

research in brief

Adult Orientation and Counseling Program

The intent and purpose of this study was to develop, initiate, test, and evaluate alternative methods to help adults entering evening colleges. Many adults returning to adult evening schools haven't been in an academic setting for a number of years and sometimes have difficulty in adjusting to the demands and rigors of the classroom.

An orientation program of 7 weekly meetings lasting for 1½ hours each was developed for adult evening students. Objectives of the orientation program were to provide increased self-knowledge and an orientation to college on the part of the participants, a better understanding of themselves and understanding of major developmental tasks of college students, and an insight into better emotional development, self-appraisal, and self-direction.

A unique feature of the orientation program consisted of the development of a simulation game entitled Adult Game of Education (AGE).

Findings of the study are based on the results obtained by analyzing observations on selected criteria of 55 students before and after participation in the study. It was concluded that participation in an orientation and counseling program did significantly help students achieve a higher grade point than those who didn't participate.

"Effectiveness of an Orientation and Counseling Program for Adult Evening Students at Drake University." Roger S. McCannon. Ph.D. dissertation, Iowa State University, Ames, 1973.

Irene Beavers

Learning Styles and Learning Experiences

Extension personnel from the county staff to state staff should find the research at Fox Valley Technical Institute interesting. It's not only interesting, but may prove to be useful in preparing materials and planning of learning experiences.

Oen and his study team at Fox Valley and the University of Wisconsin-Stout did research to identify learning styles relevant to vocational-technical education. Their findings, however, have implications for other learning activities.

A part of the study included the development of an instrument to effectively determine an individual's learning style. This instrument is described as one that is "easy to

handle” and “easy to use.” Learning styles were defined on two different continua—concrete/symbolic and structured/unstructured.

The research task included the development of a Likert Scale opinionnaire, the identification of a subset of learning styles. Other tasks included determining the relationship between learning styles and acquiring technical skills and knowledge.

Some of the findings reported are:

1. The instrument can effectively determine an individual's learning style based on the variables investigated in the study.
2. Students tend to enroll in programs of study that match or complement their particular style of learning.
3. Students viewed themselves as functioning effectively in a learning strategy that reflected a mix or composite of structured/unstructured learning styles.
4. Students who participated in the instrument administration at Fox Valley Technical Institute tended to have concrete learning styles.
5. Data from the instrument can provide information on those individuals enrolled in a program displaying a learning style different from the group, or different from the style necessary to effectively function in a program of study.
6. Students who should be offered instruction via alternative modes of presentation can be identified by the opinionnaire.
7. A classroom teacher can be provided with a simple, easily handled, and easily scored instrument to effectively determine a student's learning style as investigated in the study.
8. A teacher may use the Learning Activities instrument to make judgments about individual students when trying to individualize and personalize a program, course, or activity.

“Investigating the Interaction of Learning Styles and Types of Learning Experiences in Vocational-Technical Education—An Interim Report.” Urban T. Oen. Wisconsin State Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Sheboygan, August, 1973. [Order number: ED 086 836.]*

Huey Long

Natural Resources Career Education

Career education has become an important guidance tool in education. A need exists to understand what variables are important in the design and presentation of career information. This study was undertaken to isolate some variables that would have implications for the development of career programs.

There were 54 participants in the 1-week institute at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1973 representing 15 different states. The participant population was composed of young men and women of high school age who had expressed prior interest in the renewable natural resources area. Institute participants were asked to complete a questionnaire before the beginning of the program to identify what knowledge, opinion, and interest they had in the renewable natural resource field. This also isolated some significant variables that could be important in the individual's formation of each of these areas.

The instrument to measure knowledge was developed from questions submitted by instructors in each resource topic area and in conjunction with items from other questionnaires designed to assess conservation knowledge. Opinion items were developed to determine the participants' attitudes toward the use of natural resources. The opinion scale was based on a three-point continuum designed to differentiate between the concepts of preservation and use. Interest was assessed using a subjective rank-order scale.

Dependent variables of knowledge, opinion, and interest were analyzed in a step-wise regression format. The knowledge and the opinion components were included as the independent variables when the other components were being used as a dependent variable.

Results of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable knowledge indicated that participants from rural communities and those with high interest in wildlife tended to have higher knowledge scores. Occupation of the participant's father and the participant's interest in forestry were directly related to the participant's opinions about natural resource use. Interest in forestry was directly related to knowledge scores. Those in the upper grades, and those with a higher grade point had the highest interest scores. Younger participants and those with higher knowledge scores were the most interested in wildlife.

The results of this study suggest that the family and the community influence the level of knowledge and opinion, while knowledge and demographic variables tend to influence the specific interest patterns of the individuals. Results suggest the importance of synthesizing school and community elements to provide insight into a career program for the development of information describing occupational opportunities.

"Natural Resource Career Education and Some Important Variables That Are Related to Natural Resource Knowledge, Opinion, and Interest." David L. Groves, Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Forestry and Wildlife, 1973.

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