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# A Study of the Curriculum Content for the Clothing Occupations Program at Northampton High School

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A STUDY OF THE CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR THE  
CLOTHING OCCUPATIONS PROGRAM

At  
NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

---

A Research Paper  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Graduate School  
Old Dominion University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Education

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by  
Jacquelyn W. Martin  
Spring, 1982

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher wishes to acknowledge the love, help and understanding given to her by her husband, children and parents during the compilation of this paper. Appreciation is also given to the typist for all her help.

APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Jacquelyn W. Martin under the direction of Dr. Mildred A. Mason in Vocational and Technical Education 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The clothing or textile industry has become one of the most important and largest industries in the nation. It employs over 1.3 million workers and cloths 2.4 million people. In addition, industrial workers alone received more than \$7.6 billion in salaries in 1973. (1) It is widely distributed geographically so that the impact on employment is felt nationwide.

This type of industry was not abundant in Northampton, Virginia. The Eastern Shore has maintained its rural, sparsely populated status which did not employ a great number of people. The majority of the working class was employed by industry other than the clothing industries. There were only two shirt factories that could employ anyone displaying an aptitude in this discipline. Students who were interested in pursuing a career in the apparel industry were urged to enter the clothing program offered at the high school. Upon graduation, the students were felt to have been qualified to pursue a job in this area. As high school graduates in the clothing field, they could either obtain a job at one of the shirt factories or become a seamstress for the community.

Yearly, a survey was taken of those students who completed the program. A copy of this survey can be found



in appendix A of this research paper. From these surveys it was evident that the students who graduated from the program, did not continue to work in this field. Students who completed the program either pursued jobs in other fields or no job at all. It was for this reason a survey was done to determine the validity of the present clothing occupation curriculum at Northampton High School. The researcher wished also to determine the causes for non-employment of graduates.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of the study was to validate the curriculum content for the clothing occupation program at Northampton High School. With this validation from both present employers and past program graduates, the instructor could determine if the clothing occupation curriculum was in need of revision.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The data obtained from this study provided answers to the following questions:

(1) Does the clothing occupation curriculum at Northampton High School provide knowledge and skills for entry level jobs?

(2) Is the availability of jobs in the clothing occupation field abundant on the Eastern Shore?

(3) Does the clothing occupation curriculum at Northampton High School provide the necessary training in proper attitudes and work habits for successful em-

ployment?

#### BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Many studies have been done to determine the relevancy of clothing programs. Studies have indicated that the educators of clothing occupation programs should have as their goal to aid students in the preparation for living. Their goal should also be to assess the needs of the community. Educators should have as their goal to provide programs that will allow students to develop entry level skills in order to enter the world of work.

Clothing occupations was offered in order to prepare the student for the world of work. Upon completion of the program, the student would possess the necessary skills for employment in the clothing field. The clothing program was designed to prepare the student to work under pressure and be able to complete a simple garment within a limited amount of time. The student must be able to take constructive criticism regarding the construction of the garment, must strive toward perfection on each garment made, and have a willingness to work and learn.

Although there were not many clothing employment opportunities in this area, the instructor felt the students possessed the skills necessary for initial employment. However, it was felt that there were underlying factors why the students were not applying these skills or why they were not being hired. The enrollment in the

program has steadily decreased. Therefore, a study was done to find the reasons why this was occurring.

The clothing occupation curriculum has been offered at Northampton High School since 1972. During this time approximately 100 students have enrolled and graduated in this program; however, the students who obtained jobs in the clothing area were prospectively low. For a number of years the employment in this area in Northampton County has decreased. Therefore, a survey was done to determine the cause or causes for non-employment.

#### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were applied to the study:

- (1) That the survey served the purpose that it was intended.
- (2) That the parties surveyed answered the questions to the best of their knowledge.
- (3) That other factors other than technical skills led to non-employment by students.

#### LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The major obstacle in securing the necessary data was created by the number of clothing industries of Northampton County. Therefore only clothing manufactureries were surveyed. Also, the rural geography of this area contributed to the inadequate response to the survey which resulted in direct, personal data gathering which in itself lessen the time needed to devote to the problem.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Competency - is an attitude, behavior, knowledge, or skill which a person possesses.
2. Job - the duties and tasks to be performed by a specific individual.
3. Occupational Education - an organized sequence of learning experience consisting of vocational theory, practice, and skill for students on a regular or systematic basis.
4. Curriculum - a set of objectives, content, and instructional materials for use by the learner, structured according to an efficient learner sequence.
5. Vocational Education - training or retraining which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control or under contract with a state board or local education agency. And is conducted as part of a program designed to prepare individuals for gainful employment as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals in recognized occupations.
6. Clothing Occupations - Occupations that involves any area of clothing skills or techniques.
7. Career - A profession for which one trains.
8. Occupation - A vocation: the principle business of one's life.

## SUMMARY

Chapter I introduced the garment industry and its influence in the nation. Students enrolled in the clothing program were expected to continue working in this field after completion. Based on a survey of graduates who completed the Occupational Clothing program at Northampton High and a needs assessment survey of the possible employers of these graduates — it was determined that an investigation of the possible correlation between the clothing industry and the curriculum was needed.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter II has been divided into four subparts in an attempt to provide the reader with a background for curriculum development in clothing occupations. Sub parts included (1) Research into Clothing Occupations (2) Curriculum Development (3) Competency Based Education and (4) Summary.

Studies have been made to try to determine guidelines for prospective employers or trainees. An example of this type of study is that of LouAnn Pew (2) The purpose of this project was to develop guidelines for planning, conducting, managing and evaluating a program for teaching the skills and competencies required for employment in the clothing and textile industry. Through individualized study packets and a community survey, the students acquired information about job opportunities in the clothing field. Certain basic skills were developed by the students in the course of the program, and positive work attitudes and habits were fostered. The program consisted of three phases. In the phase, self-contained learning packets instructed the student in very basic skills and permitted extensive skill attainment, providing them with spe-

cialized interests and an opportunity to concentrate in one area. A stimulated laboratory was operated in the second phase with all students participating in the various roles needed for occupational garment making services. The third phase provided on the job training in local businesses for 12th grade students with the adequate skills and competencies.

Debbie Truitt and Ellen Holmes (3) created a curriculum guide for those who desired to make a full or part-time career of custom sewing services designed with domestic machine in mind for the independent worker or small business. This curriculum was intended for grades 11-12, and consumer and homemaking students with two years of previous vocational home economics or students enrolled in occupational clothing production and management classes. Their guide contained six instructional units. These units were: Body Measurements, Altering Flat Patterns, Construction Techniques, Home Products, Alteration of Ready Made Clothing and Business Principles in Custom Sewing.

Still another survey in the development of standards for textiles and clothing programs was executed by Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (4). It was found through this survey that sixteen competencies were common to three areas. These areas were apparel services, fashion design, and window treatment. Fifty educators in fashion merchandising and fifty four edu-

cators in other textile and clothing areas responded to the survey.

Finally, McLarty (5) summarized Vocational Education Occupational Clothing courses by stating "the ultimate goal of our educators is to aid students in the preparation for living which includes earning a living." It is the goal of vocational educational education to assist in the assessment of individual and community needs in order to develop a viable program. Clothing Occupations is one such program that will allow students to develop entry level skills in order to enter the world of work. The curriculum of such a program should foster the competencies needed to be successfully employed.

#### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Gould Dictionary of Education defines curricula as an organizational pattern of a course run. To further explain this concept, J. A. Jahoness theory (6) in curriculum design included the following components: Separate subject curriculum, which is taught in isolation, (b) core curriculum, which is an organizational pattern that relate content areas, (c) broad field curriculum, which puts together subjects that are closely related, and the (d) epoch curriculum, which is a chronological sequential way of providing information. The activities curriculum is an experimental plan.

Another type of curriculum is the Systems approach (6) This approach was more applicable to vocational oc-

cupational education. The Systems approach of curriculum design includes the following areas which have no apparent order: out of school forces, in school forces, instructional strategies, equipment supplies and materials, space, funds, events, communications, network and evaluation.

In school forces are professionals such as, administration, supervising, specialist and instructional. In school forces carry out the curriculum through assisting in fulfilling the objective of the school. The Occupational Clothing program strives to incorporate all professional staff in the school in order to equip the students with the best education necessary.

Out of school forces determines curriculum objectives, funding and society. The involvement of the community is the major reason why the System approach was chosen. The vocational program in clothing occupations is closely related to the community and its needs.

The allocation of time to the program, availability of funds and architectural design are major factors to the System approach. Funds are allocated according to the needs of program and the community. The process of allocation begins with the assessment of the needs of the student as it related to the world of work.

#### COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION

In recent years accountability has become a major factor in education. Accountability in vocational edu-



cation means the student will have the necessary training to be employable in the area which the training is being given.

The outgrowth of competency based education and accountability stems from the taxpayer wanting to see the justification of the tax dollar. The state of Virginia has mandated that by 1984, all schools in Virginia will have implemented competency based education.

The main principle of competency based education was to insure that the students sets his/her own career goal and have an open entrance and exit to the program. Competencies for vocational education were "those tasks, skills, attitudes, values and appreciations that are deemed critical to successful employment" (7)

These competencies are used for systematic development of curriculum. There are several methods used in competency identification. These include job analysis, task inventories, interviewing procedures, or through a combination of all which have been extensively written (8).

#### SUMMARY

Curriculum development is complex and changes with the need of the student and society. It involves the input of student and teacher. The development of a curriculum that would insure that graduates gain the necessary competencies was necessary in order to make them skillful in their field. The major goal of voca-

tional instruction is to equip the student with the necessary skills for employment in the occupation of their choice. Curriculum development is an extremely complex process involving many decision making situations (9).

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of this study was to validate the curriculum content for the clothing occupation program at Northampton High School. It was necessary to conduct a survey. In this chapter the procedures for the study were discussed. These included the population, procedures, and the administration of the instrument.

#### POPULATION

The population of the study consisted of 10 graduates of Northampton High School from the Clothing Occupation program for the years 1980-81. The employers used in the study were 2 owners of dry cleaner establishments and the personnel directors for the Harriet Shirt Factory and the Parksley Shirt Factory.

#### PROCEDURES

A questionnaire was developed consisting of 10 questions and sent to former students of the clothing occupation program. A copy of this survey is found in Appendix C. A survey was also sent to the prospective employers. This may be found in Appendix D.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire and cover letter were sent to 10 graduates. The researcher also included a self addressed

envelope for the responses. A questionnaire was also sent to the prospective employers. After receiving the responses, the researcher proceeded to compile the information. The data was analyzed in the following chapter. The results were presented with tables and discussion. The tables indicated the number completing the clothing occupation program, the occupational status of graduates, answers to direct questions to the graduates, and answers to direct questions by the employers.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter the methods and procedures for the research study were discussed. The population consisted of 10 graduates for the years 1980-81. A survey was sent to graduates of the clothing occupation program. A survey was also sent to prospective employers. The information received from these surveys were analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV  
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The problem of this study was to validate the curriculum content for the clothing occupation program at Northampton High School. In this chapter the researcher presented data gathered from the clothing occupation graduates. The data was presented with tables giving a breakdown of the number of students completing the clothing occupation program, the clothing occupational status of the graduates, answers to direct questions by graduates, and answers to direct questions by prospective employers.

A questionnaire was sent to 10 graduates of the clothing occupation program of Northampton High School for the years 1980-81. All responded to the survey. This information is further illustrated in Table I.

EXPLANATION OF TABLES

Table I illustrates the number of graduates completing the clothing occupation program during the years 1980 and 1981. In 1980 there were 10 students who completed the clothing occupation program. In 1981 there were 9 students who completed the clothing occupation program. This is an example of the decrease of graduates in the clothing occupation program.

Table I  
Number Completing Clothing Occupation Program

Year Graduated	Number Completing Program
1980	10
1981	9
Total 19	

Table II reveals the total number of students who were employed in 1980-81. There were no students employed in the clothing field; however, 11 of the 19 were employed in other areas.

Table II  
Occupational Status of Respondents

Year Graduated	Working in Clothing Field	Working in Other Areas
1980	0	6
1981	0	5
Total 11		

In Table III it can be seen that the majority of the students felt they had received necessary skills for job entry employment. Eight graduates agreed that they had the necessary skills, one had no opinion and one disagreed. Eight graduates disagreed when asked if they felt that the clothing merchants and industries in Northampton County did not hire because the graduates of the clothing program were not fully prepared.

Table III

Answers to direct questions by graduates

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
I feel that I had the necessary skills in clothing to obtain a job		8	1	1
I feel that the clothing merchants and industries in the Northampton area do not hire clothing occupation graduates because we were not fully prepared		1	1	1

In Table IV it can be seen that the majority of the clothing employers felt that more training was needed in skills and attitudes in the clothing occupation program at Northampton High School. One agreed that the clothing occupation graduates displayed better general work habits and attitudes than graduates from other programs. Three disagreed, three prospective employers agreed that the clothing occupation program should teach more job attitudes and personal relations skills. Four prospective employers agreed that the clothing occupation program should teach more specific job skills and knowledge.

Table IV  
Answers to Direct Questions by  
Prospective Employers

Question	Strongly		No	
	Agree	Agree	Opinion	Disagree
The clothing Occupation graduates display better work habits and attitudes than graduates from other programs		1		3
The clothing occupation program should teach more job attitudes and personal relations skills		3		1
The clothing occupation program should teach more specific job skills and knowledge	0	4	0	0



## COMMENTS BY GRADUATES

"I left the Eastern Shore because there were not enough jobs in the clothing field."

"I couldn't take the pressure of working so fast."

## COMMENTS BY PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

"I hire experienced workers first."

"Usually the students needed more training."

## SUMMARY

Table I gave the number of students who completed the clothing occupation program for the years 1980-81. There were a total of nineteen. Table II revealed the number of students who were working in the clothing field and the number of students who were working in other areas. The total of Table II was eleven. Table III gave the number of students who felt that they had received the necessary skills for employment. The majority of the students surveyed felt that they had. Table IV indicated the number of prospective employers who felt that more training was needed in skills and attitudes in the clothing program at Northampton High School. The majority of the prospective employers felt that more training in this area was needed.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to validate the curriculum content for the clothing occupation program at Northampton High School. The study was done with the following questions in mind.

1. Does the clothing occupation curriculum at Northampton High School provide knowledge and skills for entry level jobs?

2. Is the availability of jobs in clothing occupation field abundant on the Eastern Shore?

3. Does the clothing occupation curriculum at Northampton High School provide the necessary training in proper attitudes and work habits for successful employment?

The validation of the curriculum would insure that the graduates possessed the necessary competencies to make them skillful in their field and become capable for initial employment.

The major goal of vocation instruction was to equip the student with the necessary skills for employment in the occupation of their choice. However, the employment of graduates in clothing occupations of Northampton High

School was drastically low. For these reasons a survey was taken to try to determine the cause of low employment. This survey was taken of 10 graduates of the clothing occupation program and prospective employers of these graduates.

#### CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The curriculum in clothing occupation at Northampton High needed to be revised.
2. Jobs in the clothing occupation field were not abundant on the Eastern Shore.
3. The curriculum needed to be revised to include more training in proper attitudes and work habits.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings of the study the researcher submits the following recommendations:

1. A clothing occupation conceptual outline for course. This outline can be found on the following page.
2. A second recommendation could be to consider replacing this program with the following options where employment opportunities may exist.
  - A. Child Care Program
  - B. Health Occupations Program

CLOTHING OCCUPATION  
CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE FOR COURSE

- I. Introduction: Clothing Occupations
  - A. Job and career opportunities available in clothing management
  - B. Professional competencies required
  - C. Personal qualifications needed
    - 1. Skills
    - 2. Capabilities
    - 3. Attitudes
    - 4. Behavior
    - 5. Appearance on the job
  - D. Procedures for applying for a job
- II. Clothing Construction Equipment
  - A. Selection, use, and care of specialized equipment
  - B. Selection, use, and care of sewing machines
- III. Pattern Selection
  - A. Commercial pattern types
  - B. Commercial pattern alterations
- IV. Factors influencing choice of fabric finish
  - A. Fiber Content
  - B. Finished Preparations
  - C. Intended use of fabric
- V. Development of Skills in Clothing Construction
  - A. Review of Pattern guide
  - B. Preparation of fabric
  - C. Pattern lay-out and cutting for special fabrics

## Conceptual Outline for Course (continued)

## VI. Tailoring Principles

- A. Types of Tailoring
- B. Tailoring equipment
- C. Cutting
- D. Construction processes
- E. Fitting
- F. Pressing
- G. Lining, interlining and interfacing

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APPENDIX A

## NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL CENTER

## Survey Compliation

## 1. Occupational home economics program totals:

FOOD				CLOTHING		
Year	Enrolled	Response	Surveyor	Enrolled	Response	Surveyor
1976	6	2	Worsley			
1978	9	5	Rhodes			
1979	10	5	Robbins	12	5	Rhodes
1980	6	4	Robbins	8	2	Rothermal
	31	16		20	7	

TOTAL: 51 on roll during years surveyed.

23 responses

1 refused to answer questions.

2. None are currently employed in the field in which they were trained.

3. Unemployed: 7

School: Norfolk State (Special Ed.)

Virginia State (Special Ed.)

Computer School, Norfolk

Delaware State (Clothing & Textile Major)

Employment: (This list represents places worked after graduation, including present jobs.)

Machipongo School Office - 1    America House - 1 (office)

Kane Miller - 4                      Woodward & Lothrop - 1

Perdue - 4                              (Washington)

American Original - 2

Seasonal farm work - 1    Avon - 1



NAM Hospital - 2 (1-CETA)      Exmore-Willis Wharf School - 1  
(aide)

3 take in sewing for family and friends, but not as a full time job.

1 looked for employment in Norfolk, New York, Richmond and even Texas, but decided to take her chances at home on the shore.

4. All persons interviewed tried to find employment on the shore.
5. 5 found jobs immediately (1 month or under).

2 are still without jobs.

4 returned to school.

All the rest have found employment, either full or part time.

3 have started families.

APPENDIX B

# Northampton High School

Eastville, Virginia 23347

25

Phone

(804) 678-5144, 5401

Vocational Wing 678-5906

Dear

I am currently enrolled in the program leading to the degree of Masters of Science in Education at Old Dominion University. Since I am the clothing occupation instructor at Northampton High School, I would like to determine the relevancy of the clothing occupation curriculum. I have been given permission by the Northampton County Instructional Staff to do a survey of some of the graduates of the clothing occupation program. A second survey will be sent to prospective employers.

I would appreciate your cooperation in answering this survey and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn W. Martin

Student Cover Letter

APPENDIX C

## Clothing Occupational Graduates Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer the following statement using the following rating scale. (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) no opinion (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am a graduate of the Clothing Occupational Program at Northampton High School					
2. I applied for various clothing jobs in Northampton County.					
3. I feel that I had the skills necessary in clothing to obtain a job.					
4. The Clothing Occupational program of Northampton High School should teach more job attitudes and personal relations skills.					
5. I feel that the Clothing merchants and industries in Northampton area do not hire Clothing Occupation graduates because we are not fully prepared.					
6. When I entered the clothing program, I had intentions of pursuing a career in the clothing field.  (answer if you were not hired)					
7. I feel that the reason why I was not hired was because of lack of experience.  (answer if you were not hired)					
8. I did not continue my employment in clothing industry because of pressure.					
9. I am working in the clothing industry.					

Please list any specific job skills that you feel should be included or stressed in the Clothing Occupational Program at Northampton High School.

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APPENDIX D

# Northampton High School

Eastville, Virginia 23347

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Phone

(804) 678-5144, 5401

Vocational Wing 678-5906

Dear

I am currently enrolled in the program leading to the degree of Masters of Science in Education at Old Dominion University. Since I am the clothing Occupation instructor at Northampton High School, I would like to determine the relevancy of the clothing occupation curriculum. I have been given permission by the Northampton Instructional Staff to do a survey. A survey will also be sent to some of the graduates of the clothing occupation program.

I would appreciate your cooperation in answering this survey and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn W. Martin

Employer Cover Letter



APPENDIX E

## Employer Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer the following statements using the following rating scale. (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) no opinion (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I would rather hire a graduate of the Clothing Occupational Program of Northampton High School than from a general or academic school program					
2. The Occupational Clothing graduates are more adequately trained for specific job competencies than those from other secondary programs					
3. The Occupational Clothing graduates display better general work habits and attitudes than graduates from other programs.					
4. The Occupational Clothing graduates advance more quickly than graduates from other high school programs.					
5. The Occupational Clothing graduates possess the ability to work with minimum supervision better than the graduates of other programs.					
6. The Clothing programs at Northampton High School are meeting the community's employment needs.					
7. The Clothing program should teach more specific job skills and knowledge.					
8. The Clothing Occupational program should teach more job attitudes and personal relations skills.					

	1	2	3	4	5
9. The Clothing Occupational program graduates when hired still have to be trained for specific jobs.					
10. I feel that the Clothing Occupational program at Northampton High is not fully preparing the graduate for the world of work.					

Please list any specific job skills that you feel should be included or stressed in the Clothing Occupational program at Northampton High School.

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