

THE DEGREE TO WHICH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS PERFORM GUIDANCE TASKS ON THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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Since the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Amendments of 1968, vocational educators have been studying and experimenting to develop programs that are efficient for the individual and society, and also effective in preparing the individual to adapt to a changing world of work. The vocational guidance service in the secondary schools is one aspect of the vocational education program which needs to be examined in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Vocational guidance is referred to as the process of assisting individuals to understand their capabilities and interests, to choose a suitable vocation, and to prepare for, enter, and make successful progress in the vocation of their choice (Committee on Publications, 1968). However, vocational guidance as provided in the secondary schools has received much criticism for being ineffective. Current vocational guidance services generally are expensive, impractical, and theoretical. The counselors are not reaching most people who want and need vocational guidance, and in many cases, failing to help those who are reached (Holland, 1974).

Some vocational secondary school teachers are involved with the vocational guidance of their students. Cates (1968) stated that the role which can and should be played by vocational teachers in the guidance program is a major one; greater perhaps than any other person in the school with the possible exception of the counselor. Arbuckle (1962) proclaimed that the biggest share of the guidance process in the school consequently must be shared by the classroom teacher.

Research Question

Based upon the need and guidance situation, the research question was: To what degree do vocational agriculture teachers perform vocational guidance tasks within secondary schools?

Methodology

The population for the study consisted of the 271 vocational agriculture teachers in Tennessee in 1976-77. Sixty-eight of these

were selected as the sample to be studied. A fifty-item instrument containing statements in different categories of guidance tasks was developed. Selected demographic data were collected to study other variables relative to performing guidance tasks. The instrument was reviewed by a panel of vocational educators and field tested with a resulting reliability of .98.

Data were collected through a mailed survey. Thirty-eight of the selected teachers returned a completed inventory. A one-way analysis of variance was used to determine significant differences at the .05 probability level, and Duncan's new multiple range test was used to determine specific differences.

Findings

From the 50 guidance tasks included on the instrument, the 10 most and the 10 least frequently performed tasks were identified. These tasks were rated on a scale from one to five with the highest rating indicating the most frequent performance. The 10 most frequently performed tasks are shown in Table I.

The 10 least frequently performed tasks are shown in Table II. The lowest mean score indicates the least performed task. The others are listed in sequence in Table II.

The 50 guidance tasks were placed into seven categories. These categories were identified according to the nature of the guidance tasks performed in each category. The mean scores and standard deviation indicating the frequency of performing tasks in each category are shown in Table III.

Other factors were studied in the performance of guidance tasks. Comparisons were made in relation to years of teaching experience, educational level of the teacher, age, school enrollment, number of counselors in the school, number of students enrolled in vocational agriculture, responsibility for counseling and participation in guidance workshops. An analysis of variance was used in making the comparison and tested at the .05 level of significance. Only two of the factors, school enrollment and participation in guidance workshops, showed a significant difference. These differences are shown in Table IV.

The new Duncan's multiple range test was applied to determine where the significant mean difference existed. In regard to school enrollment, the difference was between the schools with an enrollment less than 1,000 and those over 1,000 students. It appeared that the vocational teachers in the larger schools were performing more guidance tasks. According to participation in guidance workshops, a significant mean difference existed between the

teachers who had over one week of guidance training in a workshop and those with less than one week or received no training at all.

Table I
THE TEN MOST FREQUENTLY PERFORMED
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE TASKS

| Tasks | Mean Score* | Standard Deviation |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Guide students in the selection of vocational courses | 3.974 | 0.636 |
| 2. Promote vocational education through media | 3.868 | 0.906 |
| 3. Assist students in developing occupational decision-making skills . | 3.842 | 0.594 |
| 4. Assist students in making personal adjustments | 3.789 | 0.777 |
| 5. Counsel with "potential drop-outs" . | 3.789 | 0.777 |
| 6. Incorporate in the placement program on-the-job work experience | 3.763 | 1.025 |
| 7. Help students identify assets and liabilities related to their personal and physical self being | 3.711 | 0.768 |
| 8. Show occupational film and film-strips | 3.711 | 0.732 |
| 9. Work with individual students on methods for effective studying . . . | 3.605 | 1.054 |
| 10. Maintain current information on educational scholarships, fellow-ships, etc. | 3.605 | 0.823 |

*Score is based on: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, and 5 = always.

Implications

The study showed that vocational agriculture teachers are performing guidance skills. The ten most frequently performed tasks are necessary for an effective guidance program. Equally important are some of the lesser performed tasks. The different

Table II

THE TEN LEAST FREQUENTLY PERFORMED
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE TASKS

| Tasks | Mean Score | Standard Deviation |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Maintain case work studies on individual students | 2.105 | 1.060 |
| 2. Provide students with forms and printed materials from job placement organizations and agencies . . . | 2.132 | 1.070 |
| 3. Provide information from the Armed Forces on educational and occupational opportunities | 2.263 | 1.083 |
| 4. Consult with employment agencies (federal, state and local) | 2.421 | 1.030 |
| 5. Provide the <i>Dictionary of Occupational Titles</i> | 2.421 | 1.328 |
| 6. Make use of sociograms, checklists, and anecdotal records | 2.447 | 1.032 |
| 7. Provide job adjustment counseling | 2.632 | 1.025 |
| 8. Familiarize students with the labor movement in the United States | 2.658 | 1.072 |
| 9. Prepare occupational briefs | 2.632 | 1.025 |
| 10. Assist in planning "career days" and/or "college days" | 2.684 | 1.210 |

categories of counseling were not given equal emphasis by the teachers. The study also showed that the teachers with the most training in counseling and guidance were performing more guidance tasks at a significant different level than those with less training. Teachers in the larger schools were performing more guidance tasks at a significantly different level than those in smaller schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Vocational agriculture teachers should continue their guidance activities but improve in areas being neglected.

Table III

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION SCORES RELATIVE TO THE DEGREE
TO WHICH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS PERFORMED
GUIDANCE TASKS BY CATEGORIES

| Categories | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Counseling | 3.644 | 0.613 |
| Placement | 3.382 | 0.603 |
| Educational information | 3.313 | 0.686 |
| Consultant | 3.079 | 0.571 |
| Appraisal | 2.994 | 0.787 |

Table IV

FACTORS SHOWING A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE
BY AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

| Categories | Total Mean Score of 50 Items* | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| School Enrollment: | | |
| 0 - 500 students | 158.200 | 16.165 |
| 501 - 1,000 students | 147.235 | 23.808 |
| 1,001 - 1,500 students | 173.444 | 20.200 |
| 1,501 - 2,000 students | 172.000 | 14.142 |
| F = 4.0768 (significant at .05 level) | | |
| Participation in Guidance Workshops: | | |
| None | 152.800 | 23.189 |
| Less than one week | 172.200 | 12.300 |
| One week or more | 198.500 | 12.021 |
| F = 4.5824 (significant at .05 level) | | |

*N = 38

- Part of the pre- or in-service education offered to vocational agriculture teachers should be devoted to guidance and counseling of students.

3. Vocational agriculture teachers and guidance counselors should work together for a combined program of guidance for vocational agriculture students.

References

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