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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS
OF UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY DISTRIBUTIVE
EDUCATION GRADUATES, 1969-1973

by

Robert K. Shaw

A report submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Business Education with emphasis in
Distributive Education

Plan B

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
1976

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Robert K. Shaw

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Those persons involved with the curriculum in the Business Education Department at Utah State University need to be kept informed of the current location and employment status of graduates from the distributive education program at that institution. This will enable them to keep abreast of the needs of the program for training teacher-coordinators and others to be employed in the field of distribution. If the graduates are employed in distributive education positions, a knowledge of their attitudes toward the curriculum they followed at the university will help in evaluating and upgrading to meet the needs of a changing world. Only through repetitive studies of the current status of recent graduates can such information be obtained.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine the employment experience of 1969-73 Utah State University Distributive Education graduates; (2) to obtain graduates' opinions regarding the value of their university courses as preparation for positions in distribution and distributive education; and (3) to obtain suggestions for addition and deletion of courses required for Distributive Education majors.

Importance of the study

As Utah State University is one of the major suppliers of distributive education teacher-coordinators in the state of Utah, it is hoped that this study will give up-to-date insight into the needs of the distributive education program at that institution.

A variety of criteria are used to determine if teacher education programs are effective. Possibly the most frequently used criterion is whether or not the graduate is eventually employed in the occupation for which he was trained.

Heisick (1969) conducted a study of Utah State University graduates in the field of distributive education and various other business education majors to determine the field in which they were then employed. The object of this research was to see how well the training at Utah State University had filled the occupational needs of the subject graduates. She determined whether the graduates contacted held teaching certificates and obtained feedback regarding their training at Utah State University.

Updating of Heisick's study would serve to ascertain what changes are needed, in the opinions of recent graduates, to improve the curriculum at Utah State University and make the distributive education teacher training program more meaningful. Careful analysis and evaluation of information received regarding the present occupations of recent graduates would serve to determine what impact their training has had on their careers to date.

Scope and limitations of the study

The study was delimited to include a selected group of graduates from Utah State University in the field of distributive education in the years 1969 through 1973.

Because only two-thirds of the graduates responded to the questionnaires, the opinions of the entire group could not be considered. It was assumed by the researcher that those not responding held no strong opinions regarding their training. Thus the diminished number of responses could be considered as representative of the majority of graduates. Answers received were based on the graduates' personal interpretations of the questions. Because their interpretations may not be consistent with the intentions of the study, some discrepancies may have occurred.

Definition of terms

Distributive education: A vocational instructional program designed to meet the needs of persons who have entered or are preparing to enter a distributive occupation or an occupation requiring competency in one or more of the marketing functions.

Distributive occupations: A distributive occupation is one in which the worker is engaged primarily in the marketing, merchandising, or distribution of goods and services at both management and nonmanagement levels.

Teacher-coordinator: A teacher-coordinator is a member of the school staff who teaches the related and technical subject matter involved in cooperative training programs. He performs the regular duties of a coordinator in integrating classroom instruction and the on-the-job activities of the employed student.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews research studies and literature relative to the need for constant evaluation and upgrading of course content and emphasis in training prospective teacher-coordinators and others working in the field of distribution. Subjects reviewed are:

- (1) The purpose of distributive education
- (2) The need for evaluation and follow-up
- (3) Previous studies

The purpose of distributive education

Distributive education, according to Crawford and Meyer (1972), is the people-oriented segment of the vocational education field which deals with training for persons in the field of distribution. These authors said the purpose of distributive education is to prepare individuals for satisfying and satisfactory entry, adjustment and advancement in distributive careers. They claimed the responsibility for the fulfillment of this purpose rests with the teachers and teacher-coordinators who organize and operate distributive education programs.

The trend in recent years has been shifting to more practical education. The contribution being made to the economic growth of our nation by workers in distribution plays a substantial role in the over-all prosperity and well-being of the country. It is the obligation of the occupational education sector to provide training which will contribute to an individual's becoming both a contributing economic producer and a responsible member of society, according to Crawford and Meyer (1972).

Need for evaluation and follow-up

The success of an institution can best be measured by the success of the student. To ascertain the effectiveness of a school's program there must be a follow-up from the day the student enters the institution until after he gains employment or transfers to another institution. Follow-up is a process by which an educational institution seeks to determine how effectively it is meeting the current and future needs of those it serves. (Wisconsin System of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, 1970.)

Crawford and Meyer (1972) said nothing is more helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of a program or in planning for the future than a follow-up study of graduates. The value of follow-up studies is indicated by the widespread use of this method of evaluating not only the status of former students with regard to attainment of career goals but also determining the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and methods of training. These authors

maintained that follow-up studies, to be most effective, should be made at three-year or five-year intervals.

Hoffman (1968) cited a need to identify the type and amount of subject matter content that distributive education teachers need to have at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He also stated that research is needed to determine the place in the institution wherein educators in the field of distributive education can function in the best manner.

A need for specifically designed curriculums for teachers of distribution and marketing is purported by Buckner (1968). He stated that the major programs in the colleges of business administration--even marketing major programs or business education programs--generally do not fill the needs for subject matter preparation for teachers in distributive education.

Iliff (1966) recommends that the business curriculum be subjected to study and revision appropriate to the maintenance of its pertinence to the needs of the students it serves. She said the opinions of the students should be sought by means of questionnaires and interviews to determine possible additions and revisions to the curriculum.

Coakley (1972, p. 176) emphasized the importance of timely and effective evaluations of both students and programs thus:

Continuous student and program evaluation should be conducted if distributive education is to function as it should in the total context of vocational-technical education.

McKinney and Oglesby (1971) cited a need for follow-up studies. These

authors stated:

The focus of most evaluation efforts should be on the product or the outcomes of the educational system. This emphasis on the output of the educational system means that we need to look at the former students of that system to assist in determining the effects of the educational system on the former students. One of the ways of securing information about former students is to conduct a follow-up study of the former students.

The Distributive Education Teacher-Coordination's Handbook states the following:

The follow-up of former students serves as an important technique for evaluating the school's distributive education department. The merit of the program may be determined by the success of the students who have left the program. In such a follow-up study, former students may be asked to submit reports indicating their success or failure and giving their opinions of the school's distributive education department. (Distributive Education Teacher-Coordination's Handbook, 1972, p. 174)

Wollschlager (1969) commented on the need for constant upgrading and improvement of curricula in order to meet the requirements of the business education student. He said:

Although there have been changes in the business education curriculum during the past decade, it is inevitable that the next decade will see changes that are both more numerous and more significant. As the world in which we live and work and transact our daily affairs experiences rapid change, then too, must the business education curriculum, if it is to keep pace with the times. (Wollschlager, 1969, p. 19)

Gilli (1975) believed that obtaining data through follow-up studies is the first step in a process "that enables vocational educators to incorporate knowledge derived from past experiences in planning for the future." He

considered such studies to be an integral part of a continuous process of scrutiny and change. Some of the areas of vocational education Gilli listed for which follow-up studies can provide valuable decision-making data are: (1) curriculum relevancy as assessed by former students; (2) overall value of the program of training, (3) quality of training and education, and (4) job satisfaction of former students.

The need for scrutiny and change was acknowledged by Newell and Miller (1973) who wrote as follows:

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Amendments of 1968 . . . was a major mandate to redirect emphasis from planning programs to fit the organization to planning programs according to the needs of those who are to receive the training.

The State of Utah Teacher Education Evaluation Team made recommendations regarding Utah State University's distributive teacher education program. Among their suggestions were: (1) efforts should be made by the department to develop means whereby prospective distributive education teachers will have an opportunity to gain appropriate training in subject matters such as salesmanship, advertising, display and merchandising mathematics; and (2) more adequate follow-up evaluation of competencies of former students should be attempted.

Previous studies

Brough (1971) said that since the teacher coordinator must be well qualified to achieve success, educators have been giving consideration to the curriculum taken by the prospective teacher-coordinator to see if the

institutions charged with the responsibility of training future educators are fulfilling the suggested needs in this preparation. Brough conducted a study which compared the subject matter of course content in the distributive education teacher preparation programs at Utah State University with the professional and technical competencies specified in the study by Crawford (1969).

Crawford involved personnel throughout the United States engaged in state supervisory and teacher education functions, as well as a number of workers at entry, supervisory and management levels. Her objectives were to ascertain basic beliefs regarding distributive education, the tasks of teacher coordinators in distributive education programs, and the professional and technical competencies needed by personnel at various levels in distributive education and by various distributive workers.

Brough (1971) wrote of the need to give consideration to the curriculum offered to prospective teacher coordinators in order to determine whether the institutions charged with the responsibility of training future educators are fulfilling vital preparational needs. Although his study revealed that the competencies specified in Crawford's study were largely met by the curriculum at Utah State University, he recommended that future distributive education teachers be required to take courses in business mathematics and management concepts, and that they should not be required to take accounting and business law. He said these subjects had little to contribute to Crawford competency.

Dixon (1972) completed a study similar to that of Brough, but with emphasis on business education and secondary education curricula while Brough studied the curricula of business administration and accounting classes. The findings of Dixon indicated that there are some duplications which should be deleted from various courses and included in others such as survey courses and seminars.

The 1956-1963 graduates in distributive education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute were subjects for a follow-up study conducted by Cheshire (1964). He asked graduates from the distributive education program of that institution to rate the training they had received as undergraduates. The former students rated directed occupational experience as one of the most profitable phases of the program. Cheshire cited the value of this practice in keeping the members of the distributive education staff aware of current problems of coordination faced by the distributive education teacher-coordinator. Value to the students was gained through practical application of principles being taught.

Heisick (1969) made a study of the graduates of Utah State University business education, office administration and distributive education for the years 1959 through 1968. Her purpose was to determine the occupations of the graduates at the time of the study, the number holding teaching certificates at that time as well as during the years since graduation, whether the graduates had taught in areas other than business or had done substitute teaching, and

to evaluate through the graduates' responses the strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate programs and related faculty advisement at Utah State University.

Her findings indicated that the graduates generally felt their faculty guidance had been adequate at Utah State University, and the subject matter and quality of instruction were rated good or superior by the majority of respondents. Depth of coverage was also rated highly. The areas where the former students felt improvement was needed were in facilities and audio visual instruction.

Because the graduates were not remaining in the teaching profession, this researcher recommended that future follow-up studies be conducted to determine if this trend continues or if the areas which needed improvement at the time of her study are no longer areas needing improvement, in the opinions of graduates from these departments.

Summary

A review of pertinent literature indicates that many educators consider evaluation of curricula designed to train students in the field of distributive education to be a necessary and continuous process. The follow-up study has been recommended as an adequate means of effecting evaluation. Previous studies conducted in this field indicate that frequent up-dating is valuable to keep educators on the university level informed about the effectiveness and relevancy of the programs being administered.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The procedure for conducting the study was as follows: (1) identify the subjects for the study; (2) devise the survey instrument; (3) tabulate results and evaluate the information received; and (4) make appropriate recommendations where responses indicate the need.

Identification of subjects

This follow-up study consisted of a survey of the 57 graduates of the distributive education program at Utah State University for the years 1969 through 1973. All graduates except one were male students.

The survey instrument

A four-page questionnaire was devised and mailed to the graduates accompanied by cover letters (see Appendix A). Through questions regarding the present and immediate past employment of the graduates, information was sought that would reveal the attitudes of the respondents toward their training for distributive education employment. The questionnaire was designed to attempt to ascertain which courses at Utah State University are most helpful in preparing the students for future employment and which courses, in the opinions of the respondents, could be eliminated. To facilitate ease of response, the names of the courses were listed, followed by boxes under

headings ranging from "useless" to "very valuable." Boxes were also provided to indicate if respondents did not take a particular course or if they had no opinion. Thus, to respond to the request for their evaluations, the graduates needed only to check the boxes under the headings which most nearly described their assessments of the courses listed.

Collecting the data

The names of graduates in distributive education from 1969 through 1973 were obtained from the Office of Admissions and Records. Their current addresses were obtained from the Utah State University Alumni Office. Assistance was solicited from the Director of Teacher Placement, who contributed greatly regarding the most recent locations of the graduates and some of their employers. Also helpful was the use of postal cards sent to parents of graduates for whom current addresses could not otherwise be obtained (see Appendix C).

The questionnaires with cover letters were mailed to the graduates and a follow-up letter (see Appendix B) was sent to each of those who had not responded within a month's time.

Processing the data

The data received on the completed questionnaires was tabulated, summarized, and reported in tabular form giving percentage figures. Tabulation of the results was done by hand and evaluation was made of the answers that did not fit any of the multiple-choice answers suggested.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine the employment experiences of graduates of the Distributive Education Program at Utah State University for the years 1969 through 1973; (2) to obtain graduates' opinions regarding the value of the courses offered at USU as preparation for positions as teacher-coordinators or in the field of distribution; and (3) to obtain suggestions for addition and deletion of courses now required for the Distributive Education major at Utah State University. This chapter presents the results obtained from the questionnaire administered to the graduates.

The number of graduates for the years of the study, the number and percentage of graduates responding to the questionnaire, the sex of the respondents, and the number and percentage with experience as distributive education coordinators are shown in Table 1.

Of the 56 graduates surveyed, 37, or 66.1 percent, responded to the questionnaire. No attempt was made to obtain data from nonrespondents. Fifteen of the total responding, or 26.8 percent, had been employed as distributive education teacher-coordinators. Half of the 14 persons who graduated in 1969 had held positions as distributive education teacher-coordinators. Only two, or 22.2 percent, of the nine graduates for the year

Table 1. Summary of questionnaire replies listing number of graduates and respondents, sex of respondents, and tally of graduates who become distributive education coordinators

Year	Number of graduates	Number of graduates responding	Percent of graduates responding	Number of males	Number of females	Number with experience as D. E. coordinator	Percent with experience as D. E. coordinator
1969	14	11	78.6	14	0	7	50.0
1970	9	3	33.3	9	0	2	22.2
1971	12	9	75.0	12	0	3	25.0
1972	15	8	53.3	14	1	2	13.3
1973	6	6	100.0	6	0	1	16.7
Totals	56	37	66.1	55	1	15	26.8

1970 had held distributive education teacher-coordinator positions. Of the twelve graduates for 1971, three, or 25 percent, had been employed as distributive education teacher-coordinators, while two, or 13.3 percent of the 1972 graduates had been so employed. Of the six graduates of 1973, only one or 17.6 percent had had experience as a teacher-coordinator of distributive education.

The researcher noted a trend of decreasing percentages of graduates who had experienced employment as teacher-coordinators during the five-year period studies, with minor exceptions in 1971 and 1973.

During the five years covered by the questionnaire, only one female graduated from the distributive education program at Utah State University. She was not employed either as a teacher-coordinator or in the field of distribution.

The remainder of the data is presented in order of the purposes of the study.

Purpose 1. To determine the employment experience of 1969-1973 Utah State University Distributive Education graduates.

A summary of data regarding the employment experience of Distributive Education graduates of Utah State University who responded to the questionnaire is shown in Table 2. The findings showed that all 37 respondents were currently employed. Ten, or 27 percent, held positions as distributive education teacher-coordinators at the time of completion of the questionnaire, while another fourteen graduates, or 37.9 percent, were employed in

Table 2. Numbers of graduates employed, types of positions held, and percentages of positions in distribution-related fields compared with other types of employment

	Dist. Ed. teacher coord.	%	Teaching other than Dist. Ed.	%	Empl. in distr. occup.	%	Other	%	Not empl.	Total
Present or most recent position	10	27.0	4	10.8	14	37.9	9	24.3	0	37
Second most recent position	6	25.0	1	4.2	9	37.5	8	33.3	0	24
Third most recent position	2	13.3	0	0.0	4	26.7	9	60.0	0	15
Fourth most recent position	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	2

distributive type occupations. Four graduates were teaching but not in distributive education and nine were employed in occupations not related to either teaching or distribution.

Of the twenty-four positions listed by respondents as their second most recent position held, six, or 25 percent were distributive education teacher-coordinators and nine, or 37.5 percent were employed in a distributive occupation. Of the respondents there were fifteen, or 62.5 percent, whose second most recent jobs were either as distributive education teacher-coordinators or in the distributive occupations.

Of the positions listed as third most recently held jobs, only 40 percent were either as teacher-coordinators of distributive education or in the field of distribution. Only two of the respondents had held four or more jobs. These two graduates indicated their fourth most recently held jobs were in the "other occupations" category.

In summary, of the 78 employment positions held aggregately by the 37 responding graduates in distribution education from Utah State University in the years 1969 through 1973, 45 positions have been distributive education teacher-coordinators or otherwise in the distribution field. These positions represent 57.7 percent of the positions held by the graduates from this major field of education.

Purpose 2. To obtain graduates' opinions regarding the value of their university courses as preparation for positions in distribution and distributive education.

Ratings given by the Utah State University graduates of the courses in the distributive education major are reported in Table 3. Of the 37 respondents, only 23 completed this section of the questionnaire. These 23 graduates were those who had been employed in the field of distribution. Those who had not been employed in this field were not requested to complete this section of the questionnaire.

The aggregate number of courses in which the graduates had been enrolled while attending Utah State University was 692. The 23 respondents to this section of the questionnaire considered 61.9 percent of the courses to be very valuable or somewhat valuable. Only 11.8 percent of the courses were considered to be useless or of little value.

Table 3. Ratings of courses in the USU distributive education major giving values assessed by graduates responding to questionnaire

	Useless	Little value	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	Did not take course	No opinion	Total
Number	12	70	182	246	159	23	692
Percentage	1.7	10.1	26.3	35.6	23.0	3.3	100.0

The graduates considered only 12 courses, or 1.7 percent, to be useless, and 70 courses, or 10.1 percent, were assessed of little value.

Figures in Table 4 indicate those courses in the distributive education composite major at Utah State University in which the graduates between 1969 and 1973 had been enrolled and the frequency of rating on a scale from "very valuable" to "useless."

A slight degree of error occurred in the information used in this table due to the fact that some of the respondents had no opinion of the courses listed on the questionnaire.

There were four courses in which all 23 of the respondents to this section of the questionnaire were enrolled while attending Utah State University. Of these, business communications, BE 351, was rated most highly by the respondents. Of the 23 students who took the course, 17 or 74 percent rated it as "very valuable." Another five students representing 21.7 percent of the enrollees gave this course a "somewhat valuable" rating. The researcher noted that 95.7 percent of the students who had been enrolled in this course felt that it was either very valuable or somewhat valuable.

The three other courses in which all 23 respondents had been enrolled were advertising, BA 458; business law, BA 201; and principles of business education, BE 461. When the ratings of "very valuable" and "somewhat valuable" were combined, respectively 95.7 percent, 91.3 percent, and 78.3 percent of the graduates' ratings for these courses were within these value categories.

The four classes with the next highest percentage enrollment were retailing, BA 454; managing personal finances, BE 581; personnel

Table 4. Summary of responses to questions about the value of the courses in the distributive education composite major at Utah State University as preparation for past or present employment as a distributive education coordinator or in a distributive occupation

Name and number of course	1 Useless	2 Percentage	3 Little value	4 Percentage	5 Somewhat variable	6 Percentage	7 Very valuable	8 Percentage	9 Total of "S. V." and "V. V."	10 Percentage	11 Total number who took course	12 Percentage of respondents*	13 Total number respondents	14 Did not take course	15 No opinion
Business Communications, BE 351	-	-	1	4.3	5	21.7	17	74.0	22	93.7	23	100.0	23	-	-
Advertising, BA 456	-	-	1	4.3	7	30.4	15	65.3	22	93.7	23	100.0	23	-	-
Business Law, BA 201	-	-	1	4.5	6	27.3	15	68.2	21	91.3	23	100.0	23	-	-
Principles of Business Education, BE 461	1	4.3	4	17.4	12	52.2	6	26.1	18	78.3	23	100.0	23	-	-
Retailing, BA 454	-	-	-	-	6	27.2	16	72.7	22	100.0	22	95.6	23	1	-
Managing Personal Finances, BE 581	-	-	2	9.1	4	18.2	16	72.7	20	90.0	22	95.6	23	1	-
Personnel Administration, BA 360 (560)	-	-	2	9.0	12	54.5	8	36.3	20	90.0	22	95.6	23	-	1
Introductory Accounting, Acct. 201	-	-	4	18.2	9	40.9	9	40.9	18	81.8	22	95.6	23	-	1
Stu. Teach. in the Sec. School, BE 460	-	-	1	4.8	4	19.0	16	76.2	20	95.2	21	95.4	22	1	-
Introductory Accounting, Acct. 202	-	-	3	14.3	9	42.8	9	42.8	18	85.7	21	95.4	22	-	1
Prin. & Meth. of Dist. Ed., B 561	-	-	3	14.3	5	23.8	13	61.9	18	85.7	21	95.4	22	1	-
Human Development-General, Psych. 110	2	9.5	7	33.3	9	42.9	3	14.3	12	57.1	21	95.4	22	-	1
Educational Psychology, Psych. 366	2	9.5	8	38.1	6	28.6	5	23.8	11	52.4	21	95.4	22	1	-
Methods of Teaching Coop. Ed., BE 571	2	9.1	1	4.6	6	27.2	13	59.1	19	86.4	22	96.0	23	-	1
Sales Management, BA 455	-	-	-	-	9	42.8	12	57.1	21	100.0	21	91.3	23	2	-
Fundamentals of Marketing, BA 350 (550)	-	-	2	9.5	3	14.2	16	76.2	19	90.5	21	91.3	23	2	-
Business Machines, BE 131	1	5.0	4	20.0	10	50.0	5	25.0	15	75.0	20	91.0	22	2	-
Meth. of Teach. Bus.-Non-skilled, BE 572	-	-	2	10.5	11	57.9	6	31.6	17	89.5	19	86.3	22	2	1
Management Concepts, 311 (511)	-	-	1	6.2	7	43.7	6	50.0	15	85.8	16	69.5	23	6	1
Audiovisual, IM 541, 551	-	-	-	-	1	6.7	14	83.3	15	100.0	15	68.1	22	7	-
Intro. to Computer Science, CS 150	-	-	7	50.0	4	28.6	3	21.4	7	50.0	14	60.8	23	8	1
Foundation Studies in Teaching, Sec. Ed. 301	2	14.3	5	35.7	6	42.9	1	7.1	7	50.0	14	63.6	22	7	1
Human Development-Adolescent Psych. 614	-	-	2	16.7	6	50.0	4	33.3	10	83.3	12	54.5	22	8	2
Secondary Curriculum Seminar, Sec. Ed. 450	-	-	2	18.7	6	54.5	3	27.3	9	81.8	11	52.4	21	7	3
Corporation Finance, BA 240 (540)	-	-	2	18.1	6	54.5	3	27.3	9	81.8	11	47.8	23	10	3
Meas. and Evaluation in Ed., Sec. Ed. 604	-	-	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0	6	75.0	8	36.3	22	12	1
Statistical Methods, Psych. 380	2	25.0	1	12.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	5	62.5	8	34.8	23	14	1
Training Teacher Aides, Sec. Ed. 150	-	-	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	100.0	5	22.7	22	16	1
Human Dev.-Exceptional Child, Psych. 313	-	-	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	3	75.0	4	14.3	21	16	1
Diagn. & Treat. of Learn. Diff., Sp. Ed. 302	-	-	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	9.5	21	17	1
Drug Use and Abuse, HPER 443	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	100.0	2	100.0	2	9.5	21	18	1
Totals	12	1.7	70	10.1	128	26.3	246	35.6	428	83.9	510	73.7	692	159	23

*The percentages shown in column 10 are based on the totals in column 9 compared with the totals in column 11

**The percentages listed in column 12 are based on the total listed in 11 compared with the totals listed in column 13.

administration, BA 360 (560); and introductory accounting, Acct. 201. Of the 23 respondents to this section of the questionnaire, 95.6 percent had been enrolled in these courses. The percentages of ratings for these courses which fell within the combined categories of "very valuable" and "somewhat valuable" were: retailing, 100 percent; managing personal finances, 90.9 percent; personnel administration, 90.9 percent; and introductory accounting, 81.8 percent.

Of the five classes with the next highest percentages of enrollment among graduate respondents (95.4 percent), the researcher noted some interesting trends. Student teaching in the secondary schools, BE 460, was given either a "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable" rating by 95.2 percent of the former enrollees and only one student gave the course a "little value" rating. Introductory accounting, Acct. 202, was given combined "very valuable" and "somewhat valuable" ratings by 85.7 percent of the respondents who took the class, while three respondents, or 14.3 percent, rated the class as having little value. Principles and methods of distributive education, BE 561, was rated either "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable" by 85.7 percent of the respondents, but also received three assessments as being of little value.

On the other hand, the researcher noted that although both psychology classes having 95.4 percent enrollment by former graduates received over 50 percent of their ratings in the "somewhat valuable" and "very valuable" categories, they both received some low ratings. Psychology 366

received ratings of "useless" and "little value" by 47.6 percent of the respondents who had taken the course. Psychology 110 was rated in the "useless" or "little value" categories by 42.8 percent of the respondents.

Another course which elicited negative ratings by 50 percent of the former enrollees was foundation studies in teaching, Sec. Ed. 301. Of the 14 persons who took this course, or 63.6 percent of the respondents, seven gave ratings of "useless" or "little value."

The researcher noted that several of the classes in which small numbers of the graduates had been enrolled were given ratings of either "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable" by all who had taken the courses. Audiovisual, IM 541 and 551 had had only 15 of the students enrolled, or 68.1 percent of the respondents. However, 100 percent of those enrolled considered it to have been either "somewhat valuable" or "very valuable." Only five of the graduates had been enrolled in training teacher aides, Sec. Ed. 150, constituting just 22.7 percent of the respondents. Of these five enrollees, three believed the course to be "very valuable" and two classed it as being "somewhat valuable." Another course which would seem to merit mention is drug use and abuse, HPER 442. Only two of the respondents had been enrolled in the course, but both rated it as being very valuable. Although this course could not be classified as a "how to" course, it was cited by both graduates as being relative to future needs.

Purpose 3. To obtain suggestions for addition and deletion of courses required for distributive education majors.

To fulfill Purpose 3, the graduates were asked to write their suggestions and comments.

The category in which the most suggestions were made for addition of courses or course material was with regard to the Distributive Education Clubs of America. Suggestions were given that courses should include more help with organization and supervising DECA activities and integration of the youth organization with classroom activities. Five of the respondents indicated they would have benefited from additional helps in this area.

The subject of vocational guidance was the second most often mentioned addition desired by the respondents. Three graduates suggested additional training to prepare them for the counseling of career-oriented students.

Five different subjects received two recommendations for increased emphasis. These were marketing, business mathematics, on-the-job experience, business management, and teaching methods.

The subject most often suggested for possible deletion was computer science, CS 150. The subjects mentioned only once as being nonessential fell into the category of theory-oriented courses. These included "history of education" classes, corporation finance, issues and trends in business education, and education classes not dealing specifically with business.

Ten, or 43.5 percent, of the respondents remarked about the need for more relevancy and practical application of course content. The

recommendations were for more "how-to" courses relating to their future experience in teacher-coordinator positions or in the field of distribution.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research paper describes a follow-up study conducted relative to the present employment status of the 57 graduates from Utah State University from 1969 through 1973 with a major in distributive education.

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine the employment experience of 1969-1973 Utah State University Distributive Education graduates; (2) to obtain graduates' opinions regarding the value of their university courses as preparation for positions in distribution and distributive education; and (3) to obtain suggestions for addition and deletion of courses required for distributive education majors.

The subject graduates were identified and their present addresses obtained. A questionnaire was sent to each graduate with cover letters soliciting cooperation by responding with the desired information. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first contained questions regarding the graduates' present and past employment. The second part was to be answered by only those graduates who had had employment in the field of distribution. This second part was to determine which courses offered at Utah State University had been most helpful in preparing for and obtaining

employment as teacher-coordinators of distributive education or other positions in the field of distribution.

Those who responded to the questionnaire constituted about two-thirds of those to whom questionnaires were sent. Since a follow-up letter produced no additional responses, the status and opinions of nonrespondent graduates were not considered.

The data received was tabulated by hand and summarized in tabular form for evaluation. Only simple percentages were used.

The findings indicated that half of the 1969 graduates had held positions as teacher-coordinators of distributive education. In the succeeding years a general trend of decreasing percentages of graduates holding such positions was noted. Of those graduating in 1973, only one had been employed as a teacher-coordinator of distributive education.

Other findings indicated that the graduates were for the most part satisfied with the curriculum followed at Utah State University. However, some of the respondents pointed out what they believed to be deficiencies in the program designed for distributive education majors.

The remainder of this chapter will outline conclusions drawn from the information received in response to the questionnaire administered and will give recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Conclusions

The first purpose of this study was to determine the employment experience of Distributive Education graduates from Utah State University for the years 1969 through 1973. The following conclusions were made relative to this purpose:

(1) Graduates from the distributive education program at Utah State University have been moderately successful in obtaining positions as either teacher-coordinators or in other distributive occupations. Of the 78 positions held by the graduates over the five-year period studied, 45 (or 58 percent) of the jobs were either teacher-coordinator positions or in distributive occupations.

(2) Because only one woman graduated from the distributive education program during the five years covered by the study, it can be concluded that the program is not attracting and retaining the interest of female students at Utah State University. The fact that the one female graduate was employed in a field other than distribution reinforces this conclusion.

The second objective was to determine opinions of the graduates regarding the value of their undergraduate courses as preparation for employment in distributive education and in distribution occupations. The following conclusions relate to this objective:

(1) The majority of the courses in which the respondents had been enrolled as undergraduates at Utah State University were considered to be very valuable or somewhat valuable. The courses which were considered

to be most valuable as preparation for employment in their major field were those which they considered to be relevant to the actual business world of distribution. Based on this information, it can be concluded that students are desirous of having relevancy in their course work.

(2) A few of the classes were considered to be useless or of little value. These were the classes that did not relate to the distributive occupations. Psychology and statistics were most often considered to be useless or of little value. From these respondent observations, it was concluded that psychology and statistics are not meeting the needs of the students.

The third purpose of the study was to obtain suggestions for improvement of the curricula and comments on the effectiveness of the distributive education composite major at Utah State University. Some conclusions drawn from this part of the study include:

(1) More classes or strengthening of course content to aid future teacher-coordinators in the areas of DECA and vocational guidance were considered to be desirable.

(2) The researcher noted that nearly half of the respondents made suggestions regarding relevancy or practical application of the courses to be taken. Their remarks suggested that theory-type classes be de-emphasized and replaced with courses dealing with "how to" type subjects. However, the findings of the study lead to a conclusion that several of the non-theory classes taken by rather small numbers of the respondents and given high

value ratings may have been overlooked by some of the students when planning their courses of study.

In general, the respondents appeared to be very pleased with the program in which they had been enrolled at Utah State University. The responses indicated a lively interest in how the program might affect those presently in the training program or those who might enroll in the program in the future.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to the Department of Business Education at Utah State University:

(1) A continual effort should be made to recruit and train distributive education teacher-coordinators and workers. One area in which more emphasis should be exerted is to attract more females to the program. It was noted that in the five-year period surveyed, only one woman was graduated in the distributive education major. More emphasis needs to be placed on the recruitment of qualified women into the distributive education teacher-coordination program.

(2) Intensive effort should be made in the recruitment and training of teacher-coordinators. The decreasing number of graduates each year who enter the job market as teacher-coordinators is indicative that more encouragement is needed in this area.

(3) The curriculum should be made more relevant to the needs of the students, society and the business and educational circles that it seeks to upgrade and improve. It is recommended that instructors evaluate their courses with an objective toward making them fit into the practical needs of the students as they enter employment.

(4) It is recommended that advisors bring to the attention of their distributive education major advisees some of the classes which had been taken by few of the respondents but rated highly by those who had been enrolled. Some of these are drug use and abuse and training teacher aides.

(5) Introduction to computer science, CS 150, should be evaluated to make it relate better to the needs of students in distributive education. The general psychology and educational psychology courses were criticized for their lack of appeal to many students and their irrelevance to distributive education. It is recommended that the Distributive Education Department cooperate with the Psychology Department and the Department of Applied Statistics and Computer Science to insure that specialized sections of statistics, computer science and psychology classes are geared to the needs of distributive education majors.

(6) Advisement screening procedures should be set up and used regularly during the program. Such measures should prevent students from getting down to their student teaching assignment without the necessary background to complete it successfully.

(7) According to the ratings given by graduates of the distributive education program at Utah State University, business education and business administration courses were on an equal basis with regard to value of courses offered. Cooperation between these two departments should be fostered. A planning or steering committee should be set up to promote the basic goal that both departments have the same aim--that of working together for the betterment of the student.

(8) There should be continual effort made to evaluate the progress of future graduates of Utah State University in the distributive education program through periodic follow-up studies. Emphasis should be given to determine whether recommendations of previous researchers have been implemented and what impact such changes have had upon the curriculum.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letters of transmittal and questionnaire



DEPARTMENT OF
BUSINESS EDUCATION
801-752-4100

Dear Alumnus:

The Business Education Department of Utah State University would appreciate your cooperation with Robert Shaw, a graduate student, in the completion of his research report entitled "A FOLLOW-UP STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION GRADUATES, 1969-1973."

This follow-up study of Utah State graduates can be of value to the department in evaluating the curricular offerings and the services offered to students in Distributive Education. Changes are constantly occurring in education, business, and society. You, as distributive educators, workers, and members of society, are in a position to help.

A follow-up study, such as this one, requires a great deal of cooperation from many people if it is to be effective, its purposes realized, and the results of it to be of significant value. Please respond carefully to the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Ed Ivatt, Head
Department of Business Education

cva

Enclosure

8650 Madison Avenue
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Dear U. S. U. Graduate:

Of what value has your university distributive education training been to you? This question is one only you can answer. The distributive education program at U. S. U. is being examined in an effort to improve the educational offerings of the school.

Enclosed is a questionnaire containing space for you to list your employment since graduation and your rating of course work in the distributive major. Your response will be considered highly personal; therefore, your name will not be used in any way. The total of the responses will indicate the value of the distributive program.

To be successful, this study requires a complete return. Please help by completing and returning the completed questionnaire in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope. Your early reply will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Shaw

Encl.

Name _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please list the positions you have held since graduation from USU.

Describe your present or more recent job:

- a. Employer: _____
- b. Job title: _____
- c. Location: _____
- d. Location: _____
- e. Dates of employment: from _____ to _____
(month & year) (month & year)

Describe your job before your present or more recent job:

- a. Employer: _____
- b. Job title: _____
- c. Duties: _____
- d. Location: _____
- e. Dates of employment: from _____ to _____
(month & year) (month & year)

Describe the job you had before that:

- a. Employer: _____
- b. Job title: _____
- c. Duties: _____
- d. Location: _____
- e. Dates of employment: from _____ to _____
(month & year) (month & year)

Describe the job you had before that:

- a. Employer: _____
- b. Job title: _____
- c. Duties: _____
- d. Location: _____
- e. Dates of employment: from _____ to _____
(month & year) (month & year)

Which of the courses below would you recommend deleting from the curriculum for distributive education major? _____

What courses would you recommend for addition to the curriculum that are not now required? _____

Indicate below the value of the courses as preparation for your past or present employment as a Distributive Education Coordinator or in a distributive occupation. If your employment has been outside the field of distribution or distributive education, you need not complete this portion of the questionnaire.

Name and number of course	Useless	Little value	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	Did not take course	No opinion
Business Machines, BE 131						
Business Communications, BE 351						
Principles of Business Education, BE 461						
Methods of Teaching Coop. Ed., BE 571						
Meth. of Teach. Bus.-Non-skilled, BE 572						
Managing Personal Finances, BE 581						
Sales Management, BA 455						
Business Law, BA 201						
Statistical Methods, Psych. 380						
Retailing, BA 454						
Advertising, BA 458						
Management Concepts, BA 311 (511)						
Corporation Finance, BA 340 (540)						
Fundamentals of Marketing, BA 350 (550)						
Personnel Administration, BA 360 (560)						
Introductory Accounting, Acct. 201						
Introductory Accounting, Acct. 202						
Intro. to Computer Science, CS 150						
Foundation Studies in Teaching, Sec. Ed. 301						

Name and number of course	Useless	Little value	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	Did not take course	No opinion
Educational Psychology, Psych. 366						
Prin. & Meth. of Dist. Ed., BE 561						
Secondary Curriculum Seminar, Sec. Ed. 450						
Stu. Teach. in the Sec. School, BE 460						
Training Teacher Aides, Sec. Ed. 150						
Meas. and Evaluation in Ed., Sec. Ed. 604						
Human Development-Adolescent, Psych. 614						
Audiovisual, IM 541, 551						
Human Development-General, Psych. 110						
Diagn. & Treat. of Learn. Diff., Sp. Ed. 302						
Human Dev.-Exceptional Child., Psych. 313						
Drug Use and Abuse, HPER 442						

Other Comments: _____

Appendix B: Follow-up letter

ROBERT K. SHAW
8650 MADISON AVE.
FAIR OAKS, CA. 95628

April 12, 1975

Dear U. S. U. Alumnus,

Perhaps the questionnaire inquiring about the use of your distributive education training is in the mail. If you have mailed it, thank you for your cooperation.

Response to date has been excellent. To make the results of this study more valuable, I am trying for a 100% return.

If you have not done so, would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire. I have enclosed a postage-paid envelope for your use.

Your response will be a most welcome addition. I am preparing to compile the data for this distributive education study and so would appreciate hearing from you within a week.

Sincerely,

Robert Shaw

Appendix C: Follow-up post-card to parents

Dear Parents of U.S.U. Alumnus,

Could you help in supplying the current address of

We need this information to up-date our records for
a follow-up of Distributive Education graduates.

Sincerely,

Dept. of Business Education
and Office Adm., U.S.U.

Address	City	State	Zip
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