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Health Occupations Education Teacher Educators: Who are They?

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Abstract: While little is known about vocational education teachers, less is known about vocational teacher educators, and even less than that is known about health occupations teacher educators. In order to establish baseline information, a national survey was conducted to identify demographic and professional information about health occupations teachers educators. Findings of the study are compared to the available information about vocational teacher educators. Specific conclusions focus upon professional characteristics, while recommendations specify professional

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development considerations such as the need for the nurturing of current and future health occupations teacher educators.

Calls for the reform of education have become progressively more frequent and vocal in recent years. Many recommendations for change (such as those discussed in the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Commissions reports) could impact vocational education. Vocational educators are understandably concerned about potential reform activities because successful changes are based on knowledge and understanding. How can reform be effectual and meaningful when little is known about vocational educators? Some of the suggested changes have implications for health occupations education (HOE) teacher" educators.

Lynch conducted a literature search in 1989 and found that little was known about vocational education teachers and even less was known about vocational teacher educators. Lynch then conducted a national study of preservice vocational teacher education to establish baseline data about where, when, how, to whom, and by whom preservice vocational teacher education was provided. Over 600 teacher educators responded to the questionnaire which focused on program and institutional characteristics and requirements. The study also gathered some data about the demographic and professional characteristics of vocational teacher educators, though no specific disciplines within vocational education were studied.

Should reform in educational practices and policies in health occupations be advisable, teacher education decisions should be guided by appropriate information. This study was designed to provide data and findings to inform and to guide decision makers. This study focused on HOE teacher educators and investigated demographic and professional

characteristics, educational program characteristics, programmatic and institutional responsibilities, service involvements, research productivity, and teaching loads. The data also could be used as a basis from which to conduct further studies of teaching and teacher education in HOE and vocational education.

Conceptual Framework

Numerous reports have criticized the American educational system by citing poor academic performance by students and the lack of quality in the Curricula. In the late 1980s, reports from the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Forum of Education and the Economy shifted the focus for the perceived failure of school systems to teacher education.

Research on teacher education is limited (Ashburn, 1988; Larder & Little, 1986; Lynch, 1989; Troyer, 1986). Lanier and Little (1986) stated, " . . . research on teaching teachers stands in stark contrast to the amount of research on teaching . . . " (p. 6). Lynch (1989) conducted a search for information on teacher training programs in vocational education and found data "to be practically nonexistent" (p. 3).

Lynch (1989) surveyed the policies and practices of preservice vocational teacher education programs in colleges and universities. Two questionnaires were used. One instrument elicited administrative responses, and the other instrument elicited faculty responses. A total of 633 vocational teacher educators responded from 78 colleges and universities. All traditional disciplines within vocational education were represented in the major area of study except HOE.

Lynch (1989) reported that the vocational teacher education professorate had an average age of 49 years, with more males (71%) represented than females (29%). The

faculty was predominantly Caucasian (91 %) and included a small number of African-Americans (6%) and other minorities (3.5 %). In identifying their faculty status, 38% indicated that they were professors, 30% were associate professors, 3 % were assistant professors, and 9% were instructors or lecturers. More than two-thirds (68 %) were tenured, and 18% were nontenured but on a tenure line. Nearly all (98%) were employed full-time. Of those teacher educators with a terminal degree (24%), half had earned the Ph.D. degree and half had earned the Ed.D. degree. Fourteen percent had completed a master's degree. The respondents' length of teaching experience ranged from 1-41 years. Twenty-three percent of the respondents also indicated that they had been employed at their current institution for more than 16 years.

The Lynch (1989) study also examined academic productivity. Educators were found to spend an average of 58% of their time teaching, 18% in scholarship, and 24% in service. The respondents reported that they spent more time in service and teaching and less in scholarship than either they or their institutions desired. Over 69% of the educators taught an average of 3.3 undergraduate vocational courses during an academic year, and almost half of them taught a average of four courses. In addition, nearly 49% of the respondents indicated that they taught two graduate courses during an academic year.

Only 24 other studies were found in the topical search on vocational teacher educators conducted for this study. Three studies focused on critical issues in vocational education (Herr, 1985; Smith, Hughes, Finch, & Leo, 1986; Zellner & Parrish, 1986). One study involved inservice teacher education models (Alvine, 1990) and three studies were concerned with professional affairs (Kienast & Lovelace, 1981; Posner & Halbrook, 1985; Vaughn,

1987). Eleven studies were conducted on agricultural education (Barrick, Ladewig, & Hedges, 1983; Blezek, 1986; Foster & Homer, 1988; Gartin, 1989; Hedges & Straquadine, 1987; Hillison, 1982; Kotrlik & Lelle, 1985; McCracken, 1983; Miller& Dlamini, 1987; Nelson, 1986; Yahya & Moore, 1988). Five studies involved the various disciplines in vocational education. one was in home economics education (LeBleu & Daniel, 1987), two addressed marketing education (James & Searle, 1985; Louisiana State Department of Education, 1983), and two *concerned* trade and industry education (Anderson, 1986; Drennan, 1985).

An ERIC search failed to disclose any literature on HOE teacher education and/or teacher educators. This finding supports previously discussed statements by Lynch (1989). In an effort to address this dearth, this study was conducted to create a baseline of information about HOE teacher educators.

Methodology

Given the shortage of data at local, state, and regional levels, a broad-based national survey of HOE teacher educators was determined to be appropriate. In an attempt to ensure that the maximum number of educators would be reached, a mail survey was selected as the vehicle for the data collection.

Population

The entire national population of HOE teacher educators was sent a questionnaire. The population was defined by using The Directory of Teacher Educators with Supervisory Responsibility for Health Occupations Education Programs (Junge, 1988).

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was drafted, reviewed, and field-tested. Required improvements and revisions were made in the substance and instrument format. The instrument consisted of 49 forced choice items which represented demographic characteristics; program and institutional activities; and teaching, service, and scholarly activities. Demographic characteristics included gender, age, ethnicity, initial and current salary, initial and current rank, aod tenure status. Program and institutional activities included committee and leadership involvements and administrative responsibilities. Service, teaching, and scholarly activities items addressed levels of involvement, work load, and productivity.

Data Collection

All members of the study population received a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the instrument, and a stamped, noncoded return envelope. A follow-up letter encouraging completion of the instrument was mailed approximately two weeks after the initial mailing.

Data were received from 28 of the 45 persons in the study population, representing a 62% return. Three individuals returned the questionnaires stating that they were inappropriately identified as health occupations teacher educators and therefore were not completing the instrument. The 25 remaining questionnaires provided the basis the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using measures of central tendency by category or interval and Pearson correlation coefficients. Computer analyzes were performed using selected subprograms of the SPSSX statistical program.

Discussion of Findings

Study findings are discussed in four subsections. The subsections are (a) demographics; (b) institutional/teacher educator characteristics; (c) program characteristics; (d) teaching, service, scholarly, and administrative characteristics.

Demographics

Evaluation of the demographic information focused on age, gender, and ethnicity. The average age of the respondents was 46 years old, with a range from 36 to over 55 years of age. A greater number of women (60%) were HOE teacher educators than were men (40%). Faculty members were predominately white (96 %) with a minority (4%) from the Asian-Pacific Islands. Table 1 summarizes these data by age, gender, and ethnicity.

Institutional/Teacher Educator Characteristics

The institutional settings where the teacher educators worked varied considerably. Of the 23 respondents in a university setting, 13 (52%) were employed by a comprehensive university and 10 (40%) by a research university. The remaining two respondents were located in a four year liberal arts college and a state department of education. The vast majority (80 %) of respondents were employed by a school of education within their

Table 1

Age, Gender, and Ethnicity of HOE Educators

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
36-45	4	16
46-55	10	40
>55	11	44
Gender		
female	15	60
male	10	40
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	24	96
Asian-Pacific	1	4

institution. One respondent was employed by each of the following: school of allied health, science department, school of technology, professional school, and extension instruction.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents were appointed initially as assistant professors at their current institutions. Twelve percent began as associate professors. Others received initial appointments as administrators (4%), consultants (4%), curriculum Specialists (4%), instructors (20 %), and lecturers (8%) .

In response to questions about their current rank, the majority of the respondents indicated that they held the rank of assistant professor (24%) or associate professor (40%). Two respondents were instructors, two were adjunct professors, and two had attained the

rank of professor. The other three respondents held the rank of administrator, consultant, and curriculum specialist.

About half (48 %) of the HOE educators reported that they had attained tenure, and an equal percentage remained nontenured. One participant in the study did not respond to this item. Table 2 reports data related to rank and tenure status.

A question regarding respondents' initial salary at their current position disclosed a range from $20,000 to more than $45,000. The mode was greater than $45,000. Forty percent of the teacher educators stated that pay increases were given across the board. Eight (32 %) specified that increases were based on merit considerations. Seven (28%) indicated that both forms of pay increases were used by their institutions. Table 3 presents data on salaries and methods of salary increases.

Program Characteristics

A variety of degrees were awarded by HOE teacher education programs. The largest number of degree programs offered both a Bachelor and a Master of Science degree. Three programs awarded only a Bachelor of Science. Other programs offered a combination of arts and science degrees. Two programs offered a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science while another offered a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts. Three programs awarded doctoral degrees. Table 4 provides a complete listing of the degrees awarded.

Program size varied on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Fifty-six percent of the respondents reported an undergraduate enrollment of 25 or fewer, and 20% of the

Table 2

Current Appointment and Tenure Status

	Frequency	Percentage
Current Rank		
Instructor	2	8
Assistant Professor	6	24
Associate Professor	10	40
Professor	2	8
Adjunct Professor	2	8
Consultant	1	4
Curriculum Specialist	1	4
Administrator	1	4
Tenure Status		
Attained	12	48
Not attained	12	48
No response	1	4

programs identified enrollments of 26-75 students. Sixteen percent of the respondents specified that their programs had more than 75 students enrolled.

On the graduate level, 64% of the programs had 50 or fewer students enrolled. Eleven programs reported 25 or fewer students. Three programs enrolled 26-50 students, and four programs had 51-75 students. "The data are shown in Table 5.

Undergraduate student advisement responsibilities were reported by 84% of the teacher educators. Five educators reported advising more than 50 students, while 16 (64%) respondents stated that they had responsibilities for 50 or fewer students. Eleven respondents advised 25 or fewer students.

Table 3

Current Salaries and Pay Increase Methods

	Frequency	Percentage
Current Salary		
$20,000-$24,999	2	8
25,000- 29,999	0	0
30,000- 34,999	6	24
35,000- 39,999	4	16
40,000- 44,999	5	20
>45,000	8	32
Pay Increase Method		
Merit	8	32
Across the board	10	40
Combination	7	28

Table 4

Degrees Awarded by Programs

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor of Arts	2	8
Bachelor of Education	1	1
Bachelor of Science	16	64
Master of Arts	3	12
Master of Education	3	12
Master of Science	12	48
Doctorate	3	12

Note. Columns do not total 25 and 100% respectively because of multiple responses. Also, one program awarded continuing education credits and another gave a teaching credential.

Table 5

Student Enrollments in Programs by Level

Level	Number of Programs	Percentage
Undergraduate		
1-25	14	56
26-50	3	12
51-75	2	8
>75	1	16
Graduate		
0	2	8
1-25	11	44
26-50	3	12
51-75	4	16
>75	1	4

Note. Columns do not total 25 and 100% respectively because of multiple responses.

Individuals providing graduate advisement also varied in the number of students they advised. Eight respondents indicated that they had no advisement responsibilities. Approximately 75% of the respondents stated that they had 25 or fewer graduate advisees. Table 6 summarizes information about student advising.

The study also investigated whether or not HOE secondary or post-secondary teacher certification was offered in conjunction with the program. A significant majority (84%) of the programs offered secondary school certification/licensure, and a smaller majority (52 %) offered certification for non-secondary teacher licensure. Table 7 provides data related to certification.

Table 6

Number of Student Advisees of HOE Faculty

Advisees per faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate students		
0	3	12
1-25	11	44
26-50	5	20
51-75	3	12
76-100	1	4
>100	1	4
Graduate students		
0	8	32
1-25	11	44
26-50	4	12

Note. Columns do not total 25 and 100% respectively because of multiple responses.

Teaching. Service. ScholarIv. and Administrative Characteristics

The number of undergraduate courses taught by teacher educators per semester ranged from one to more than four, with the majority teaching one to two courses. Most of the respondents (78 %) taught from one to three undergraduate courses each semester. In addition, nearly half of the respondents (48%) were responsible for teaching at least one graduate course per semester. The majority of respondents taught one graduate course, and more than half (64 %) were responsible for one to three courses.

The number of class sessions convened per week ranged from one to more than four, with six respondents (24 %) indicating that class sessions meet twice per week. Four

Table 7

Certification Offered in Programs

Certification Level	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary Certification		
Offered in program	21	84
Not offered	2	8
Post-secondary Certification		
Offered in program	13	52
Not offered	2	8
Not required	3	12

Note. Columns do not total 25 and 100% respectively because of multiple responses.

educators met with their students once per week or more than four times a week, while the majority of the respondents (91%) indicated that they held classes four times per week or less. Table 8 contains data related to course loads.

The study investigated faculty responsibilities for teaching Health Occupations Education and interdisciplinary courses. Fifty percent of the respondents were responsible for courses specific to health occupations education, while 42 % taught interdisciplinary courses which were taken by students training to teach HOE. One respondent reported teaching a combination of health occupations and interdisciplinary courses.

Table 8

Number of Undergraduate and Graduate Courses Taught per Semester

Courses	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate		
1	8	32
2	6	24
3	5	20
4	2	8
>5	2	8
Graduate		
0	3	12
1	12	48
2	2	8
3	4	12
4	0	0
>5	1	4

Enrollment in courses taught by HOE teacher educators ranged from one to more than 30 students. Typical class size was from 11 to 20 students, with 72% of the classes composed of 20 or fewer students. Eight teacher educators (32%) typically had fewer than 10 students in their class. Only two respondents indicated that their typical class size was greater than 30 students. Table 9 contains data related to class size.

HOE teacher educators reported serving on institutional, school, and program committees. Approximately 80% of the respondents were involved with committee activity at the institutional level. One teacher educator indicated having responsibilities on more than

Table 9

Average Class Size

Class Size	Frequency	Percentage
1-1o	8	32
11-20	10	40
21-30	2	8
>30	2	8

Note. Responses do not total 25 and 100% respectively because incomplete data were provided by respondents.

six committees. A majority of the respondents (76%) reported serving on one to four school committees and an additional 8 % served on five to six committees. Service at the department or program levels was very high, with 72% serving one to four committees.

Even though the respondents reported considerable committee involvement, few educators had leadership roles on those committees. Only one respondent cited being chairperson of an institution-wide committee, and five served as chairperson at the school-wide level. Nine respondents served as a chairperson of a department or a program committee. The vast majority did not report any leadership responsibilities on committees at the institutional (88 %), school (76 %), or department/program (60%) levels. Table 10 reports the data related to committee membership and leadership.

Investigation of other service activities revealed that over half of the respondents (58 %) served on thesis committees. Nine teacher educators were on at least three or more

Table 10

Number of Committees: Participation and Leadership

Committee Type/ Leadership	Frequency	Percentage.
Institutional committees		
0	3	12
1 - 2	16	64
3 - 4	3	12
5 - 6	0	0
> 6	1	4
School committees		
0	3	12
1 - 2	14	56
3 - 4	5	20
5 - 6	2	8
> 6	0	0
Dept. /program committees		
0	3	12
1 - 2	15	60
3 - 4	3	12
5 - 6	2	6
> 6	1	4
Service as Chairperson Institutional committees		
0	22	88
1 - 2	1	5
Service as Chairperson School committees		
0	19	76
1 - 2	5	20
Service as Chairperson Dept. /Program committees		
0	15	60
1 - 2	6	24
3 - 4	3	12

Note. Responses do not total 25 and 100% respectively because incomplete data were provided by respondents.

committees. Others (42 %) indicated that they had not served in this capacity during the time period investigated by this study.

Examination of health occupations teacher educators' service to government and other public agencies disclosed that a majority of the respondents (83%) had involvement at the state level. Over half of the educators (67%) also stated that they participated in service activities with public agencies, while *over* two-thirds of the educators reported that they were involved with state and local organizations in leadership capacities. Seventy-five percent reported holding a national office.

Activities in scholarly publications were relatively constant during the period investigated by the study. Fifty-two percent of the respondents published during the two year period and 68% during the five year period of time. Two respondents reported that they had published more than four articles during the two year time period. A slightly smaller number (44 %) had articles published in non-refereed journals. In contrast, 68% of teacher educators had articles published in refereed journals during the past five years, but only 52% had articles published in non-refereed journals during that same time period.

Other activities associated with scholarly publications were investigated. Seven educators indicated that they had a book published within the two year period preceding the study. Five stated that they had chapters published in a book. Half of the respondents stated that they had served on the editorial board of refereed journals, and five reported having been an editor of a refereed journal. Six individuals conducted book reviews within the two year period, and eight did so within the past five years. This information is summarized in Table 11.

Table 11
Number of Publications in Refereed and Non-refereed Journals per Two and Five year Periods

Time Frame	Frequency	Percentage
Refereed Journals		
Publications within last two years		
0	11	44
1 - 2	8	32
3 - 4	3	12
>4	2	8
Publications witbin last five years		
0	6	24
1 - 2	4	16
3 - 4	7	28
>4	6	24
Non-refereed Journals		
Publications with last two years		
0	11	44
1 - 2	10	40
3-4 -	0	0
>4	1	4
Publications within last five years		
0	9	36
1 - 2	7	28
3 - 4	4	16
>4	2	8

Note. Responses do not total 25 and 100% respectively because incomplete data were provided by respondents.

Respondents also were surveyed regarding the number of papers they submitted for presentation and the number of presentations they have given. An identical number of health occupations teacher educators (72 %) submitted papers for presentations during the two and five periods of time investigated by this study. During the two year period, 33% of the respondents submitted up to two papers, and during the five year period, 38% submitted more than four papers.

A similar number of educators gave presentations during the two year period (88%) and the five year period (88 %) preceding the study. Two respondents reported giving no presentations for the two year period, and one had given no presentations during the five year time frame. Table 12 summarizes this data.

Health occupations teacher educators reported being recognized for their service and accomplishments. Nearly 75% of the respondents were recipients of professional awards or honors.

A large number of respondents (70%) identified that they performed a variety of administrative duties involved with planning and implementing change. Sixty-three percent had some involvement with the application of new instructional technologies. Approximately one-third of the respondents were instrumental in the design of new academic programs. Only three educators reported having no administrative duties. Three individuals served as department chairs, nine were program directors or coordinators, and one was an assistant dean.

Table 12

Number of Presentations Given per Two and Five Year Periods

Time Frame	Frequency	Percentage
Presentations given within last two years		
0	2	7
1 - 2	7	28
3 - 4	8	32
>4	7	28
Presentations given within last five years		
0	16	4
1 - 2	3	12
3 - 4	4	16
>4	15	60

Note. Responses do not total 25 and 100% respectively because incomplete data were provided by respondents.

In addition to providing information about the investigations reported above, the study verified assumptions posed by the researchers about correlations between the study variables. Significant direct relationships were found between age and current salary, current rank, service or department committees, service as an officer at a national level, service as a journal editor and the number of scholarly publications in both the two and five year time periods. In essence, salary, rank, service, and publications increased with age. Similarly, as academic rank progressed toward professor, service increased on institutional, school, and departmental or program committees. Current rank was linked directly with the receipt of awards and honors, and as the educators progressed bigher into the ranks, the number of awards increased. Table 13 summarizes these correlations.

Table 13

Correlations of Selected Variables

Variables	Coefficient	Variation	Significance
Age & current salary	.528	.603	.003
Age & current rank	.480	.698	.008
Age & service on dept./program committees	.511	.544	.005
Current rank & service on institutional committees	.614	1.569	.001
Current rank & service on school committees	.679	1.717	.000
Current rank & service on dept./program committees	.363	.971	.041

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients are used.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study revealed that 60% of health occupations teacher educators were female, 96% were Caucasian, and their mean age was over 46 years. Most held faculty status of associate professor (49 %) or assistant professor (24%). Only two (8%) held the rank of full professor. An equal percentage (48%) were tenured and non-tenured. Ninety-two percent were employed at a comprehensive or research university, with 80% identifying a school of education as their academic home.

While health occupations teacher educators shared some similar characteristics with the vocational educators in Lynch's baseline study, there were differences as well. The

ethnicity of both groups was predominately Caucasian. Health occupations teacher educators were slightly younger (approximately three years) and predominately female, in contrast to Lynch's findings. Whereas the Lynch data revealed that 68% of vocational educators had achieved tenure, only 48% of the HOE teacher educators reported being tenured in this study.

A comparison of academic productivity also revealed differences in the two groups. The Lynch baseline study identified an average course load of three undergraduate and two graduate courses per academic year. This study found that 76% of HOE teacher educators taught one to three undergraduate and one to three graduate courses in an academic year. Fewer of the HOE teacher educators have achieved tenure. The comparison of service activities corresponded to the Lynch baseline data, although the two studies approached the topic differently.

Scholarly activities appeared to be the domain of older members of HOE teacher educators. Service to the institution, school, and department or program via committee participation also was related to the age of the members.

. Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. An HOE teacher education faculty member is similar to, yet distinctly different from, the vocational teacher education professorate described by Lynch in his baseline study.
2. HOE teacher education faculty baseline data should be recognized and incorporated into a generic vocational education baseline if an accurate picture of vocational teacher educators is to be obtained.

Five recommendations result from this study:

1. A study of all HOE teacher educators should be conducted to describe the population more accurately. (The participant rate of over 60 % is noteworthy, but greater accuracy would be derived by full participation.)
2. Comparative evaluation of the findings of this study to individual status, scholarly productivity, and teaching load would be helpful in program, school, and institutional negotiations.
3. Attention should be focused upon the apparent differences in academic rank and tenure status between HOE teacher educators and those of other vocational areas. The apparent inequality should be studied.
4. Professional development and/or assistance and support for HOE teacher educators seeking to attain the rank of full professor should be provided. The disparity between HOE teacher educators and generic vocational education faculty in the achievement of full professorship needs to be addressed. (National professional associations such as the Association of Health Occupations Teacher Educators and the American Vocational Association should be alerted to the needs of the HOE faculty members.)
5. Future HOE teacher educators should be identified and supported in their efforts to become faculty members. Because the current pool of HOE teacher educators is greying, an apparent need for HOE teacher educators may become a crisis in the near future.

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