

Research Project Summary

Research Title Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Professions
Name Paul Wells
Dept/Institution Auckland University of Technology
Final Report 4/05/2005
Received Date

Project Officer Comments

The main aim of this study was to measure the perceptions of influential high school teachers towards the accounting profession relative to other professions.

This was done by comparing New Zealand, Australian and United States high school teachers' perceptions of the accounting profession compared to the legal, engineering and medical professions. The literature reviewed suggests that many young persons make career decisions in high school, and that teachers are second only to parents as a source of career advice. As a consequence, high school teachers' perceptions of the accounting profession could have significant effect on the profession's recruiting efforts.

The findings suggest that high school teachers in all three countries have a low opinion of accounting as a career opportunity relative to law, medicine and engineering. This suggests that there is likely to be a serious mismatch between skills perceived by teachers as necessary for the profession, and the pre-requisite skills sought by the profession (Arther Andersen et al., 1989). As a consequence students who possess the skills and abilities sought by the profession, are being directed to other career opportunities. Given the documented evidence of these perceptions of accounting it is imperative that the profession actively promotes the importance of accounting to students at college and high school. It is further advocated that the importance of accounting needs also to be promoted to key student influencers, that is parents, and high school teachers.

While the professional accountancy bodies in Australia and NZ have active recruitment programmes which target high school and university students, there appears to be no such programmes which specifically target the students' career advisors. The recruitment material targeted to students seeks to provide information on the duties and work environment of accountants, however promotional material directed to the world at large tends to be more branding focused. This assumes that the target audience understands the nature and type of duties performed by accountants. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of promoting the duties performed by accountants to students as potential practitioners in an effort to reduce the amount of misinformation about the profession. The results from this study suggest that the accounting profession needs to more widely disseminate this information. Specifically this information must target the people who have a key influence on students, when they are making a career choice decision, and therefore must include teachers and parents.

This study has four limitations. First, identifying high school teachers who are influential in helping high school students make a career choice is highly subjective and there can be no certainty that high school principals did in fact use this criteria in their selection process. Second, while the response rate was 5% higher than the Hardin et al (2000) survey, the actual number of respondents (n=36) makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions from some of the data collected. Third, is that insufficient attention was paid to the possibility of a non response bias. Lastly, this study makes no attempt to report on the reasons for the perceptions held by the respondents.

This project has presented two opportunities for further research. The first is to consider the grouping of attributes and also the extent to which one group of attributes may influence other groups of attributes. While the second opportunity is to examine the impact of teacher perceptions on student career choice.

Report filed on: 2004/1045

Research Project Summary

Research Title Status of Agricultural Education in Northern Territory Schools
Name Louise Coutts
Dept/Institution Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (Dbird) Katherine Research Station
Final Report Received Date 4/05/2005

Project Officer Comments

Original Report forwarded to Debbie Efthymiades, Director Curriculum Services Branch
Copy of Executive Summary filed on 2004/1045

Executive Summary:

The process undertaken to prepare the report included a review of the structure and delivery of education, including the availability of agricultural resources in the NT. Information was also collected using email and telephone questionnaire responses from teachers and management at Government and Non Government primary and secondary schools in the NT.

Responses were generally positive and included:

1. A desire for Industry contact in the delivery of agricultural resources into schools.
2. A current focus on agricultural education through small produce gardens at the primary school level.
3. A current focus on agricultural education through vocational education and training at the secondary school level.

Recommendations:

The need for Industry contact (DBIRD and Private Enterprise in delivering agricultural resources into schools to:

- maximise opportunities to highlight the valuable role Primary Industries play in our society;
- lift the profile of the Agricultural Industry in education in the Northern Territory; and
- develop relationships and networks, which is seen to be the most useful means of 'doing business', including educating, in the Territory.

Developing four tier structures to allow for information sharing and involvement at the schools level, a local level, a Territory level and at the National level.

Tier 1: Establish an informal network of motivated and enthusiastic teachers and schools interested in or actually teaching agriculture.

Tier 2: Establish local area networks with interested teachers and schools centered around the local research centres, but including producers, representatives of industry and other scientific organisations.

Tier 3: Establish a formal network including a memorandum of understanding between NTDEET, DBIRD and various other industry and education organisations similar to the advisory committees established in other Australian states.

Tier 4: Maintain and Develop links with the National Networking Committee which is currently being established with links to all states and Territories in Australia.

Research Project Summary

Research Title Resourcing of Australian Schools (Stage 2 - 2003)
 (Undertaken in consultation with the Australian Primary Principals Association and
 the MCEETYA Schools Resourcing Taskforce)

Name Professor Max Angus

Dept/Institution School of Education
 Edith Cowan University

**Final Report
Received Date** 20/05/2005

Project Officer Comments

This research was a Commonwealth funded national research project undertaken in consultation with the Australian Primary Principals' Association and the MCEETYA Schools Resourcing taskforce.

Harriet Olney, Project Manager Edith Cowan University advised that a copy of the final report was forwarded to Ken Simpson, Trevor Saunders and Ian Cooper on 30 June 2004.

A copy of the Executive Summary was requested.

The aim of the study was to investigate whether Australian primary schools have sufficient resources to achieve the goals set for them by Commonwealth and State Ministers for Education in the statement, National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century.

The results:

The statement of National Goals outlines the educational outcomes sought for all Australian students. As such it represents an ideal yet to be attained by many primary school students. Without additional financial and other resources, these goals are outside the reach of many schools, particularly those with lower Socio-Economic Status intakes unable to attract high-quality community support, adequate private contributions from parents and high-quality staff.

What needs to be done?

The insufficiency of resources can be addressed by four overarching strategies:

1. Improve the knowledge base;
2. Extend the use of effective instructional systems;
3. Consolidate curriculum frameworks
4. Allocate additional resources to address student needs.

Copy of the Executive Summary has been filed on 2003/1016.

The report is available on the DEST website at: www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/2004/resource_suficiency/default.htm

Research Project Summary

Research Title Evaluation of Deadly Vibe magazine
Name Dr Nola Purdie
Dept/Institution Australian Council for Educational Research
Final Report Received Date 20/05/2005

Project Officer Comments

Deadly Vibe is a magazine for Indigenous students that aims to enhance their academic and social outcomes of schooling, including literacy and numeracy learning, self esteem and self concept, regular school attendance and retention, career and employment opportunities, and healthy lifestyles.

Four hundred and forty three primary and secondary schools students (of whom 290 were Indigenous) and 91 teachers located in 61 schools across Australia completed surveys. Government, Catholic, and Independent schools were included in the sample. The surveys contained both fixed response and open-ended response format items.

Results:

The evidence from both teachers and students very strongly supports the efficacy of the magazine in terms of its positive impact on students' attitudes, knowledge, and achievement in the areas of literacy, numeracy, attendance and retention, career aspirations, health, and Indigenous culture. This positive impact applies to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, but more particularly to Indigenous students.

The success of the magazine is remarkable, given the diversity of students for which it currently has strong appeal - including those in urban, regional, and remote locations. This success is almost certainly related to the very strong emphasis on excellence by Indigenous people, as well as content that is meaningful.

Most important is the positive impact of the magazine on educational outcomes that is evident in the results of both student and teacher surveys. For instance, as a result of reading the magazine, the Indigenous student self-report data showed that:

- 85% of students learn new things;
- 71% have become more interested in reading;
- 76% are more aware of career options;
- 68% have been inspired to complete secondary school;
- 43% are encouraged to come to school more often;
- 68% are more aware of the risks of drinking alcohol;
- 87% have learned more about their culture;
- 92% feel proud to be Indigenous.
- 73% are more aware of the dangers of taking drugs such as marijuana and cocaine; and
- 72% are more aware of the dangers of sniffing glue, petrol and aerosols.

There are four Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The magazine should continue in its current format with very little change.

Recommendation 2: Consideration should be given to developing a new distribution strategy for 2005, given the introduction of the Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPi) to replace the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program.

Recommendation 3: Engage more regular classroom teachers as users of the magazine by establishing a teacher contact in each school (in addition to existing ASSPA contacts).

Recommendation 4: Develop links with State and Territory Indigenous Education Units (or equivalent) to seek ways of further promoting use of the magazine in schools.

The report is filed on 2004/2041