

Business Education **O**bserver

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The New Jersey Business Education Association is a people-oriented organization serving business education in New Jersey. The association invites business educators to contribute articles for publication in the OBSERVER.

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my most RECENT ARTICLE published
This month. IT would be my PLEASURE
IF you would READ IT. THANKS,

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Building
Student Self-Esteem Through **W** *ork Experience*

Dr. Morton Tener

A business educator's most important task next to preparing students for the work world or post-secondary education is that of imparting positive self-esteem to their students. Only when students value and respect themselves as productive citizens will they be able to contribute to the business world. Business educators have a sizeable task because of the caste system that exists in our high schools. I refer to the view held by most people that the students who take the traditional college-bound courses such as science, math and foreign language are held in higher regard and with greater future potential. Conversely, business courses are not recognized for the value it can offer to many of our students. Unfortunately, this impression is filtered down to our business students.

When a student respects himself, he will develop a positive attitude, be more productive on the job and have a good relationship with others. They will better trust their own abilities, become more confident and become more independent. They will be better prepared to compete in the job market, work in a world of technology and meet the challenges in their personal lives.

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How do business educators meet this challenge? A successful work experience is one of the best avenues to accomplish this task. Work experience is "hands-on" experience and achievement that can be seen. Therefore, one gets a feeling of being productive. The teacher-coordinator is the most important factor in the success equation that can make this happen. The coordinator must make the appropriate match between the student and the work station. Every work station has its own requirements in terms of skills needed and expectations of the employer. The coordinator must assess the student's abilities and interests and then make the match. Students cannot be placed randomly or just to fill a particular position. Unfortunately, in most cases there are not special tests devised to help the placement process or measure future success on the job. Determination of placement must depend upon the job description and student qualities.

To enhance the possibilities of success in job placement, the student should visit the work site and study the job in operation. There should also be a meeting with the employer. By this approach, the student gets a realistic picture of the job and of the expectations of the person in charge. A follow-up meeting should take place between the coordinator and employer, and between the coordinator and the student in order to determine the appropriateness of the placement.

After placement, the coordinator should monitor the progress of the student in a thorough manner with a sufficient amount of meaningful visits. Post-visitation meetings should be made with the student and with the student's superordinate in order to obtain valuable feedback. The students should always know where they can receive help. Support, praise and encouragement should be in

abundance. It is the coordinator's job to motivate and build confidence. This will help in developing greater self-esteem and, therefore, a more effective worker. It is the pygmalion effect in the work place. In other words, the student will achieve to the level his coordinator establishes for him. The coordinator is not just a teacher but an achievement engineer specializing in esteem building. An appropriate site selection will be the eco-system where this could happen.

A significant number of today's students are not prepared to meet the demands of our "work world." These students become classified as "students at risk." By providing the hands-on experience program in a nourishing environment, we will promote maturity, skill building and success. Success breeds success, and in turn enhances self-esteem.