

Fourth Edition

LIFE CENTERED CAREER EDUCATION

A COMPETENCY BASED APPROACH

Donn E. Brolin



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Foreword

The Council for Exceptional Children is pleased to offer this fourth edition of *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach*. Dr. Brolin's work supports CEC's policy on career education, which states that career education is the totality of experiences through which one learns to live a meaningful, satisfying work life. Within the career education framework, work is conceptualized as conscious effort aimed at producing benefits for oneself and/or others. Career education provides the opportunity for children to learn, in the least restrictive environment possible, the academic, daily living, personal-social, and occupational knowledge and the specific vocational skills necessary for attaining their highest levels of economic, personal, and social fulfillment.

CEC supports the belief that career education should permeate the entire school program and even extend beyond it. It should be infused throughout the curriculum by knowledgeable teachers who are able to modify the curriculum to integrate career development goals with current subject matter goals and content. It is the position of The Council that individualized, appropriate education must include the

opportunity for every student to attain his or her highest level of career potential through career education experiences. Children with exceptionalities require career education experiences that will develop their wide range of abilities, needs, and interests to the fullest extent possible.

We believe that the LCCE approach also addresses Goal 3 of the National Education Goals, supporting academic achievement, thinking skills, and citizenship with the intention of preparing students to be responsible and productive citizens.

In order to assist students with exceptionalities to become productive workers and independent adults, special education professionals need to work in collaboration with parents, other educators, community service personnel, and the business community. The LCCE approach serves as a model for making this happen.

CEC is proud to be the disseminator of the LCCE curriculum and training materials.

George E. Ayers
Executive Director

Preface

Successful transition from school to work for students receiving special education services has been a significant problem for these individuals for many years. In the 1970s, considerable federal and state legislation was enacted and funding became available to help educators and other service providers hire and train more personnel, expand their services, and conduct research and development activities that would lead to a better quality of life for persons with disabilities. In the 1980s, the “Transition from School to Work” movement was launched. Section 626 of The Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-199) designated funds to be used for transition services. The Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524) was passed to provide additional impetus to the preparation of these students for employment success.

In October 1990, Congress passed into law the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA P.L. 101-476). IDEA renames the original Education of the Handicapped Act and its earlier amendments in a composite law that promotes effective transition programming by (a) providing a clear definition of “transition services”; (b) listing the set of “coordinated activities” that comprise transition services and describing the basis for determining which activities are appropriate for an individual student; (c) specifying the process by which a statement of needed transition services is to be included in the student’s individualized education programs (IEPs); and (d) describing shared responsibility for transition service provision.

Too many students exiting special education experience employment problems after they leave school. This unfortunate circumstance has been documented in many studies

and continues to confound many educators who believe they are providing an appropriate educational program for their students. Yet, too many educators continue to use the same old approaches, parents remain only minimally involved and committed, and community resources (including the service agencies) are not adequately utilized or are not participating with a cooperative/collaborative spirit. It is hoped that IDEA will rectify this longstanding problem.

Almost everyone is born with a need to work and feel productive. Work is the most central adult activity and is the cornerstone on which individuals are generally judged. However, work does not mean only paid work. Unpaid work is done in the home, in volunteer community activities, and in productive avocational activities. Thus, when persons with disabilities are not employed, due to various circumstances, they can still engage in many fulfilling unpaid work activities to meet their need to work and maintain their self-esteem while attempting to secure satisfactory employment.

What happens to special education students when they grow up depends largely on the ability of educators and parents, with support from community agencies and the employment sector, to give them the skills, understandings, and opportunities for becoming independent, productive, and happy adults. A systematically organized educational system that links these resources together in a scope and sequence with content leading to successful adult functioning becomes paramount. Professor Maynard Reynolds, a long-time leader in the special education field, once told me, “We must not neglect academics, but rather recognize the continuing failure of educators to respond to the consistent

evidence showing that the critical tools in our culture—the real determiners of survival—relate to social and personal skills, employability, and efficient life skills.”

This fourth edition of *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach* continues the focus on three major curriculum areas that need to be infused into the educational program of special education students: daily living, personal-social, and occupational skills. The LCCE Curriculum continues to be adopted in a growing number of school districts across the country. One reason is its similarity to the “Transition from School to Work,” functional skills, and “Supported Work” concepts that have evolved and prevailed in the 1990s. This curriculum guide contains 97 subcompetency units and some specific examples of how LCCE can be taught, although it is not intended to present everything you need to know about teaching your students. Rather, it provides a framework for building a comprehensive and systematic effort for career development that can be infused into academic subjects and/or provided as separate units. Now available from CEC are more extensive instructional units consisting of over 1,000 lesson plans covering all 400 subcompetency objectives contained in this guide.

In addition to the subcompetency units, this guide can be used for the development of individualized education programs and for student assessment. The Competency Rating Scale presented in this publication can be used to track the progress of each student’s competency development on a yearly or semester basis. Recent measures that have been

developed for LCCE assessment include a Knowledge Battery (1992) and a Performance Battery (1992).

For many years, much has been written about the need to provide special education students with an appropriate education. The CEC Ad Hoc Committee to Study and Respond to the *Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education* noted that “the most fundamental tenet of special education is to develop to the maximum degree possible the abilities of each student.” This included becoming employed, developing personal and social skills, and functioning as independent citizens. More career preparation and vocational education were recommended to enable children and young adults with disabilities to become self-supporting, tax-paying citizens. LCCE is a good approach to meeting this longstanding goal.

We are once again grateful to The Council for Exceptional Children for publishing the results of our federally supported projects from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. A revised 1993 edition of the *Life Centered Career Education Trainer’s Manual* with a videotape training package and an *LCCE Professional Development Activity Book* are now available to help school districts prepare their personnel to implement the LCCE program. We wish you the best in your efforts to educate your students in a manner that will lead them to successful and productive adult lives as a citizens, family members, employees, volunteers, and participants in meaningful recreation and leisure activities.

Donn E. Brolin

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1. Career Education

The concept of career education was officially introduced to U.S. educators in 1971 by the U.S. Commissioner of Education at a national conference of secondary school principals (Marland, 1971). Education officials were vitally concerned with the high drop-out rate of students who failed to see the relevance of what they were being taught to their future life goals. A more practical and meaningful approach to education was being voiced in many quarters, and in response to this critical need, career education was born. A betting person would have given 100-to-1 odds against the newest educational reform lasting more than a few years. But career education has endured and weathered the usual rejection and resistance to innovations and is gathering greater momentum with the passage of time, although much is now embedded in newer terms such as *transitional programming*, *functional curriculum*, *supported work*, and the like. LCCE has been developed on the principles of the career education approach.

EARLY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Some special educators profess to have practiced a type of career education long before its introduction by Dr. Marland. They are partially correct. The work-study model (Kolstoe & Frey, 1965) of the 1950s and 1960s was to some degree a forerunner of the career education concept at the high school level. The "Persisting Life Situations" curriculum of the Wisconsin State Department of Instruction and several other curriculum models of the 1960s were also precursors of career education. It is not important, however, to give credit to anyone in particular for its invention. What is important is that in 1971 the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) gave top priority to career education as a critical educational need. The exact nature and definition of career education were left to evolve from the field as it responded

to the basic tenets of and need for this educational reform.

Special education and vocational education, in particular, responded favorably to the federal dictate of the early 1970s. Some noteworthy events that followed were: (a) the federal special education agency declared career education a top priority and gave it financial backing (1972); (b) The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the American Vocational Association (AVA) cosponsored an extensive national conference on the topic; (c) a U.S. Office of Career Education was established (1974) and existed under the direction of Dr. Kenneth B. Hoyt until 1982; (d) the Division on Career Development (DCD), now the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT), was formed and became CEC's 12th Division (1976); (e) the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act (P.L. 95-207) was passed to help states infuse career education into school curricula for all students so it could become an integral part of the nation's educational process (1977); and (f) CEC issued a position paper describing its conceptualization of career education and its importance for special education students (1978). CEC also published the first edition of *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach* (Brolin, 1978).

In 1982, the Career Education Incentive Act was repealed and the federal Division on Career Education (formerly the U.S. Office of Career Education) began phasing out. It is important to know, however, that this law was never intended to be renewed but was designed to provide federal incentive funds so that state and local districts could initiate career education and make it an integral part of their educational effort for all students. Many school districts did just that, and career education concepts, processes, and materials became imbedded in their curricula.

The flurry of curriculum and materials development that occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s was unprecedented,

both for regular and special education students. But when the federal and state monies subsided, so, proportionately did the efforts by most school districts, and the term *career education* was used less frequently than before. However, as indicated previously, in many districts career education became a part of the educational program to different degrees. The career education movement has had a significant impact across the country and is now known in some places by different terms and in different forms, although in many other areas of the country the term *career education* still prevails. A review of more recent career education and transition literature for students with mild disabilities (e.g., Clark & Kolstoe, 1990; Polloway, Patton, Payne, & Payne, 1989; Rusch, DeStefano, Chadsey-Rusch, Phelps, & Szymanski, 1992; Schloss, Smith, & Schloss, 1990; West et al., 1992) attests to the importance of career education in our present-day educational literature.

NEW AND RELATED EDUCATION CONCEPTS AND THRUSTS

In recent years, several new terms and movements have emerged that relate closely to the career education concepts and efforts of the past. These are the transition, functional skills, outcome(s)-based education (OBE), and self-determination movements. The LCCE approach contains substantial elements that relate to each of these movements as explained below.

Transition Services

The final rules for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990) defined transition services as

a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of services must be (1) based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, (2) include *needed activities* in the areas of instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. NOTE: Transition services for students with disabilities *may be special education* if they are provided as specialized designed instruction or related services, if they are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education. (300.18 Transition Services)

The IEP for each student should contain the transition services component, beginning no later than age 16 or at a younger age, if determined appropriate, and must include a statement of the needed transition services including, if appropriate, a statement of each public agency and each participating agency's responsibilities or linkages, or both, before the student leaves the school setting. If the IEP team determines that services are not needed in one or more areas, the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made. It is important to note that the U.S. House of Representatives committee reporting on the law stated, "Although this language leaves the final determination of when to initiate transition services for students under age 16 to the IEP process, it nevertheless makes it clear that Congress expects much consideration to be given to the need for transition services for students by age 14 or younger." The Committee encouraged that approach because of their concern that

age 16 may be too late for many students, particularly those at risk of dropping out of school and those with the most severe disabilities. Even for those students who stay in school until age 18, many will need more than two years of transitional services. Students with disabilities are now dropping out of school before age 16, feeling that the education system has little to offer them. Initiating services at a younger age will be critical. (House Report No. 101-544, 10, 1990)

The LCCE approach integrates classroom instruction with community-based experiences and the active involvement of family members, employers, and human service agencies in cooperatively preparing students with the skills needed for adult functioning. The curriculum is intended to begin during the elementary years so that students have sufficient time to learn and develop the critical skills they will need to be productive and successful upon making the transition from school to community life and work.

Functional Skills

There is more recognition now that students will need an appropriate blend of academic and functional skills instruction in school, home, and community settings if they are to be successful during their school years and after they leave the educational system. Functional skills are not just academic ones, they are also those needed for adult living, including independent living, social, communication, and vocational skills, which should be taught in part in integrated natural settings. Clark (1991) has defined functional curriculum as "instructional content that focuses on the concepts and skills needed by students in the areas of personal-social, daily living, and occupational adjustment."

The LCCE approach is designed to focus on 22 major functional skills or competencies that research has found critical for adult adjustment. In the process of learning these 22 competencies, students learn functional academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math) as well. Thus, the LCCE Curriculum provides a comprehensive framework for delivering all or most of the functional, practical, everyday skills instruction that students will need to function as productive workers and citizens of their communities.

Outcome(s)-Based Education

Presently, many states and local educational agencies are adopting the basic tenets of the outcome(s)-based education (OBE) approach. Basically, OBE is

a philosophy which “drives” the way in which instruction is organized, delivered and evaluated in our schools. Its purposes are: (1) equipping all students with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed for future success in school, in the workplace and in advanced studies; and (2) establishing conditions in schools which maximize achievement and success for all students. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1992)

In the OBE system, student outcomes define the curriculum, and the learning time depends on the needs of each student. Grades are based on the mastery of specified outcomes, and expectations are high for all students. There is a close connection between academic and vocational goals. For students with disabilities, needed adaptations and modifications can be addressed through the IEP process.

The LCCE Curriculum is an outcome(s)-based education system. The 22 competencies that the approach advocates comprise the critical knowledge and skills an individual needs to be a successful and productive citizen and worker in today’s society. Many schools implementing LCCE have recognized this fact and have designated LCCE as their outcome(s)-based response to their state’s and/or school district’s mandate to implement the OBE approach.

Self-Determination¹

In its earliest conceptualization, self-determination referred to the inherent right of individuals with disabilities to assume control of and make choices that impact their lives

(Nirje, 1972). Self-determination referred to an inherent human right—the right to receive respect, the right to human dignity and choice. Twenty years later self-determination remains as critically important for people with disabilities as when Nirje called for action, and too often it remains as unattainable. Wehmeyer (1992a; 1992b); and Wehmeyer & Berkobien, (1991) proposed that for purposes of education, self-determination is best conceptualized as an outcome and described by essential component elements that define it in terms of processes. A process is characterized by gradual changes leading to a particular result or a series of actions or operations conducive to an end. Wehmeyer & Berkobien (1991) proposed the following definition: “Self-determination refers to the abilities and attitudes required for one to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to make choices regarding one’s actions free from undue external influence or interference.” Self-determination incorporates the related processes of *autonomy* (acting according to one’s own priorities or principals), *self-actualization* (the full development and use of one’s unique talents and potentialities), and *self-regulation* (cognitive or self-controlled mediation of one’s behavior). These processes provide the foundation for the development of interventions to enhance self-determination.

A number of factors are driving the current attention to the issue of self-determination. Perhaps the most important factor has been the demands from people with disabilities for choice and self-determination. Many Americans with disabilities have become increasingly active in promoting these issues through the independent living movement, legislative advocacy, and the judicial system. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is one outcome of this movement, and civil rights legislation such as this Act will provide a platform for increased visibility for self-determination. A second factor supporting the self-determination thrust is the growing recognition that adult outcomes for students with disabilities are not as positive as educators would prefer. Results from follow-up and follow-along studies suggest that a focus on vocational and job skills is a necessary step to preparing students with disabilities to succeed in the world of work but not sufficient to ensure job success. A focus on self-determination instruction will prepare students with disabilities to make choices and decisions based on their own values, beliefs, interests, and abilities so they can assume greater control and responsibility in their lives.

Recognizing that curriculum development was the logical first step toward promoting self-determination for students with disabilities, The Arc has adopted and field tested the LCCE Curriculum to teach self-determination skills to

¹ Appreciation is extended to Dr. Michael Wehmeyer of The Arc, a national organization for persons with mental retardation, who provided information for this section on self-determination.

secondary age students with mild cognitive disabilities. Applying the LCCE Curriculum to enhance skills related to self-determination involved the use of 17 subcompetencies in 4 competency areas within the Personal-Social Skills Domain. Further information about The Arc's application of the LCCE materials to self-determination instruction is presented in Chapter 4.

FEATURES AND BARRIERS

Through the years some people have had trouble differentiating career education from vocational education. Career education can be distinguished from vocational education and other related curricular concepts such as life skills education, transitional programming, functional curriculum, and supported work in the following manner.

1. *It interfaces education with work.* Work becomes a primary need for the vast majority of individuals when they grow up. Productive work activity, paid or unpaid, is something that makes a person an acceptable adult. People perform productive work in the home or community, on the job, and in enjoyable leisure-time and recreational pursuits. Adults spend much of their productive work time on the job; others spend most of it at home or on volunteer projects that benefit the community. Thus, students should be prepared to engage in the different roles and settings in which meaningful, productive work is done. The school curriculum offers the opportunity to teach many of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills needed to perform various work roles.
2. *It is a K–12+ effort that involves all possible school personnel.* Children begin developing a work personality, as well as a general personality, in early childhood. Work attitudes, values, interests, motivation, needs, habits, and behaviors develop early and are susceptible to the influence of parents, teachers, peers, and experiences. Teachers are important in helping students learn about and clarify their values and potential for the world of work.
3. *It is an infusion concept.* Career education is not a course; rather, it is the process of integrating concepts, materials, and experiences into traditional subject matter. For example, when teaching mathematics concepts, the teacher can use practical examples of how to relate the instruction to productive work activities in the home, community, job, and avocational situations. Role playing, simulated businesses, occupational notebooks, job analysis assignments, and many other stimulating activities can be used to enhance academic learning.
4. *It does not replace traditional education or subject matter.* Career education requires a focusing of why and how subject matter is taught. Much of what is already being done in the classroom may be career education. Generally, however, the effort is too limited and unfocused. Educators can be taught to expand their career education efforts without discarding most of what they have done in the past.
5. *It conceptualizes career development occurring in stages.* The elementary school years, or the *career awareness stage*, is when students need more instruction and experiences that will make them more aware of themselves, the world of work and its requirements, and how they might fit into it someday. The junior high or middle school years, or the *career exploration stage*, provide further career awareness opportunities but also offer students the opportunity to explore areas of interest and aptitude. This period is important because it is then that students can begin to determine their future roles as citizens, family members, employees, and participants in productive avocational activities. The high school period, or the *career preparation stage*, should focus on career planning and preparation for the world of work after high school or with future training. It is important to provide for these three stages of career development in the curriculum so that students can develop a satisfactory work personality and career maturity. The fourth stage, the *career assimilation stage* (placement, follow-up, and continuing education) occurs after the student leaves the secondary or postsecondary school and embarks upon the world of work, paid and unpaid.
6. *It requires a substantial experiential component.* Most people learn best with hands-on activity. Many special education students learn best if this method is a major focus of their instructional program. A major concern of many teachers is the behavior of their students. If students are busily engaged in something they like, and if it has a meaningful goal related to their future lives, motivation will increase and behavior problems will diminish. A basic principle is that the school must meet the needs of students; students should not have to fit into the exact needs and structure of the school and its personnel.
7. *It focuses on the development of life skills, affective skills, and general employability skills.* Life skills are important for productive work activity in the home and community. However, they are also directly related to job functioning. An individual must be able to dress and groom properly, have good table manners, make decisions about money, and use transportation to get to work. Interest and aptitude in certain life skill areas

(e.g., cooking, cleaning, mending clothes, taking care of children, or athletics) provide valuable clues to possible job interests, instruction, and employment. Affective skills are important for acceptance by others in the home, community, and job site. General employability skills such as work motivation, dependability, promptness, safety, consideration for others, sticking to a task, and handling criticism are skills that all educators can help students acquire.

8. *It requires the school to work more closely with the family and community resources.* The majority of learning occurs outside school. Career education promotes a partnership with parents and community resources whereby what is deemed important to learn about the world of work is taught beyond the confines of the school environment. In the process, parents and community members can become more aware and supportive of the school's program and objectives.

As noted in the preceding discussion about the career education concept, career education proponents view an individual's career as more than his or her occupation. It includes all the productive work activities engaged in during a day and throughout life. From this perspective, career education is a total educational concept that considers the whole person, not just one part. Although it is not all the education a student should receive, it should be a pervasive part. Vocational educators can expand their role by providing more career awareness and exploration experiences related to a variety of occupations and to home and community experiences. General educators should not view vocational teachers and counselors as the only ones who provide career education. They, too, can provide many important career activities.

Why, then, is career education not implemented more widely in American schools? This question is constantly before those who profess its virtues and promote its implementation. Although most school systems would report that they have implemented career education, few have done so systematically and comprehensively. Some possible reasons include the following:

1. *It is only one of many pressures being applied to school districts.* Financial pressures have cut into the heart of many school districts. Administrators have been forced to lay off faculty, deal with strikes and unions, cut back salaries and supplies, and face many other devastating problems. The mandate to implement Public Law 94-142 has posed serious problems in orienting, preparing, and convincing regular educators to accept students with special needs in their classrooms. Career education is just one more pressure that

must be dealt with even though it offers an appropriate but sometimes unrecognized method for mainstreaming or inclusion.

2. *It is difficult to get people to change their approaches, even though most will agree openly to the importance of and need for change.* Educators tend to teach as they were trained and in the manner that meets their styles and needs. Once people establish a satisfying pattern it is difficult to change, even though what is being introduced makes sense. (There are, however, a great many educators who are exceptions and who are always seeking new and better methods.)
3. *There is often no reward for changing.* Many educators find that there are no rewards for making changes. They get no time off to make the changes, no recognition, no inservice training, no extra pay, and often no additional funds or space. They have little incentive to change, especially if their colleagues are not changing. Change requires extra study and preparation. Who knows what the next innovation is going to be? How do we know whether there will be a job next year and what the pay will be?
4. *Many educators aren't convinced that this approach is better than what they are doing now.* What evidence is there that career education makes any difference? Many believe they are doing most of it now and much more. They think "career" means job. To many, the use of the term *career education* is confusing and is synonymous with vocational education.
5. *It requires educators to reveal what they are doing to their colleagues, parents, and community representatives.* Career education requires a cooperative spirit and a willingness to be open and flexible while listening to others' opinions. This attitude is not easy for those who believe they are hired and paid to teach specific subject matter and nothing else.

There are no doubt many other reasons for resistance to implementing the career education, transition, and functional skills approaches. In many instances, the barriers are not a rejection of the concept and the need for it, but instead are an inability of the state or district to implement it, whatever the reason(s). It is difficult to reject the basic tenets on which the concepts are built.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The need for career education and its conceptual framework continues to be strong in U.S. schools. The "Transition from School to Work" movement and other related concepts introduced in the 1980s reflect the recognition by curriculum developers that the career education approach

provided the foundation upon which the current and contemporary models of the 1980s have been built. Unfortunately, it is the nature of the field to use new terms and discard previous ones every few years. But, whatever we are calling the need for life skills, interpersonal skills, and occupational skills preparation, we must continue to build upon proven methods from the past by recognizing and using their contributions.

Many of the problems noted in years past continue to pose barriers to implementing the concepts of career education in the 1990s. Some of the needs that must be addressed are the following:

1. *Career education must be provided more substantially at the elementary level.* The preponderance of career education efforts for students with exceptionalities still seems to exist at the secondary school level, although earlier efforts are being implemented in some schools. Career education is probably even more important at the elementary school level. It is during this period that children form a work personality and develop critical prevocational and affective skills. Teachers can make academic subjects more interesting and effective by integrating substantive career education concepts, materials, and experience.
2. *A cooperative learning and teaching environment should be provided in the school.* The very nature of career education requires teachers and students to be intimately involved as active partners in the learning/teaching environment. Both career education and cooperative learning offer powerful mechanisms for effective mainstreaming and career development. Their merits must be given considerably more promotion. Several recent efforts at coteaching by special and regular class teachers are yielding improved results.
3. *A continuous system of career and vocational assessment must be implemented in later elementary years and be provided periodically and systematically thereafter.* The movement toward curriculum-based assessment (CBA) is long overdue and will provide educators and their students with more meaningful assessment data for individual educational planning. Curriculums such as the Life Centered Career Education program, which provide assessment instruments, should be reviewed for possible use.
4. *Schools need to develop more active and meaningful partnerships with parents, employers, and community agencies.* The transition movement has promoted this area as one of critical importance if students are to be successful after leaving school. Interactions with these groups will give educators a greater insight into the real world and its requirements. Many employers are receptive to partnership arrangements with schools if educators approach them first.
5. *Educators must make greater use of the community as a learning environment.* It is rapidly becoming recognized that most students with special needs can learn more and behave much better in a realistic work and community setting. Career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities will be greatly enhanced by community-based experiences and instruction. This will require more flexible staff assignments so educators can spend time in the community and then make curriculum changes based on their observations of need.
6. *More staff development opportunities need to be instituted in the schools so that regular teachers are better prepared to adopt career education/transition and to mainstream students.* The lack of sufficient inservice time is a constant problem that needs to be rectified. Unless adequate time for inservice training is allocated, any innovation will continue to be misunderstood, resisted, and neglected. The new LCCE staff development materials should be considered if interest in the LCCE approach is strong.
7. *More attention should be focused on the educational system and how it can better incorporate career education/transition into its operation.* Educators have emphasized providing the student with general employability skills but have neglected a major goal of career education—changing the education system. Much attention needs to be directed toward school administrators and state education department officials who set the policies. The fact that the Council of Chief State School Officers endorsed career education should help to promote greater implementation. Special educators must convey to their state special education divisions the importance and need for increasing career education for exceptional individuals.
8. *The impact of career education/transition must be demonstrated more clearly.* Little evidence is available to demonstrate the efficacy of career education, although most who profess it staunchly profess that it has great impact. A nationally organized program of research should be implemented to discern effective models and practices. Studies of the adjustment of adults should be part of this effort. The Transition Institute at the University of Illinois is the major current resource addressing this area, although it does not focus specifically on career education.
9. *State departments of special education must promote more strongly the inclusion of career education/transition as an important component in the school district plan.* Unless there is a directive from the state funding agency, many school districts will not be re-

sponsive to the needs because of the many other requirements that they must fulfill. The transition legislation is now prompting some state agencies to be more directive to local districts than previously. The state of Alabama is one example of a state agency that has endorsed the LCCE Curriculum and is promoting it throughout the state with substantial resources.

10. *Universities and colleges must increase their inclusion of career education/transition in their curriculums.* There has been a considerable increase in this area in the past several years as the transition movement has made its impact. However, much remains to be done. We cannot expect those in the field to be responsive to this need if it was not even mentioned during their teacher preparation program.

These 10 areas include several mentioned in the previous edition of this Curriculum. Unfortunately, the needs still exist, because change in the field is slow. In spite of this, the movement that has occurred is encouraging; however, much more must happen if the needs of children and youth are to be realized.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The time has never been better for the career education concept to become an important component of more appropriate educational programming for students with special needs. Whether it is called career education, transition, or something else, its tenets can be used to build better programs and interagency and parent collaborations, so that students can be better prepared to become productive workers and citizens in family, community, and employment settings. Much remains to be done, however, if the needs of these students are to be met. Special education and other programs for students with special needs must resist the constant push for an academic curriculum emphasis rather than the more important career/life skills approach that its students will need for successful community living and working. Administrators and boards of education must understand that these are the most important priorities for individuals with special learning needs.

The Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of The Council for Exceptional Children continues to spearhead the career education and transition concepts for the special education field. It is dedicated to work closely with other CEC divisions and related organizations to get career education and transition integrated into instructional programs throughout the country so that every student has

the opportunity to become a productive, working adult. This group of dedicated and hardworking individuals continues to provide conferences and publications that are enhancing the knowledge base and further development of the career education approach.

Chapter 2 will present an introduction to the Life Centered Career Education Curriculum that has been developed and refined over the past 20 years by the author and his associates. The curriculum continues to grow in its acceptance as a viable approach to providing a logical K–12 scope and sequence of career development experiences that will eventually lead students from school to a successful transition into work and community living.

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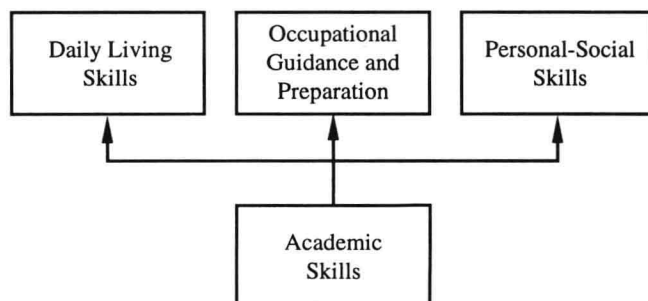
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2. The Life Centered Career Education Curriculum

The curriculum is based on the position that career education is more than just a part of the educational program—it should be a major focus of the program. The Life Centered Career Education Curriculum underscores this point with its emphasis on daily living, personal-social, and occupational skills, all supported by academic skills. This is not to imply that career education is the only education students should receive, but it should be a significant and pervasive part of what is taught. Career education is not simply another name for occupational education. Instead, it is education that focuses on facilitating growth and development for *all* life roles, settings, and events.

This broad life view of career education is readily apparent in the Life Centered Career Education Curriculum, which organizes 22 student competencies into three primary categories—daily living skills, personal-social skills, and occupational guidance and preparation. Instruction to develop academic competencies is seen as supportive to skills in these three categories. This is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

FIGURE 2-1
Curriculum Areas for the Life Centered Career
Education Curriculum Model



Based on previous research (Brolin & Thomas, 1971, 1972; Brolin, 1973; Bucher, 1985) and input from several other studies and professional opinions, 22 career education competencies were identified as priority areas. Each can be classified under one of the three primary curriculum areas and should constitute the basic objectives of programs at this level. A discussion of each curriculum area and its competencies is presented in the following section.

CURRICULUM AREAS AND COMPETENCIES

Daily Living Skills

Most students receiving special education services have the potential to become independent or semi-independent citizens. Most can become home managers or homemakers; they will marry and raise families. A large percentage will not make large salaries; thus, it is crucial that they learn how to manage a home, family, and finances as effectively as possible. The competencies contained in this curriculum area include the following:

1. *Managing Personal Finances.* It is particularly important for individuals to learn how to manage their money. This knowledge includes using and realizing the value of simple financial records, knowing how to obtain and use bank and credit facilities, and planning for wise expenditures. Computational skills in maintaining a checkbook and budget are also necessary.
2. *Selecting and Managing a Household.* Students must learn how to care properly for a home, its furnishings, and its equipment, particularly since such equipment is expensive to purchase and repair. Repair of appli-

ances, broken furniture, electrical plugs, plumbing, and so forth should be emphasized in the curriculum.

3. *Caring for Personal Needs.* Knowledge of grooming and hygiene methods, sexual matters, and physical fitness are examples of information an individual must have to take care of personal bodily needs. Lack of competency in these areas creates problems of acceptance and adjustment.
4. *Raising Children and Meeting Marriage Responsibilities.* Students will have to understand the components of effective family living: setting goals and making decisions, choosing lifestyles, managing available resources, expanding and controlling family size, providing for needs of children and adults, and ensuring the safety and health of all family members. (Also of importance is the understanding of childhood, adolescent, and adult sexual experiences.)
5. *Buying, Preparing, and Consuming Food.* A great majority of children in low-income families grow up with significant nutritional deficiencies. Instruction in planning proper meals; purchasing, caring for, and storing food; and preparing proper meals is extremely valuable. Learning how to work safely in the kitchen should be stressed, including the proper use and care of knives, stoves, and other equipment.
6. *Buying and Caring for Clothing.* Learning how to purchase appropriate clothing and how to clean, press, and repair clothing should be included in the student's instruction. Another area of importance is constructing garments and other textile projects, such as drapes, wall hangings, and weavings.
7. *Exhibiting Responsible Citizenship.* To become contributing members of the community, students must learn about the laws of the United States, what rights they have, how to register and vote, citizen responsibilities, state and local laws, customs, and other pertinent citizenship matters.
8. *Using Recreational Facilities and Engaging in Leisure Time.* Presently in the United States we are moving toward shorter work weeks while employment is becoming more difficult to obtain. Therefore, it is crucial that knowledge of possible leisure activities and resources be made available to all students. Such activities can also be valuable in building friendships, self-confidence, and other skills.
9. *Getting Around the Community (Mobility).* Students need to be able to use intercity and intracity travel resources. They should learn to drive a car, obey the traffic laws, and know the agencies that can aid in mobility needs. In this mobile society, it is paramount that an individual be able to get around efficiently for work, leisure, and civic pursuits.

Personal-Social Skills

Developing independence, self-confidence, and socially acceptable behaviors and maintaining personal friendships are critical skills for students to learn if they are to adjust satisfactorily in the community. Continuing the previous list, the primary competencies that should be learned in this curriculum area are:

10. *Achieving Self-Awareness.* Students must learn to understand, accept, and respect their uniqueness as individuals. They must gain an understanding of their abilities, values, aspirations, and interests and how they can be incorporated into a lifestyle that will be meaningful and fruitful. Learning who they are and what they can do with their lives is an important precursor to each of the subsequent competencies needed for societal assimilation.
11. *Acquiring Self-Confidence.* People from minority groups, including those with disabilities, are often the subject of ridicule and rejection. They are frequently made to feel different, incompetent, and unwanted, which causes them to have degrading feelings and attitudes about themselves. Students need to be in an environment that gives them positive reinforcement, motivation, and appropriate conditions for learning and behaving. Unless these feelings are overcome, and students can experience success related to community experiences, many students will fail at community living. This is a time of great change and personal confusion for youth, and they need to explore extensively their roles as individuals in this society.
12. *Achieving Socially Responsible Behavior.* There are many children in our schools who fail to understand modes of social etiquette and appropriate social behaviors. Understanding the characteristics of others, how to react in various situations, how to form and maintain social relationships, dating, and eating out, are examples of coping behaviors dealt with in this unit.
13. *Maintaining Good Interpersonal Skills.* Learning to get along with people is one of the greatest problems all of us face. In too many instances, research has demonstrated this to be a prime reason for loss of jobs, especially for workers with disabilities. Having an appropriate circle of friends with whom to associate during recreational and leisure time is another area of focus. Many people apparently lack knowledge of how to develop meaningful friendships.
14. *Achieving Independence.* Concentrated efforts to develop independence must be made; students must learn to do things by themselves. They must learn to accept responsibility for their own actions—for example, get-