |
| 31. What specific things about your vocational program have you found to be the most useful to you in your present job? _____ | | | | |
| 32. What specific things about your vocational program have you found to be the least useful to you in your present job? _____ | | | | |
| 33. Would you recommend this vocational program to others? _____ Yes _____ No | | | | |

**PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
Follow-Up Study of
Vocational Students
1983**

Students Name _____

Courses completed _____

STUDENTS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

1. Since you left this vocational program, did you seek full-time employment? (35 or more hours per week)
 Yes No
2. If you did not seek full-time employment when you left this vocational program, indicate the reason. Check only one.
 Expected to enter another school
 Physical or other handicap
 Not interested in a job
 Expected to enter the military service
 Only wanted to work part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
 Other (Specify) _____
3. Did you seek part-time employment (less than 35 hours per week) when you left this vocational program? Yes No
4. If you sought part-time employment instead of full-time employment when you left this vocational program, indicate the reason. Check only one.
 Expected to enter another school
 Physical or other handicap
 Not interested in a full-time job
 Expected to enter the military service
 Unable to find full-time job
 Other (Specify) _____
5. How many full-time jobs (35 or more hrs per week) have you held since you left this vocational program?
 _____ (Number of jobs)

6. If you got a full-time job when you left this vocational program, what was your job? _____

7. How closely did your first full-time job (35 or more hours per week) after leaving this vocational program relate to the training you received?

- _____ I was employed in the occupation for which I was trained by this vocational program
- _____ I was employed in a related occupation
- _____ I was employed in a completely different occupation

8. Did this vocational training program adequately prepare you for your first full-time job after leaving this training? _____ Yes _____ No

9. What is your current employment status?

- _____ I AM EMPLOYED
 - _____ full-time (35 or more hrs per week)
 - _____ part-time (less than 35 hrs per week)

- _____ I AM UNEMPLOYED
 - _____ but looking for work
 - _____ and not looking for work

- _____ I AM IN THE MILITARY SERVICE
- _____ I AM CONTINUING MY EDUCATION

10. If you are employed, please provide the following information on your present job:

Company _____

Firm Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Your Immediate Supervisor's Name & Phone Number _____

PRESENT JOB INFORMATION: Job Title _____

Job Duties _____

11. Is this job related to your vocational program?

- _____ This is an occupation for which I was trained
- _____ This occupation is related to my vocational program
- _____ This occupation is not related to my vocational program

12. What is your current wage (before deductions)?
\$ _____ per _____
(hr, month, year)

13. Since you left this educational program, have you enrolled in any additional education programs?
_____ Yes _____ No

IF YES, INDICATE TYPE(S) AND PURPOSE(S) BELOW:

- _____ GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
 - _____ To raise my general education level
 - _____ Informal, noncredit course(s)
- _____ VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS
 - _____ To upgrade the vocational skills previously learned in this program
 - _____ To learn a new occupation _____
 - _____ To start my own business

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM?

14. Did this vocational training program adequately prepare you for your first full-time job after leaving this program? _____ Yes _____ No

15. How many separate vocational courses did you take while enrolled in this vocational program? _____

16. Did you enroll in this vocational program with specific purpose in mind of getting skill training in order to get a job in this field? _____ Yes _____ No

17. Were you satisfied with the vocational training you received in this program? _____ Yes _____ No

PLEASE CIRCLE

18. Quality of instruction--Good Good Poor Poor

Very Very

19. Instructor interest-----Good Good Poor Poor

Very Very

20. Content of courses-----Good Good Poor Poor

21. Availability of appropriate

tools & equipment-----Very Very

Good Good Poor Poor

APPENDIX 2

PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
Employer Follow-Up
of
Vocational Students
1983

EMPLOYER QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please complete all sections of this form even if the employee no longer works for your firm. When you have completed the form, return it in the enclosed return-addressed, stamped envelope. Your responses will in now way affect the employee but are intended to provide assistance to the vocational program in which he/she was enrolled.

1. How well do you feel the vocational program at Plattsmouth High School prepared this employee in each of the following:

Specific occupational skill	5	4	3	2	1	0
(technical knowledge)	5	4	3	2	1	0
Basic literacy skills	5	4	3	2	1	0
Problem solving	5	4	3	2	1	0
Decision making	5	4	3	2	1	0
Self-directed learning skills	5	4	3	2	-1	0
Acceptable work habits	5	4	3	2	1	0
Acceptable work attitudes	5	4	3	2	1	0
Acceptable work values	5	4	3	2	1	0
Job application skills	5	4	3	2	1	0
Quality of work	5	4	3	2	1	0
Other _____	5	4	3	2	1	0
Please specify	Very	Ave	Very	Don't		
	Good	Good	Poor	Poor	Know	

Comments: _____

2. In comparison to others in the employee's work group, how would you rate the employee on each of the following characteristics:

Job skills	5	4	3	2	1	0
Willingness to accept responsibility	5	4	3	2	1	0
Punctuality	5	4	3	2	1	0
Ability to work without supervision	5	4	3	2	1	0
Willingness to learn & improve	5	4	3	2	1	0
Cooperation with co-workers	5	4	3	2	1	0
Cooperation with management	5	4	3	2	1	0
Compliance with Co. policies, rules, practices	5	4	3	2	1	0
Work attendance	5	4	3	2	1	0
Other _____	5	4	3	2	1	0

please specify

Comments: _____

3. What is your overall rating of the vocational training received by this individual as it relates to the requirements of his/her job?

Very Good Good Aver Poor Very Poor

4. As a result of this person's vocational training, how would you rate his/her preparation in relation to other employees in his/her work group who did not receive such training?

- _____ No basis for comparison (0)
- _____ Individual is better prepared (5)
- _____ Both are about the same (3)
- _____ Individual is less prepared (1)

5. How current are the vocational programs in your employee's former school? (circle)

	Course Content	Physical Facilities	Tools & Equipment
Completely Up To Date	X	X	X
Moderately Up To Date	X	X	X
Somewhat Out Of Date	X	X	X
Entirely Out Of Date	X	X	X
Don't Know	X	X	X

6. What would be your main suggestion on how to improve the vocational education program at Plattsmouth School?

7. Would you recommend graduates of this vocational program to other employers? Yes No
If no, why not? _____

8. Would you be interested in serving on a council to advise the school in the operation of this program? Yes No

EMPLOYER _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY & STATE _____
PHONE NUMBER _____

Thank you for your time, it is greatly appreciated.

Plattsmouth Community Schools

PLATTSMOUTH, NEBRASKA 68048

APPENDIX 3

March 7, 1983

Dear Graduate of PHS:

We need your help! Plattsmouth High School is in the process of evaluating its Vocational Education programs and we need your assistance. As you know, PHS is constantly seeking ways to strengthen and improve its Vocational programs. One very good way to do this is to find out how past graduates of the Vocational programs feel about their training and how successful this training was in helping them get jobs in the kind of work for which they prepared.

This is why we are writing to you and your fellow graduates of the past 5 years. We are asking for your help in making the Vocational programs at PHS even better. Please take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed form and return it in the envelope provided.

Please be assured that all replies will be held strictly confidential. We are grateful to you for your help and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. We would like to have all forms returned by March 16th.

Sincerely,



Steve Bernth
Assistant Principal

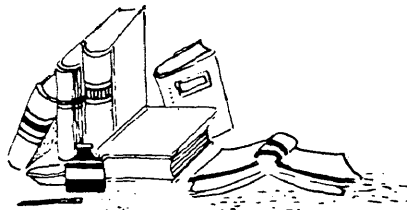
SB:mlv

Enc

P.S.

If we have the wrong address please assist us by forwarding it to the correct residence.

Thank you.



Plattsmouth Community Schools

PLATTSMOUTH, NEBRASKA 68048

APPENDIX 4

March 7, 1983

Dear Employer:

Plattsmouth High School is in the process of doing a 5-year follow-up study of its Vocational Education graduates.

_____ has indicated to us that he/she is an employee of yours. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in providing us with some information that we see as being vital to the improvement of our Vocational Education programs.

Please be assured that all replies will be held strictly confidential. Your responses will in no way affect the employee but are intended to provide assistance to the Vocational program in which he/she was enrolled.

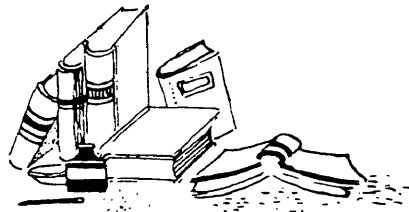
We are grateful to you for your help and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Steve Bernth
Assistant Principal

SB:mlv



APPENDIX 5

March 14, 1983

Dear Graduate of PHS:

About a week ago we sent you a questionnaire on your views on the Vocational Education programs at PHS. If you have already replied, I thank you for your cooperation.

If you have not yet completed and returned the form, we urge you to do so at your earliest convenience. Your responses are important to us so that we can make the Vocational programs at PHS even better for the students of the future.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Bernth".

Steve Bernth
Assistant Principal

