

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE OF
FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES IN NEBRASKA CONCERNING
PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

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The Problem

In an effort to assess the degree of involvement by local secondary school staff in the preparation of the local plan for vocational education, a statewide study was undertaken in Nebraska. The primary objective was to assess the level of knowledge of the secondary school staff member who coordinates vocational education advisory council activities which pertain to preparation of the local plan for vocational education.

Methods

A random sample of 61 secondary schools was selected from the population of 214 public secondary schools in Nebraska with reimbursed vocational education programs, a 28 percent sample. Table 1 shows the number of schools in the sample, by school district size.

An interview schedule listing nine knowledge areas needed for preparation of the local plan for vocational education was developed by a committee representing the vocational areas of agricultural education, business and office education, home economics education, health education, diversified occupations, distributive education, trade and industrial education, and special vocational needs. The nine knowledge areas were:

1. Knowledge of community resources:

- Economic: Census of agriculture and other statistical data concerning products produced in the school service area.

Table 1

NUMBER AND ENROLLMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SAMPLE

School Size Classification*	Schools in Sample Number	Sample Percent
2 (Under 1,000 pop., grades K-12)	5	8.2
3 (1,000 - 5,000 pop., grades K-12)	49	80.3
4 (50,000-200,000 pop., grades K-12)	1	1.6
5 (200,000 or more pop., grades K-12)	1	1.6
6 (grades 9-12 only)	5	8.2
TOTAL	61	100.0

*Source: Nebraska State Department of Education, Eighty-Second Annual Directory, 1979-80.

- Ethnic: Nationality groups and their influences.
 - Education: Levels achieved by various age groups in the school service area.
 - Business and industry: Types and numbers of those firms in the school area.
2. Knowledge of employment opportunities in the school service area.
 3. Knowledge of possible vocational programs which could be offered to students in their school.
 4. Knowledge of vocational programs offered by their school.
 5. Knowledge of steps in the program-planning process.
 6. Procedures for identifying community vocational program needs.
 7. How to set priorities for vocational programs to be offered by the school.

8. How to organize an advisory council.

9. How to use group dynamics.

The instrument was validated by a panel representing the Division of Vocational Education in the State Department of Education, the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education, and the Center for Business and Vocational Teacher Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Six graduate students, each representing a different vocational area, were trained on how to conduct a personal interview using the interview schedule. They personally interviewed the secondary school staff person who had the responsibility for coordinating vocational advisory council activities in each of the sixty-one schools in the sample. A 100 percent response was obtained from the schools.

The subjects were asked to rate themselves on the level of knowledge they had in the nine areas of knowledge concerning preparation of the local plan for vocational education. Each person rated the "level of knowledge I have" and "level of knowledge I feel is ideal," on a scale of one to 10, depicted as follows.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No Knowledge	Little Knowledge		Some Knowledge			Considerable Knowledge		Thorough Knowledge	

The two-tailed t test was used to determine if there were significant differences between "knowledge I have" and "ideal knowledge" in each of the knowledge areas and for each occupational title group. Table 2 shows the occupational title groups which were included.

Findings

Table 2 shows the t values and the two-tail probability test score for each of seven faculty representative groups, by job title, over the nine knowledge areas.

Faculty representative groups of agricultural teachers, home economics teachers, business and office teachers, and secondary principals had significant differences between "knowledge I have" and "ideal knowledge" for eight or more of the nine knowledge areas. Vocational directors had significant differences in five

Table 2

T VALUES FOR FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES IN SEVEN FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE JOB TITLES,
FOR NINE KNOWLEDGE AREAS RELATING TO LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN PREPARATION

Knowledge Area	Faculty Representative Group						
	Supt. N=5	Agri. N=14	Home Economics N=10	Bus & Office N=8	Prin. and Asst. Prin. N=10	Counselors, DO and DE N=5	Vocational Directors N=9
Community resources	-1.63	-5.29*	-4.87*	-2.70*	-3.35	-5.88*	-0.43
Employment opportunities	-1.58	-3.12	-4.98*	-2.39*	-4.12*	-6.32*	-1.21
Possible vocational programs	-3.16*	-2.76*	-3.24*	-3.55*	-3.04*	-2.75	-5.66*
Vocational programs offered by the school	-1.63	-1.47	-2.18	-2.38*	-2.18	-1.00	-1.51
Planning activities	-2.33	-4.60*	-2.81*	-3.54*	-5.17*	-3.14*	-2.31*
Community vocational program needs	-2.75*	-4.92*	-5.24*	-5.18*	-3.89*	-2.45	-2.57*
Setting priorities for vocational programs	- .82	-4.13*	-4.31*	-4.77*	-4.66*	-4.71*	-3.27
Organizing an advisory council	- .30	-3.54*	-2.98*	-4.78*	-2.87*	-2.14	-1.21
Working in group settings	-1.24	-5.66*	-3.59*	-2.50*	-3.59*	-2.33	-2.82*

*Significant difference at .05 level between "knowledge level had" and "knowledge level desired," on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = low and 1 = high.

areas, superintendents in two areas, and the group including counselors, diversified occupations teachers, and distributive education teachers had four areas where significant differences were found.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Agriculture, business and office, and home economics teachers, along with secondary principals, were the most heavily involved as faculty representatives in preparing the local vocational education plan.
 2. Teachers in all vocational areas offered by the school should be involved in preparing the local plan for vocational education. In particular, there should be increased involvement by trades and industry, industrial arts, diversified occupations, distributive education, health occupations, and special vocational needs teachers, and counseling and guidance staff.
 3. The study supports the need for inservice education for all faculty representative groups. The inservice efforts may be directed toward one particular faculty representative group at a time or may concentrate on one knowledge area at a time with vocational teachers from the different faculty representative groups being invited.
 4. Three faculty representative groups, including superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and vocational directors, make up 31 percent of the sample of faculty representatives. It is important, then, that this major program planning task of local plan development receive prominent consideration in the pre-service and inservice programs of these groups.
 5. Undergraduate students in all of the faculty representative groups should receive experience in attending vocational advisory council meetings, and be given other responsibilities during the student teaching period that will develop competencies for performing needed tasks in each of the nine knowledge areas studied.
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(Hillison, Hagee, and Paulette, continued from page 8)

Summary

Recruitment of students in departments of agricultural education is crucial. Recruitment also demands time and money. To make the recruitment process work as efficiently as possible, it must be organized to effectively use all of the people available. By following the 16 theorems outlined in this article, a department of agricultural education should find that its recruitment efforts operate both efficiently and effectively.

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