

the university staff, and the leadership of the cooperating agency. When vocational educators have had the benefit of related practical experience prior to teaching, and have been updated in technology and pedagogy by means of externships and internships throughout their careers, all of society stands to profit.

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WHAT IS EVALUATION?

by

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The term evaluation has its roots in the words évaluer and valère. The French word évaluer means to estimate, and the Latin word valère means to be strong. From valère comes the word value, meaning the worth or quality of something. Evaluer implies a process whereas valère implies a product. Thus, evaluation is thought of as a process or product of evaluating.

This background helps to explain why definitions of evaluation include concepts of process, estimation and value. To illustrate the use of these concepts a few definitions have been gleaned from educational literature and are presented here:

Evaluation is the process of determining the extent changes in knowledges, interests, understandings, attitudes and skills were accomplished.

Evaluation is the process of assessing the degree to which one is achieving his objectives.

Evaluation is a process of determining the extent to which the educational objectives of a program have been reached at the end of a particular educational activity.

Evaluation is the systematic attempt to gather evidence regarding changes in student behavior that accompany educational experiences.

Evaluation is the process of ascertaining or judging the value or amount of something by careful appraisal.

These definitions of evaluation consider evaluation a process (or attempt) to determine (or ascertain, assess, or judge) the degree (or extent, value or amount) of progress (or change, effectiveness or achievement) toward predetermined objectives (or behaviors or something). Evaluation, then, is an active process of trying to find answers to specific

questions by actually checking and looking at appropriate evidence. These specific questions arise within the span of activity between the present status of a behavior, for example, and the desired behavior or objective.

In educational situations where emphasis is on changing behavior of learners, at least three fixes will play an important part in the evaluation process. One fix would be on the present status of the learners at the beginning of the planned experience. A second would be on the objective or outcome sought. One can realistically expect the learners to progress toward the objective, but not all will reach it, or at least not all at the same time. It is normal to expect a gap to exist between the anticipated and the attained at any point in time. Through the evaluation process a fix may be established on where the learner is. This fix can be used in determining progress in terms of the beginning point and the anticipated final point.

Evaluation is not restricted just to systematic attempts in gathering evidence. Everyone utilizes the evaluation process in his daily activities. He makes judgments whether something is "good" or "bad" in relation to his objectives or the standards he holds. These unstructured or informal evaluations are essential to normal living. In evaluating instruction, agricultural educators must, however, rise above this level to the systematic evaluation of conditions under which the instruction is carried on and of how far the instructional purposes are actually being realized.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE VOCATIONAL CHOICES OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS IN LOUISIANA

by

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What vocational plans have youth made for themselves? What are the circumstances, and who are the people influencing the educational and occupational plans of high school youth? Answers to these questions are needed to fill the "credibility gap" between occupational training and job requirements.

To obtain this information, a survey was conducted in Louisiana involving 741 vocational agricultural students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the public secondary schools. Participating in this research were 17 high schools representing five parish school systems. Cooperating in the design and performance of the study were the Departments of Vocational Agricultural Education and Home Economics Education at Louisiana State University. This report is based upon a fragmentary study which served as a dissertation for the author.