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Editor's Note

Norma J. Walters R.N., Ph.D.
Auburn University

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Topics of interest for teachers, teacher educators, and administrators are included in this issue as we strive to improve health occupations education. This can be accomplished by keeping abreast of the current needs in the teaching arena as well as in the practice arenas. Some needs have been explored through research and are provided for professional growth.

Professional journals and research indicate a substantial need for health care professionals now and in the future. Richards described the current practice of health occupations education in meeting the needs for these professionals. It was concluded that health occupations education is creating a crisis, rather than avoiding a crisis. Richards recommended that the State Board of Education and the health care industry become active partners and take leadership roles to provide the required changes.

Other states have followed suit in trying to assist teachers to build quality health occupations programs. According to Southern, Walters, and Wilmoth, results of research to determine the educational needs and interests of health occupations teachers in Alabama indicated several areas of need. Even though the majority were interested in pursuing degrees, priority skill areas indicated a need for workshops addressing radiography, medical laboratory, medical records, and dental assisting skills. Priority inservice topics included using computers and organizing HOSA chapters.

To improve the numbers of program completers in Kentucky, Leitsch, evaluated the effectiveness of predetermined grade equivalent levels on the reading and mathematics sections of the Tests of Adult Basic Education as an admission tool to postsecondary health occupations programs. However, the test sections were not good predictors of program completion or non-completion and further research was recommended.

Another implication related to teaching was addressed by Baker. Educators have been repeatedly challenged by employers to assist students to develop problem solving/critical thinking skills. Thus, the author presented the socratic method of teaching whereby students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate processes, products, and human interaction situations to acquire critical thinking skills needed by health care employees.

A book review by Linnan provided an insight for nursing assistants. Of special interest would be the valuable information on normal values for vital signs, types of isolation, medical specialties, liquid measurement equivalences, and weight equivalences.

The information presented in this issue could be synthesized and applied in relation to health occupations programs throughout the nation. These findings could benefit all programs now and in the future.

Norma J. Walters
Editor

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