OH, VISION, WHERE ART THOU? DEFINING AND MARKETING A VISION FOR CTE
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>> SOTO: Welcome to the Professional Development Speaker Series, sponsored by the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education.
My name is Raul Soto, and I am with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.
Today the National Dissemination Center is honored to have Dr. Mike Rush from the Idaho Division of Professional Technical Education.
Today's presentation is entitled "Oh, Vision, Where Art Thou? Defining and Marketing a Vision for Career and Technical Education." After the presentation, there will be an opportunity for questions.
Dr. Rush.

>> RUSH: Welcome.
It's a pleasure to be here.
I'd like to personally thank the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education for making these series of professional development events possible.
And, Floyd, I appreciate your work on that, and I think it's extremely important for the profession.
In terms of the presentation format, as you said, there will be actually a response to this presentation.
I don't think Floyd trusted me to do it live.
He brought in an expert to correct any mistakes I might make, which I really appreciate.
There's also a question-and-answer period at the end. But as we go through the presentation, there might be a comment that you just cannot resist making, and that will not offend me.
So if you would like to participate as we go through, I have no problem with that.
I do encourage participation, however, and I brought from Idaho some genuine plastic Idaho potato pins.
And so if you ask a good question or make an insightful comment, you can be eligible to receive one of these pins.
Remember, it has to be a good question or an insightful comment to get a potato pin.
Now, for you folks out there in Webland, obviously, I can't give you one of my plastic potato pins.
But due to the good work of one of our folks in Idaho in Career Information Systems, Terry Moxafini, we do have some stellar virtual potato pins in the form of Web sites, and if you folks ask a particularly good question or make an insightful comment, you will get access to a Web site that you might find particularly interesting.
Another thing to mention for those in the remote sites, I am going to be using some slides, and so that window up in the right-hand corner of your screen, you might want to drag that and make it a little bit bigger so that you can see all the slides.
And, finally, I would like to say something a little bit about Web etiquette.
The way this system works is there's a buffer, and the buffer creates a slight delay so that you can have kind of a continuous presentation, where you don't get a jerky voice and that sort of thing. But part of the problem is sometimes the buffer gets empty, and so the image of me will freeze. Inevitably, it will freeze on a close-up when my mouth is hanging open.
Now, proper Web etiquette is not pointing at the screen and saying, "Oh, it's tongue is hanging out."
The proper Web etiquette is to politely divert your eyes until the buffer catches up and then go back and watch. I know some of you haven't participated, so I thought I would let you know how that works.
The other problem with technology is that often it distorts the view of the speaker. And so I've taken the liberty to put a picture up of what I actually look like so that you can -- in case that distortion occurs out there in Webland, you know what I actually look like.
You know, sometimes this technology just completely cuts off your hair.
Frankly, I think technology is going to change our perception and how we appreciate the world around you.
I just read a story about a family who had gone on vacation, and their kids were particularly interested in the computer simulation of the Oregon Trail.
And so the family decided that would be a fun vacation. And so they drove out across Wyoming and they came up to where -- at the South Pass there where it's just a desolate desert area, and the little girl got out of the car and looked around very sophisticatedly, and she says, "Yes, this is where my oxen always die."
The topic today is "Oh, Vision Where Art Thou? Defining and Marketing a Vision for Career and Technical Education." And we might ask the question why we might want to articulate a vision, or why is a vision important.
And I think that the easiest way to do this, or at least one way to do this might be to frame the discussion in a historical context. In 1914 and 1915, in "The New Republic," there was a debate of sorts between prominent educational leaders, and that is David Snedden and Charles Prosser.
And these two individuals -- excuse me -- be David Snedden and John Dewey.
David Snedden -- if you look at the little picture -- go ahead and put the next one -- you'll see that I pictured Charles Prosser. The reason is that I couldn't find a picture of David Snedden anywhere on the Web, but Charles was Snedden's protege and probably best known to this group as the author of the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act.
And so if he's up there representing David Snedden, John Dewey's up there representing himself. But in that debate I think that a lot of the issues that we're going to be talking about today were raised. I will define the need for this discussion in Dewey's own words. Dewey: "The need of a substitute for the disappearing apprenticeship system, the demand of employers for more skilled workers, the importance of special training if the United States is to hold its own in international competitive commerce, figure side by side with the educational need of making instruction more vital to pupils." Boy, I don't know about you, but that may have been said in 1914, but those issues sound pretty fresh.

The debate was in light of these compelling needs, there was a movement to create vocational education programs in public schools at a national -- or in (inaudible) by national initiative. Both Dewey and Snedden were actually supportive, but all is not roses in paradise. Snedden: "We have even reconciled ourselves to the endless, endless, misrepresentations that define Dr. Dewey apparently giving aid and comfort to the opponents of a broader, richer, and more effective program of education is discouraging." Dewey: "Sir, I've written unclearly indeed when Dr. Snedden interprets me as giving even an appearance aid and comfort to the opponents of a broader, richer, and more effective program of education, but in the name of a genuinely vocational education, I object to the identification of education with acquisition of specialized skills and the management of machines at the expense of industrial intelligence based on science and a knowledge of social problems and conditions."

The key issues in this debate focused on three things: Content of vocational education, the purpose of vocational education, and control of vocational education. First, content found Snedden and Dewey in agreement. Both of them agreed on the value of work as an educational tool. Back to Dewey: "In these places, the aim has been to borrow from shops the resources and motives which make teaching more effective and wider in reach." Snedden: "Vocational education at the right time and of the right kind is supremely important." They disagreed, however, on the other two, the purpose of that education. Snedden: "Vocational education is irreducibly and without unnecessary mystification education for the pursuit of an occupation." Dewey: "But every ground of public policy protests against the use of the public school system which takes for granted the perpetuity of the existing industrial regime with all its antagonisms of employer and employee, producer and consumer. I object to regarding as vocational education and training which does
not have as its supreme regard the development of such intelligent initiative, ingenuity, and executive capacity as shall make workers, as far as they may be, the masters of their own industrial fate."

And, finally, they disagreed on control.

According to Dewey: "The issue at stake is a sharp line -- is whether a sharp line of cleavage shall be drawn as respects administrative control, studies, methods, and personal associations of pupils between schools of the traditional literary type and schools of a trade preparatory type."

And then, finally, Snedden: "Minimalists generally are suspicious of the so-called academic mind in connection with vocational education. They feel assured neither of the friendliness nor of the competency of our school masters in developing sound industrial education. For that reason, they often favor some form of partially separate control, at least at the onset of any new experience."

I don't know about you, and that may be somewhat different than what we're used to hearing today, but the issues sound pretty fresh. How can career and technical education contribute to the economic vitality of our nation and equally to the enhancement of opportunity for its citizens?

This debate is clearly important today. And, in fact, I think may be more important today than it was in 1914. The contributions of any enterprise, and in this case career-technical education, is tied to its ability to define itself and identify its mechanisms for effecting results.

Defining something also allows resources to be assigned to that activity.

Frankly, I don't think career-technical education, at least recently, has done a very good job in answering those questions posed. In many ways our leadership infrastructure is not very cohesive or very strong. Our teacher education programs in some cases are contracting across the nation.

State directors often have a fairly high turnover rate. We have a situation in which there is kind of a vacuum, in some cases, of leadership.

On the other hand, improvements in programs across the United States, new innovations, the demand for career-technical education has never been better or higher. There's an incredible amount of synergy and activity at the local and state level, and that begs for some -- some national support, if nothing else.

It was to this end that the National Association of Career-Technical Education and state directors of career-technical education felt it critical to articulate some sort of vision for career-technical education and when we determined that the first step was to define the key characteristics of professional technical education.

And so we went through a process that was actually stretched over a
several-year period. We reviewed work done by other entities, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the paper that was penned by Richard Lynch. Materials developed through the National Dissemination Center were reviewed. State efforts, of which there were some tremendous, including those right here in the state of Ohio, were called upon, and other groups and entities such as the Hudson Institutes, Workforce 2020, materials from the National Governors Association, materials from the Chief State School Officers Association. And, finally, concepts from initiatives, like School to Work, and tech prep, and High Schools That Work were drawn upon. The state directors then created some four focus groups at one of their conferences. They dedicated the entire conference to the development of a vision paper. And, in fact, the person that was in charge of that, Jo Kister, who is sitting right in the audience, had a tremendous amount to do to organize that and get us off the dime in terms of organizing this development of a vision statement for career and technical education. And then, finally, I've drawn the short straw and was asked to draft a note -- draft a document, and I think that's why I'm here today. The guidelines for development were first that this statement address the entire scope of career-technical education, everything from middle school exploration to secondary programs to postsecondary programs to short term training, this statement was to try to encompass the entire field of career and technical education. Secondly, we determined it ought to transcend immediate issues, not what is the latest flavor of the month in terms of legislation or pet project, but that this would transcend those kinds of issues. Thirdly, we focused on defining the uniquenesses of career-technical education, not just how career-technical education was the same as everything else, but what it brought to the table that made it different and valuable and useful. And, finally, we tried to limit this statement to as few principles as possible, with the idea that if we could capture the essence of career and technical education in as few principles as possible, we would have a better chance of communicating that across the nation and to various constituent groups. The components of the document -- and the document itself looks like this. This is for the folks here, and I think there's a picture on the Web site, as well. For the folks here, we actually have copies for you. For those folks on the Web site, there is an address at the bottom of this that can tell where you can print out a copy of this for yourself. But this is the document, and essentially it's divided into two
pieces.
The first is the premise, and the second piece are five principles.
The premise, first, identify the name.
You might want to think that's sort of self-evident, but let me tell you, coming up with a name to describe this enterprise was not a simple task.
We talked about vocational education and career education and school to work and workforce education and all the different -- professional technical education and all the different names that this enterprise has been called across the United States.
But we found it critical that we agree on a new name to call this, because it's very difficult, once again, to direct resources if you call it 15,000 different things.
So we agreed on career-technical education, not necessarily because we all thought that was the very best name, but we thought it had the most cachet, if you will, that it was the most accepted across the nation.
Secondly, we identified the scope, and I already describe that scope as middle school to short-term customized training.
We thirdly identified the purposes or functions of career-technical education.
We decided it had three broad functions: First, to provide technical job skills; secondly, to provide cross-functional skills, like problem-solving and communications skills, the ability to use communication; and, finally, we said it had a purpose as a context for enhancing general education.
So those are the things that the premise addressed.
And then we created five key principles, which essentially began with "We believe that".
The first principle was that we believe career-technical education draws its curricula, its standards, and its organizing principles from the workplace.
In my opinion, this principle probably more than any other differentiates career-technical education.
It defines how it is different from the rest of the educational enterprise.
There are essentially two primary sources of curricula in our public and private schools at this time.
The first is the discipline approach, and the second is the profession and/or occupation approach.
The characteristics of a discipline-driven curricula include, first, it's supported by the academic infrastructure.
In other words, if you go over here to Ohio State University, you will find majors in social science and history and physics and chemistry and English.
You also find that disciplines are supported by awards.
If you look at the Nobel prizes, for example, you find prizes in chemistry and physics and mathematics.
It's supported by conferences. Most academic conferences are organized around a discipline. It's supported by theories, and most standardized tests are developed based on a discipline-based approach. You'll have a math section and a communication or an English section. Secondly, a discipline-driven curricula forms the basis of most of our academic standards. Those standards are developed by disciplines. It builds to more in-depth study within the discipline. Mathematics at the first grade level eventually leads up to mathematics at the Ph.D. level, and we build on that as we go through the curriculum. Its integration with other disciplines is not a primary focus in discipline-driven curricula, although it's receiving increasing attention. But most of the colleges at the university level in which it's receiving attention tend to be vocational colleges, i.e., colleges of business, in those areas. It is -- application is secondary. The primary purpose is to learn particular principles in the discipline. And, finally, motivation to learn is intrinsic. In other words, we learn the information because we want to become smarter. We want to know what kind of information is presented in that particular discipline. The characteristics of a profession or occupation-driven discipline are somewhat different. First, it's driven by the workplace. Standards are drawn from the workplace requirements. It builds to a higher level of participation within an industry or a career path. It combines knowledge from various academic disciplines. I think this is a really important one. Have you ever wondered why almost all of the conferences, all of the initiatives, all of the activities with regard to integration are driven from career and technical education, not the academic side? I'd like to think that that's because we're morally superior and naturally gifted intelligently, but I suspect that may not be the case. The reason that most innovation is driven from career and technical education is because it's part and parcel of an occupation-driven curriculum. In other words, if you're going to become an electronics person that works in the IT field, you have to be able to write manuals and communicate effectively. You have to be able to do mathematics. You have to be able to do the technical skills.
In other words, you cannot hire a person in that area that cannot integrate both the academic and the technical skills together. And so integration is naturally driven from career-technical education almost all the time because it's a fundamental premise of what an occupation-driven curriculum is like.

Application is primary. In other words, the reason we learn this information is so that we can do something with it.

And, finally, motivation to learn is extrinsic. Once again, the reason we learn the information is that we need to know the information so we can perform this particular task.

Some implications of these two types of curricula. First is that both types of curricula are important. I am absolutely convinced that discipline-driven curriculum and occupation-driven curriculum are necessary. There isn't one that is superior enough to take over the entire educational system.

I think we need both. I think, secondly, that the cultures in those two environments are different enough that both require structures for advocacy. In other words, I think we need people in career-technical education. We need structures to fund and encourage and to motivate that sort of education.

And, thirdly, both demand specificity. Part of the problem, I think, that we've had in creating a vision for career-technical education has been that the debate goes like this: If we offer, as part of our educational continuum, kids job-specific kinds of skills, we are depriving of them of transferable skills. In other words, Dewey's desire to make them masters of their own destiny.

Now, that may have been true back in Snedden and Prosser's today and is (inaudible) true in individual technical programs today. But I don't think that it's a prerequisite of career-technical education.

In-depth study does not in and of itself mean less transferable. There are lots of examples. Think back on your most interesting course or program that you participated in. Let's just take college, for example. Was it that freshman level survey course that you took, or was it maybe that junior or senior level course where you really got into the meat of it, and the senior methods course where you got to practice things? Which class was more interesting, and in which class did you develop more transferable problem-solving skills and communication skills? Was it the survey lecture class, or was it the in-depth specific class? Another example.
If you look at the music education field, certainly people wouldn't say music education is vocational, but I'll tell you what, the kinds of practice that people go through to become accomplished musicians look awfully repetitive to me. And certainly if we advocated that kind of education, rote memorization, in career-technical education, we would be said as severely limiting the skills of those students. But the facts are, students who perform well, who spend hours and hours in a very narrow of becoming accomplished musicians actually perform better academically than those students that don't. And the research expands across IQ levels. Problem-solving requires problems, real live problems. And you don't get to that level until you get to specificity. It's in the specificity that creates the motivation engagement that turns intellectual activity into experience that fundamentally changes our thinking and our behavior.

In my opinion, it's this concept that has the potential of bringing those two philosophies of Dewey and Snedden together, that education drawn from the workplace can both develop job skills, put people to work, enable them to succeed, and enhance learning in general. So that brings us to our second belief that career-technical education is an integral component of the total educational system. We believe that career-technical education can benefit all students. It does not benefit all students in the same way. It can benefit students who are pursuing careers requiring specific technical skills of less than a four-year baccalaureate in nature. It can benefit students who are pursuing degrees, careers requiring the traditional four-year or more degree. Regardless, it prepares students for the next level, either the next level in terms of their work environment or the next level in terms of their educational experience.

Secondly, we believe it's an integral component of the total educational system because it contributes to broader educational goals like high academic achievement, student retention, and motivation. In fact, at the tech prep conference a couple of weeks ago, one of the statistics that our folks brought back said that students who enrolled in career-technical education, at-risk students who enroll, were 8 to 10 times less likely to drop out of school, a tremendous force for retention and motivation.

And, finally, the development of general workplace and life skills. We also believe it's an integral component of total educational system because it connect education and work, and it may be in this particular belief where we wrestle with the issue of control. If career-technical education is an integral part of the total educational system, do we need to have it separately identified at all? Does calling a student, for example, a career-technical education student make any sense?
In the view espoused by Snedden and Prosser, where there's a population of students best suited for this kind of training, and we've got to know who those students are and then give them it, the answer's probably no.

Career-technical education, as our belief says, benefits all students. In the sense, however, that we identify students to target resources and realize the benefits of career-technical education, I think the answer is yes.

After all, we often identify students as music students, or debate students, or athletes, without presuming that they are not math students or incapable of writing an essay.

Career-technical students can be identified with target resources. We can create an infrastructure that mines the benefits of this enterprise without limiting student options.

If you'll -- if you'll forgive me, one of my background issues or -- part of my background's agricultural, and so I'm going to use an agricultural example, and so the rest of you are just going to have to bear with me.

Darrell, however, will appreciate this.

The facts are, if you're raising cattle, you know that cross-bred cattle are more vigorous and produce more meat.

The question is why deal, then, with purebred cattle at all?

And the answer is, well, you cannot get to the latter without maintaining the former.

It is important in career -- that the career-technical education community carefully define itself and make sure it's bringing its best to the table.

Discipline-driven curricula and workplace-driven curricula both provide unique and powerful genes, if you will, which, when combined, produce a more vigorous and thorough education.

The third belief that the directors came up with in terms of the vision and the key principles is that career-technical education is an integral component of the workforce development system.

It (inaudible) that an occupation-driven curricula that this would be self-evident, but it may be in this area where we've done the worst job of all.

With all our emphasis on the reformation of education, we've forgotten that career-technical education is one of the most powerful tools our country has for creating a thriving economy.

In some cases I think we've relegated that task to the Department of Labor programs which only target unemployed or high-risk youth.

In this particular belief, the -- career-technical education is an integral component of the workforce development system.

We believe that it provides curricula tied to workplace requirements. It enhances the interaction of education and work.

It requires, however, better partnerships.

I'm often dismayed by the lack of interaction from the career-technical education community with the other workforce
development partners. And I have to say in Idaho I think this is an area we have really worked hard on, creating an infrastructure where the governor and the Department of Labor and the state board of education can work together.

In fact, in Idaho the chair of the state board of education is also the chair of the governor's workforce development council. And so we have a unique opportunity to collaborate, and we've been able to do so without compromising the integrity of either the workforce or the educational programs by creating an environment where these programs can work together.

I think it's important to recognize that we don't need to create some monolithic, overreaching bureaucracy to combine these programs. In fact, most of the time that works against you because we're trying to work with educators who often have a very significantly different mandate and mission.

And so by creating structures in which we can collaborate, I think we get further down the road.

The fourth principle is that we believe that career-technical education maintains excellence through standards, accountability, and high expectations.

I think this has often been a sticking point with career-technical education, i.e., if you have a student for which you have low expectations, then you ought to send them off to a career-technical education program. And, conversely, if you have a student for which you have high expectations, you ought to keep them away from such programs.

Now, I think that this has created a tremendous problem for the career-technical education community because it is not consistent at all with the profession nor the community in which we put our students.

High standards means we focus on workplace standards, which means both the academic and the technical standards necessary for those students to succeed.

It involves industry certification as a component of that, continuous improvement, and, finally, the preparation and deployment of qualified teachers.

The final belief that we developed was that career-technical education is robust and flexible enough to respond to multiple educational environments, customers, and levels of specialization. Frankly, career-technical education is a complex system.

We deal with multiple levels of education. We deal with multiple educational environments, which are often very different. We deal with multiple customers. And, finally, we deal with multiple levels of specialization.

Let me just review some of the system elements that the directors developed.
Career-technical education does the following things:
It integrates career exploration.
It provides tools for organizing curricula.
It facilitates the teaching and use of technology.
It's integrated into the total learning experience.
It enhances the learning of academic subjects.
It teaches broad occupational skills.
It also provides job-specific training.
It includes all aspects of the industry.
It teaches how to balance family and work responsibilities.
It's offered at multiple levels of the educational (inaudible) to a variety of educational environments.
It responds quickly to changes in the economic environment.
It requires comprehensive career guidance to provide students the information they need for what courses to take.
And, finally, it does serve students with special needs.
That complexity mitigates against our being able, sometimes, to articulate a clear vision of the enterprise of career-technical education.

Someone listening to a person designing a program for training firefighters, for example, may not have much in common with the person trying to find out how to motivate students to stay in school and focus on taking the right courses.
Frankly, I think that's something the career-technical education community has got to recognize and we've got to deal with.
So that brings us to the conclusion, i.e., where do we go from here?
In my opinion, the career-technical community needs to come together on major issues.
We don't need to agree on everything.
And I think if we insist that we're going to have to agree on everything in order to come together at all, we're never going to make it.
I think the community has to come together on major issues.
I think we need to develop leadership with good philosophical and educational credentials.
And I commend particularly the State of Ohio and the National Dissemination Center for developing a leadership development academy, if you will, to help to develop and foster leaders in professional technical education.
I think we have to develop a leadership strategy, and I think that strategy needs to have the following components:
First, I think we have to identify who we want to serve.
Although career-technical education is beneficial for all students, we don't serve everybody.
An enterprise cannot serve everybody and do everything and still be a differentiated enterprise.
We have to identify our customers and decide how we're going to serve them.
And we have to identify those not based on what we'd like their needs to be and have that fit what we can offer, but we have to identify what their genuine needs are.

One of my favorite stories -- and some of the folks I know watching the Webcast have heard this, so I apologize to them -- but it's a guy from Texas who goes to England to visit. And because he's a Southern Baptist, he thinks it might be fun to go to church and see how the English churches respond. Well, the thing he's struck by is the formality of the service. Everybody stands up when they're supposed to, sits down when they're supposed to, and there's no noise in between.

Well, finally, the Texan's sitting there, and the pastor says something he really agrees with, and he just can't resist, and he shouts out, "Amen."

Every eye in the congregation turns to where this man is sitting, and pretty soon you have the usher rushing up and talking to the guy, and he says, "You must not talk out loud in this church."

"But I got religion."

"Well, you didn't get it here."

I think sometimes our institutions become so wrapped up in being institutions and protecting them that we forget to evaluate and remember that we're out there to serve a felt need, and we've got to identify that need, and we've got to meet it accurately.

Secondly, I think we have to create a clear vision, and that's why I think this presentation has been about the Directors Association effort about trying to lay some groundwork for a vision that we can all buy into as a career-technical education community.

However, we need to go further. The next thing I think we need to do is create a compelling case for our enterprise. We have to identify the specific needs and then explain how career-technical education can meet those needs better than any other enterprise. We have to have a comparative advantage, in other words. We have to do -- we not only have to be able to meet the need, but we have got to be able to do it better than other alternative modes of operation.

Fourthly, I think we need to develop accountability. I think anything that seeks to become funded or supported must be accountable to those people who have to support it.

Next, I think we have to adopt what I call persistent collaboration. There's a lie out there that says -- goes something like this: You know, if you'll just work with other people and cooperate, your life will be made easier.

That is not true. If you work with other people and collaborate, your life will be harder.

It is much simpler to go in your office and close the door and just do
it than to go out and try to get everybody's buy in on getting it done.
The flip side of this, however, is that if you collaborate and cooperate, it's almost always better for the end receiver of the services.
And so that's why I say I think we have to adopt a notion of persistent collaboration because unless we're persistent at it, we will quit before we get the benefits.
And then, finally, I think we have to be realistic in that we have to adapt our strategies to the political context.
And I think career-technical educators and leadership has been somewhat naive in this particular area, particularly at the national level.
Let me give you an example.
I think we all go to Congress and we're sold out on our little particular notion of what career-technical education ought to be.
And so we go to sell our little particular set-aside or our particular little notion, and we do that nationally by saying, "But it works better than all these other pieces."
And then the next person goes and sells their particular notion, and they say, "And it works better than all these pieces."
And the next person goes and sells their particular notion and says, "And it works better than all these pieces."
Well, what do they hear?
That this notion is good and that this notion is good?
No, what the politicians hear is that nothing works very good because we've had three people tell us that all these pieces don't work very good.
Now, granted, they've said one little component worked all right, but the concept and the political realities are is that if you can't agree as a career-technical community, particularly when we're looking at national policy, federal legislation kinds of issues, we are not going to be successful.
In fact, I don't think career-technical education has been very successful at the national level.
The amount of funds going into Perkins, for example, even if you add all the funds into School to Work and Perkins and put everything in a big pile, have not increased nearly as rapidly as support for, say, Title I and some of the other educational programs.
And I think we have done partly that for ourselves -- to ourselves.
We haven't identified a clear vision, and then we haven't articulated that vision in a way that policymakers can create policy at the grand policy level.
But that doesn't mean we have to give up our passions.
But it does mean we have to set aside some of the details while we work on broad, philosophical issues.
So that brings us back to the beginning.
Oh, vision, where art thou?
Although Dewey lost the debate back in 1917, I do like his quote, where he said, "In short" -- he describes the system he would like to see. He says, "In short, a complete educational system, preserving the best and the old and redeeming the heritage by lively association with studies, methods, and teaching representing our newer social needs." It's our hope that these key principles that I've articulated today are -- form the first part of a vision for career-technical education and that we can realize that goal of a complete educational system. With that, Darrell, are you next on the agenda for your responses?

>> I think so.
>> RUSH: All right, well, I'll sit down and let you get after it.
>> PARKS: Thank you, Mike, and welcome to Ohio. It's nice to have you be with us and to hear your views on a vision for career and technical education. And I want to applaud the state directors for taking on this -- this particular task.
My assignment today is to kind of react to your presentation.
>> Do you want to present to the camera?
>> PARKS: I don't know.
They told me to do it at the table.
What do you want me to do?
We need some clarification here.
Do you want me to do it here, or do you want me to stand up?
Stay right here?
Turn around, okay.
>> RUSH: What we need here, Darrell, is some specific job training. We need some specific job skills here.
>> PARKS: We'll stumble through it.
Like I was saying, my task today is to react to your presentation within the framework of comments, elaboration, cautions, and maybe even some challenges. Your topic today I think is extremely timely and important to career and technical education's future because a vision is a clear image of what a movement could be or should become to realize its full potential.
I think it was Yogi Berra who said once, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll most likely end up somewhere else." And I think a clear -- a clearly defined vision that in your own words defines what career and technical education is about is extremely important as we move forward.
I thought for a long time that without the benefit of a clear vision, sometimes we become reactors to someone else's vision, and oft times when federal legislation is past, that legislation wasn't based upon a clearly defined vision that the leadership had for career and technical education, but it was somebody else's vision, and then we scurried around to figure out how we could adapt to it and best accommodate it.
So this notion about a vision is not just an academic exercise. I think it's extremely important to the enterprise and should become top priority in terms of career and technical education realizing its full potential. I really like the basic principles that you reiterate in your comments, because I think they're a good starting point for framing that vision. But as you noted toward the end of your comments, there's a lot of work to be done yet because those basic principles are kind of characteristics of what career and technical education is like, but they do not clearly establish what it is in terms of an enterprise or in terms of an entity. I agree with your inclusiveness notion, because we're talking about a program that does not know any particular ability level, does not know any particular physical challenges that students may bring to the classroom, does not know anything with regard to gender, because it is an inclusive program and must serve all students. So I think that, you know, from the standpoint of those basic principles, you're on a solid foundation. While I agree with your notion that the curriculum in a career and technical education enterprise is driven by the occupation, I'm not so sure that that's always practiced as religiously as what the theory might suggest. I think particularly in the era of educational reform, we've compromised some of our beliefs in order to fit into that larger structure, which was not necessarily driven or led by people who were sympathetic to career and technical education, but perhaps driven more from the academic side of the equation. The caution I would offer you in terms of pursuing this task is one of being able to deal with the external forces that we tend to constantly play upon in shaping this vision. And I'm talking about forces such as -- and you mentioned in one of your comments the Hudson Institute and the likes, who sit around the table in Washington and theorize about how the world ought to be and sometimes lose touch with how the world really is in regard to the kind of students that we are addressing. I'd also caution you to figure a way to deal with the pressures of school reform that aren't necessarily sympathetic in many cases to the cause of career and technical education and, also, to the force of political expediency. You commented on that, and -- and it's one that's very real and one that will have to be dealt with. I guess a challenge I would offer you is once you get this vision statement crafted, how are you going to be able to transcend the legislative and the policy-making bodies, the state level leadership, the total educational community, to cause them to rally around this notion in terms of the -- the importance and the significance that it has to the future of this economy?
This notion about adapting to the political arena is certainly one that you have to strategize and also -- it's also important that this vision provide that compelling case, in terms of getting the resources and the kind of policies that you need to move this enterprise forward.

There's some question sometimes about, well, where does the vision come from?

Well, I think you're right on target.

I think it has to come from the discipline.

And it seems to me that based on the current structure we have, it's going to have to come out of the state directors' leadership.

And so carry forth, Mike.

I think you're on a good pathway.

I certainly think you've got a challenge ahead of you, but it's one that has to be done.

And I applaud you for the effort that you've taken so far.

>> RUSH: I -- Darrell Parks, for those of you who might not know in Ohio, he is a former state director of career-technical education, and, in fact, one of the foremost of the state directors, a tremendous leader that -- I remember when I was a young professor at Penn State University, we invited Darrell to come and speak to our faculty because he was considered at the time one of the foremost leaders in career-technical education, and I think he's maintained that stature.

And so, frankly, I feel much more important because he got to react to this discussion.

The bottom line is, Darrell, your comments do warrant a potato pin there.

So there you go, I appreciate it.

(Applause)

At this time we'll respond to questions from either the Web audience or the audience here.

Barbara?

>> Yes, I have Ken White on the chat room.

>> RUSH: No, he doesn't need to ask questions.

>> He's not asking one.

He's making a statement.

>> RUSH: Oh, well, he can clearly make a statement.

>> He says, "Mike, your definition of career and technical education sounds like a combination of career ed and voc ed.

That's okay provided it doesn't replace career ed.

>> RUSH: It wasn't a question.

(Laughter)

>> RUSH: Any other questions or comments?

Yes, sir.

>> I liked your talk.

I think it was very good, and I was motivated to ask a question because I want a potato pin.

>> RUSH: Right, good.
I have never had one before.

RUSH: I believe in incentives, if that's what it takes.

But I want to ask you a question about your basic premises. When you describe discipline-driven curricula, you say that the motivation is to learn.

When you described occupation-based curriculum, you said the motivation to learn is more extrinsic, if I caught the terms correctly.

I think if you were to ask someone in chemistry why they're taking chemistry, they certainly want to learn, but they think they're going to work as a chemist.

If you ask someone who is taking math, they think they're going to be using the math in their careers in some fashion or the another. So I sense that that premise is sort of dividing something that may not be quite there, and I suspect that if you ask people in those discipline-driven curriculums, if they would respond to that quite differently than you characterized it.

So I would ask you to respond to that.

RUSH: Obviously, whenever you try to create some differentiation, you're going to gloss over a lot of the realities.

And what I was trying to do with those two characteristics was trying to draw what made them different.

There's obviously probably more that makes them the same, and I think you've drawn a good analogy there.

One of the issues that I think -- if you think back -- and still today, if you -- you're in a classroom and a student asks their teacher, "Why do I need to know this particular principle," generally, the response is not very well formulated and often ends up being, "Well, because you'll need it in college."

That response is different, generally, in a career-technical education class.

And that's why I was trying to articulate that difference between the motivation.

In career-technical education I think it is clearly because you need this skill to be able to do something else.

But I agree with you, and that becomes part of the articulation -- or the integration of the academic skills.

You're going to have to know all of that.

RUSH: Shouldn't learning always be highly intrinsic as well as extrinsic?

I think when you draw that, you could raise some hackles in other communities.

RUSH: Should, ought to, but not necessarily will.

And, after all, I brought potato pins to get responses, so for that you get one.

Any other questions?

If this is on, I have a question.

First of all, Mike, you didn't just draw a short straw; you were selected by your peers, and we're very grateful for the work that you
did on this, but the real challenge has been the implementation. And can you speak to what you think the priorities should be to actually implement the vision, the work, that is, that Darrell alluded to as well?

RUSH: Well, I think that there are a number of activities that have got to get done. First, I think that these sorts of activities that we're doing here today are important because I think that we need to present this vision and the next iteration, the completeness of that, as Darrell pointed out, to as many different groups and in as many different settings as possible so that we develop that consensus, and not only develop the consensus -- because I think in some cases leadership just has to step up and say, "This is the way we're going to do it" because if we don't, we never get anywhere. But regardless of how we get to that vision, we need to get as many people on board as possible. The second step is I think we need to work closely at least at the federal level -- or we're looking at reauthorization or development of new federal legislation. I think we need to work closely with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education to, as a community, direct the next iteration of federal influence in professional technical education or career-technical education. The federal legislation has always been an important driver of what we actually implement, although I think some of the best innovation has actually occurred at the state level with state initiatives using state money. I think in terms of a national roll-out, that federal legislation's always been very critical to us. And so I agree with Darrell. I think too often we've waited until somebody else came up with the legislation, generally based on a whole series of specific narrow needs that individual groups had. And when I say that, I'm not saying these groups have needs that aren't true and need to be met, but that's not a very way to -- good way to craft an overall vision for career and technical education. And so I think we have to work very closely with those folks up front; that the leadership needs to work on that, so that we can craft a piece of legislation that really embodies a broader vision. The other thing I think we have to do is that the career-technical education community has to document our performance and to communicate that performance more effectively to those in the policy-making roles. Data drives decision-making, and I think that our community has not been very good at pulling that data together and presenting it in a coherent way. And the excuse we always use is that, well, we don't have some national database. Well, folks, we aren't going to have a national database for a while.
And so what we have to do -- there are lots of ways to collect data and to assemble it and to organize it in ways that tells a single story without having a single national database collection system. And so that's part of what I think we need to marshal the resources, and I think the National Center has done a particularly good job. In fact, this last paper that I just read that came out on the environmental scan I thought was particularly good in identifying some real successes in career and technical education, and it's that sort of thing that I think we need more of.

I think we also need to -- at the state level need to be agreeing on and working on implementing and supporting a vision that other states agree to. I think too often we tend to get too competitive and say, "Well, the way our state configures this is so much better than the other states that this is the only one we're willing to accept in terms of our promotion and our support and our energy and our money. And I think, frankly, that we lose a lot of the synergy that we could get when we adopt that particular point of view. I mean, even the name debate has been painful for a lot of people. Obviously, the right name for career-technical education is professional technical education like we have in Idaho and Oregon, but, you know, people just aren't there yet, and so we have to have some compromises, if you will.

That didn't answer your question, but at least it got to some of the principles that I think we have to focus on. And certainly it was worth a potato pin.

I've got lots more, folks, so don't hold back.

>> I have a comment.
First, I think --

>> RUSH: Wait, are they insightful comments?
>> Yes.
>> RUSH: Oh, well, okay.
>> Of course they are.
>> RUSH: Comments don't qualify for potato pins; they have to be insightful.
>> Honestly, you can assess whether or not they're insightful. I don't know if you have criteria or not.
>> RUSH: No, Floyd is the judge whether you're being insightful.
>> Okay, my two comments.

First of all, a very quick commercial for one of the projects within the National Dissemination Center which focuses on identifying exemplary career and technical programs across the nation because the ones that we have identified so far do reflect the vision that you have put together with the state directors, and I'd like to tell people that those programs are really out there, and they're doing wonderful things, and they do have the data to support them. And if you're going to ACTE, you can meet those folks at several different points during the conference.
So there's my short commercial.

>> RUSH: For that comment, you have to get Floyd to give you the potato pin.

>> Number two, I'm really interested in where you're headed with this issue of benefiting all students.

Back when we were arguing about School to Work, and all means all, meaning we're really going to look at serving all students with career-focused education, that hit a lot of very difficult barriers among a lot of groups who felt very threatened by that kind of positioning.

But, I think that we've gotten past a lot of that, and I think that our real challenge now, like Joe was alluding to, is in the implementation.

I don't think that we can do a very good job of providing some kind of contextual and/or career-focused education for all students, given the current very traditional delivery system that we have in the United States for 9th through 12th grade education.

I think we have to look at radically different delivery models to be able to collaborate with those academic folks, and I think that seeing them as the enemy or competing with them is a war that we will lose very quickly and very soundly.

I think that we need to be very cognizant of the benefits that we each bring to the table, that discipline versus curricular debate, and think about ways that we can truly collaborate, not just within occupational-specific programs but across the entire curriculum so that those students in chemistry aren't taking chemistry simply because they might need it in college, but when they take chemistry, they understand how it relates to a myriad of careers and industries and it becomes relevant for them and they have more of a motivation to learn than just because it's on the ACT or the SAT.

>> RUSH: Well, that definitely was an insightful comment, worthy of a potato pin.

In fact, you might even want two because you might want to give one to your friends.

There's a couple comments.

One, I don't think career-technical education will serve all students. I think there will be a percentage of students that will opt to not participate in career-technical education, and I think that's okay.

I don't think that career-technical education and the principles it brings to table are absolutely necessary for a complete education for every person in the world.

And I think when we try to say that unless we're serving every single student, then somehow we're not offering what we need to offer, then we get ourselves in trouble because we tend to compromise the integrity of our programs and, therefore, make what we bring to the table not as valuable.

>> And I'm not saying that every student should participate in career-technical as in every student should take welding.
That's not what I mean. I'm looking at the whole continuum of career and technical education that includes career exploration, career orientation as well as occupational-specific programs, professional education. I'm talking about the whole continuum, not just everybody needs to pick a program and enroll in it.

No, that's not what I'm saying at all. 

>> RUSH: Right.
And I think that's the -- the dilemma sometimes is how we structure programs.
And I guess the caution I would have, as Darrell put it, would be to try to create something that is so generic that it meets everybody's needs and thereby lose the essence of what makes the enterprise valuable in the first place.
Yes, sir.

>> PARKS: What I interpreted from your comment, and maybe that's not what you meant, but when you used the word "all," I interpreted that as being at the exclusion of no one. Not, you know, all-encompassing, but it was open to students of varying ability levels, it was open to students of -- regardless of gender, it was open to students regardless of whether they had any physical challenges. I didn't interpret your comments as meaning that every student would be included.

>> RUSH: The other thing is, though, I do think that career-technical education, because of the things that it can bring to the table in that it connects educators with work, I think that we have been able to do a lot of internships, externships, with academic teachers and business and industry, activities that don't really directly address career-technical education, per se, but have been driven by career-technical educators and that enterprise. Also, a lot of the workshops and in-services and curriculum development that have been driven by the career-technical education community and philosophy have found their way into academic teaching. And that, in essence, benefits a broader scope of students. So I think in that way we do help other folks indirectly.
Yes, sir?

>> PARKS: One area that we have been conspicuously -- 

>> RUSH: You have one of the lapel mikes so you don't need the other kind.

>> PARKS: One of the areas we have been conspicuously silent on has been the whole area of teacher education. Where do they fit into this role?

>> RUSH: Well, that's in February, isn't it, Floyd? We only do one workshop at a time. Well, I'll tell you what, in the early '90s, late '80s, a tremendous amount -- number of states withdrew direct career-technical support to teacher education programs.
And I think you saw a precipitous drop-off after that in career-technical education programs.
So I think, frankly, there ought to be a higher level of involvement of the career-technical education community with teacher education because I think that is an absolutely essential component to developing leadership.
And if we don't have strong programs there, I think we pay for it at the other end.

>> Explain why, because of Perkins reduction in leadership.
>> RUSH: Good point.

Yeah.
It wasn't something that we all just sat down one day and decided, well, we're going to cut out support.
The federal legislation changed, and we didn't have the kinds of funds to put in, and we couldn't use federal money to support teacher education like we had before, and I think our profession is paying for that.
In Idaho we were fortunate enough to be able to shift that support entirely to state money, and so we were able to continue support for teacher education.
But all the state funds -- and, frankly, we haven't been able to keep up with the level of support that we would like to in that area.

>> PARKS: It's such a good idea.
We don't subsidize English teachers and chemistry teachers and elementary teachers and middle school teachers with federal funds.

>> RUSH: Well, I beg to differ.
I think we spend a tremendous amount of federal money supporting those teachers, except we do it through the whole general infrastructure, if you will.
And what career-technical education needs in terms of defining this enterprise, I think it's some special focus in that particular area.
And, granted, we may not have to do it through that mechanism, but we haven't found an alternative.

>> I have a question from one of our national scholars from Idaho, Angie Neal, and she wants to know what is your thinking on -- what will be the impact of state exiting standards on the implementation of CTE?

>> RUSH: Wait till I get back to Idaho.
Exiting standards are absolutely critical, I think, to the educational debate or the educational implementation.
Anybody that does not pay attention to academic exiting standards is going to be in trouble, and I think that includes everybody from the P.E. teacher to the janitor that cleans the school building to the career-technical educators, that standards has to be on the horizon, has to be in their vocabulary, and they have to be addressing that.
I think the key for career-technical education on standards is first that we need to get out -- I don't know if get out in front is the correct term because standards are already everywhere, but we have to
be proactive in identifying exactly how we contribute to the acquisition of academic standards.
I do not think that means that we have to rewrite our entire programs and do away with career-technical education and turn all career-technical education teachers into remedial English teachers or remedial math teachers.
I think it involves identifying what about our enterprise contributes to those standards but contributes specifically, i.e., what special standards can we support in our curriculum?
And I think there's going to be some need for some crosswalks, in other words, taking the competencies (inaudible) and matching up with the academic standards.
I think we need those crosswalks partly because it will help the career-technical teachers and the academic teachers integrate their curriculum and thereby help students achieve better.
But I also think it's important politically, because I think we have to identify how we contribute to this compelling problem that school administrators are going to face because, frankly, if you're a school administrator and your kids aren't meeting academic achievement standards, you're going to have to make some changes.
And the standard that we use for educational reform is if we've got a problem, we throw another course after it.
Regardless of the fact that this kid has taken math for eight years or ten years or whatever many years, we're going to throw another one course at the very end of their career, and somehow that's going to solve the problem that they've had 12 years in school.
And I think that if we don't articulate how career-technical education helps students meet academic standards, then the fallback position of school administrators is going to be, we've got to shut down everything else so we can put in more remedial courses so we can meet these standards, and I think that will be a real problem for us.
So I think academic standards are real important and we have to pay attention to them.
Yes.
>> We have a question from Lisa Foley, and she is with Truckee Meadows Community College Technical Institute, Reno, Nevada.
She would like you to define the word "career" as used in context with "technical education"; in other words, is it broader than "vocational education"?
>> RUSH: The -- the vision statement, if you will look at it, or this principles and premise that we developed, specifically combines the terms "career" and "technical."
And, in fact, I don't know if on this version it has them combined or not.
No, it still has "career and technical" on this one.
But if you look at the (inaudible) version, it hyphenates the terms.
In other words, "career" and "technical" are combined as a new term, if you will, that defines the (no audio) what Prosser and Snedden
envisioned, I think, as vocational education. And to be inclusive of some of those general benefits that focuses on -- that focus on careers offers the career-technical enterprise. But I think we have to be careful that the career education as envisioned by the movement in the '70s is not what we're talking about in this particular enterprise. We are talking about education that draws its curriculum from the workforce -- or from the workplace, that prepares students for that workplace, and it's not just a way to get better textbook examples that mean more to students. It has much more content and rigor than that. And so my definition of career education, in this sense, is a broader -- and we use that term, I think, to define a broader vocational education than what the old vocational education term defines, but it is not the same thing as the career education that we looked at in the '70s.

Yes, sir?

Now, are they getting virtual potato pins for this participation, by the way?

>> They are.

Okay. You're sending the Web sites?

>> Yes.

>> That's good.

Yes, sir.

>> You've spoken about the contributions to academic programs and placement in the workforce. What about the role as it relates to participation in additional education in postsecondary -- and I think you've been focused more on postsecondary in the presentation, but in postsecondary participation and also in higher education?

>> RUSH: Let me make sure I understand your question. How does career-technical education at the secondary level help participation in postsecondary education?

>> or even into higher ed.

>> RUSH: Well, I think that in the first place I think we have to recognize that most people will participate in postsecondary education, either two-year certificate level, four-year programs, doctoral programs, and/or continuing education. Once they get in the workforce, they'll probably come back. And so to design an educational program in which we do not prepare people to be able to take advantage of that postsecondary option is to design a program that's obsolete before you start. So I think that the notion that career-technical education particularly at the secondary level does not need to prepare students to go on to further education is not practical because most people will have to get into further education as we go along. The problem -- and I think everybody's pretty much in agreement with
that.
I don't find a lot of argument. Even not much of the hard-core
ingressive will argue with that particular concept.
The problem comes in how we implement that.
The first corollary says because people will all go to postsecondary
education, we don't need to have any kind of job-specific career focus
education at the secondary level.
That, to me, is a tremendous mistake and a misinterpretation of how
the system works.
In the first place, that's where the power and the synergy and the
benefit of career-technical education comes from, is in drawing
curriculum from the workforce.
And if we divorce ourselves from that, we divorce ourselves from
everything that gives us the power, if you will, to affect even the
general educational outcomes.
So I do not believe that because career-technical students at the
secondary level need postsecondary education, that means we need to do
away with even very much in-depth career-technical education at the
secondary level.
On the other hand, we have to prepare students to move on to
postsecondary education.
And I think statistics indicate, for example, the statistic I shared
that at-risk students are 8 to 10 times more likely to stay in
secondary ed if they enroll in career-technical education.
But let me tell you the student who stays in high school is going to
be way more likely to be prepared to go on to college than one who
drops out.
So just from the student motivation retention standpoint,
career-technical education can serve and benefit and enhance the
participation in postsecondary education.
I think beyond that, the articulation between -- and the interaction
and the integration of academic skills with career-technical skills
and academic educators with the career-technical educators is
extremely important because I think students need to recognize that if
they're going to be in auto technology, they have to write well, they
have to do math skills well.
And the math teacher and the English teacher needs to work with the
career-technical educator to create educational experiences that will
get the student not only those technical skills but those academic
skills that they're going to -- that are necessary for them to succeed
in auto technology.
Well, the facts are those same skills are the skills they also need to
succeed in postsecondary education.
And so there's not that clear dividing line that we used to have.
So I think career-technical educators need to do a better job of
recognizing that they need to address all aspects of the industry.
They need to take advantage of the incredible learning environment
they've been given.
And one of the frustrations I have -- in fact, Ray shared this today, is that you go into some classrooms and you want to shake somebody because they're not taking advantage of the environment they've been given. They're making this class more boring than the worst class we ever took, and that's because they're not taking advantage of the incredible learning environment.

And so in our implementation, if -- I think if we implement career-technical education the way it ought to be, that we will enhance the participation in postsecondary ed. And that deserves a potato pin.

>> One of our scholars, Cynthia Pellock from Pennsylvania, would like to know if you had active teachers in the classrooms or counselors at the table when you were discussing what the national state directors' mission would be, or did you only speak to national groups?

>> RUSH: The -- the vision statement actually was drawn from the collective experience of all the directors, through a variety of different interactions with all kinds of people, which included counselors and classroom teachers and all those sorts of folks. We did not have those groups represented, per se, at the final drafting stage when we were putting the vision statement together.

>> Her point is that it seems like CTE is so divided, and that's part of our problem.

>> RUSH: I agree.

Any other questions?

Yes.

>> You had made a comment that CTE has not been successful at the national level because it does not have --

>> RUSH: Why don't you pick up that microphone.

>> -- Because it does not have a unified clear vision.

Looking -- looking at the looming Perkins bill coming up, as far as reappropriation --

>> RUSH: "Looming" is an interesting choice of terms there.

>> -- what would be your strategy to make CTE nationwide unified? And then how do we get that point, I mean, as far as advocacy, to the national level?

I've had legislative aides say to me when I've been on the Hill, "Well, you don't even" -- "you" meaning CTE -- "you folks don't even have a clear definition of who you are" because we've changed names.

Now, with that in mind, how do we get -- how do we get our politicians to see this new vision and show them that we are unified?

>> RUSH: Well, I'm not naive enough to think that we'll ever get 100% unity, and I think we just have to move beyond that and not worry about it too much.

But I do think things like creating a vision statement like this and publishing it and saying "This represents the collective view of all the state directors of career-technical educators in the United States" is an incredibly important first step.
I think we can also bring on our teacher professional organization, the ACTE group, and I think they'll buy into this sort of visioning process, and we need to work closely with them to get that buy-in. Frankly, the two primary lobbyists on Capitol at the federal level are the National Directors Association and the ACTE. So, frankly, even if we can get those two groups to agree and to support each other, which I think they are today and have the last couple years, better than in the past, I think we'll go a long ways toward selling that concept. Further than that, I think we just have to keep doing activities like this. We have to keep trying to bring people on board to get people to buy in, to convince them it's in their own best self-interest to set aside some of the differences and to join together in a clear visioning process, and also a marketing process, if you will, so that we can create some legislation. And, finally, I think we have to get access to and work directly with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education because I think they will have an influence on what that federal legislation looks like. And I think we need to do more than just say, "We want to play, too." We've got to come to the table with some help for those folks and some definite direction and some legislation or proposals that they can incorporate. Yes, sir. 

>> I thought it was a good question.
>> RUSH: You want two potato pins?
>> No, I don't.
>> RUSH: Absolutely, you can have two, even before you start.
>> I'm not a career and technical educator, and I think one problem I have is how the term is defined. I don't think it's communicating well to me when you combine them or you have a hyphen or not a hyphen, and the idea that it's not the old vocational ed, but it's expanded now with other things doesn't create an image. I don't know what it is, but I can't put my finger on it. Now, I'm outside of the field, and I've tried this on other people, and they struggle with it as well. So I think part of it is incumbent on the field -- I'm just speaking personally -- to get a better definition of what that means other than now it's expanded.

I think it is, and I think that it has meaning, but the terms aren't conveying -- you're hearing enough on the Web and so on -- they're not conveying a good sense of what this means, and it's probably something in the terminology. It's a complicated thing to define. But I have to be honest, I think a lot of people share that, and it's a tricky kind of concept.

>> RUSH: I personally agree with you.
I think that any term we use -- in the first place, it is a complex enterprise.
We are actually describing in the narrow sense many different things, and we're trying to combine that into a single term.
And part of that exercise is -- there is no perfect term, so part of the exercise is to pick one, any one, and then -- and then sell it and get people used to it, and then attach definitions to it that people then can understand and articulate the concept that I think you're talking about.
But I personally agree with that.
I personally have a difficult time at times defining that enterprise and saying exactly what it means and what it is at its core.
>> We have one last question from one of our scholars in Minnesota who is in a postsecondary institution, and he would like to know how you get faculty buy-ins, because it boils down to choices, and if they're going to take technical writing courses versus more of the technical education-type programs, how do you get faculty to buy in that those are just as important?
>> RUSH: Which kind of faculty, do you think?
>> He's at a community college, so it's probably his peers, his teaching peers, how do you get them to buy in that their courses are just as important as the other academic courses?
>> RUSH: I'm not sure I understand the full complexity of the question.
If he's asking how do we get vocational or career-technical educators to think that their courses are as important as academic courses --
>> I think it's the academic faculty.
>> RUSH: To buy -- to think that their counterpart -- well, in the first place, we have to make the courses as valuable.
I think that it is a mistake to try to say, "I want you to appreciate what I do," when what you do isn't very valuable.
And so we have to make sure first that what we're doing in career-technical education is indeed of top-notch quality, is indeed meeting the needs of our customers.
Frankly, I think at the community college it should be a fairly easy sell, because if you look at the majority of the occupations, if you look at the placement rates, if you look at the success rates, career-technical students tend to do very well.
Placement rates for career-technical education in Idaho is extremely high at the postsecondary level.
They get good jobs, they're well-paying jobs, the community of employers appreciates that value.
And I think that that is -- so the first step is that we need to create quality programs.
Secondly, we need to document our results, and we need to document in terms of having educationally meaningful outcomes, i.e., the people that employ our customers like what they get, and our customers, i.e., the students, are benefitting from their education and say, "When I
get out on the job, I am better prepared because of the courses I took."

If we can do that and then we can share that information with our academic counterparts, I think we can get them on board. I think also if we can get away from this competitive nature in that "because what I do is valuable, because what I do is important, that means that what you do is less valuable and what you do is less important," then you're naturally going to have a reaction from your academic counterparts who say, "What I do is valuable, too."

And we have to get out of that mode. We have to have a little more synergy in terms of "What I do is valuable, what you do is absolutely essential," not only in and of itself as a discipline, but in terms of what it contributes to what -- what my curriculum has to have to prepare these students to be successful in business and industry. So I think defining our enterprise more clearly, I think making sure that what we do is of sufficient rigor that warrants support, and then, finally, collecting information and sharing that in kind of a collaborative, cooperative, affirming, supportive role will help us get to that end.

>> PARKS: (Inaudible) where there are preestablished values put on various kinds of occupations and -- you know, I grew up in vocational education so I have a different perspective, but I have friends in college who really don't value an automotive technician until their car doesn't start, and then their value goes up significantly until the car is running again, you know, "Oh, they're an automotive technician."

So I think it's bigger than just selling. I think it's a whole cultural revolution, almost, and I don't know that I'll live long enough to see it.

>> RUSH: And I think that is definitely one of the things we deal with, and that's why I think it's important for the career-technical education community to at least define itself and understand what they do and to stay united in selling those approaches because we do deal with an unrealistic culture that says certain occupations aren't of value.

And I agree with you. I don't think we're going to fix that overnight.

>> SOTO: Well, thank you, Dr. Rush, for a very insightful presentation, very interesting discussion this afternoon.

>> RUSH: I can hear that potato pin.

>> SOTO: I've earned my potato pin, too.

>> RUSH: There you go.

>> SOTO: Thank you.

And thank you all for coming here this afternoon and those of you joining us via the Webcast. Please join us on January the 10th at 3:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.
The speaker will be George Copa, project director of Oregon State University, and the topic will be "New Designs for Career-Technical Education at Secondary and Postsecondary Levels."
All presentations are archived and at www.nccte.org.
So happy holidays, Feliz Navidad.
(Applause)
>> RUSH: I have some extra pins here.
(Webcast transcription by Professional Reporters, Inc. 800-229-0675)