

COORDINATION PRACTICES AND EMPLOYER PREFERENCES FOR SECONDARY
COOPERATIVE DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MONTANA
DURING THE 1975-1976 SCHOOL TERM

by

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A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

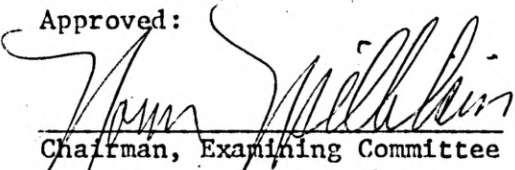
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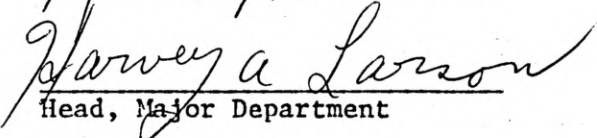
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ABSTRACT

How closely do Montana's distributive education teacher-coordinators follow commonly accepted practices for cooperative vocational education, and what are the participating employers' opinions on the operation of the distributive education programs? To address this question and to keep information as current as possible, the school term of 1975-1976 was selected since it was the basis of the most current information on the programs currently in operation. Of the eighteen distributive education programs in operation at the time of the study, sixteen were classified as cooperative programs under Part G funding. Of these sixteen programs, fifteen submitted reports listing the training stations that were utilized at the time of this study, to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. From this information, 243 employers were identified as being participating employers in the Part G programs in operation. A questionnaire was mass mailed to all the identified employers, after being verified by Mr. Norman L. Millikin and Dr. Daniel G. Hertz of the School of Business staff at Montana State University. The questionnaire was mailed on May 28, 1976, a follow-up was forwarded on June 28, 1976, and the survey was terminated on July 12, 1976. The initial sample of 243 was revised down to 220 upon survey termination because 23 employers had experienced management changes, went out of business, or claimed no connection with the programs. This resulted in the revised base of 220, of which 170 responses were received and were usable, yielding a 77.27 percent return. Findings were presented that showed the teacher-coordinators were not in strict compliance with the commonly accepted coordination practices revealed in the review of literature. However, it must be also kept in mind that only those coordination practices visible to the participating employer were included in the survey instrument, and that the survey was limited in scope to only the employer---neither the teacher-coordinator nor the student were included in the survey to seek their opinions. Findings indicated that the participating employers tended to prefer that the teacher-coordinator make visitations on a monthly basis, rather than more often as is suggested by commonly accepted practices. Based upon the survey findings and the conclusions drawn from the data, recommendations were made, of which two are of high importance: (1) Training plans should be in a written form constructed by the employer, the teacher-coordinator, and the student, for every placement made; and (2) Effort should be made by the teacher-coordinator to have more control over student placement by selecting a number of students for interviews for each training station opening, rather than allowing students to seek their own training stations, as is often the case.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The cooperative method is the coordination of classroom instruction with a series of on-the-job learning experiences related to each student's occupational objective. The term "cooperative" describes the relationship between the school and the employing business, both of which work together to prepare a student for his or her vocation in distribution. (Finch, 1969:29) The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education reflected its attitude toward this method of instruction when it stated:

The part-time cooperative program is undoubtedly the best program we have in vocational education. It consistently yields high placement records, high employment stability, and high job satisfaction. (Harris, 1971:1)

Distributive education is one of the best known secondary school instructional programs using the cooperative plan. (Harris, 1971:1)

The teacher-coordinator using the cooperative method skillfully blends classroom instruction and on-the-job instruction and application. Determining opportunities to place students in jobs related to their career goals, counseling and referring students to prospective employers, and reaching understandings concerning training experiences and responsibilities for each student's job are initial coordination functions. To coordinate classroom work with part-time employment, the teacher-coordinator obtains information from the job setting. This information is obtained by conference with the training sponsor and the student's

progress is checked also. The teacher-coordinator also evaluates students' job performance by conducting observations, meeting with supervisors, and obtaining progress reports. (Finch, 1969:30)

Two individuals are directly responsible for the operation and upgrading of secondary distributive education programs in the State of Montana. These individuals are the state supervisor for marketing and distributive education, and the distributive education teacher-educator. The state supervisor, working from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, acts in a regulatory capacity dealing with the funding of cooperative distributive education and the approval or disapproval of project proposals for funding; and also acts in an advisory capacity for Montana DECA and for the teacher-coordinators in the operation of their programs. (Wagner, 1976) The distributive education teacher-educator, working from Montana State University, acts in an advisory capacity for teacher-coordinators by helping them acquire and enrich their capabilities in the classroom and the community; and also acts in an evaluative capacity on the evaluation team that checks the secondary and post-secondary distributive education programs for the state department of education. (Millikin, 1976)

The state supervisor and the teacher-educator each have specific means of securing information about the secondary distributive education programs operating within the State of Montana at the time of this survey. The means available to the state supervisor are the following:

- (1) discussions with teacher-coordinators in the field periodically

during the year, (2) observations made during visitations by occasionally accompanying teacher-coordinators on visits to students' training stations, (3) discussions with teacher-coordinators at workshops, conferences and by telephone, which are not always verifiable, and (4) use of a formalized evaluation program just initiated this past school term.

(Wagner, 1976) The means that are available to the teacher-educator are the following: (1) use of the Montana State University Council for Distributive Education, which consists of six teacher-coordinators (five secondary and one post-secondary) who meet periodically throughout the school term, (2) research conducted by graduate students, (3) evaluation of distributive education programs while acting as the evaluation coordinator in alternation with the state supervisor, (4) program visitations, primarily occurring through visitations to sites where student-teachers are located, and (5) discussions with teacher-coordinators at professional association meetings (MADEP) and by telephone, which are not always verifiable. (Millikin, 1976) The lack of verifiable information in some of the above stated means of securing information about the secondary distributive education programs in Montana, as well as the verifiable means provided by the research of graduate students, suggests that this research will lead to increased understanding of present practices and problems.

Statement of the Problem

The overall purpose of this study was to determine pertinent

information about Montana's secondary distributive education programs, in order for those individuals concerned to have a solid basis for action. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine, by response of Montana employers actively participating in the secondary distributive education programs during the school term of 1975-1976, the following: (1) distributive education teacher-coordinators use of commonly accepted practices for cooperative vocational education, and (2) employer opinions on the operation of the distributive education programs. To accomplish the purpose of this study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. To what extent did teacher-coordinators apply recruitment and selection of training stations?
2. To what extent were training agreements and training plans applied?
3. To what extent were training sponsors appointed to train and supervise students placed in training stations?
4. To what extent were sponsor development activities carried out, and what were the employers' opinions of the activities?
5. What methods were used in placing students in training stations?
6. Using degree of interest in the area of work, were students tentative career objectives compatible with their respective training stations?
7. To what extent were student evaluation forms used, and what role did the teacher-coordinators play in the evaluation process?

8. With what frequency did teacher-coordinators visit the training stations, and what frequency of visitations did employers prefer?
9. Were training station visitations ever made by telephone rather than by the teacher-coordinators in person?
10. What degree of pre-arranged appointments occurred and did the employers request these of the teacher-coordinators?

Need for the Study

In researching published information for studies similar in nature to this study, the researcher discovered two examples. One study was conducted through the U. S. Office of Education, Region V, Chicago, Illinois, during 1970-1971, and served as a general guide for this study. (Harris, 1971:vi) The other study was conducted in Montana during 1970-1971, and served as a specific guide for this study. (Koon, 1973:x) Since this type of study had been used by the U. S. Office of Education and by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Montana, as well as by the School of Business at Montana State University, the researcher felt the study to be useful and necessary. Also, since this type of study had not been conducted in Montana for five years, updated information was needed to coincide with the process of formalized distributive education program evaluation begun in 1975-1976 through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Wagner, 1976)

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations inherent in this study which were

the following:

1. The population sample was limited to the employers of cooperative distributive education students working at training stations in Montana during the 1975-1976 school term. Neither the teacher-coordinator nor the student has been actively included in the study, and so only one interpretation from the three key members of a cooperative work situation has been used.

2. Since only the employers have been surveyed, the employers were not expected to be aware of all activities conducted by the teacher-coordinator as a part of the occupation. Therefore, only those coordination activities that the participating employers come into contact with were used in this study.

3. The study was conducted using employers from only 15 of the 18 distributive education programs in existence in Montana in 1975-1976. Two programs were omitted since they were funded under Part B of the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments and were not required to submit employer information to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The third program was omitted because employer information had not been submitted at the time of this study, although the program was funded under both Part B and Part G of the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments. (Wagner, 1976)

Definition of Terms

To assist the reader with the terminology used in this study,

the following definitions of terms are presented. These definitions are commonly accepted for distributive education programs and have been drawn from numerous sources studied by the researcher prior to this study.

1. Career objective: Either a specific occupation or cluster of occupations in which a student has professed an interest and in which he or she aspires to training, usually consummated by the act of enrolling in a particular class of vocational education.

2. Cooperative vocational education: A program of vocational education for persons who through a cooperative arrangement between the school and the employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field. The two experiences must be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and employability.

3. Coordination: The act of supervising the cooperative vocational education program toward the goal of providing meaningful education for students enrolled in the program.

4. Sponsor development program: A series of formal meetings in which the teacher-coordinator provides instruction on how persons can more successfully perform the role of the training sponsor.

5. Teacher-coordinator: A vocational education teacher, meeting requirements of the Montana State Plan for Vocational Education, employed by a school district to coordinate the cooperative program and

to teach the related vocational class.

6. Training agreement: A form prepared by the teacher-coordinator that indicates the period of training, hours of work, salary, responsibilities of those involved, and any other pertinent facts and information needed for the basic understanding of the work situation and the cooperative program. The form may be signed by the teacher-coordinator, employer, training sponsor, student, school official, and parents.

7. Training plan: An outline of educational activities, both classroom and training station experiences, prepared cooperatively by the teacher-coordinator and the employer. The plan is derived from a realistic analysis of the tasks, duties, responsibilities, and occupational objective of the student.

8. Training sponsor: The person within the training station designated by the employer to be responsible for teaching and supervising the student.

9. Training station: Often referred to as an occupational laboratory, it is a business establishment employing part-time students to provide them with needed knowledge, skill, and work attitudes in areas closely related to the students tentative career objectives.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized to facilitate presentation of information relating to the coordination practices of Montana distributive education

teacher-coordinators as viewed by cooperative work experience employers. First, the statement of the problem, the need for the study, the limitations of the study, and the definitions of terms peculiar to the study were determined. Next, an extensive review of literature was conducted concerning the coordination practices of the distributive education teacher-coordinator. A questionnaire was developed based on important findings in the literature. An explanation of the sampling procedures was followed by a review of the responses to the questionnaire. The presentation of the study was completed by listing conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of literature was conducted to determine commonly used and accepted coordination practices for secondary cooperative distributive education programs. This review was accomplished using those practices of coordination which would be most visible to the employer involved with the cooperative program. Initially, a selected number of studies dealing with coordination practices on the national level were reviewed. To further define the information gathered from the national studies, numerous sources dealing with coordination practices in Montana were reviewed. It was planned that if a common grouping of coordination activities for the distributive education teacher-coordinator could be discovered, that this information would be written into the questionnaire which was being developed to send to those employers involved with the cooperative distributive education programs in Montana.

To facilitate organization and to develop a sense of continuity in this chapter, it was determined by the researcher that a chronological order would be used to present the findings. The national level findings, dating from 1961 to 1974, were presented first; followed by the findings dealing with Montana coordination practices, dating from 1972 to 1975. Also, the researcher sought to present these findings in a manner that would be in accordance with the sequence of events occurring between an employer and a distributive education teacher-coordinator.

Distributive Education Issues

Orientation. Certain activities should be conducted by the distributive education teacher-coordinator to set up a cooperative training station. Initially, it must be realized that in a high school cooperative program, both classroom instruction and on-the-job experiences are of equal importance. Classroom instruction, with no provision for business experience, is seldom adequate preparation for a secondary school student who plans a career in a distributive occupation. Assuming then that experience in a distributive occupation is necessary, adequate experience is provided by on-the-job business experiences. Training stations should be selected by the advisory committee and the teacher-coordinator working together. A designed job rotation schedule (training plan) which provides for increased responsibility in the duties of the student-learner as the school year progresses is usually necessary. (Warmke, 1961:19, 30, 31, 35)

Placement and Evaluation. Once orientation is completed, certain activities should be conducted to place the student and to aid in the maintaining of the placement. The teacher-coordinator should select several suitable students to apply for the position at the training station, and final selection should then be left to the discretion of the business firm personnel. To create and keep student interest in the job situation, approximately one-third to one-half of the directly related class time in the cooperative program should be devoted to the study of the student's specific job. (Warmke, 1961:35, 39)

Coordination. Since experience in a distributive occupation should be required in a cooperative distributive education program, the experience must be coordinated by a teacher-coordinator. On the average, the teacher-coordinator should visit the student on the job or the training station at least once every two weeks. The frequency of the visitation also depends upon the maturity of the program, the length of use of the training station, and the ability and maturity of the student. (Warmke, 1961:31, 37)

Distributive Education in the High School

Orientation. The teacher-coordinator using the cooperative method skillfully blends classroom instruction and on-the-job instruction and application. Initial coordination functions are to determine opportunities to place students in jobs related to their career goals, to reach understandings concerning training experiences and responsibilities for each student's job, and to coordinate principles and practices developed in the curriculum with part-time employment. (Brown, 1969:30)

Supervision. The teacher-coordinator should consult with the training sponsor to reach agreement on responsibilities and training experiences to be involved in the student's part-time job. The training sponsor should be assisted in identifying opportunities for the student to apply principles developed in the curriculum to the training station. Working with the training sponsor frequently involves using a cooperative training agreement and training plan in which desired learning experiences

on the job are scheduled. School approval of the student's training program is an essential feature of cooperative training. (Brown, 1969:30)

Placement and Evaluation. The teacher-coordinator should refer students to prospective employers for final decisions in hiring for the training station. The teacher-coordinator also evaluates student's job performance by conduction observations, meeting with training sponsors and supervisors, and obtaining progress reports. (Brown, 1969:31)

Employer Preferences and Teacher-Coordinator Practices in Distributive Education

The format of this particular study was constructed to show a frame of reference between employers preferences and teacher-coordinator practices for the distributive education cooperative program. As a result of this format, the information presented in this section is that information having the highest priorities for both the employer and the teacher-coordinator.

Orientation. Classroom instruction having a relationship to the learning experience of the student in the training station should be developed. Training materials for the student to study in school that are related to the training station experiences should be included. A plan of training for each student should be developed by the teacher-coordinator and the training sponsor. In addition, a written agreement establishing the responsibilities of the student, the school, and the employer should be utilized. The teacher-coordinator should explain the training program and the role of the employer and/or the training sponsor,

and should establish and maintain good working relationships with officials of the firm. A personal visit by the teacher-coordinator is of the highest priority in influencing a firm to participate in a distributive education program. (Harris, 1971:4, 7, 20)

Supervision. According to the recommendations of this particular study, a specific individual should be assigned to serve as an on-the-job training sponsor for each distributive education student. Also, a training session should be used to prepare training sponsors for their role in training distributive education students. (Harris, 1971:35)

Placement and Evaluation. The procedures for the selection of distributive education students for a training station were established by the employers and teacher-coordinators surveyed in this particular study as follows: (1) The coordinator selects several qualified students to apply and final selection is left to the employer; (2) The coordinator refers a student who meets the requirements of employment, and final acceptance is the decision of the employer; (3) The coordinator sends several students who wish employment and the final selection is left to the employer; and, (4) The student seeks the job opportunity without any referral by the coordinator. As to evaluation, discussion by the teacher-coordinator with the employer and/or the training sponsor about the work performed by the student on the job was felt to be of high priority. (Harris, 1971:6, 21)

Coordination. Relating to the desired frequency of coordination visits, the following choices were selected by employers surveyed in this

particular study: (1) once every month, (2) once every grading period, (3) once each semester, (4) only when there is a problem to be solved, (5) every three weeks, and (6) every two weeks or less. Of these choices for frequency of visitation by the teacher-coordinator to the training station, once every month was ranked as the most popular choice. (Harris, 1971:22)

Identification and Analysis of Issues in Distributive Education

Orientation. A written training plan is necessary to insure optimum training. The expansion of the work experience concept into cooperative vocational education demands that cooperative distributive education programs keep the training plan. A written training plan should be required and signed by every distributive education cooperative student. According to survey results of this particular study, the amount of classroom instructional time for a cooperative program that should be devoted to the study of the student's particular job is approximately one-fourth to one-half. (Weatherford, 1974:27, 28, 72)

Coordination. In an ideal situation, the teacher-coordinator should visit the student-trainee on the job or the training station at least once every two weeks. In this particular study, other choices offered were: (1) twice a week, (2) once a week, (3) once a month, and (4) other. Assuming that on-the-job experience is required for a cooperative distributive education program, then that experience must be coordinated by a teacher-coordinator. While students can benefit from

work experience without coordination, greater gains can be assured with the help of a coordinator. (Weatherford, 1974:34, 36)

The review of literature information presented to this point has been taken from surveys that have been done in various areas of the country and have been felt to be of a level of importance to warrant publication for national distribution. As such, the researcher has included these sources to present standards of national level for the distributive education teacher-coordinator to use in working with an employer involved with the cooperative distributive education program.

The information to be presented in the remainder of this chapter has been obtained from sources dealing exclusively with coordination practices in the State of Montana. The information presented is restricted to those coordination practices visible to the employer of a cooperative distributive education student.

Cooperative Education Coordinators Handbook

This source was prepared in Montana and was published in 1972.

Orientation. In order to initiate a cooperative distributive education program, the teacher-coordinator should begin by personally visiting and interviewing prospective employers. The relationship of the employer to the program should be explained during this period. If the business is to become a training station, a training agreement should be used to communicate the responsibilities of the employer, the school, the parents, and the students. This tool of coordination should be

explained to all the parties concerned in the training agreement. In addition to the training agreement, a training plan is essential to outline the educational activities of the student while working at the training station. The training plan should be developed by the school and the employer, and should be based upon the needs of the employer as well as the needs of the student. This instrument should also be flexible to allow sufficient time for training and also to meet the needs of the employer. (Amberson, 1972:98, 111, 113)

Supervision. To make the training station educational for the student, a sponsor must be appointed. The sponsor should supervise the work of the student, see that competencies are learned, and participate in the evaluation of the student. To assure success of the program, the teacher-coordinator should conduct a sponsor development program to provide necessary knowledge and skill to the sponsor of the student. The sponsor development program should be a series of formal class meetings to provide instruction. (Amberson, 1972:103, 104)

Placement and Evaluation. To conduct the placement process for the training station hiring of the student, the teacher-coordinator should send the employer a minimum of three students and allow the employer to make the final selection for job placement. The selection of the students for the placement process is important since the students must show interest in the business, or the employer may soon become dissatisfied with the program. During the employment period of the student, an accurate evaluation of the student's participation should be accomplished.

The evaluation requires the joint efforts of the employer, training sponsor, and the teacher-coordinator, and should be in a written form. (Amberson, 1972:101, 105, 141)

Coordination. According to this research source, the following actions should be accomplished:

The teacher-coordinator should visit each occupational laboratory regularly, planning each visit to meet a pre-determined objective. Specifically, the coordinator, through regularly scheduled visits, should determine whether the occupational laboratory experience is contributing to the occupational competence of each individual student. A concise resume of each visit should be prepared and retained. (Amberson, 1972:139)

Guide for Distributive Education Teacher-Coordinators

Orientation. Once the distributive education teacher-coordinator has decided upon a list of prospective training stations, he should personally visit and interview the employer. This visit is used to evaluate the business and to sell the employer on the value of the program while acting as a participant in the program during that school term. A training agreement should be used to aid in communicating the responsibilities of the employer, the school, the parents, and the students. It should be kept in mind that the training agreement is a memorandum and not a legal contract. Also, a training plan should be implemented, and should be developed by the employer and the teacher-coordinator. The training plan should be based upon the needs of the employer and the needs of the student. (Colburg, 1972:67, 78, 83)

Supervision. After the decision to use the training station

has been made, a training sponsor should be selected. The sponsor should be from within the business and responsible for supervising and instructing the student on the job. A sponsor development program should be used to orient the sponsors to the program, and should consist of a series of formal class meetings conducted by the teacher-coordinator. (Colburg, 1972:70, 71)

Placement and Evaluation. The teacher-coordinator should contact the employer at the potential training station, and should refer two or three students to the potential employer. The final decision of hiring the student should be left to the employer. Evaluation of the student's progress at the training station should be made on a systematic basis with the student's training sponsor. Once the teacher-coordinator has received an evaluation from the training station for the student, an individual conference should be conducted with the student to discuss the ratings and comments and to make necessary changes. (Colburg, 1972: 71, 127, 129)

Coordination. According to this research source, the following is true of coordination practices:

The success of the cooperative distributive education program depends on the teacher-coordinator getting out of the school and into the business community to develop occupational laboratories and supervise the students on the job. (Colburg, 1972:24)

The teacher-coordinator should visit the training station periodically to obtain information about the student's performance on the job. This should be accomplished by discussions with the employer and the training

sponsor, and by personal observations of the student by the teacher-coordinator. (Colburg, 1972:129)

A Survey of Montana Employers Participating in High School Distributive Education Programs During the 1970-1971 School Year to Determine Coordination Practices and Employer Preferences

After reviewing this source of information, the researcher determined that the information offered in the section of the source entitled, Coordination Implications, was highly applicable to this study and the information is as follows:

Based upon careful analysis of the findings from this survey of 1970-1971 school year participating employers, the following recommendations in regards to coordination practices are offered to facilitate growth and development of distributive education programs in Montana:

1. Application of personal coordination visits as the primary technique for securing employer participation in the program.
 2. Identification of a training sponsor for every student placed.
 3. Training sessions to help prepare training sponsors for their role in training the student.
 4. More teacher-coordinator control over student placement and less emphasis upon students seeking their own job positions.
 5. Application of training agreements.
 6. Application of training plans.
 7. Teacher-coordinator visitations to training stations at an absolute minimum of monthly and more frequently when needed.
 8. Increased employer participation as resource persons for the program's related instruction.
 9. Use of written student evaluations at least each grading period performed by the training sponsors.
 10. Increased emphasis to develop and implement the communication of goals, objectives, and methods of operation so that the program is understood by the business community, and especially participating employers.
- (Koon, 1973:50, 51)

Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile

This source was developed during a Distributive Education Workshop at Montana State University during the summer session of 1975. It was felt by the researcher that this source should be mentioned separately at this point in the review of literature, as it is the most current Montana based document which provides additional insight into the relationship of coordination practices and employer preferences. The source has specific sections that go into detail for use in evaluation of the overall cooperative distributive education program. That level of information that is in more detail than previously cited Montana references is presented here.

Orientation. The employers should have an interest in training the student. The training station offers advancement opportunities within the establishment. A training agreement should be used and a copy should be kept by the coordinator and/or other parties as necessary at the time the student is placed on the job. A training plan should be used which offers provision for rotation among different areas for the student on the job. The employer, the student, and a school official should have signed a copy of the training plan, and each should have received a copy. (Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile, 1975:3, 6, 7)

Placement and Evaluation. Employers should be furnished names of students interested in the type of job available in the training station, prior to interviews conducted for the purpose of filling the position. The teacher-coordinator should supply the employer with rating sheets

that list achievements and competencies and their measurement by levels rather than by grades for the purpose of rating. (Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile, 1975:5, 12)

Coordination. The teacher-coordinator should plan his visits and notify the training station in advance of the visit. When making a visit, the teacher-coordinator should observe the student at work and determine employer satisfaction. The visits should be made on the basis of individual student needs. (Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile, 1975: 10)

Summary

This review of literature has shown the evolvement of those basic coordination practices visible to the employer, from 1961 thru 1975. The evolvement of those coordination practices has been shown by using sources both of a national guideline level and of a Montana guideline level. Since the coordination practices that have appeared are in concept, consistent, these practices will form the basis for specific questions to be included in the questionnaire for Montana employers of cooperative distributive education students of the secondary level for 1975-1976. Since some differences within specific practices of the teacher-coordinator in dealing with the employer have been discovered, these differences will be the basis for multiple choice structured questions to be included in the questionnaire.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the following:

(1) distributive education teacher-coordinators use of commonly accepted practices for cooperative vocational education, and (2) employer opinions on the operation of the distributive education programs. This purpose was further restricted to the State of Montana and to the school term of 1975-1976. It was hoped that this study would strengthen and standardize coordination efforts in the State of Montana through use of the study by the distributive teacher-education program at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana.

The purpose of this chapter is: (1) to define the sources of data; (2) to examine the construction of the questionnaire; (3) to discuss the procedure of gathering data, by administration of the questionnaire; and (4) to examine the procedures used in reporting the data.

Sources of Data

The population of the sample was composed of all employers of cooperative distributive education students placed during the school term of 1975-1976. The compilation of the employers business addresses was determined from training agreements submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction as required by laws governing the funding of cooperative distributive education programs. According to the Vocational Amendments of 1968, all programs funded under Part G must

submit training agreements each year, while those programs funded solely under Part B are not required to do so. (Wagner, 1976)

Eighteen Montana distributive education programs were in operation during the 1975-1976 school term, with sixteen of the programs funded under Part G and Part B and two of the programs funded under Part B only. (Wagner, 1976) All programs funded under Part B and Part G both are considered cooperative programs, but only fifteen of the sixteen cooperative programs in Montana were used due to the fact that training agreements from one program were not submitted by the date that sampling was begun for this survey. (Wagner, 1976) The cities in which the training stations were located were: Billings, Bozeman, Glendive, Baker, Columbia Falls, Hardin, Havre, Helena (two programs), Libby, Missoula, Sidney, Kalispell, Livingston, and Shelby.

A screening process was conducted to assure that only one questionnaire would be submitted to each employer by: (1) counting employers providing training stations to more than one student only once, and (2) checking the training agreements provided from cities having more than one program for duplication of employers so that the employers would receive only one questionnaire. The screening process produced 243 employers that participated in the cooperative distributive education programs in Montana in the school term of 1975-1976.

Construction of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire (Appendix E) was constructed to gather information

from the population surveyed, and was designed so that it could be presented to the entire population at one time. The questionnaire was patterned after the survey instrument used by Charles William Koon to survey a similar population during the 1970-1971 school term in Montana. In comparison to that survey instrument, this questionnaire was made shorter, easier to answer, and a variation on the format was instituted. (Koon, interview, 1975)

The format of the questionnaire was divided into four areas which were determined from the review of literature section of this study. The four areas determined were: (1) orientation, (2) supervision, (3) placement and evaluation, and (4) coordination. Initially, a trial format was developed by the researcher and trial tested for possible revision. Those involved in the trial test were Dr. Daniel G. Hertz and Mr. Norman L. Millikin of the School of Business faculty at Montana State University.

Following the evaluation of the questionnaire, a finalized format was determined consisting of: (1) one limited free response question to introduce the instrument (Fox, 1969:535); (2) one structured response with free option question (Fox, 1969:536); and (3) the remainder of the questions of the totally structured response format. (Fox, 1969:537) This design readied the questionnaire for circulation to the sample.

Administration of the Questionnaire

Prior to mailing, each questionnaire was coded with a letter and

number code which designated which employer in which city the questionnaire was being sent. On May 28, 1976, 215 questionnaires were mailed to employers in the population of the sample, along with a letter of transmittal in memorandum form (Appendix D). This mailing date was picked by the researcher as it was as close as possible to the end of the 1975-1976 school term, to facilitate easier recollection by the employers of the training situations.

As of June 26, 1976, it was determined by the researcher that a follow-up post card should be sent to those employers that had not sent back the questionnaire as of that date. The post card follow-up (Appendix F) was mailed out on June 28, 1976. On July 6, 1976, the researcher personally followed up the questionnaire in Kalispell, Montana, and completed the sampling in that city. On July 8, 1976, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire in Bozeman, Montana, adding another twenty-eight questionnaires to the original sample of 215 questionnaires. On July 9, the researcher conducted a follow-up in Livingston Montana, and completed the sample in that city. As of July 12, 1976, 193 of the 243 questionnaires measuring the sample population were received yielding 79.4 percent, and the survey was considered successful and was terminated. As each survey instrument was received, responses were recorded upon a questionnaire consolidation form (Appendix G), with each respondent code listed to ensure accurate recording.

Analysis of the Data

Once the survey had been terminated, responses for each question were tallied and were reported in the following manner:

1. Total number of responses.
2. Number of responses made for each option given, with the percentage of the total response for each.
3. Number and proportionment of omits due to the structure of the questionnaire, from the employers answering the questionnaire.
4. Total number of responding employers to the survey.

(Koon, 1973:22, 23)

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In the third chapter of this study, procedures were presented in respect to sources of data, construction and administration of the questionnaire, and analysis of data, for the purpose of identifying and securing information from participating employers in Montana's high school cooperative distributive education programs during the 1975-1976 school term. In this chapter, the results of the survey are presented.

Employer Participation

Initially 243 employers were identified as participating in the fifteen Montana secondary programs of the 1975-1976 school term used as the basis for the sample. Table I reflects the breakdown of participating employers by the programs surveyed. Upon termination of the survey, it was determined that twenty-three firms must be eliminated from the sample due to lack of completion of questionnaires for the following reasons: (1) six businesses changed management near the end of the school term, (2) four firms went out of business during the school term, (3) three firms had students for too short a time to form an adequate evaluation of the program, and (4) ten employers claimed not to have been participants in the programs surveyed. Consequently, a revised sample of 220 employer participants was derived. From this revised base, 170 (77.27 percent) responded to the survey with usable replies to the questionnaire.

Table 1

Identification of Participating Employers by Montana
Distributive Education Programs Surveyed, 1975-1976 School Term

PROGRAMS SURVEYED (Part G Classification)	INVITED SAMPLE			USABLE RESPONSES	
	Original	Void	Revised	N	% of Revised
Baker High School, Baker .	18	1	17	12	70.59
Billings Career Center, Billings	12	0	12	10	83.33
Bozeman Senior High School, Bozeman	28	5	23	23	100.00
Capitol High School, Helena	27	4	23	18	78.26
Columbia Falls High School, Columbia Falls	6	0	6	5	83.33
Dawson County High School, Glendive	13	0	13	8	61.54
Flathead High School, Kalispell	13	7	6	6	100.00
Hardin High School, Hardin	8	1	7	7	100.00
Havre High School, Havre .	11	0	11	8	72.73
Helena Senior High School, Helena	18	0	18	14	77.78
Libby Senior High School, Libby	12	0	12	12	100.00
Livingston High School, Livingston	5	0	5	5	100.00
Missoula Career Center, Missoula	33	5	28	17	60.71
Shelby High School, Shelby	23	0	23	14	60.87
Sidney High School, Sidney	<u>16</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>68.75</u>
	<u>243</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>77.27</u>

Recruitment and Selection of Training Stations

The employers surveyed were asked if they were personally interviewed by the teacher-coordinator and informed about the program prior to becoming involved and accepting a distributive education student. Responses showed that of 170 responding employers, 104 (61.18 percent) said they had been contacted, while 66 (38.82 percent) said they had not been contacted prior to employing a distributive education student. The employers were also asked if they were contacted and informed about the program by the teacher-coordinator after employing a distributive education student. Of the 170 employers responding to this question, 117 (68.82 percent) said they had been contacted, while 53 (31.18 percent) said they had not been contacted about the program after employing a distributive education student. To check cross-referencing for these questions, the researcher checked all replies and found that 73 (42.94 percent) had been contacted both before and after employing a student, while only 5 (2.94 percent) of the employers responding had not been informed about the program either before or after employing a distributive education student.

Common Tools Used in Coordination

From the research information gathered in the second chapter of this study, it was discovered that two tools are common to every guide for coordination of cooperative distributive education programs.

These two tools are the training agreement and the training plan. Each should be used to aid everyone involved in the cooperative situation in providing the most effective and useful educational program for the student enrolled in the program.

Application of the Training Agreement

For all programs classified as Part G under the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, the training agreement is required for purposes of receiving state funding. (Wagner, 1976) Since Part G programs only were used in the sample for this study, it was expected by the researcher that all employers would indicate that training agreements were used. Therefore, the researcher was interested in more depth of information dealing with the training agreement, specifically, what parties were involved in the training agreement; as well as if one was used.

The employer was first asked if a training agreement was suggested, and then was asked if one was suggested and used, who was involved in the agreement. As was expected, 170 (100 percent) of the participating 170 employers said the training agreement was suggested and used. As to response dealing with those involved in the training agreement, the participating employers indicated the following: (1) the employer was involved in every agreement with 170 of 170 (100 percent) participating employers indicating such; (2) the distributive education teacher and the student were involved approximately the same amount with employers indicating 153 of 170 (90.00 percent) agreements involving the teacher

and 152 (89.41 percent) of 170 agreements involving the student as well; and (3) the parents were involved in some agreements with 17 of 170 (10 percent) of the employers indicating this, and the training sponsor was involved approximately the same with 12 of 170 (7.06 percent) indicating that level of involvement in the training agreement. The information dealing with the training agreement and its formulation in written form is presented in Figure 1. According to the research of the second chapter, each training agreement should involve a minimum of the employer, the teacher-coordinator or other school official, and the student.

Application of the Training Plan

Of the employers participating, 51 (30.00 percent) said that a training plan had been suggested to them by the teacher-coordinator, and of these, 47 (92.16 percent) in turn used a training plan when one was suggested. In detail questioning about the training plan revealed that 22 (46.80 percent) of the 47 training plans used were in writing, while the remainder of the plans were verbal only. Of the 47 training plans used, only 9 (19.15 percent) were made by the distributive education teacher-coordinator, the employer, and the student; while the remainder were made in some other combination of these individuals, or independently by one of the individuals. Research in the second chapter of this study suggested that the training plan should be made by all those concerned as was asked in the question. The employer was also asked if

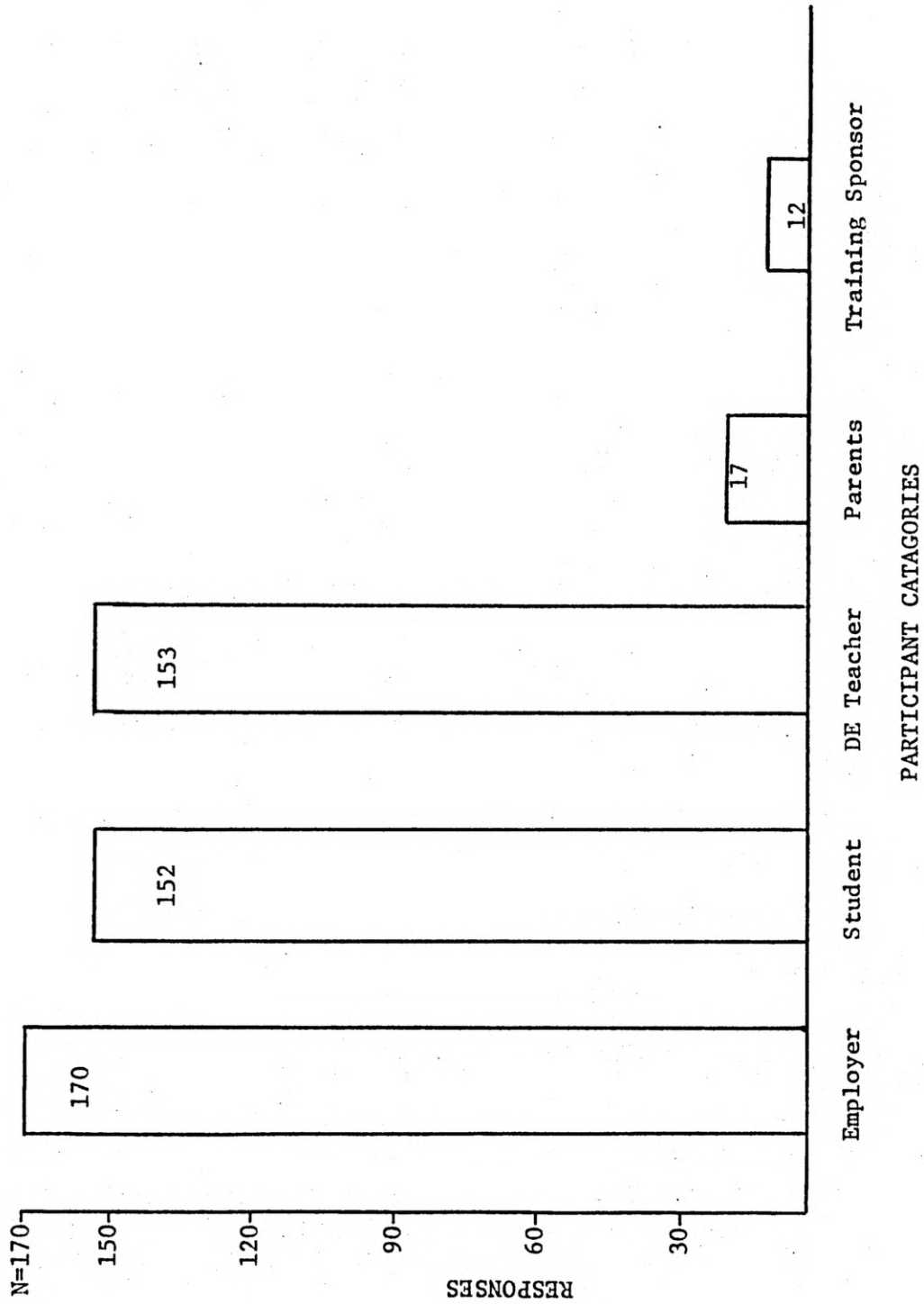


Figure 1

Participants in the Written Training Agreement

the training plan was developed to adequately cover the needs of the business and flexible enough to allow for training at the same time, and 44 (93.62 percent) of the 47 employers using the training plans felt this to be the case.

Appointment of Training Sponsors

As part of the training process of the cooperative distributive education student, it is important that an individual at the training station be appointed as a training sponsor to supervise the work experience of the student and to give on-the-job instruction. Of the 170 responding employers, 100 (58.82 percent) said that a training sponsor had been appointed while 70 (41.1 percent) said that a training sponsor had not been appointed.

Use of the Sponsor Development Program

The employer was asked if there were any formal sessions conducted by the distributive education teacher-coordinator to orient the training sponsor to the task, either prior to or during the time a distributive education student was employed. Also, the attitude of the employer was sought to determine the value of such formal sessions if used or if they might have been helpful if they were not used. As seen in Figure 2, 27 (15.88 percent) of the employers participating said that formal training sessions for the training sponsor had occurred, while 143 (84.12 percent) said that no formal sessions had been held. When asked about the value of the formal sessions when they had been used, 24

(88.89 percent) of the employers felt the sessions were worthwhile, while only 3 (11.11 percent) felt the sessions were not worthwhile. Of the 143 employers who said there had been no formal sessions, 42 (29.37 percent) felt that sessions would have been helpful, and 82 (57.34 percent) felt that the formal sessions would not have been helpful, with 19 employers not commenting whether the sessions would have been helpful or not. Overall, 66 (66.00 percent) of 100 employers having training sponsors at the training station felt positive about the use of training sponsor formal sessions.

Student Placement

The teacher-coordinator has available a number of approaches to utilize in placing students in the cooperative training situation. Placement is an important factor in the success and acceptance of the cooperative distributive education program, and this necessitated using some means to discover what methods of placement were being used during the 1975-1976 school term. According to the Guide for Distributive Education Teacher-Coordinators, the preferred method of placement is for the teacher-coordinator to select two or more students for an available position and to allow the employer to make final selection. (Colburg, 1972:71) In reviewing a study conducted by Charles William Koon completed in 1973 for the State of Montana, common methods of placement used at that time were discovered and incorporated into the survey for this study. (Koon, 1973:31).

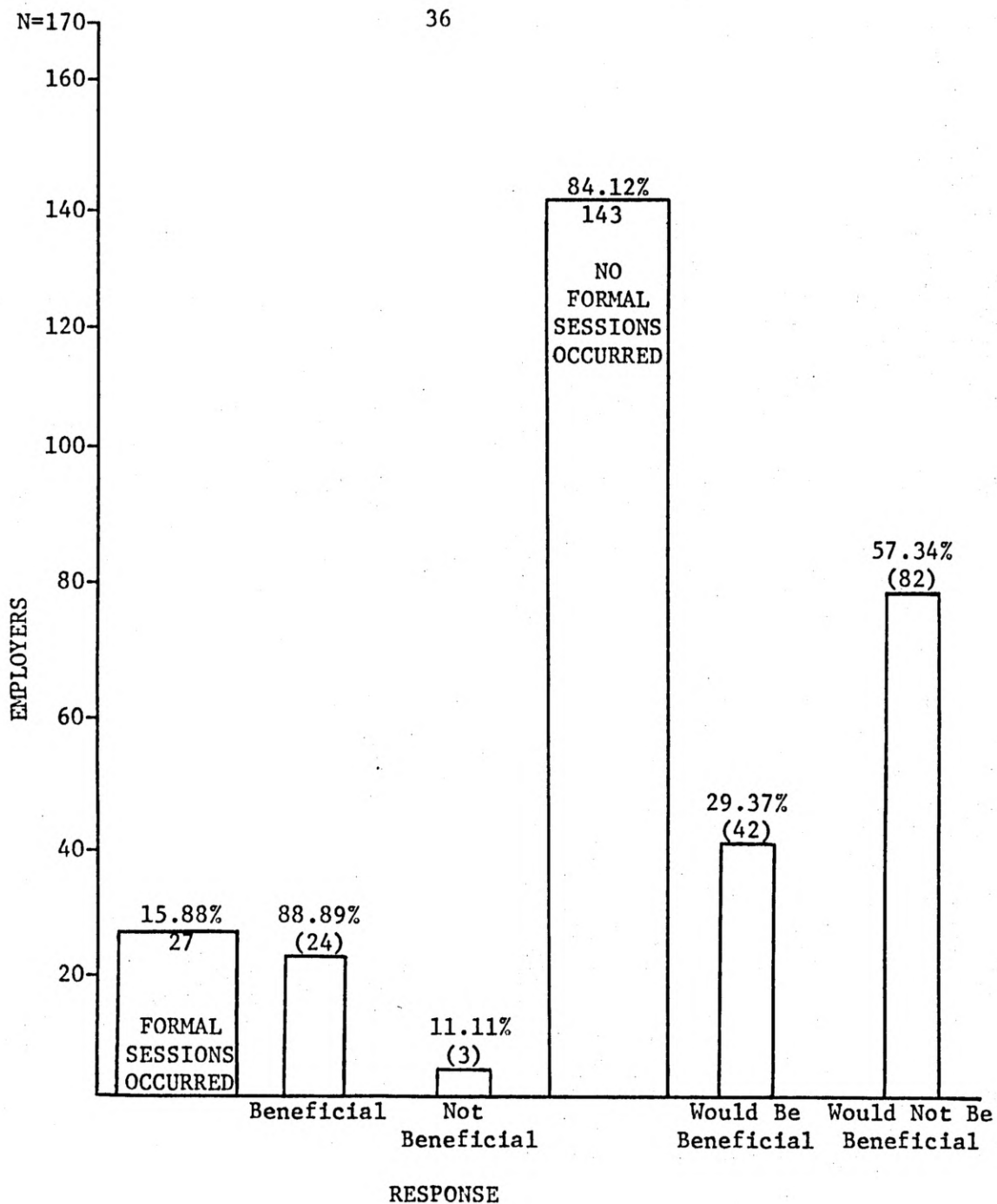


Figure 2

Sponsor Development Program and Employer Opinion on Its Value

Methods of Placement Used

Since various methods of placement were available and many employers employed more than one distributive education cooperative student, the employer was asked to identify the number of students that were trained at the business firm during the 1975-1976 school term and also was asked to indicate how each of the students were placed. Participating employers identified 258 students placed in the 170 business firms that comprised the final sample.

As seen in Figure 3, the largest number of students were placed on the basis that the student sought the job with the business firm, and the teacher-coordinator contacted the firm after the student was hired. By this method, 86 (33.33 percent) of the 258 students placed were integrated into the training stations. The second largest group of students placed, 67 (25.97 percent) of the 258, were integrated into the training station by the method of the teacher-coordinator selecting two or more students for the position and the employer making the final selection. The third largest segment of the 258 students placed, 58 (22.48 percent), were integrated into the training station by the method of the teacher-coordinator selecting one student for the position and the employer interviewing the student for the final decision. Another group of the 258 students placed in training stations, 40 (15.51 percent), were working for the firm prior to involvement in the distributive education program and contact was made by the teacher-coordinator after the student

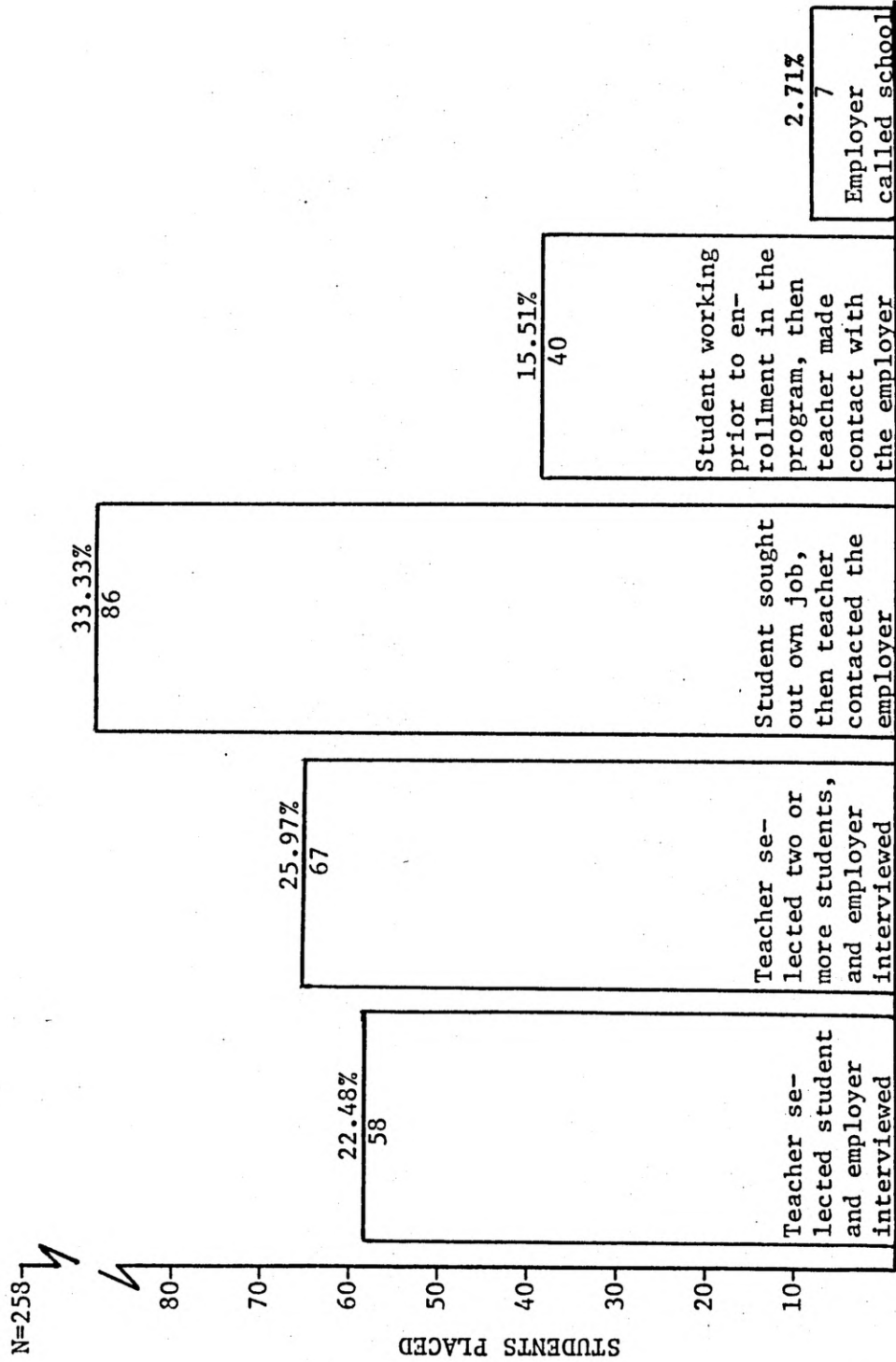
enrolled in the program. The remainder of the students placed was 7 (2.71 percent), and they were placed through the employer contacting the school and asking for students to be hired as employees.

Findings indicate that the teacher-coordinator had some degree of initial control over placement in 132 (51.16 percent) of the reported training situations as compared to 126 (48.84 percent) cases where there was no initial control by the teacher-coordinator.

Student Interest as a Measure of Placement Success

Students who have developed tentative career objectives should be placed in training stations that offer opportunity in that area of the career objective if possible. If the teacher-coordinator can accomplish this task, it follows that these students will have a higher degree of interest in the placement. However, this task is not simple as many students are indecisive about career objectives and many students who have developed tentative career objectives wish training in a firm of a type not available in the local trading area.

Because the researcher felt that many employers might not be aware of or familiar with students tentative career objectives, the participating employers were asked simply to indicate what degree of interest the distributive education student had shown toward the area of work in which he or she had received training. As shown in Figure 4, those students showing "high interest" were of the largest group, with 132 (51.17 percent) of the 258 students placed indicated to be in that group. The



EMPLOYER RESPONSE

Figure 3

Employer Recollection on Method of Student Placement

second category in interest level was "somewhat interested" with 65 (25.19 percent) of the 258 students indicated to have shown that level of interest. Following that level, 44 (17.05 percent) of the 258 students involved were judged by their employers to be in the level of "interested most of the time". The smallest category of interest response came in level of "not interested" with only 17 (6.59 percent) of the 258 students judged to be in that level by their employers. This data does present a favorable view of placement satisfaction and success, but not considered here are students that were not placed, or students who may have worked well for the employers even though they were not placed in training stations compatible with their tentative career objectives.

Student Evaluation

Another area found to be of high importance in the success of a cooperative distributive education program is that of student evaluation. From indications presented in the second chapter of this study within the review of literature, it is particularly important that written evaluations be used to aid in the progress of the student at the training station, and the teacher-coordinator should utilize the evaluation to supplement the students instruction in distributive education.

Form of Evaluation

According to the Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile for Montana, employers have the responsibility for rating the on-the-job achievement of the students using a written form. (Vo-Ed Assessment Profile, 1975:12)

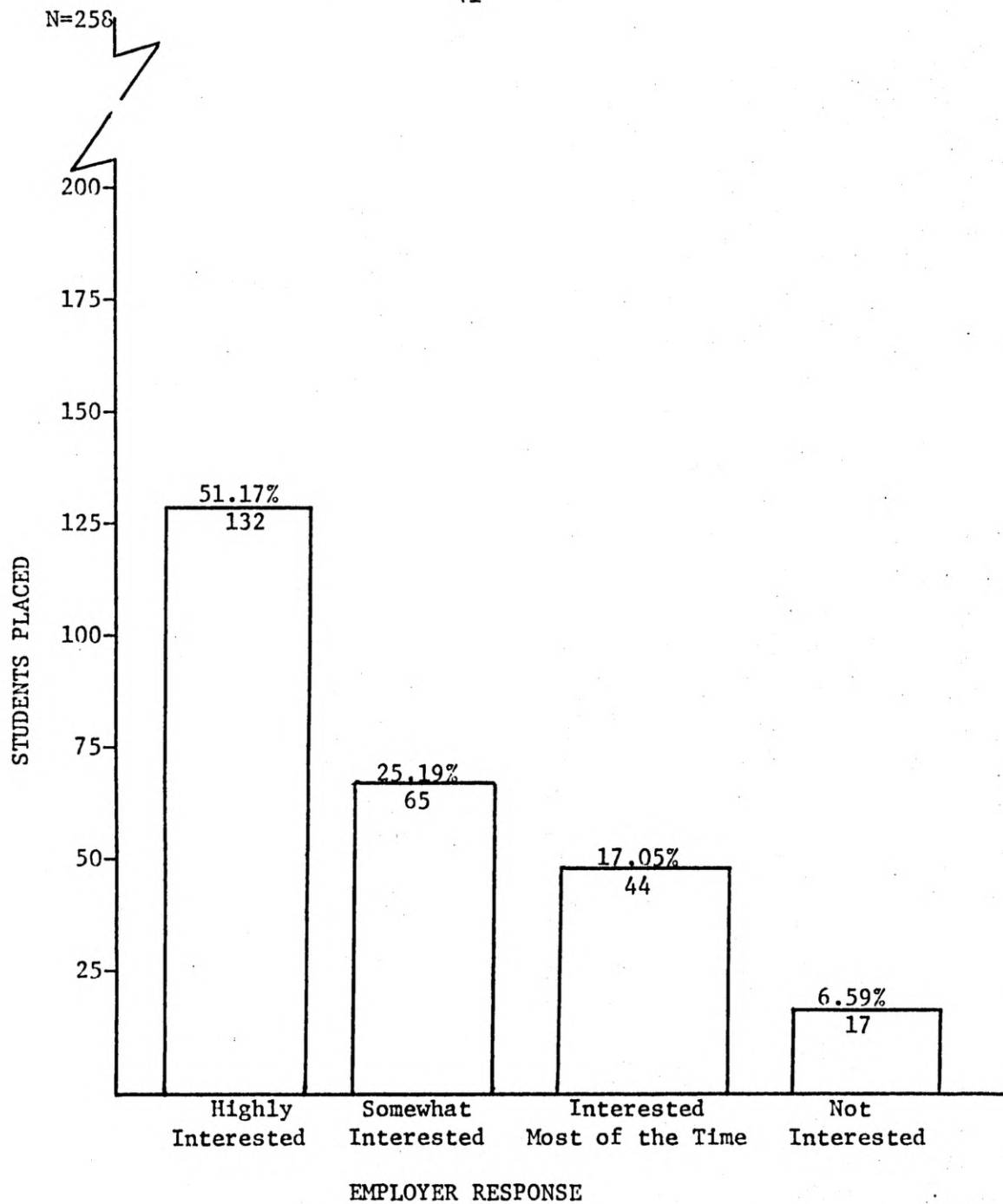


Figure 4

Student Interest in the Job

While this resource is the most current for Montana, the Guide for Distributive Education Teacher-Coordinators suggests that evaluation be made on a systematic basis using the training sponsor, and that the teacher-coordinator should assist the training sponsor with the format of the evaluation. (Colburg, 1972:127, 128) These two sources are somewhat in conflict as to who should complete the evaluation of the student, both agree that the evaluation should be in written form. As shown in Figure 5, the participating employers indicated that of the 258 students placed, 219 (84.88 percent) were evaluated by written evaluation forms, while 39 (15.12 percent) were not evaluated by written evaluation forms. The employers also indicated that for the 219 students receiving written evaluations, the distributive education teacher-coordinator was present when the evaluation form was completed in only 64 (29.22 percent) instances of each 219 evaluations. The employers also indicated that the teacher-coordinator was not present for the written evaluation in 155 (70.78 percent) of every 219 written evaluation situations.

Completion and Use of the Evaluation Form

When asked as to what person had completed the written evaluation form, the participating employers indicated that 212 (96.80 percent) of every 219 evaluations were completed by the employer, with the remainder, 7 (3.20 percent), completed by the training sponsor. This information agrees with that previously given from the Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile developed for Montana in 1975.

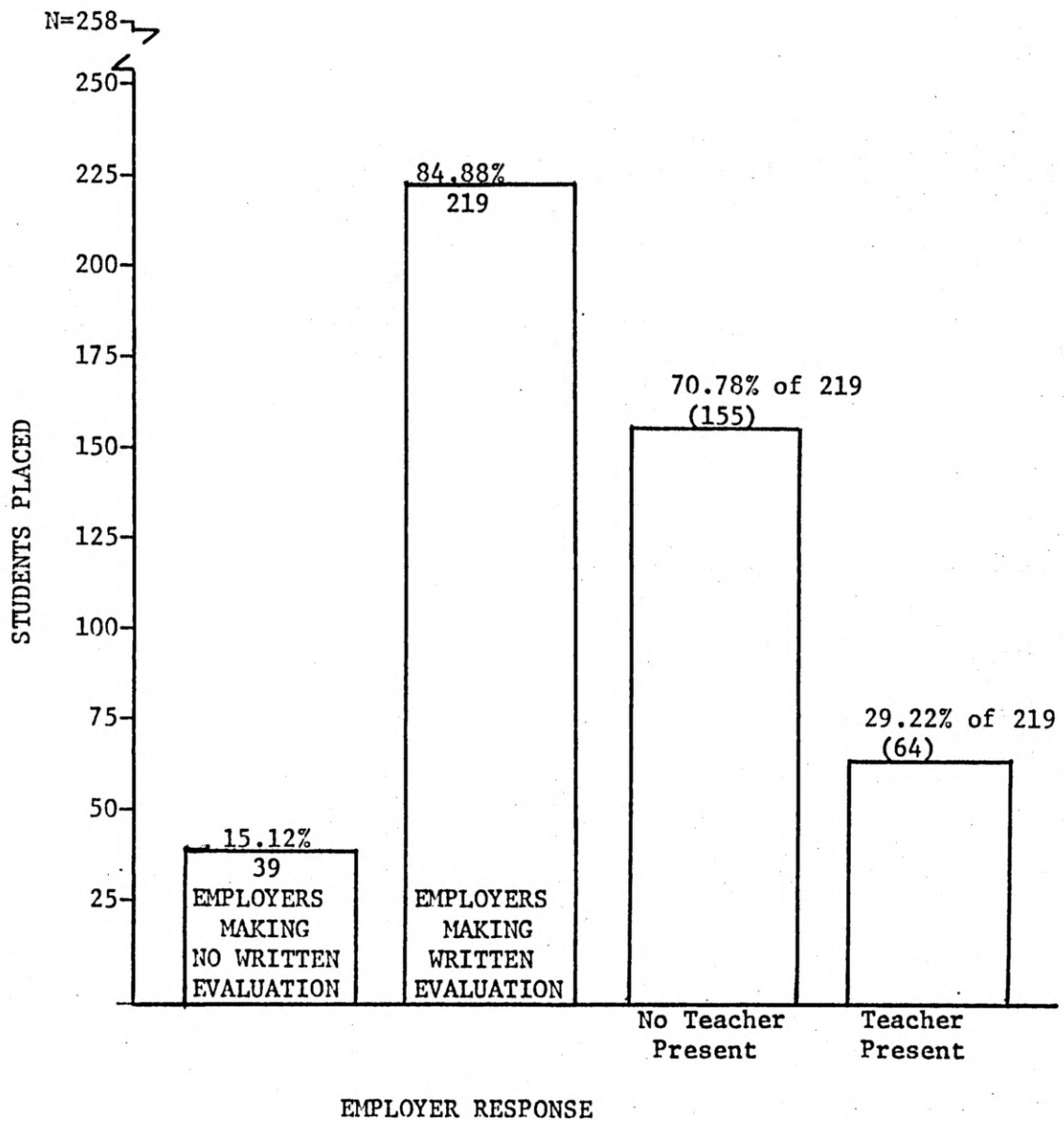


Figure 5

Use of Written Evaluation and the Presense of the
Teacher-Coordinator at the Evaluation

As to use of the evaluation form, an employer may or may not know if the teacher-coordinator has attempted to correct student imperfections brought out by the written evaluation form. If the imperfections are prominent on the job, the employer will be able to judge if improvement is seen through the efforts of the teacher-coordinator. For this reason, the employers were asked if the distributive education teacher-coordinator attempted to correct student imperfections brought out by the student evaluation form. As shown in Figure 6, the participating employers indicated that on 123 (56.16 percent) of every 219 occasions of written evaluation, the teacher-coordinator had attempted to correct imperfections brought out by the form. On only 2 (.91 percent) of the occasions did the teacher-coordinator not attempt to correct the imperfections brought out by the form, but the participating employers did not know of teacher-coordinator efforts on 94 (42.93 percent) of every 219 evaluation occasions.

Coordination Visitations

Employer responses were sought pertaining to the frequency of teacher-coordinator visitations and employer satisfaction with the visitation frequency, and as to the employer preference for frequency of teacher-coordinator visitations. Also, employers were questioned as to whether the visitations were determined by a preset schedule formed by the employer and the teacher-coordinator. Responses were also sought from the employers regarding use of the telephone by the teacher-

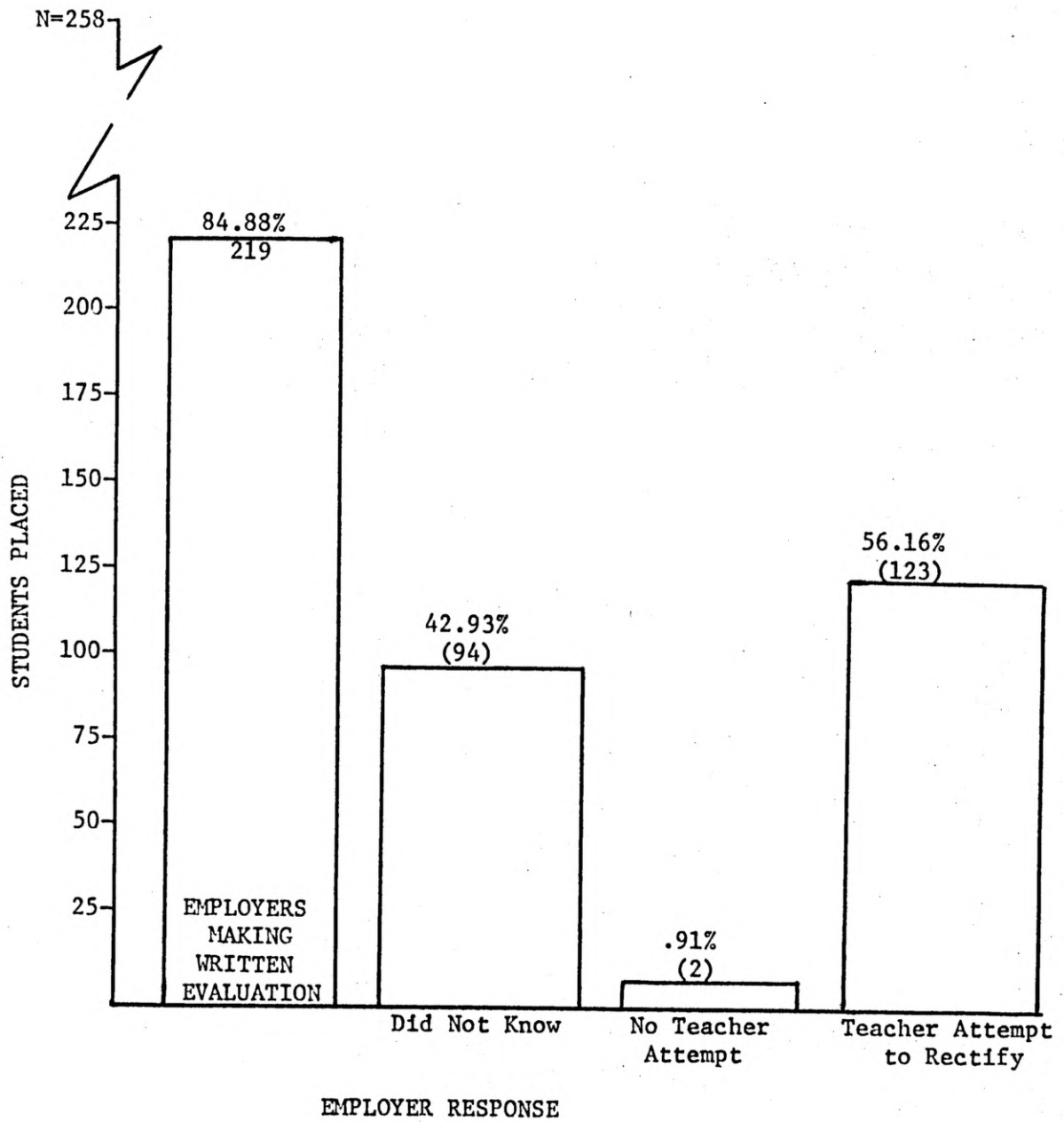


Figure 6

Correction of Student Imperfections
Brought Out by the Written Evaluation

coordinator to check on the student on the job, and also to determine if the teacher-coordinator made appointments prior to the visitations and if the employers requested the teacher-coordinator to make such appointments.

Frequency, Satisfaction, and Employer Preference in Visitations

Of the 170 employers responding to the survey, 75 (44.12 percent) indicated that the teacher-coordinator made visitations less than monthly, this being the largest response. The second largest response of 65 (38.23 percent) indicated that the teacher-coordinator made visitations on a monthly basis. In descending order, the remaining employers indicated that the teacher-coordinator visited the training station twice monthly (24 for 14.12 percent), twice weekly (4 for 2.35 percent), or weekly (2 for 1.18 percent).

As to satisfaction with the frequency of visitations that occurred, the participating employers indicated that 128 (75.29 percent) of 170 employers felt that the visitations were sufficient. Those employers that felt that the visitations were of inadequate frequency numbered 28 (16.47 percent), and those employers that felt that the visitations were not often enough numbered 14 (8.24 percent). There were no employers that felt that the visitations were conducted too often.

When asked how often, on the average, the employers would like the teacher-coordinator to visit their businesses, the majority favored the monthly visitation, with 112 (65.88 percent) of the 170 indicating

that choice. In descending order, the remainder of the participating employers favored the following: twice monthly with 29 (17.06 percent) responding, quarterly with 27 (15.88 percent) responding, weekly with 1 (.59 percent) responding, and as necessary with 1 (.59 percent) responding as to that selection for the question. These response levels left monthly as the central choice with a total of 30 (17.65 percent) in favor of more frequent visitations than monthly, and a total of 28 (16.74 percent) in favor of less than monthly visitations. The findings in this section are presented in a visual form in Figure 7 to show the correlation of frequency, satisfaction, and employer preference in visitations by the teacher-coordinator to the training station.

Scheduling of Visitations

The participating employers were asked if the visitations were determined by a schedule discussed by the distributive education teacher-coordinator and the employer to fit the needs of the business. Of the responding employers, 50 (29.41 percent) indicated that the visitations were determined by a previously set schedule, while 120 (70.59 percent) indicated that the teacher-coordinator visitations were not determined by a previously set schedule.

Coordination by Telephone

When asked if the distributive education teacher-coordinator checked on the student by telephone, all 170 participating employers made replies. Of the 170 replies, 53 (31.18 percent) indicated that the

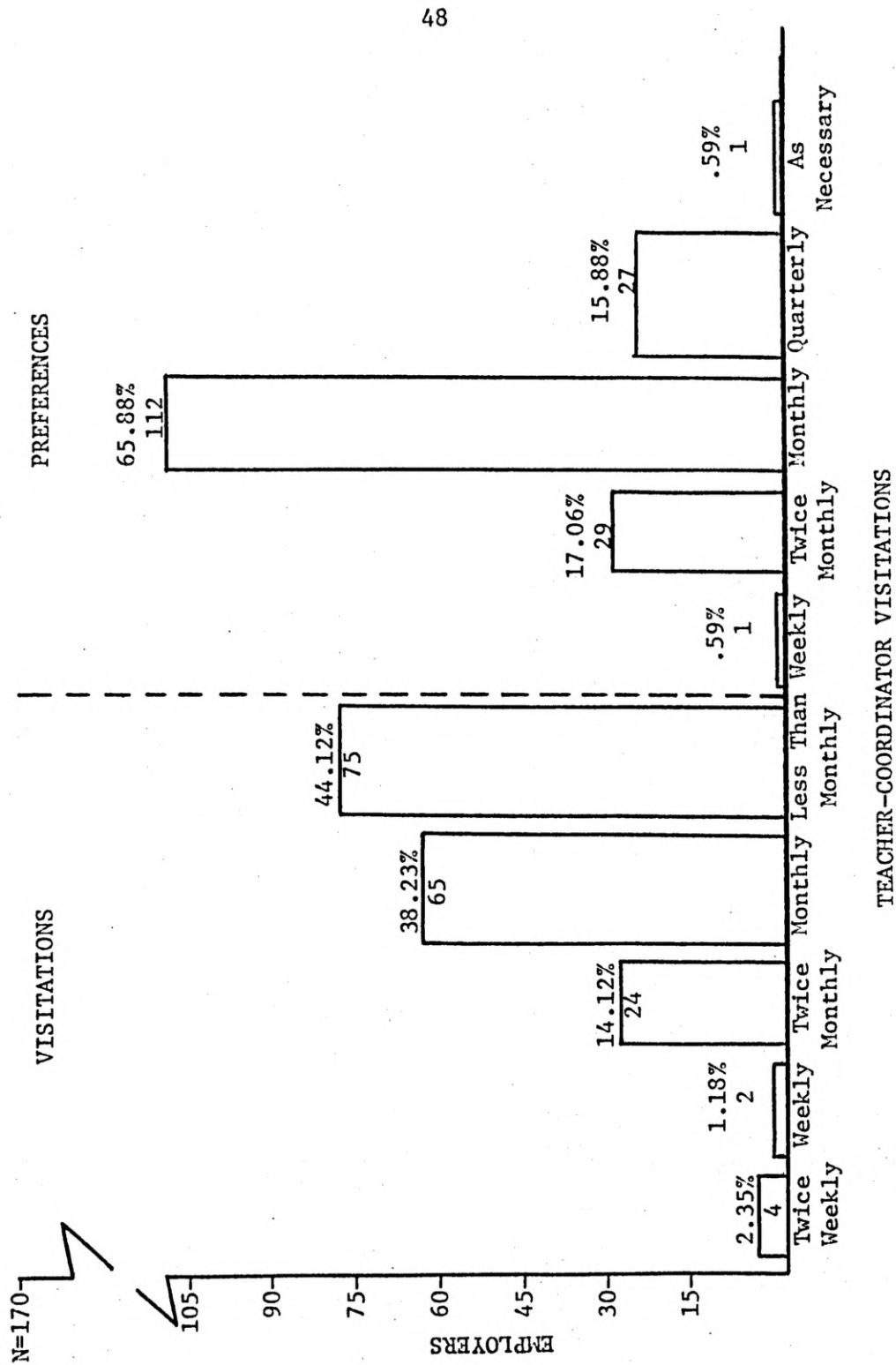


Figure 7

Frequency, Satisfaction, and Preference
for Teacher-Coordinator Visitations

teacher-coordinator had checked on the student by telephone, while 117 (68.82 percent) indicated that the teacher-coordinator had not checked on the student by telephone. This question was used because research indicated that a telephone should be provided for the teacher-coordinator as an aid to coordination. (Vo-Ed Program Assessment Profile, 1975:8)

Appointments for Visitations

Making an appointment prior to visitations can be of definite use to a teacher-coordinator in avoiding mismanagement of time, a precious commodity to the distributive education teacher-coordinator. Coordinators must learn to manage the use of their time. Many coordinators find it difficult to identify and establish priorities necessary in planning for effective time utilization. (Rowe, 1975:7) Also, some employers request the distributive education teacher-coordinator to make an appointment prior to visitation at the training station, and the preference of the employer should be observed. As shown in Figure 8, participating employers were asked if they requested the coordinator to make appointments prior to visitations, and 8 (4.71 percent) indicated that they did, while 162 (95.29 percent) indicated that they did not request appointments. However, when asked if the teacher-coordinator did make appointments prior to visitation, 60 (35.29 percent) of the 170 participating employers indicated that they did, while the remaining 110 (64.71 percent) indicated that the coordinator did not make appointments.

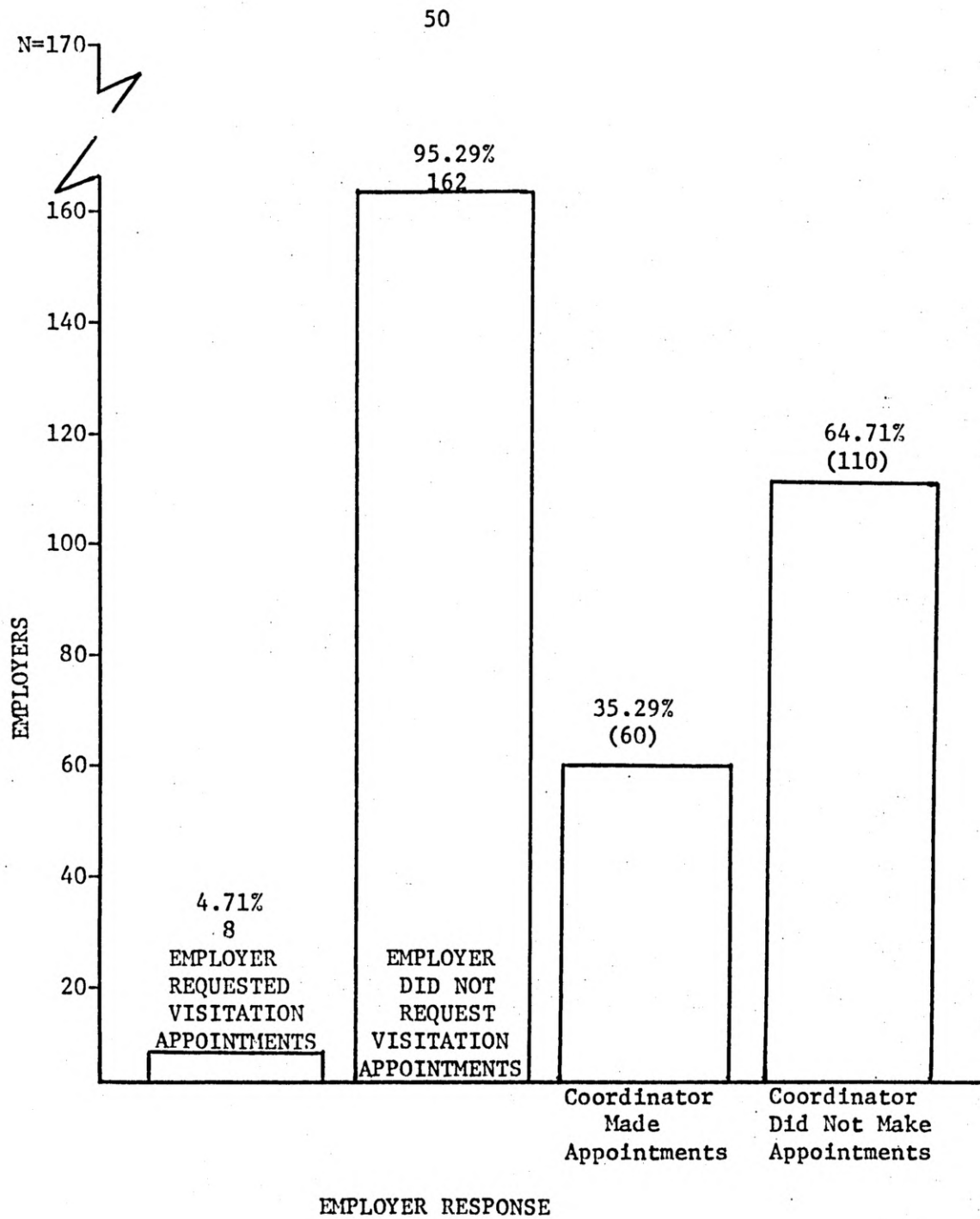


Figure 8

Pre-Arranged Visitations

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter of this study, the data gathered as a result of surveying Montana's cooperative distributive education participating employers from the 1975-1976 school term were presented and compared to common practices for cooperative distributive education derived from the review of literature. In this chapter, the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from this study are presented.

Summary

Distributive education as it exists today, has applied the cooperative method of instruction here in Montana since the 1930's. The cooperative method needs active participation from the teacher-coordinator, the employer, and the student to be useful in providing the most valuable learning experience for the student. The purpose of this study was to determine pertinent information about Montana's secondary cooperative distributive education programs, and specifically to determine teacher-coordinators use of commonly accepted practices for cooperative vocational education, as well as employer opinions on the operation of the distributive education program. It should be kept in mind that only one of the three major participants in the cooperative distributive education program, the employer, had a voice in the data that was gathered. The teacher-coordinator and the student were not represented in the survey.

Training agreements used by the Part G programs during the 1975-

1976 school term were obtained from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and screened to avoid duplication of employers providing more than one training station placement. This screening resulted in determination of 243 participating employers involved in 15 cooperative distributive education programs operating during the selected school term. Employers from the one other Part G program were not used since training materials were not available at the time of this study.

On May 28, 1976, an initial mailing of questionnaires was completed, and a follow-up was initiated on June 28, 1976. The survey was terminated on July 12, 1976, when a response level of 193 was reached yielding a 79.4 percent return. Upon termination of the survey, it was determined that the initial sample be revised by 23 to a level of 220 due to data revealed by the questionnaires that the 23 employers should not have been included in the sample. From this revised base, the final response was 170, yielding a 77.27 percent return, all of which were usable replies.

Responses given by the 170 participating employers yielded the following conditions as claimed to be in evidence during the 1975-1976 school term in relation to coordination practices investigated:

1. Recruitment and Selection of Training Stations. Of the 170 responding employers, 104 or 61.18 percent said they had been contacted by a teacher-coordinator prior to becoming involved in the program and accepting a distributive education student, while 66 or 38.82 percent said they had not been contacted prior to involvement in the program.

When asked if they had been contacted by a teacher-coordinator after employing a distributive education student, 117 or 68.82 percent of the employers said they had been contacted, while 53 or 31.18 percent said they had not been contacted after becoming involved in the program. In cross-referencing, it was discovered that only 5 or 2.94 percent of the participating employers had not been contacted and informed about the program either before or after employing a distributive education student.

2. Use of the Training Agreement and the Training Plan. As was expected all of the participating employers or 100.00 percent had the training agreement suggested to them and had used the training agreement. As to the training plan, 51 or 30.00 percent of the employers had a training plan suggested to them, and of these, 47 or 92.16 percent used a training plan when it was suggested. Of those that used a training plan, only 22 or 46.80 percent of the employers had the plan in writing.

3. Use of Training Sponsors. Of the 170 responding employers, 100 or 58.82 percent said that a training sponsor had been appointed, while 70 or 41.18 percent said that a training sponsor had not been appointed.

4. Use of the Sponsor Development Program. Of the participating employers, only 27 or 15.88 percent said that formal training sessions for the training sponsor had been used, but 24 of the 27 or 88.89 percent felt that the formal training sessions were worthwhile. Also, in cross-referencing the employer replies, 66 or 66.00 percent of the 100 employers having training sponsors felt positive about the use of formal training

sessions.

5. Methods of Student Placement. According to the participating employers, 258 students were placed in the training stations. Of the 258 students placed, 86 or 33.33 percent were placed on the basis that the student sought the job with the firm, and the teacher-coordinator then contacted the firm. The second largest group of students placed, 67 or 25.97 percent, were placed in the training station by the method of the teacher-coordinator selecting two or more students for the position and the employer made the final decision. The third largest group, 58 or 22.48 percent were placed by the teacher-coordinator selecting one student for the position and the employer making the final decision. Another 40 or 15.51 percent of the students were working for the firm prior to enrollment in the program, while the remaining 7 or 2.71 percent were placed by the employer calling the school and asking for students.

6. Degree of Student Interest. Of the 258 students placed, according to the participating employers, 132 or 51.17 percent showed "high interest"; 65 or 25.19 percent were "somewhat interested"; 44 or 17.05 percent were felt to be "interested most of the time"; and only 17 or 6.59 percent were felt to be "not interested" in their job at the training station.

7. Student Evaluation Forms and the Role of the Teacher-Coordinator in Evaluation. Of the 258 students placed in the training stations, 219 or 84.88 percent were evaluated by written evaluation forms. However, the teacher-coordinator was not present for the evaluation process

in 155 or 70.78 percent of every 219 written evaluations. It was also discovered that the employer completed the evaluation form in 212 or 96.80 percent of every 219 cases in which the written form was utilized. The employers did indicate that the teacher-coordinator had attempted to correct imperfections brought out by the written evaluation form on 123 or 56.16 percent of every 219 written evaluation occasions.

8. Coordination Visitations. Of the 170 employers responding, 75 or 44.12 percent said that the coordinator made visitations less than monthly, 65 or 38.23 percent said that the teacher-coordinator made visitations on a monthly basis, 24 or 14.12 percent indicated that the coordinator made visitations twice monthly, 4 or 2.35 percent indicated a visitation rate of twice weekly, and 2 or 1.18 percent said that the teacher-coordinator called on a weekly basis. As to satisfaction with the visitation schedule, of the 170 employers replying, 128 or 75.29 percent felt that the visitations were sufficient. When asked what level of visitation they preferred, the employers surveyed showed preference for the monthly visit with 112 or 65.88 percent of the 170 responding choosing that option.

9. Coordination by Telephone. When asked if the teacher-coordinator checked on the student by telephone, of the 170 employers responding to the question, 53 or 31.18 percent indicated that the coordinator had used the telephone for this purpose, while 117 or 68.82 percent indicated that the teacher-coordinator had not used the telephone to check on the student at the training station.

10. Pre-arranged Appointments for Visitations. Of the 170 participating employers surveyed, only 8 or 4.71 percent had asked the teacher-coordinator to make appointments prior to the visitation. However, 60 or 35.29 percent of the employers indicated that the teacher-coordinator did make appointments prior to visitations.

Conclusions

In the first chapter of this study, the researcher indicated in the statement of the problem that answers to a number of questions were sought through the use of the survey. Consequently, the conclusions are presented here in respect to each of the questions posed in the statement of the problem.

1. To what extent did teacher-coordinators apply recruitment and selection of training stations? The data showed that 61.18 percent of the employers were contacted prior to employing a distributive education student, and 68.82 percent of the employers were contacted after employing a student from the program. Since only 2.94 percent of the employers said they had not been contacted either before or after employing a distributive education student, it is concluded that the teacher-coordinators applied recruitment and selection of training stations to a great extent, but not enough contact was made prior to the employment of the student.

2. To what extent were training agreements and training plans applied? Training agreements were used on a 100.00 percent basis, so the

training agreement was used to the maximum possible. According to the research conducted by the researcher, the employer, the student, and the teacher-coordinator should be involved in every training plan, and the parents of the student should be considered also. However, the data gathered showed the teacher-coordinator and the student were involved in approximately the same number of agreements, at or near 90.00 percent, so it can be concluded that more standardization of training agreements should be accomplished and these parties should be included in every training agreement. It can also be concluded that the parents should be considered more, since only 10.00 percent of the training agreement involved parents.

As to training plans, only 30.00 percent of the participating employers indicated that a training plan had been suggested, but over 90.00 percent of the employers receiving the suggestion agreed to use a training plan. Therefore, it can be concluded that the training plan was not suggested to a sufficient extent. While the employers indicated good flexibility in the training plans used with 93.62 percent agreeing, only 19.15 percent of the training plans used were made by the employer, the teacher-coordinator, and the student together. Research showed that this should always be the case for all training plans, and all training plans should be in writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that while flexibility is good, the training plans were used only to a limited extent and the process of construction of the training plan was not sufficient.

3. To what extent were training sponsors appointed to train and supervise students in training stations? Since 58.82 percent of the participating employers said that training sponsors were used, it can be concluded that training sponsors were used insufficiently, since the research of this study indicated that training sponsors should be used in all training station situations.

4. To what extent were sponsor development activities carried out, and what were the employer's opinions of the activities? Sponsor development activities were used in only 15.88 percent of the training situations, while 66.00 percent of the employers having training sponsors at the training station felt positive about the concept. In conclusion, sponsor development activities were not conducted to a great enough extent to satisfy the employers.

5. What methods were used in placing students in training stations? Research for this study pointed out that the preferred method of placement is for the teacher-coordinator to send a number of students to the employer and to allow the employer to make the final selection. The data gathered from the survey indicated that only 25.97 percent of the students placed were placed by the recommended method. It can be concluded that placement efforts of the teacher-coordinators were not sufficient as to method of placement. The data also indicated that the teacher-coordinator had no control over placement in 48.84 percent of the students placed, so at the best, the teacher-coordinator used good placement practices only slightly over one-half of the time.

6. Using degree of interest in the area of work, were students tentative career objectives compatible with their respective training stations? Since the data indicated that only 6.59 percent of the students placed showed "no interest", it can be concluded that the placements satisfied the students career objectives in the majority of the placements.

7. To what extent were student evaluation forms used, and what role did the teacher-coordinators play in the evaluation process? From the data gathered, 84.88 percent of the students placed were evaluated by written means, while the teacher-coordinator was not present at the evaluation 70.78 percent of the occasions when evaluations were done. Therefore, it is concluded that student evaluation forms were used to a good extent, but the teacher-coordinator was not present as frequently as is indicated by common practice. Research indicated that the evaluation should be conducted for every student and the presense of the teacher-coordinator is highly desirable during the evaluation process.

8. With what frequency did teacher-coordinators visit the training stations, and what frequency of visitations did the employers prefer? Since the data showed that the employers surveyed had high preference for the once monthly visitation with 65.88 percent selecting that option, while only 38.23 percent indicated that the teacher-coordinator made visitations on a monthly basis, it is concluded that the teacher-coordinators are not making visitations according to employer preference. The once monthly visitation selection was supported in the research by past

studies such as Harris's of 1971 and Koon's of 1973.

9. Were training station visitations ever made by telephone rather than by teacher-coordinators in person? Since only 31.18 percent of the employers surveyed indicated that the teacher-coordinator used the telephone for this purpose, it can be concluded that the telephone is a useful tool for coordination, but it is not used to a great extent.

10. What degree of pre-arranged appointments occurred and did the employers request these of the teacher-coordinators? From the data gathered, very few employers requested appointments for visitations since only 4.71 percent stated this response. Coordinators did take it upon themselves to make appointments approximately one-third of the time, but it can be concluded that not enough use of time management is done by the teacher-coordinator.

Recommendations

Based upon the analysis of the data from the survey of 1975-1976 school term participating employers, and the review of literature presented in the second chapter of this study, the following recommendations are offered to facilitate growth and development of cooperative distributive education programs in Montana:

1. More effort should be made on the part of the distributive education teacher-coordinator to make personal contact with prospective employers of distributive education students prior to employment of a student at the training station.

2. A training agreement should be used for every student placed and the training agreement written format should be standardized to include at least the employer, the teacher-coordinator, and the student with consideration given to inclusion of the parents also.

3. A written training plan should be constructed by the employer, the teacher-coordinator, and the student for each training placement, and flexibility to allow adequate coverage of the needs of the business and the training of the student should continue to apply.

4. Training sponsors should be used to aid in the training of every student placed in a training station.

5. Sponsor development activities should be carried out on a formal basis by the teacher-coordinator to orient training sponsors to the cooperative distributive education program.

6. Effort should be made by the teacher-coordinator to have more control over student placement by selecting a number of students to interview for each training station opening with the employer making the final selection, and students seeking their own training stations should be receiving less emphasis.

7. A written evaluation for each student should be conducted periodically throughout the school term at the training station, by the employer in consultation with the training sponsor and the distributive education teacher-coordinator both present at the evaluation.

8. The teacher-coordinator should visit each training station on a monthly basis on the average, with variations from this standard only

on the request of the employer.

9. The teacher-coordinator should use the telephone to supplement regular personal visitations to the training stations.

10. To better manage the use of coordination time, the teacher-coordinator should make appointments prior to training station visits, even though the employer may not have requested the teacher-coordinator to make appointments.

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APPENDIX A

Interview with Mr. S. Ross Wagner, Supervisor of
Marketing and Distributive Education, Office of
the Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Helena, Montana, on June 28, 1976

Question: What programs were in operation during the 1975-1976 school term?

Answer: Eighteen programs were in operation, two of which were classified as Part B programs solely, while the other sixteen are considered cooperative programs, being under both Part B and Part G funding. The two Part B programs are located in Great Falls, Montana.

Question: Are all distributive education programs considered as cooperative programs?

Answer: With respect to funding purposes, Part B programs, which are the two located in Great Falls, are not considered as cooperative programs. Part G programs, for funding purposes, are considered to be cooperative in nature.

Question: Which programs submitted training agreements?

Answer: Only the Part G programs submitted training agreements, as Part B programs, existing prior to 1968, are not required to submit training agreements.

Question: What authority does the state supervisor have over programs in Montana?

Answer: For programs under Part G, the state supervisor has authority to regulate the laws as follows:

- 1) The coordinator must have at least one coop period per every twenty students over and above a preparation period.
- 2) The coordinator must not be responsible for over 40 coop students.
- 3) The coordinator must be vocationally approved as a cooperative coordinator.
- 4) Training agreements submitted are evaluated on the basis of minimum wage paid to the student.

For programs under Part B only, the state supervisor can review teacher certification and only approves those with certified vocational certificates as distributive education teachers. Also, the supervisor may approve or disapprove project proposals on the basis of validity as a distributive education program.

Question: What means does the state supervisor have for feedback as to what is occurring in the field within the state?

Answer: The state supervisor has a number of means at his or her disposal to discover what is occurring in the field. Contact is made with various teacher-coordinators at workshops, conferences, and during visits to the programs in the state. Contact is also made by telephone on periodic calls to various programs, but the formal evaluation process is the best

means available for assessing what practices are actually being followed within the state. This year, three high school distributive education programs were evaluated by an evaluation team, and five to six will be evaluated during the coming school term.

APPENDIX B

Interview with Mr. Norman L. Millikin, Distributive
Education Teacher-Educator, School of Business,
Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana,
on June 28, 1976

Question: What is the role of the distributive education teacher-educator?

Answer: The role of the teacher-educator is five-fold and follows in the descending order of time partaken in each area:

1. Pre-service activities involving the initial training provided those desiring to become teacher-coordinators in the field of distributive education.
2. In-service activities constituting involvement with curriculum development, graduate program, workshops, summer school, and coordinator meetings.
3. Program consultant for teacher-coordinators and advisor dealing with instructional materials.
4. Leadership, guidance, and management dealing with youth group activities (DECA).
5. Public relation activities dealing with distributive education as applied to various publics.

Question: What means does the teacher-educator have available for keeping informed as to what is occurring in Montana's distributive education programs?

Answer: Six sources are utilized to keep abreast with program activities:

1. The Montana State University Council for Distributive Education, which consists of six teacher-coordinators (five secondary and one post-secondary) and meets twice annually.
2. Programs visitations, primarily occurring through visitations to sites where student-teachers are located.
3. Research conducted by graduate students.
4. Acting as a participating member of the evaluation team (evaluation coordinator alternating with the state supervisor in this position) that formally evaluates programs on the secondary and the post-secondary levels.
5. Professional association meetings (MADEP).
6. Telephone conversations with teacher-coordinators.

APPENDIX C

Interview with Mr. Charles W. Koon,
Distributive Education Teacher-Coordinator,
Helena, Montana, on July 14, 1975

Question: What changes would you suggest in the format of your questionnaire used for your professional paper?

Answer: Initially, the format needs to be shortened so not so many pages are involved. A possibility might be a variation on sheet size to allow for restructuring of the questionnaire. As to the questions themselves, look at the charts for "other" sections to see if the the replies can be converted into choices and added to the questions. Also, when you figure the percentage of response, do it by each question, rather than overall. You might figure responses both ways on returns to assure that your information is accurate and usable.

APPENDIX D

MEMORANDUM

May 27, 1976

To: EMPLOYERS OF DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS

From: Richard E. Darsow, DE Teacher-Coordinator
Rt. 1, Box 1616
Libby, Montana 59923

Subject: COORDINATION PRACTICES OF MONTANA DE TEACHERS

The enclosed survey has been created as a part of my professional paper to meet graduate requirements at Montana State University. The topic has been selected to provide information to improve DE teacher education at MSU, as well as to aid in standardizing the coordination practices throughout Montana.

It is very important that I receive your reply to provide accurate information. It is also very important that you take just a few minutes of your time to complete this survey and return it in the envelope provided as soon as possible to facilitate the gathering of the data. Thank you for your assistance.

Directions: 1) The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information that will strengthen and standardize coordination efforts in the state of Montana. This data will be used in the teacher education program at Montana State University and will be available to all the coordinators in the state.

2) Please fill out all questions that apply to your situation for the 1975-1976 school term now being completed.

3) If for some reason you feel that you cannot respond to this questionnaire, please comment below and return the materials in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

	YES	NO
e		

1. Were you personally interviewed by the DE teacher and informed about the program prior to becoming involved and accepting a DE student?
2. Were you contacted by the DE teacher and informed about the program after employing a DE student?
3. Was a training agreement suggested to you?

If one was and it is used, who was involved? (Please check those that apply: employer__student__DE teacher__parents__training sponsor__school official__other__)
4. Was a training plan (schedule of student training experiences) suggested?
If one was suggested, was one used?
5. If a training plan was created, was it in writing?
Was it made by the DE teacher, the student, and the employer?
Was it developed to adequately cover the needs of the business and flexible enough to allow for the training at the same time?

6. Was a training sponsor appointed for supervision of the work experience of the student and for giving on-the-job instruction?
7. Prior to or during the time you employed a DE student, were there any formal sessions conducted by the DE teacher to orient the training sponsor for the supervising and training of the student?
8. If the answer to #7 was YES, were the sessions worthwhile?
If the answer to #7 was NO, do you feel that the sessions would have been helpful?

PLACEMENT AND EVALUATION

9. How many DE students were employed by your business during the 1975-1976 school term? _____

For the following questions, #10-#15, if you employed more than one student during the school term, please give the same number of responses per question as the number of students that you employed. (e.g. 2 DE students, 2 responses, 3 DE students, 3 responses, etc.)

10. The DE student was placed in your business by what means?
 a. The DE teacher selected one student for the position, and you interviewed the student for the final decision
 b. The DE teacher selected two or more students for the position, and you interviewed to make the final decision
 c. The DE student sought the job with your firm, and the DE teacher contacted you after the student was hired
 d. The DE student was working for your firm prior to involvement in the DE program and then contact was made by the teacher
 e. Other (please specify) _____
11. What degree of interest did the DE student show towards the area of work that he or she was training in? High interest _____ Somewhat interested _____ Interested most of the time _____ Not interested _____
12. Was a written evaluation form used in evaluating the DE student? If YES _____ answer #13-#15; if NO _____ omit #13-#15.
13. Who completed the evaluation form? Employer _____ Sponsor _____ Other _____
14. Did the DE teacher attempt to correct student imperfections brought out by the student evaluation form? YES _____ NO _____ Don't know _____
15. Was the DE teacher present when the student evaluation form was being completed? YES _____ NO _____

COORDINATION

16. How frequently did the DE teacher visit your business? Weekly _____ Twice weekly _____ Twice monthly _____ Monthly _____ Less than monthly _____
17. Were the visits made by the DE teacher considered by you to be: Too often _____ Sufficient _____ Not often enough _____ Inadequate _____
18. Were the visits determined by a schedule discussed by the DE teacher and yourself, to fit the needs of your business? YES _____ NO _____
19. How often, on the average, would you like the DE teacher to visit your business? Weekly _____ Twice monthly _____ Monthly _____ Other(specify) _____
20. Did the DE teacher check on the student by telephone? YES _____ NO _____
21. Did the DE teacher make appointments prior to the visits? YES _____ NO _____
22. Did you request the DE teacher to make appointments? YES _____ NO _____

APPENDIX F

Hi Again! I need your help! Remember the Distributive Education Employer Questionnaire? According to my records, I have not received a reply from your business as yet. Please take just a few minutes of your time to fill out the questionnaire and return it to me in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided. Your response is important to make the information gathered useful towards improving coordination practices here in Montana. Thanks again for your assistance!

Richard E. Darsow, DE Teacher-Coordinator
Rt. 1, Box 1616
Libby, Montana 59923

