

NEW CAREERS FOR TEACHERS

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Since beginning work on the MCTE Careers and Job Opportunities Committee, I have discovered, not surprisingly, that most teachers do not wish to pursue alternative careers. Despite retrenchment policies, falling enrollments, cutbacks, we all long for "one more year" and avoid all references to career counseling, job placement services or to our "transferable skills." Rightly or wrongly, study of the Liberal Arts fosters a disinclination towards business and commerce, and, like Bartleby the Scrivener, we would "prefer not to."

This attitude must change. Dozens of teachers are being "released from their contractual obligations" yearly and must seek new careers, a reality which nothing can efface. This reality can be ameliorated, however, by the conscious adoption, within our ranks, of a new career imperative. We must give serious consideration to the process of career and life planning for teachers, and to the development of a Minnesota-based career planning project which is rational, systematic, effective and humane.

Many career change programs have been developed in recent years to meet the needs of college faculty and other professionals forced to consider new career options. Those individuals who successfully achieve new careers as a result of these programs have common characteristics: they manage to adopt a positive attitude toward new career exploration; they initiate the career change process

before they are literally without work; they do extensive research of specific careers, including interviews with both employers and employees; and they "individualize" the process by setting their own unique career goals and making the "system" work on their behalf.

I invite the teachers of Minnesota to assist the Careers and Job Opportunities Committee of MCTE in the design of a Career Change Model for the state's teachers whose careers have been disrupted by the phenomena of retrenchment and declining enrollments. Many excellent "new career" resources already exist; they need only be centralized and teacher-focused.

Direct inquiries and suggestions to:

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