

A STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL
STUDENTS AT AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL
SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Trade and industrial programs in Oklahoma are designed to be two years in length. This time block has been determined by vocational educators and members of advisory committees to be necessary for successful development of skills required to be employable in most trade areas.

It is estimated in the Oklahoma Annual State Plan for 1979 (20) that there will be approximately 17,000 high school students enrolled in 475 trade and industrial education programs for the 1979-80 school year. Due to the limited number of students who can be effectively trained in a vocational course, it becomes economically desirable that only those students who are sincere about pursuing a trade as an occupation be enrolled.

Follow-up reports developed through the Occupational Training Information System in 1977 (18) and 1978 (12), indicate that fewer than half of the total enrollees in trade and industrial programs complete the training. If trade and industrial education programs are to meet the goals of providing skill development training to those students wishing to seek employment in their chosen occupational field, every effort must be made to enroll those students who have a definite need for the training and are serious about seeking employment where they can use the skills developed in the programs. It is necessary to promote the type of programs which provide learning environments that

encourage students to remain with the training to completion. It is also desirable to identify those situations and factors which students perceive as reasons for not completing programs.

Statement of the Problem

The problem which this study is directed toward is the lack of information from students presently enrolled in the trade and industrial programs as to why they will or will not return for the second year of training.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors of trade and industrial programs which students consider important in their decision to remain with a program to completion. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do first-year trade and industrial students perceive their school, their instructor and their program?
2. What factors do first-year trade and industrial students consider important in deciding to enroll for the second year of training?
3. What qualities of trade and industrial programs help students decide to enroll for the second year of training in a trade and industrial program?

Need for the Study

The need for this study was seen as a method of providing information to teacher training institutions and state trade and industrial

supervisors to use in working with administrators and instructors at area vocational and technical schools for program improvement. Each school attempts to obtain information from students who drop out of programs but there has been very little effort to determine what factors and qualities of a program entice students to return for the second year. It is felt that educators responsible for developing, instructing and administering trade and industrial education programs need a criteria for identifying the positive aspects. By surveying the juniors who are enrolled as first-year students and would make up the second-year class next year, this information could be obtained.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to nine area vocational and technical schools of Oklahoma. They were selected to be a sample of those schools representing all areas of Oklahoma. The students who are high school juniors and first-year students in two-year trade and industrial programs were used by this study to provide the data. These students represented rural area vocational and technical schools, suburban area vocational and technical schools, and metropolitan area vocational and technical schools. The home high schools which provided students to these selected area vocational and technical schools represent those high schools from very small school systems to some of the larger school systems of Oklahoma. This study is limited to trade and industrial education programs which are approved as two-year training programs by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature reviewed for this study indicated that the problem of students not completing vocational programs is not a new one. Vocational educators have always tried to eliminate unfavorable stereotyping of vocational education. It is impossible to place the blame for this attitude on any one group in society. There is evidence to support the existence of negative attitudes about vocational programs. This study sought literature in the following areas:

1. High school counselor's perception of vocational education.
2. Parents' perception of vocational education.
3. Industry's view of vocational education.
4. High school student's perception of vocational training programs.
5. The promotion of vocational education programs by instructors and administrators.

These are the areas often considered to be influential to students selecting an occupation. Even though young people of high school age like to make their own decisions, these external forces have a real effect on a student's choice of a career.

High School Counselor's Perception
of Vocational Education

Hummel in 1976 (11), explained guidance and counseling to a Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education. In his paper he says:

Guidance begins with an individual's freedom and responsibility to make decisions. The need for guidance becomes critical when a person must choose, with only minimal information and experience, among a great number of vague alternatives. This is the condition under which most young people currently decide about their education, their work, and their future life in general. Guidance is a process in which a qualified person assists another to appraise his personal resources and limitations, to make decisions appropriate with such appraisal and to assume responsibility for acting on his decision (p. 103).

The American way of allowing persons to select their careers is quite different from many European countries where a student's abilities and aptitudes are assessed and a program is prescribed. This procedure is explained in a 1968 Manpower Report, Bridging the Gap from School to Work (29). This report further explains that career counseling begins at a very early stage in a child's education.

In the United States, in order to allow as much freedom as possible for each individual to select their own career, much of the counseling takes place after an occupational choice has been made. In the 1968 Manpower Report (29), the Department of Labor states that 77.6 percent of school dropouts never received job counseling and 43.9 percent of the graduates had not received counseling about job opportunities. From this report we can see an urgent need for more qualified counselors. In the same report, it was noted that 13 percent of the nation's secondary schools did not provide counseling services and only the Virgin Islands and Massachusetts met the standard of one counselor for each 300 students.

A shortage of competent school counselors is not the only problem facing vocational education. The perception of vocational education held by those in counseling positions is also important to vocational education. In School Shop magazine, Hoyt (10, p. 41) says: ". . . it is essential that counselors hold an image of vocational education which is accurate in terms of today's thrust in vocational education."

Through contacts with thousands of school counselors, Hoyt documented considerable evidence that there were five major negative perceptions of vocational education held by a large number of the counselors. These negative perceptions as related by Hoyt (10) were:

1. That vocational educators try to turn out skilled technicians and craftsmen at the secondary school level.
2. That secondary vocational education has a major purpose of preparing people for gainful employment.
3. That vocational education has failed to offer a variety of choices to students.
4. That vocational educators are really looking for the academically talented rather than providing for students with low levels of academic aptitude.
5. That vocational education exists as something apart and separate from 'regular' school (p. 42).

These things are indeed often representative of vocational education. However, if they are viewed negatively by someone with influence over student enrollments they can be limiting to vocational education. In the First Annual Report of the National Advisory Committee on Vocational Education in 1968 (27), the Committee reported that we were all guilty of promoting the concept that "vocational education is designed for somebody else's children." They further stated that:

We have promoted the idea that the only good education is an education capped off by four years of college. This idea, transmitted by our values, our aspirations and our slight support, is snobbish, undemocratic, and a revelation of why schools fail so many students (p. 3).

We can relate this viewpoint to the negative perceptions of vocational education by school counselors reported by Hoyt. Counselors have often seen their primary responsibility as working with students who will pursue a college education after high school. A study conducted in Oklahoma in 1972 by Gardner (9) showed a direct relationship between administrators' attitude toward vocational education and that of counselors in the same system. Six of the ten schools checked showed that if the school administration felt positive about vocational education the counselors also held positive attitudes toward it. This study further showed that attitudes of administrators and counselors were related to the attitudes of students in the school and affected the number and type of students who chose to enroll in vocational programs.

A study completed in Colorado by Brown and Clark in 1976 (2) sought to determine if parents' and students' attitudes toward vocational education were related to the perceptions held by school counselors. There was sufficient evidence to show that there was a difference in the way parents felt about vocational education and the perceptions of parents' attitudes held by counselors. Parents had a much more positive feeling about their child taking vocational education than counselors believed. Brown and Clark (2) go on to state that there is increased interest and positive attitudes toward vocational education by counselors.

Parents' Perception of Vocational Education

Literature reviewed for this section indicated that parents are probably the most important single influence on occupational decision-making by students. A study by Medvene (16) stated that a parent's influence in the very early ages of a child, began the development of

concepts toward status and prestige of different occupations. This was especially true of the father's attitudes. The feeling that parents often have of wanting a "better life" for their children often stereotypes vocational education as less desirable education compared to college.

This perception of vocational education is not universal, however, and many parents are proud to have their children attend vocational courses in high school. A study completed by Darby (4) indicated a difference in opinion about vocational training between upper-status and lower-status parents. The upper status being professional people with at least a baccalaureate degree and the lower status those with less than a college degree. The results showed that often those without a degree encourage their children to enroll in vocational courses in high school. This study showed that social status does seem to influence a person's perception of what is an acceptable level of educational attainment. Darby recommends that perhaps a wider and more comprehensive public relations program is needed to educate parents who are not and have never been associated with vocational education.

Many of the skilled craftsmen in the past were slaves or very poor people who learned their trade by working with a craftsman. This perception has been passed down from generation to generation for many years. Stallworth (24) states:

The stigma is real and cannot be predicted to vanish just because it is troublesome, even with an effective propaganda program designed to eliminate it, until certain social conditions vanish from the American scene (p. 215).

This perception of vocational education is a real part of the American society of which parents are a very influential group. The

National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (27) in their first annual report stated that:

At the very heart of our problem is a national attitude that says vocational education is designed for someone else's children. This attitude is shared by businessmen, labor leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students (p. 4).

As vocational education coexists with general education it becomes important that efforts be made to minimize negative perceptions of parents and students by providing meaningful vocational training to those students who want to develop skills in order to gain employment.

Industry's View of Vocational Education

The primary consumer for the product of vocational education is business and industry, the product being graduates of vocational education programs. Therefore, it becomes important for vocational educators to maintain communication lines with those who will employ their students. A study conducted in Oklahoma by J. B. Morton (17) and others in 1977 produced information favorable to vocational education. The employers sampled indicated that their employees who had completed a vocational education training program were above average in work habits and quantity of work done. This would indicate that they would have a preference for hiring someone with training over someone without vocational training. The study stated that:

Ninety-two percent of the employers were satisfied with their employees vocational training. The eight percent that was not satisfied indicated employees attitude toward the job as the reason for their dissatisfaction (p. 8).

This research study also found that a majority of employers said their employees with vocational education training were above average in

willingness to improve and learn new jobs, to work without supervision and in compliance of company policies, rules, and practices. The overall feelings of employers in Oklahoma was determined to be positive and supportive of vocational education.

Another study completed in 1975 in Ohio by Talarzyk (25) compared two groups of employers, those who employed vocational education graduates and those who had not. The results of this research yielded evidence that the employers who had employed graduates of vocational education courses felt that vocational education students were well trained and highly motivated.

The employers who had not hired vocational school students were less informed about vocational education and held more negative attitudes about that type of training.

The research by Brown and Clark (2) did find that the one aspect of industry which does not support the goals of vocational education was labor unions which had strong apprenticeship programs. These unions have felt the need to control the manpower entry into the trades and have not seen the need to support training outside the apprenticeship programs.

High School Students' Perception of Vocational Training Programs

It is assumed and promoted by vocational educators that the single most important element of a training program is the student. It, therefore, becomes useful for this study to review information available about the way students perceive vocational education. Larson (15) reports on recent studies in which high school students in Colorado

responded to a questionnaire about vocational education. The study showed 79.39 percent of the students were interested in vocational education. A similar study in Ohio indicated 72.4 percent were interested in vocational education. Another study completed in Utah in 1966 showed 83 percent were interested in vocational training. Of the 79 percent of the students in Colorado which were interested in vocational education, less than 10 percent would have the opportunity to enroll in programs for entry-level employment.

We must look at factors affecting a student's decision to enroll in a vocational education program. Larson (15) says:

Influence of the peer group, the family, and the experiences of youth contribute greatly to the individuals final occupational decision. Exposure at an early age to a large variety of occupations, both through vicarious experiences and through written and oral communications as well as media aids the process of decision-making (p. 8).

Evans (6, p. 5) states there is actually little known about why students enroll in vocational courses. He writes that "students often seek vocational goals in courses that teachers believe to be nonvocational in nature." This would be the case for a student to take English courses to prepare him for a career in writing. On the other hand students may desire a "vocational" course purely for avocational reasons. Many times these students are singled out and eliminated from vocational programs. For this reason their goals are kept concealed until they have reached their objective.

Faulkner (7) attempted to determine how students perceived their chosen occupational field in relationship to prestige and self-concept. The results showed that post-secondary students viewed vocational training as preparing them for subprofessional occupations. The findings of

this study revealed that the attrition from technical programs was often a result of the subprofessional concept held by the students.

Students enrolled in vocational education programs have been stereotyped as being lower in intelligence and from lower socio-economic class than students taking college preparatory programs. Davidson and Johnston (5) report on a study conducted of 2,000 high school boys graduating in 1969. It was indicated that there was no difference in the intelligence level between the two groups. It was found, however, that the majority of vocational students in this study were indeed from a lower socio-economic class. The boys enrolled in vocational education held a self-concept of being "slightly above average". This group also had a higher concept of self-esteem one year after completion of high school.

The study by Davidson and Johnston (5) found that vocational students were less active in extracurricular activities connected with the high school than the college prep group. There appears to be a smaller percentage of vocational students dropping out of school than the other group. The findings of this study were contradictory to many of the myths assumed about vocational education students. A similar study on a much larger scale was conducted by Brown and Clark (2) in 1976 which reinforces the positive perceptions of vocational education by those students enrolled in these programs. Their study found that there was no relationship between family income levels or ethnic background and a desire to enroll in vocational training courses. The study also found that there was a high relationship between vocational education and occupational goals. There was evidence that students' attitudes about vocational education was influenced by parents, peer groups, and school

counselors. Another positive result from this study was, that more information available to students about vocational education courses increased the probability that they would enroll in a vocational course.

Research conducted by Black (1) in 1976 sought to determine if there was a difference in attitudes toward vocational education between white and nonwhite students. He mentioned that the general feeling among educators that the nonwhite students would have a much higher regard for vocational education. The results showed no connection between ethnic or racial background and perception of vocational education. Black (1, p. 19) said his study found the overall public image of vocational education is positive, however, it seemed clear that students' opinions were variable and were influenced by many external forces. He recommends that "any program designed to increase the involvement of students with vocational education should be aimed not only at influencing the attitudes of the students, but those of their parents as well."

The trend of student attitudes in literature reviewed for this study seems to indicate that students enrolled in vocational courses consider their education at least as good as other aspects of high school programs.

The Promotion of Vocational Education Programs by Instructors and Administrators

Gardner (9) found that there was a relationship between administrators' attitudes and students' attitudes when tested using the ATVE. This study also showed that students, from schools where administrators had scored above the mean, scored higher on the GATB tests. The

attitude relationship was significant between administrators and counselors in the same schools. This study would indicate that the attitude toward vocational education of administrators would have an influence on everyone involved with the school system.

A study by Sawyers (23) found that administrators, teachers, and school counselors in Indiana in 1976 felt that vocational education hindered students from further education after high school. They felt that:

. . . vocational education programs should be geared mainly for youth of limited academic ability and that graduates of vocational education programs work mainly with their hands rather than with their minds and with little or no opportunity for advancement (p. 28).

The data obtained in this study indicates that the administrators and teachers sampled were not familiar with the goals and objectives of vocational education.

The number of schools sampled for Sawyer's study was small and perhaps not reflective of the attitudes of administrators and teachers as a whole.

Kapes and Pawlowski (14) completed a study of teacher characteristics and the rate of student progress in vocational programs. This study found that the teacher characteristics having an impact on student progress were: attitude, interest, motivation, values, and the classroom or laboratory environment. There was a large variation between student progress of school systems even though teachers may have the same characteristics.

Summary

Through the literature reviewed in search of factors having an

impact on students' decision-making process concerning vocational education, it is reasonable to assume that the forces are many. One group did not predominate over the others in influencing students' decisions to enroll in vocational education courses.

There was an indication that perhaps parents and peer groups were most influential but not to the point that other external and school environments were insignificant.

The majority of this literature review indicated that students do seek information and help from parents, community, teachers, counselors, and other groups in helping to make career choices and decisions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors of trade and industrial programs which students consider important to their decision to remain with a program to completion. The methodology was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How do first-year trade and industrial students perceive their school, their instructor and their program?
2. What factors do first-year trade and industrial students consider important in deciding to enroll for the second year of training?
3. What qualities of trade and industrial programs help students decide to enroll for the second year of training in trade and industrial program?

Population

Since trade and industrial education is developed around the concept that the two-year programs be offered to junior and senior students in high school, it was necessary to obtain the information from juniors who were also first-year students. These are the students who would be enrolled in the programs the following year as second-year trade and industrial students to become program completers.

Due to the large number of trade and industrial programs offered at the area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma and the large number of high schools contributing to the student population of the area vocational and technical schools, it was determined adequate to select the subjects for this study from that group. To obtain a cross section of students in Oklahoma, nine of the area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma were used in this study. Students from a large metropolitan area, a large suburban area, a small metropolitan area, a small rural district, a large rural district, two large industrial areas, a rural industrial area, and a district made up of very small rural schools were selected to participate in this study. The area vocational-technical schools which participated in this study were: Foster-Estes Area Vocational-Technical Center, Oklahoma City; Central Oklahoma Area Vocational-Technical School, Drumright; Gordon Cooper Area Vocational-Technical School, Shawnee; Mid-America Area Vocational-Technical School, Wayne; Oklahoma Northwest Area Vocational-Technical School, Fairview; Northeast Oklahoma Area Vocational-Technical School, Afton; Pioneer Area Vocational-Technical School, Ponca City; O. T. Autry Area Vocational-Technical School, Enid; and Moore-Norman Area Vocational-Technical School, Norman (see Appendix A).

The survey instrument was completed by all juniors who were enrolled in trade and industrial education programs at the nine area vocational-technical schools selected. Students who were seniors enrolled as first-year students and post-high school students were not included in this study. The wide range of schools used for this study provided students from very large high schools, students from very small high schools and students from high schools representing those

between very large and very small. The population included students who lived near the area vocational-technical school and could drive their own vehicle to those required to take long bus routes to get to school. It was felt this selection of a population provided an appropriate and fair cross section of first-year high school juniors enrolled in trade and industrial education programs in Oklahoma.

Data Collection

Data for determining those factors said to be important to students in the decision-making process to return to the trade and industrial program and the students' opinion of their school, program and instructor was obtained from a student survey form (see Appendix B). The administrator at each of the area vocational-technical schools was contacted by telephone and an appointment was made to administer the survey. Five of the schools assembled the students from all trade and industrial programs in one group for morning classes and one group for afternoon classes for students to complete the survey. At four of the schools, the survey was administered to each class individually for both morning and afternoon classes.

This method of collecting data was felt to be the most effective method for this type of a study. Each administrator was mailed a letter of thanks and appreciation for their cooperation in the data collection (see Appendix C).

The Survey Instrument

The student survey instrument (see Appendix B) was developed specifically for this study. There were 15 items for the students to

respond by placing an "X" in a block indicating YES or NO. These items were developed from a list of factors suspected to be important to students by state trade and industrial supervisors, the teacher education staff for trade and industrial education at Oklahoma State University, counselors at area vocational-technical schools, and instructors of secondary trade and industrial programs. These items included areas for students to respond YES or NO to statements from a perception or feeling. One such item, number four, was "the instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course." Another item requiring the students to respond from their feelings was number eight, "the second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year." The remainder of the items could be responded to from the student's association with their family, their home high school, the area vocational school or their present vocational program.

A statement was provided for students to indicate if they plan to enroll in the same vocational course for the second year. It was decided to provide three options to this statement. Spaces were provided for the students to select YES, NO, or UNDECIDED as a response.

To provide a method of determining which of the 15 statements were most significant to students when deciding to return or not return for the second year of training in their program, the third part of the survey (see Appendix B) provided spaces for the student to select from the 15 statements the three most important to their decision. The number of these three items was then placed in a blank by: (a) most important item listed, (b) second most important item, and (c) third most important item. It was felt that the 15 items on this survey would not cover all the reasons students give for returning or not returning for

the second year of training. Three numbered doubled lines were provided at the end of the survey (see Appendix B) for the students to write factors or reasons affecting their decision to return or not return for the second year. It was stated on the form and explained to the students that these should be reasons other than the 15 listed.

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors of trade and industrial programs which students consider important in their decision to remain with a program to completion. To accomplish the purpose of this study and to answer the questions created by the purpose, the data was analyzed and treated with frequency analysis.

The student survey instrument was coded and keypunched for using the computer to determine the frequency of the items. This information was compiled by number and percentage for each item as responded to by the total group and each enrollment decision group. The item or items with the highest percent of response either negative or positive were considered significant to this study. The same frequency analysis was accomplished for the most important, the second most important, and the third most important items listed by each group. To treat the data received on the final section of the survey the students' additional reasons were read by this author and coded under 18 categories. A frequency analysis was completed by using the computer. The additional reasons, listed by students from each group the highest percent of the time, were considered by this study to be significant.

To analyze and treat the data on students' decisions to enroll, not enroll or undecided to enroll for the second year, a frequency count was made and reported.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction.

The results of this study of the factors determined important by first-year students enrolled in trade and industrial programs at area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma to their decision to enroll or not to enroll for the second year are analyzed and described in this chapter.

The findings of this study are reported in four parts. The parts are:

1. The number of students responding to the survey who will enroll, will not enroll, or are undecided whether to enroll for the second year of the same program.
2. The students' responses to the 15 items concerning their program, school, instructor and personal perceptions by each decision group.
3. The importance of the 15 items in the decision to enroll by each enrollment decision group.
4. The factors listed as important to students in addition to the 15 items when deciding on next year's enrollment by each decision group.

This survey was completed by 1,370 high school juniors who were enrolled in trade and industrial courses in nine area vocational and technical schools in Oklahoma. Of this group, 92 responded to the statement, "I plan to enroll in this vocational course next year," with a NO response. This was 6.715 percent of the total number of respondents. A YES response was given by 1,060 or 77.372 percent and 217 or 15.839 marked UNDECIDED to the statement. One student or 0.073 percent failed to indicate a decision to enroll for next year (see Table I).

All the schools surveyed for this study had completed or were in the process of completion of pre-enrollment for the next school year. The students had been aware of this decision through their school system prior to and separate from this study.

TABLE I
STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT DECISION

Student Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	1060	77.372
No	92	6.715
Undecided	217	15.839
No Response	1	0.073
TOTAL	1370	100.000

Students' Response to a 15 Item Survey

The students were provided with the survey instrument (Appendix B) which contained 15 items concerning their program, instructor, parents' support for their vocational training, their home high school and the area vocational-technical school. They were instructed to respond to each statement by marking YES or NO.

Responses to the 15 Items by Students Who Indicated They Would Not Return for the Second Year of Training

There was one item from the remaining items which was responded to negatively by more than 50 percent of the students who indicated they would not return for the second year of training. Item nine received 53 negative responses accounting for 57.61 percent of this group. This compares with 13.58 percent of the students who indicated they would return for the second year (see Table II). The remainder of the items received less than 50 percent negative response from the indicated non-returnees.

On the survey, two of the items received over 80 percent affirmative responses from the indicated nonreturnees. These items were numbers three and four with 80.43 percent and 81.52 percent respectively. This compares with 87.74 percent for item three and 93.49 percent for item four from the students who indicated they would return for the second year (see Table III). The remaining 13 items received less than 80 percent affirmative responses from the students who indicated they would not return for the second year of training (see Table III).

TABLE II
NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO 15 SURVEY ITEMS

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		No Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.	34	36.96	55	5.19	49	22.58	0
2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.	33	35.87	190	17.92	52	23.96	1
3. Transportation is adequate from my home high school to the area vo-tech school and back to my home high school.	18	19.57	125	11.79	28	12.90	0
4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.	16	17.39	61	5.75	30	13.82	0
5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.	41	44.57	66	6.23	40	18.43	0
6. I can graduate from high school without taking this course next year.	22	23.91	377	35.57	37	17.05	0
7. My high school counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.	23	25.00	183	17.26	47	21.66	0

TABLE II (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		No Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.	42	45.65	129	12.17	50	23.04	0
9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.	53	57.61	144	13.58	91	41.44	0
10. My time is well used in this vocational course.	25	27.17	60	5.66	43	19.82	0
11. I am active in our local VICA club.	69	75.00	640	60.38	155	71.43	0
12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.	26	28.26	93	8.77	46	21.20	0
13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my high school such as sports, band, etc.	56	60.87	720	67.92	136	62.67	0
14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.	42	45.65	185	17.45	85	39.17	0
15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.	43	46.74	23	2.17	37	17.05	0

TABLE III

AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES TO 15 SURVEY ITEMS

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		No Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.	58	63.04	1002	94.53	165	76.04	
2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.	59	64.13	868	81.89	164	75.58	1
3. Transportation is adequate from my home high school to the area vo-tech school and back to my home high school.	74	80.43	930	87.74	189	87.10	1
4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.	75	81.52	991	93.49	182	83.87	1
5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.	50	54.35	978	92.26	168	77.42	1
6. I can graduate from high school without taking this course next year.	70	76.09	676	63.77	177	81.57	1
7. My high school counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.	69	75.00	865	81.60	166	76.50	1

TABLE III (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		No Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.	50	54.35	912	86.04	159	73.27	1
9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.	36	39.13	906	85.47	124	57.14	1
10. My time is well used in this vocational course.	67	72.83	996	93.96	172	79.26	1
11. I am active in our local VICA club.	19	20.65	400	37.74	57	26.27	1
12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.	66	71.74	960	90.47	170	78.34	1
13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my high school such as sports, band, etc.	36	39.13	330	31.13	80	36.87	1
14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.	50	54.35	869	81.98	130	59.91	1
15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.	48	52.17	1036	97.74	179	82.49	1

Responses to the 15 Items by Students Who
Indicated They Would Return for the
Second Year of Training

There was one item which received more than 35 percent negative responses from the group who indicated they would return for the second year after discounting items 11 and 13. Number six received 377 negative responses for 35.57 percent of this group. This compares with 23.91 percent from indicated nonreturnees and 17.05 percent from the undecided group (see Table II). The remaining 12 items received less than 18 percent negative responses from the indicated returning students which is shown in Table II.

From this group, six of the items received more than 90 percent affirmative responses. Items 1, 4, 5, 10, 12 and 15 were those receiving more than 90 percent from this group of students as shown in Table III.

Item one received 1,002 affirmative responses for 94.53 percent. This compares with 63 percent of the indicated nonreturning students. Number four had 991 affirmative responses for 93.49 percent of the group. There were 81.52 percent of the indicated nonreturning students who listed affirmative responses to this item. A total of 978 indicated returning students responded affirmative to item five. This was 92.26 percent compared to 54.35 percent of the nonreturning group for the same item. Number ten received 996 affirmative responses for 93.96 percent of the indicated returning students. Less than 73 percent of the nonreturning students responded affirmative to this item.

Item number 12 had 960 positive responses for 90.57 percent of the students who said they would return for the second year. This is

compared with less than 72 percent of the students who said they would not return. The item receiving the most affirmative responses from the students indicating that they would return for the second year was number 15. More than 97 percent of this group listed positive responses to this item. This compares with 52.17 percent of those indicating they would not return for the second year responding positively to this item (see Table III).

The remaining nine items received less than 90 percent affirmative responses from this group of students as shown in Table III.

Responses to the 15 Items by Students

Who Are Undecided About Next

Year's Enrollment

Discounting items 11 and 13, more than 39 percent of the group of students who were undecided about their enrollment plans for next year gave negative responses to two items. These items were 9 and 14 with 91 and 85 responses respectively. Of the undecided group, 41.44 percent gave negative responses to item nine. This compared to 13.58 percent of the indicated returning students and 57.61 percent of those who indicated they would not return. Item 14 received negative responses from 39.17 percent of the undecided group. This compared to 45.65 percent of the nonreturning group and 17.45 percent of those who said they would enroll for the second year (see Table II). The remaining items received negative responses from less than 25 percent of this group as shown in Table II.

Table III presented data showing four of the items with positive responses from more than 80 percent of the students who had not decided

on enrollment for the second year. These items were 3, 4, 6 and 15. Number three received 189 affirmative responses for 87.10 percent of the group. This percentage was closely related to the other two groups as shown by Table III. Item four received 182 positive responses representing 83.87 percent of the group. This was closely related to responses by those students who said they would not return but is ten percent less than those indicating they would enroll for the second year (see Table III).

Item six received 177 affirmative responses for 81.57 percent of the undecided group. This percentage exceeded that from the other two groups of students which was shown in Table III. The final item with more than 80 percent was 15 with 179 positive responses. This was 82.49 percent and compared with 52 percent of the nonreturning students and 97 percent of those who said they would return for the second year of training (see Table III).

The Importance of the 15 Items in the Enrollment Decision of Students

There was one item which was listed by all three groups as the most important item on the survey in helping them make a decision to enroll or not enroll for the second year of a vocational program. The three groups listed item number one more times than any of the other items (see Table IV). The students who indicated they would not return for the second year listed item one 29 times for 31.52 percent of the group. Those students who said they would enroll for the second year listed item one 569 times for 53.68 percent. The students who were undecided about enrollment listed item one 98 times for 45.16 percent of the group

TABLE IV
FIRST IMPORTANT ITEM IN ENROLLMENT DECISION

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.	29	31.52	569	53.68	98	45.16	696
2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.	5	5.43	22	2.08	12	5.53	39
3. Transportation is adequate from my home high school to the area vo-tech school and back to my home high school.	7	7.61	14	1.32	4	1.84	26
4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.	10	10.87	78	7.36	21	9.68	109
5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.	5	5.43	23	2.17	8	3.69	36
6. I can graduate from high school without taking this course next year.	8	8.70	8	0.75	9	4.15	25
7. My high school counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.	0	0.00	2	0.19	1	0.46	3

TABLE IV (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.	4	4.35	17	1.60	7	3.23	28
9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.	2	2.17	98	9.25	13	5.99	113
10. My time is well used in this vocational course.	2	2.17	16	1.51	7	3.23	25
11. I am active in our local VICA club.	1	1.09	1	0.09	1	0.46	3
12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.	2	2.17	22	2.08	6	2.76	30
13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my high school such as sports, band, etc.	5	5.43	11	1.04	2	0.92	18
14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.	2	2.17	5	0.47	8	3.69	15
15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.	2	2.17	130	12.26	9	4.15	141

(see Table IV). The other items were each listed less than 13 percent by any of the enrollment decision groups as shown in Table IV.

The same items were listed as the second most important by all three of the groups. Items 4, 9 and 15 were listed more times than the other 12 items by all students completing this survey. Table V lists the items listed by each group and the percentage of each group listing each item as the second most important item. Item four was listed ten times by the students indicating they would not enroll for the second year. Those students stating they would enroll again listed item four 143 times and the undecided group listed item four 22 times. This item was listed by more than ten percent of each group (see Table V).

Item nine was listed by 13.04 percent of the nonreturning students, by 20.94 percent of the returning students and by 15.67 percent of those who were undecided about enrollment. Number 15 was listed by 7.61 percent of the students who indicated they would not return. This item was listed by 15.94 percent of the group who said they would return and by 10.60 percent of those who were undecided. The students who said they would not return listed item ten 9.78 percent for a fourth item. Number one was a second most important item to 122 returning students. The remaining items were listed fewer times by each group (see Table V).

The third most important item listed most often by students indicating they would not return was number 15 with 13.04 percent of the group listing it. The other items were listed less than nine percent by this group (see Table VI). The students who said they would return for the second year listed two items more than the other 13. Item 15 was most significant for this group with 266 students listing this item. Number nine was listed by 11.60 percent of the group. The other items

TABLE V

SECOND IMPORTANT ITEM IN ENROLLMENT DECISION

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.	6	6.52	122	11.51	18	8.29	147
2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.	3	3.26	55	5.19	16	7.37	74
3. Transportation is adequate from my home high school to the area vo-tech school and back to my home high school.	5	5.43	18	1.70	10	4.61	33
4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.	10	10.87	143	13.49	22	10.14	175
5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.	4	4.35	76	7.17	16	7.37	96
6. I can graduate from high school without taking this course next year.	5	5.43	22	2.08	8	3.69	35
7. My high school counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.	1	1.09	5	0.47	4	1.84	10

TABLE V (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.	9	9.78	62	5.85	21	9.68	92
9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.	12	13.04	222	20.94	34	15.67	268
10. My time is well used in this vocational course.	9	9.78	76	7.17	14	6.45	99
11. I am active in our local VICA club.	0	0.00	2	0.19	1	0.46	3
12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.	5	5.43	29	2.74	11	5.07	45
13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my high school such as sports, band, etc.	3	3.26	5	0.47	2	0.92	10
14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.	4	4.35	9	0.85	6	2.76	19
15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.	7	7.61	169	15.94	23	10.60	199

TABLE VI
THIRD IMPORTANT ITEM IN ENROLLMENT DECISION

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.	1	1.09	70	6.60	15	6.91	86
2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.	5	5.43	30	2.83	7	3.23	43
3. Transportation is adequate from my home high school to the area vo-tech school and back to my home high school.	5	5.43	41	3.87	13	5.99	59
4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.	3	3.26	82	7.74	10	4.61	95
5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.	8	8.70	101	9.53	13	5.99	122
6. I can graduate from high school without taking this course next year.	7	7.61	19	1.79	8	3.69	34
7. My high school counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.	2	2.17	5	0.47	2	0.92	9

TABLE VI (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.	4	4.35	71	6.70	13	5.99	88
9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.	8	8.70	123	11.60	23	10.60	154
10. My time is well used in this vocational course.	7	7.61	77	7.26	21	9.68	105
11. I am active in our local VICA club.	0	0.00	7	0.66	1	0.46	8
12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.	7	7.61	77	7.26	15	6.91	99
13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my high school such as sports, band, etc.	5	5.43	10	0.94	9	4.15	24
14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.	8	8.70	31	2.92	19	8.76	58
15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.	12	13.04	266	25.09	37	17.05	315

were listed less often as shown in Table VI.

The undecided group of students listed the same items as the group who indicated they would return. This group listed item nine 23 times and number 15 was listed 37 times (see Table VI).

Additional Reasons Listed by Each Group for Their Enrollment Decision

The instrument provided space for students to write in three reasons in addition to the 15 items listed in the survey. The numbers and percentages given in Table VII are based on three responses per student. The students who indicated they would not return for a second year failed to respond to 106 of the spaces for 38.41 percent. Those who said they would return left 676 spaces for 21.26 percent and the undecided group left 219 blanks for 33.64 percent (see Table VII).

The two reasons listed most often by the nonreturning students were numbers 15 and 16. These reasons were given 18.84 percent and 28.99 percent of the time respectively. Table VII shows the frequency of the remaining reasons which were each listed less than three percent of the time.

Three of the reasons were listed more than ten percent of the total by students who said they would return. Reason number two was listed 383 times, number five was listed 542 times and number nine was listed 347 times. The students who were undecided listed two additional reasons more than the other 15. Number 15 was listed 11.83 percent of the time and number 16 was listed 14.59 percent of the time. Table VII gives data on the number of times and percentage of the other additional reasons.

TABLE VII
 ADDITIONAL REASONS GIVEN BY EACH GROUP

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1. To complete the program or to graduate from high school.	1	0.36	177	5.57	19	2.92	197
2. To get a good job.	8	2.90	383	12.05	34	5.22	426
3. To make more money.	0	0.00	110	3.46	6	0.92	116
4. To prepare for advanced training beyond high school.	2	0.72	35	1.10	6	0.92	43
5. Interested in or enjoys the course.	3	1.09	542	17.05	42	6.45	588
6. Likes the instructor.	4	1.45	142	4.47	15	2.30	161
7. To work with people and meet new friends.	1	0.36	70	2.20	13	2.00	84
8. To get away from the home high school.	1	0.36	68	2.14	9	1.38	78
9. Needs or wants more training in the field.	4	1.45	347	10.92	35	5.38	386
10. Parents want student to complete vocational course.	0	0.00	25	0.79	7	1.08	32

TABLE VII (Continued)

	Nonreturnees		Returnees		Undecided		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
11. Likes the area vocational-technical school.	3	1.09	175	5.50	19	2.92	197
12. To be better prepared for work.	2	0.72	267	8.40	21	3.23	291
13. To get on-the-job training or work experience.	2	0.72	65	2.04	12	1.84	79
14. To get free training or three easy credits.	1	0.36	59	1.86	4	0.61	64
15. Conflict with scheduling.	52	18.84	7	0.22	77	11.83	136
16. Student does not like the area vocational school, program or the instructor.	80	28.99	19	0.60	95	14.59	194
17. Transportation.	6	2.17	12	0.38	18	2.76	36
18. No additional response.	106	38.41	676	21.26	219	33.64	1001

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors of trade and industrial programs which students consider important in their decision to remain with a program to completion.

A student survey was developed and administered to 1,370 first-year students at nine area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma. Table I shows that 77.372 percent of the students completing the survey indicated they would return for the second year of training.

The frequency of positive and negative responses by students to the items concerning students' perceptions and feelings about their school, instructor, parents' support and the program was used to determine the important factors. Additional reasons listed by students for their decision to enroll or not enroll was determined by a frequency count of the 17 reasons listed by the students.

The nature of the study and the methods used for treating the data provided information differences and similarities in responses given by students who indicated they would return, those who said they would not return and those who were undecided about enrolling for the second year. It was also possible to determine the importance of each item and additional reasons in the enrollment decision.

Conclusions

The specific conclusions of this study were formed from the data collected and reported by using the student survey instrument. These conclusions are:

1. Approximately 75 percent of the students enrolled as first-year trade and industrial students in area vocational-technical schools will enroll for the second year of training in the same vocational program. This conclusion is based on 77.372 percent of the students surveyed for this study indicating they would return (see Table I). Counselors from the area vocational-technical schools participating in this study estimated 75 percent of their first-year students would return.
2. Students enrolled in first-year trade and industrial programs at area vocational-technical schools who say they will not return do not have a career objective to work in the occupation which they are being trained (see item nine, Table II).
3. A majority of first-year trade and industrial students who attend area vocational-technical schools are satisfied with transportation provided by the area schools (see item three, Table III).
4. First-year trade and industrial students who say they will return for the second year have higher perceptions of their instructors' qualifications than those students indicating they will not return (see item four, Table III).
5. First-year trade and industrial students who say they will return believe the second year will prepare them for employment

- in their chosen occupation (see items 1, 10 and 15, Table III).
6. Returning first-year trade and industrial students feel it is an honor to attend their area vocational-technical school (see item 12, Table III).
 7. First-year trade and industrial students believe that the level of training available in the second year of their vocational program is the most important factor in their decision to return or not return for the second year (see item 15, Table IV).
 8. First-year trade and industrial students consider the instructor and their career objectives important factors in their decision to enroll or not enroll for the second year of a vocational program (see items four and nine, Table V).
 9. First-year trade and industrial students who say they will not enroll for the second year say the reasons for not returning are conflicts in scheduling at the home high school and that they do not like the program, the instructor or the area vocational-technical school (see items 15 and 16, Table VII).
 10. First-year trade and industrial students who say they will return for the second year of training enjoy the course, they feel it will help them get a good job, and they feel they need more training (see items two, five and nine, Table VII).
 11. A reason first-year trade and industrial students are undecided about their enrollment is a conflict in scheduling between the area vocational-technical school and their home high school (see item 15, Table VII).

Recommendations

Due to the results of this study and the author's experiences while conducting this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A follow-up study be completed to determine the percentage of students enrolled in first-year trade and industrial programs who actually return for the second year of training at area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma.
2. A study be conducted at area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma to determine why nonreturning students do not like the area school, the programs and the instructor.
3. A study be conducted to identify the factors of trade and industrial programs which are considered important to students by employers, parents and trade and industrial instructors.

It is further recommended that a similar study to this one be conducted with second-year students in trade and industrial programs to identify strengths and weaknesses of the programs as perceived by the completing students.

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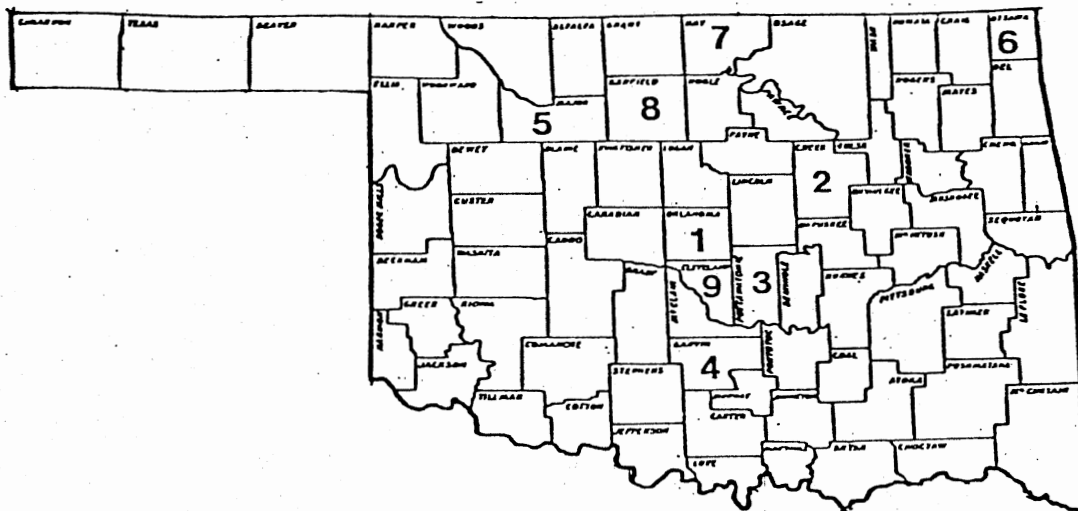
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APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

OKLAHOMA AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY



1. Foster Estes Area Vo-Tech Center
Oklahoma City
2. Central Oklahoma Area Vo-Tech
Drumright Campus
3. Gordon Cooper Area Vo-Tech School
Shawnee
4. Mid-America Area Vo-Tech School
Wayne
5. Oklahoma Northwest Area Vo-Tech School
Fairview Campus
6. Northeast Oklahoma Area Vo-Tech School
Afton Campus
7. Pioneer Area Vo-Tech School
Ponca City
8. O. T. Autry Area Vo-Tech School
Enid
9. Moore-Norman Area Vo-Tech School
Norman

APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

We are gathering vital information from T&I students in order to improve vocational education. You have been selected as an important resource person to respond to this questionnaire about your vocational education program at this area vocational-technical school. It is not necessary to put your name on this form. Your responses are important and will remain anonymous.

Please respond to these statements by placing an **X** in either the YES or NO box for each. Respond to all statements.

Yes	No	
		1. This course will prepare me for employment in my chosen occupational field.
		2. This course was my first choice for a vocational training program.
		3. Transportation is adequate from my home highschool to the area vo-tech school and back to my home highschool.
		4. The instructor of my program is well qualified to teach this vocational course.
		5. My family wants me to complete this trade and industrial course.
		6. I can graduate from highschool without taking this course next year.
		7. My highschool counselors and principal are familiar with the courses at the area vocational-technical school.
		8. The second year of this vocational course is more advanced than the first year.
		9. My career objective is to work in the occupation which I am being trained.
		10. My time is well used in this vocational course.
		11. I am active in our local VICA club.
		12. I feel it is an honor to attend this area vocational-technical school.
		13. Attending vo-tech school prevents me from being active in extra activities at my highschool such as sports, band, etc.
		14. This course is what I expected when I enrolled.
		15. I will be better prepared for employment after the second year of training in this vocational program.

I plan to enroll in this vocational course next year.

yes	no	undecided
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Select three (3) of the items listed in this questionnaire which were **MOST** important in your decision to enroll or not enroll in this course for the second year. Place the number of the item in the appropriate blank.

Most important item listed _____

Second most important item _____

Third most important item _____

Please list three other reasons why you will or will not return to this vocational program for the second year of training.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Thank you for your sincere help with this survey.

Ronald R. Simmons

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF APPRECIATION



Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406
(405) 624-6275

February 19, 1979

Dear

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you and your school for allowing me to administer my student survey to the juniors enrolled in your trade and industrial education programs. The attitudes and views expressed by the students are valuable information and reflect their feelings and perceptions about their school and program.

Your help and the cooperation of your trade and industrial instructors is certainly appreciated. Without it we could not obtain information necessary to conduct research in vocational education. I will make the information resulting from this study available to you and your staff. It is our goal and desire that this study has produced information which can be used to improve the programs with low reenrollment rates and maintain the quality of those which encourage students to reenroll and complete the two years of training.

Sincerely,

Ronald R. Simmons
Instructor
Trade & Industrial Education

RRS/bh

VITA²

Ronald Raymond Simmons

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL STUDENTS AT AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Vocational-Technical and Career Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Blanding, Utah, April 28, 1943, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas S. Simmons. Married Josie L. Simmons, December 11, 1964; father of two daughters.

Education: Graduated from Fairview High School, Fairview, Oklahoma in May, 1961; Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Arts Education from Panhandle Oklahoma State University, Goodwell, Oklahoma, July, 1972; Master of Education in Administration and Supervision of Vocational Education degree, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, July, 1977; completed requirements for Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in May, 1979.

Professional Experience: Military Service, United States Air Force, August 30, 1962 until August 29, 1966; Jet Aircraft Mechanic until July, 1969; Automotive Mechanic and Student until July, 1972; Instructor of Vocational Automotive Mechanics, Canon City, Colorado, August, 1972 until June, 1975; Instructor of Vocational Automotive Mechanics, San Juan Campus, New Mexico State University, Farmington, New Mexico, July, 1975 until June, 1977; Graduate Assistant, Oklahoma State University, School of Occupational and Adult Education, September, 1977 until June, 1978; Instructor, Oklahoma State University, School of Occupational and Adult Education, Department of Trade and Industrial Education, June, 1978 until Present.

Professional Organizations: Phi Delta Kappa; American Vocational Association; Oklahoma Vocational Association.