

CHAPTERS OF OMICRON TAU THETA

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BETA—Colorado State University
CHI—University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland
GAMMA—Temple University
DELTA—Rutgers University
EPSILON—State University of New York
ETA—The Ohio State University
IOTA—Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
KAPPA—University of Wisconsin-Madison
LAMBDA—Southern Illinois University
MU—The University of Georgia
NU—California State University
XI—North Carolina State University
OMICRON—Pennsylvania State University
PHI—Oklahoma State University
PI—University of Houston
RHO—University of Minnesota
SIGMA—University of Nebraska
TAU—Kent State University
UPSILON—University of Jyväskylä, Finland
PHI—Oklahoma State University
CHI—University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland
PSI—University of Idaho
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The quality of any research journal is dependent on the services of a strong Editorial Board and that is certainly true for the *Journal of Career and Technical Education*. The Board has provided guidance to the manuscript review process and the publication of JCTE and the Editors rely on them to provide quality reviews of several manuscripts each year. We express our appreciation to each EB member for their contributions to JCTE.

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Prior to Volume 16, Number 2, the *Journal of Career and Technical Education* was published as the *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*. These issues can be found at the following case sensitive URL:

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It would not be possible to publish a refereed journal such as the *Journal of Career and Technical Education* without a distinguished group of reviewers. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following colleagues for giving their time and expertise in providing timely reviews of manuscripts.

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The *Journal of Career and Technical Education (JCTE)* is a non-profit, refereed, national publication of Omicron Tau Theta, the national, graduate honorary society of career and technical education. Manuscripts submitted for consideration by *JCTE* should focus on career and technical education philosophy, theory, or practice. Comprehensive reviews of literature and reports of research and methodology will be considered. All articles should relate to current issues and have direct implications for career and technical educators. It is intended that *JCTE* serve as a forum for discussion of philosophy, theory, practice, and issues in career and technical education. Manuscripts submitted for review should not have been published or be under current consideration for publication by other journals.

Publication Style

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 5th Edition (2001), is the standard of style for *JCTE*. Place figures and tables in the appropriate place in the manuscript. Underlining should not be used anywhere in the manuscript. Statistics and titles in the reference list should be italicized according to APA 5th Edition Style. Manuscripts not adhering to the style manual will be returned to the authors without review.

Figures and Tables

Tables and figures should provide only information essential to understanding the article. Authors should **avoid reporting the same information in both text and tables**. In the preparation of tables and figures, authors should use APA guidelines for format and include the tables and figures in text where they should appear. Tables and figures are to be prepared as a part of the word processing file. Tables **must** be developed in columns **using the table-formatting feature in the word processor** so that they will translate to HTML. Each item in a table should be placed in an individual cell. Do not use tabs to format tables because they will not translate properly. Tables and figures will not be published on oversized or foldout sheets.

Submitting Manuscripts

Manuscripts accepted for publication normally may not exceed 20 pages of printed, double spaced text, including title page, abstract page, tables, figures, and references. Margins should be 1" all around and use Times New Roman 12-point for all text, tables, and figures. **Use the line numbering feature of the word processor to number each line of the manuscript.**

Electronic submissions are preferred, although mailed copies will be accepted. Submit the following:

1. a separate **title page** with the manuscript title, author(s), institution(s), complete address(es), telephone number(s), and the author(s)' e-mail address(es); and

2. one double-spaced copy of the manuscript with the abstract placed immediately after the manuscript title and the lines numbered; author(s) must ensure that all references to the author(s) and their institutions are removed from the manuscript according to APA guidelines to facilitate the double-blind peer review process; the abstract should succinctly describe the manuscript's contents and cannot exceed 960 characters and spaces (150 words).

The manuscript and title page can be submitted via e-mail to jbartii@aol.com, or it can be mailed on a 3.5" diskette or CD to Dr. James Bartlett at the address on page 2. Diskettes become the property of *JCTE* and will not be returned. The electronic files must be in Microsoft Word format. The use of Rich Text Format (rtf) is acceptable.

Review and Publication

JCTE is published twice a year, spring (about June 1st for the hard copy) and fall (about December 1st for the hard copy). All accepted articles will be published in both traditional hard copy and in the electronic journal, which is currently available at the following case sensitive URL:

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The review process for the *Journal of Career and Technical Education* normally requires six weeks to three months. The Editor will notify you as each stage in the review process is completed. The decision of the reviewers will be one of the following:

1. **Accept** (publish as submitted, very minor editorial revisions may be needed-this is very rare for initial submissions);
2. **Accept Conditionally**, with minor revisions (revisions are reviewed by editor, not resubmitted to review panel);
3. **Accept Conditionally with Major Revisions** (revised manuscript will be sent back to the same reviewers for reconsideration);
4. **Reject but Invite Major Revision and Resubmission** (fundamental changes are needed, and the revised manuscript will go back to the same reviewers for reconsideration-this is a very common decision on the initial review and should not be considered as a final rejection); or
5. **Reject** the manuscript for *JCTE* (the manuscript will not be considered again).

The manuscript review process for *JCTE* is a "double-blind" peer review in that the reviewers are not informed of the identity of the author(s) and the author(s) are not informed of the identities of the reviewers. The reviewers of the manuscript are recognized scholars with appropriate professional and educational preparation and are selected for their specific expertise relative to the topic of the manuscript being reviewed. At least one of four reviewers on each manuscript must be a member of the

JCTE Editorial Board. The final acceptance rate for *JCTE* is usually 35-45%. Authors who persevere through requested revisions are generally the authors whose manuscripts are eventually published in selective, refereed journals such as *JCTE*.

Book Reviews/Thematic Issues

Book reviews will also be considered for publication in the *JCTE*. Persons interested in publication of a book review should contact the Editor-Elect (see inside front cover, page 2). A thematic issue of the *JCTE* may be published at least once every two years. Themes for upcoming issues will be announced in both the hard copy and electronic journal.

DOES SCHOOL -TO-WORK MATTER? TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

Although the success of School reforms such as the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) hinges on classroom teachers' implementation of career-related activities, few quantitative studies have examined teachers' implementation practices in STW programs. In this study, classroom teachers involved in a STW partnership in a Southwestern Pennsylvania school district were surveyed to determine the extent that they integrated school-based and work-based activities into their curriculum. The attitudes of teachers in the district were also examined in terms of their perceptions of the value of school-to-work and the benefits of the STW program for students. Analysis of the data indicated that teachers had favorable attitudes toward STW and the reform goals of the STW initiative. However, teachers' implementation of career-related activities on average was low. Teachers were more likely to implement school-based activities than work-based activities. Significant differences were found among the STW implementation practices of teachers of various grade levels.

INTRODUCTION

Many school districts are finding alternative funding from businesses and other educational sources to continue programs seeded by the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) (STWOA, 1994). The STWOA was initiated by the federal government to expand students' experience with vocational education and to produce high school graduates capable of transitioning smoothly into the workforce. Traditionally, career

training was left to vocational or technical teachers. Under the STWOA, responsibility for teaching career-related activities was broadened to include classroom teachers of all academic subject areas. The purpose of the STWOA reform was to infuse the entire curriculum with career-related activities, rather than offer vocational education as a separate component of the school program (Eisenman, Hill, Bailey, & Dickison, 2003). STWOA was intended to be a vehicle for changing the nature of schooling rather than serving as an add-on program. But questions remain as to what extent has change been effected in schools receiving School-to-Work (STW) monies, and what lessons can be learned from the implementation of STWOA that could inform future STW programs.

This study surveyed classroom teachers involved in a STW partnership in a Southwestern Pennsylvania school district to determine the extent that they integrated career-related activities into their curriculum. In 1997, the Indiana County School District created a STW Partnership with the support of federal funds from the STWOA. Consistent with the guidelines of the STWOA, the District instituted a program which included school-based, work-based and connecting activities. Teachers of all academic subjects were given the responsibility of including career-related activities as part of their regular curriculum. Activities connecting school-based and work-based activities were also designed into the STW Program.

School-to-Work Program Components

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act was passed in 1994 to provide seed money to help schools implement curriculum changes that link schooling to career opportunities. There are three components of a STW program described in STWOA: school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities (STWOA, 1994). The career-related activities in these three components of STW are an outgrowth of workplace foundational skills and competencies recommended by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills in their report, *What Work Requires of Schools* (SCANS, 1991), and legislation such as the Amendments to the Carl A. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1984. The school-based learning component of the STWOA involved integration of academic and vocational learning. School-based activities were to be integrated into the curriculum of all subject areas while maintaining the same academic standards necessary to prepare students for postsecondary education. Work-based activities included planned job training and work experiences coordinated with school-based learning, including workplace mentoring, job shadowing, and general workplace competency instruction. The connecting activities component involved activities such as matching students with work opportunities, providing school site mentors, and providing technical assistance to employers.

Previous Research on Implementation of School-to-Work Activities

There are a limited number of studies evaluating implementation of career-related activities in STW programs published in the literature to date. From the review of these studies, it appears that different school-to-work program components are implemented to varying degrees. Hughes, Bailey, & Mechur (2001) reported that few students participate

in all aspects of STW, particularly in applied academics, work-based learning, and career development. School-based activities were implemented more often than work-based activities. School and work-based activities were implemented more often than connecting activities that link schools and work. In addition, schools or districts varied in terms of the range of types of STW activities offered to students (Stull, Sanders, & Stull, 2000).

According to the majority of studies in the STW literature, most teachers supported the goals of the STW program and responded favorably to the idea that school curricula should incorporate work-place skills (American Youth Policy Forum, 1995; Balczyk & Bialek, 1999; Vandergrift & Wright, 1999). Studies in the vocational literature have reported mixed results. Research indicates that some educators do not support the notion of an integrated vocational program because they believe such a curriculum might limit the opportunities for vocational teachers (Stasz, Ramsey, Eden, DaVanzo, Farris & Lewis, 1992) or because it could divert students from pursuing college (Little & Threatt, 1992). Other studies from the vocational literature examining the perceptions and practices of teachers indicated that while teachers believed that integrating academic and vocational education was beneficial, there was little consensus on how much emphasis was placed on integrated instruction. For example, Arnold & Schell (1999) found that educators agreed that an integrated instruction prepares students for work and has an advantage of putting education in a real world context. However, vocational teachers and teachers of academic subject areas disagreed about the amount of integration that was occurring. Vocational teachers believed it was occurring less than academic subject area teachers.

Previous research is limited in the following ways. First, few studies have examined the extent that teachers in school-to-work partnerships implemented career-related activities, despite the reality that the success of school reforms such as those initiated by the STWOA hinges on teachers' implementation of career-related activities in the classroom (Fitzgerald & Bass, 1997). Many STW studies have studied STW success by collecting data from school personnel, such as administrators or STW on-site coordinators. In such studies, a single school official such as an administrator or a STW on-site coordinator provided information about STW activities implemented in an entire school or district. It could be argued that this type of evaluation does not adequately assess the degree that STW activities are being implemented in individual classrooms. There is evidence that these types of studies could overestimate (Vannatta, Almonte, Borrowman, Lamb, McCleary & Oliver, 1998) or underestimate (Medrich, Merola, Ramer & White, 2000) teachers' actual implementation practices.

Second, with the exception of STW evaluation studies such as those conducted by the Mathematica Policy Research Institute, Inc. (e.g., Medrich et al., 2000; Stull et al., 2000; Vannatta et al., 1998), a large proportion of the research on STW has been qualitative and anecdotal in nature. For example, some studies interview a small number of students in a school district to discuss career-related activities experienced as a result of the school STW program (Hollenbeck, 1996; Olson, 1997). In these mostly qualitative studies, students discussed their career interests and testified how the program offered at their

school improved their career skills and their attitude toward schooling. This research provides valuable insight into the accomplishments of students participating in STW programs. However, because these studies utilize data from a small number of students, they have limited external generalizability.

Third, many of the evaluation studies conducted by school districts are in the form of unpublished reports. As a requirement of the STWOA, school districts using STW funds put in place evaluation programs that would provide information about the success of their program and provide direction for future improvements. Such evaluation reports have the potential to provide useful information to inform policy makers and stakeholders about how to continue and improve school-to-work programs. However, few of these reports have been published in academic journals or have been widely disseminated (Neumark & Allen, 2003).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To address these limitations, this study used quantitative methods to measure the perceptions and practices of regular classroom teachers to determine the extent that they integrated career-related activities into their teaching. A district-wide teacher survey was conducted to examine teachers' classroom practices of integrating school-based and work-based activities. The attitudes of teachers in the district were examined in terms of their perceptions of the value of school-to-work. The purpose of the study was to (a) determine teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward the goals of the STW program, (b) determine the degree that teachers implemented school-based and work-based activities into their instruction, and (c) to determine if teachers' perceptions and practices of STW differ by grades taught.

The present study was conducted as part of an evaluation system created by the Indiana County Partnership in collaboration with Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The STWOA required each funded School-to-Work Partnership to create an evaluation system but gave flexibility to each Partnership to design its own evaluation, based on program needs and characteristics. The evaluation system designed for the Indiana County School District included a survey of teachers in the District. Teachers of traditional academic subjects as well as vocational teachers were surveyed to examine the degree they implemented career-related activities recommended in the STWOA and the degree that teachers supported goals and valued the importance of the STW initiative.

METHODOLOGY

Participants in the Study

This study utilized data collected from a teacher survey in a public school district in southwestern Pennsylvania where a STW Partnership had been established through funds from the STWOA. All middle school and high school teachers were invited to participate, including teachers of all subject areas. The teacher survey was distributed in the Fall of 1999 to 698 teachers. The number of teachers completing and

returning questionnaires was 367, for a return rate of 53%. Individual characteristics for teachers participating in the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Characteristics of Teachers Participating in the Study*

Characteristic	Category	n(%)
Gender:	Female	178 (57)
	Male	133 (43)
Years Teaching Experience:	Less than 5 years	41(13)
	5 – 10 years	68(22)
	11 – 20 years	80(25)
	More than 20 years	125(40)

Instrumentation

The design of the teacher survey instrument was guided by an advisory group comprised of 19 individuals from the school district and local community who were stakeholders in the STW partnership. The group included one representative from the Chamber of Commerce, the director of the local technology center, four business leaders from the community, two school district superintendents, one counselor, three teachers, 2 parents, 2 students from the district, and three STW staff members. The role of the advisory group was to focus the study’s goals and objectives, assist in the development of the survey instrument, and to establish the content validity of the instrument.

In collaboration with the advisory group, a self-report teacher questionnaire was developed to measure the extent that teachers valued STW and implemented the goals of the STWOA in their teaching. The construction of the instrument occurred in several stages. First, the advisory committee determined key factors that would be assessed in the survey, and an item pool was made to assess these factors. Items constructed for the teacher questionnaire measured (a) teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward STW and (b) teachers’ practices of integrating school-based and work-based activities into the curriculum. The survey also obtained teachers’ demographic and background information such as gender, subject and grade level being taught, and years of teaching experience. Second, the survey was pilot tested and final items were selected and approved by the advisory committee.

The items on the survey measured teachers’ attitudes toward the School-to-Work program and teachers’ practices of integrating school-based and work-based activities into the curriculum. The first section of the teacher questionnaire included 5 items related to teachers’ beliefs about the importance of school-to-work goals and the schools’ role in preparing students for the workforce. For example, teachers were asked to indicate their agreement with statements such as “Schools should integrate School-to-Work goals into the larger picture of high school education,” and “Schools should play a key role in helping our nation remain competitive in global workforce preparation.” The

