



Clean hands are one aspect of vocational training—and they're necessary in the close, careful work of architectural drafting.

Is education never more than theory?



Amidst a cluster of drawing boards, Tina Tate works her way toward a job as a draftsman.

This school gets your hands dirty!

By JUDITH BERNIE

WEST BLOOMFIELD—More than 70 West Bloomfield High School students are spending as much time learning a vocation as on academics this year.

These students attend the Southwest Oakland Vocational Education Center (SVOVEC) for two and a half hours each school day following regular classes at West Bloomfield High.

Shuttled by bus to Walled Lake, site of the vocational center, they join students from 11 other Oakland County high schools in learning a saleable skill to enter the working world.

The center, opened in September 1971, is one of four serving Oakland County.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES at the center include learning skills of par-

ticular value in the Detroit area such as auto mechanics, diesel power mechanics, welding, machine shop and industrial electronics.

In addition one and two year courses in dental and medical office assistance, office procedures, data processing and production arts are available.

More esoteric, but at the same time marketable, are advanced display (window dressing), retail plant and floral sales and greenhouse and nursery sales.

A full-fledged food service kitchen which services a public dining room gives would-be restaurateurs an opportunity to learn and to test skills.

The center offers a life-time placement service to its graduates.

WEST BLOOMFIELD'S Steve Landry admitted he likes his second year

auto mechanics course "a lot better" than academic work.

"It's run kind of like a real car shop," he explains.

Completely absorbed in the corn beef he was slicing, Harry Gordon said he might be interested in owning a restaurant one day.

"I'm trying it out," he added.

For Denise Rycus, her abilities in window display have already assured her of a job with Jacobson's when she graduates. "I really love it," she explained as she directed Kim Kajava on just where to hang a plant in the wicker window display they were completing.

Bob Bonzeville and Steve LaFave are two West Bloomfield students concentrating on either landscape design or greenhouse procedures in the combined curriculum.

One of the class projects this spring

is a landscape plan for Orchard Lake Middle School.

STUDENTS FROM all levels of academic achievement attend center classes but most will graduate to the work world rather than attend college.

Approximately half the students are placed in fields related to their vocational course; only two percent of center graduates are unemployed.

Those who attend the center from West Bloomfield High School are usually juniors and seniors, according to Gene Paap, assistant principal.

Occasionally a sophomore will be enrolled "to keep him in school," according to Paap.

"Some we save, some we don't," he frankly admitted.



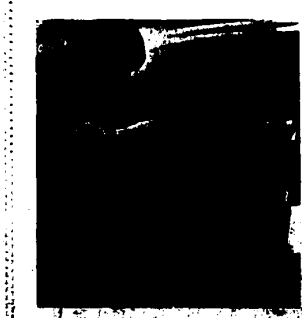
Grime, traditional staple of voc ed students, is no stranger in the automobile mechanics class (above). Bill Dolve (below), who owns those greasy hands, learns about a car's innards from the bottom up.



Debbie Moore's no cut-up-yet. She's paying close attention to the less-than-surgical delicacy involved in quartering a side of beef. When she finishes her training, she'll be a part of the chain that brings high-quality meats to your table.

Photographed by Leilani Hu

Computer programming is new--to vocational education curricula and to Pete Sweeney (left). It's one of the many subjects now in voc ed programs that are mixing brain power with the more traditional elbow grease of yesterday.



Randy Howland takes a break during a car repair class.

