

## Hoke Vocational Education

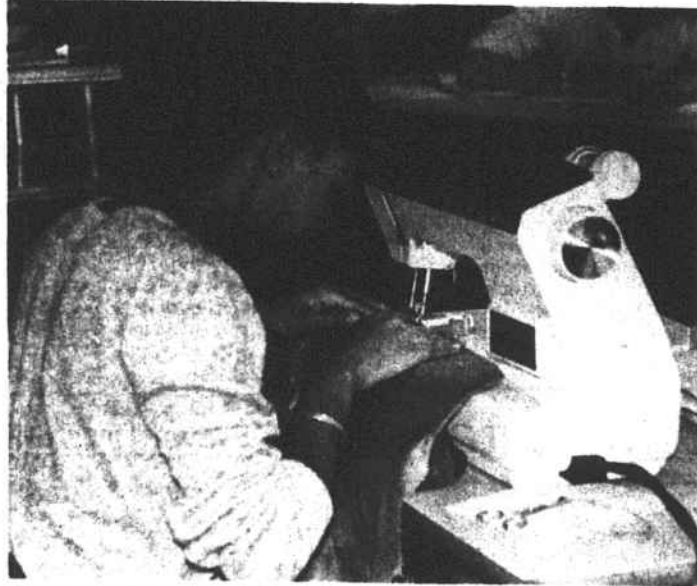
# Keeping Pace



## Checking the roots

On warm days, these horticulture students get to work in the school's greenhouse checking roots on plants which they have grown during the

year. Students also have a chance to grow various plants and flowers from seeds during the course.



## Completing that stitch

This home economics student appears to be devoting her full attention to each stitch that she sews. She is taking one of the many courses in the vocational education program that provides "hands-on" experience to Hoke students.



## Examining the yarns

Textile I students try their hand at examining some of the yarn used by fellow students in the more advanced textile classes. These classes provide students with a chance to learn about the textile industry by working with the local Burlington plant.



## Working on the heart

Health occupations instructor Sally Young (right) shows these students the different parts of the human heart and discusses the individual functions. The health class is one of 18 different vocational education classes being taught at Hoke High.



## Learning the fundamentals

These vocational students learn the fundamentals of working in a fast food or short-order restaurant as they prepare a "quick meal" in one of their classes.

By Sherry Matthews

Industries are replacing old machinery with "computerized" and advanced "high technology" equipment, and pressure is being placed on the public school systems to keep up with the changing pace.

In Hoke County, Vocational Education Director Harold Gillis says his department is "putting forth every effort" to "keep up." "We are always trying to improve our department," Gillis said.

"We don't have the resources to move into the real high technology realm of industry, but we are staying abreast of the changes," he added.

At present, the Hoke school system offers 20 different vocational education courses to some 922 students at both the junior high and high school level.

The courses range from junior high "occupational exploration" to a Textile III course that allows seniors to earn money as they learn.

The programs at Upchurch Junior High school are actually "preparatory courses that help encourage students to make tentative career choices," Gillis said.

"We are not forcing them into career goals. The courses just help them with their choices," the vocational director added.

"We are not able to serve all the students at Upchurch that we would like, but we are working on it," Gillis said.

At Upchurch, four "occupational exploration" courses and two "special vocational" courses are being taught.

Once at the Hoke High level, a wide and varied selection of vocational education classes and activities are offered.

"I think we have a very broad course selection in our vocational education program," Gillis said.

"A lot of schools are not able to serve the students as broadly as we do," he added.

The vocation program at Hoke High offers classes in agriculture, business and office studies, electricity, electronics, health occupations, job placement, marketing and distributive education, masonry, technical drafting, textiles I, II and III, welding and extended day programs.

The wide variety of courses are offered to anyone who registers for them.

Along with the regular vocational classes, there are courses offered that "meet the needs" of the handicapped and disadvantaged students, Gillis said.

In the disadvantaged class, instructors attempt to provide training for the "economically and educationally handicapped students that will help them obtain 'some sort of employment skills' that will benefit them later," Gillis said.

A second group of students that have been identified as handicapped or disadvantaged are mainstreamed into the regular vocational education program.

"They are placed in a regular vocational class, but the teachers give them extra special help in order to meet their particular needs," Gillis said.

"It works well," he added. In addition, Hoke High offers an extended day program that allows "students that have had to drop out for various reasons" to learn job-training skills.

Thirty-five students are presently enrolled in the extended day program.

"The students in the extended day program are those who have not been able to cope with a daily school schedule," Gillis said.

The other 14 vocational education courses also offer job skills and training to interested students.

"I think every course we offer gives the students hands-on training," Gillis said.

Students learn how to germinate seeds, keep a green house, paint a car, wire a television, cook a meal, compute an accounting problem, type a memo and draft building plans.

The more advanced courses offer students a chance to put what they have learned into practice.

Students in the health occupations courses learn to read blood pressure gauges, take temperatures and make up hospital beds as part of their training.

Many even get the chance to work at the local rest home, taking care of elderly patients a few hours each week.

In the business department, students also get "hands-on experience" by working with manual and electric typewriters and computers.

In the advanced courses, students enjoy the feel of the "real office atmosphere" as instructors train students in the different jobs in an office setting, Gillis said.

At present, the business department is working with some manual and some electric typewriters.

The beginning typing class is left to master "the old system" for the time being, but Gillis is optimistic that "all that is going to change next year."

"We are going to switch to all electric typewriters next year," Gillis said.

In addition to hands-on training that most of the vocational education classes offer, two programs provide students with the chance to earn salaries as they learn.

Hoke High and Burlington Industries have joined together through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to give students a chance to have "on-the-job" training and earn wages at the same time, according to Gillis.

The job training is provided through a Textile III course that is offered at the high school.

The course is one of three designed to give students "a better understanding" of the textile industry and how it works.

The first level "introduces" the students to the industry while the second level gives a "more detailed" account of what is required in that industry, from safety regulations to plant management.

The third level gives the student a chance to "occupy a temporary position" with the industry.

Students in groups of two occupy an eight-hour shift at Burlington with the industry picking up the tab for the student's salary, according to Gillis.

A second vocational education program, marketing and distributive education, also generates thousands of dollars back into the county.

Through this program, students are placed in sales-related jobs from grocery store clerks to fast food cooks.

Many of the students participating in this program can be found working at the local fast food restaurant or in a nearby grocery store.

This program has brought in over \$35,000 to participating students.

"These courses are good because we have a lot of students leaving high school and entering the job market or going on to a technical school," Gillis said.

In 1982, figures show that 33% of Hoke's graduating class entered the job market while 36% went on to a technical school or community college.

Now, with Burlington Industries planning a million dollar expansion that calls for highly advanced and computerized equipment and the possibility that the other local industries may follow suit, many are wondering if Hoke students will be able to keep up with the new industrial surge.

"We are going to have to take a close look at our vocational programs to see if they meet the changing industrial needs here.

"If they don't we may have to re-direct programs to meet those needs," Gillis added.

"We are doing what we can with the resources we have. We try to prioritize our needs.

"We are all looking to give students every opportunity for good job placement," he added.

"Naturally we are not completely satisfied. We are always looking to upgrade and improve our courses," Gillis said.

"I think we have a pretty strong vocational program in this county. It can only get stronger."