Abstracts Research Presentations from the 9th Annual Summer Institute

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Abstracts of Research Presentations from the
9th Annual Summer Institute

Center for Higher Education
Nova University
PREFACE

The theme of the 1980 Summer Institute is "Educational Research: Problems - Practices - Potential." Many of the presentations will deal with various topics related to this theme. This document is a collection of abstracts for these presentations.

We feel that you will be able to use these abstracts to determine the content of the presentations. Also you will have the opportunity to select the sessions that interest you most. If you take advantage of this collection of various research topics presented by some of the nation's leading experts, you will sharpen your skills and gain a deeper understanding of Educational Research.
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Research is needed on the origin, scope, and impact of strategic factors in community college management. Factors such as demographic transition, the condition of the economy, institutional goals and objectives, current and projected students, the program-service mix, and the size and composition of the institutional service region combine to produce a comparative advantage or disadvantage for community colleges in relationship to other organizations engaged in the pursuit of scarce resources. Decision modes for the conversion of strategic information into action plans for institutional development are critical to the educational and financial well-being of community colleges. A failure on the part of faculty and administrators to assess strategic factors in management could result in the deterioration of institutional programs and services as other organizations move to provide duplicatory services at a lower cost.

Recent data published by urban community colleges throughout the United States indicate a dramatic decline in the reading, writing and mathematics skills of college-age youth. The decline, in part, has been attributed to demographic transition in many cities as lower-middle and middle-income groups have moved
to suburban community college districts and been re­placed by less affluent population subgroups. A second theory advanced to explain the decline postu­lates that a "wave of permissiveness" and movement toward liberalization of the curriculum in the nation's secondary schools has produced a condition of "student hegemony." Students enjoy a strategic advantage in relationship to secondary and post­secondary education and employ the lever of attend­ance and withdrawal to encourage institutions to dilute the curriculum as a means toward stabiliza­tion of enrollment and reduction of attrition. Change in basic skills of students mandates change in the program-service mix needed to serve new student learners. The task of research is to identify and document change in the characteristics (basic classi­fication, intellective, demographic, and perceptual­attitudinal) of the student population, the programs and services needed to serve this population, and the outcomes of college attendance in relationship to the world of work and further education.
This national survey was carried out during the academic year 1980-81 in response to growing concerns with the existing enrollment forecasting and enrollment projection models. The study identified four broad enrollment estimating approaches under which specific methodologies and techniques are applied. The report will cover "Trend Extrapolation Models, Causal Models, Policy Alternative Models, and Futurist Models."

This study identifies each state's approach and classifies it within one of the various models. Observations of state-level officials and practitioners are also included. Applicability of this study is primarily for state agencies and secondarily for institutions.

Much confusion continues to exist within the field over the nature and purpose of management information systems. A popular misconception makes an MIS and a computer center synonymous. Equally dangerous is the lack of understanding of the kind of information needed for the levels of management involved.

This study sought to identify the evolution of management information systems used by state agencies responsible for community colleges over the ten-year period 1971 to 1981. It analyzes the aggregate nature of information needed for state level planning and
coordination and demonstrates the differences involved at the institutional and state levels.

Those interested in hearing this report would be planners, administrators, and policy-makers.
The power structure which operates in most American communities will be described. Included in the presentation will be a description of the action research methods employed which will help adult educators learn to identify and work with the power structure in their own communities and organizations.

The session participants will be encouraged to apply the principles presented to their own communities, and encouraged to engage in a dialogue with others in order to explore the wide range of differences in communities.
It is interesting to note that we no longer worship the idea that our society is continuously advancing toward perfection. Societal beliefs fell apart when cultured minds tried to comprehend, for example, Buchenwald, Auschwitz and Hiroshima. At this point in time, we do not know whether society is advancing; we only know that it has gotten more complex. German author Wilhelm Tuefel in Das Schloss Der Barmherzigkeit (Stuttgart: Quell-Verlag, 1960) described how the Nazi Party attempted to eliminate persons with substantial handicaps. What has society learned? Have we advanced? Discussion will include principles of normalization, deinstitutionalization, national and regional zoning problems, role of the educator in eliminating myths associated with particular handicaps, results of research conducted by Wolfensberger and Wolport, and legal ramifications for the future.

The United States Office of Education Bureau of the Handicapped describes a specific learning disability as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding and using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to reason, think, speak, read, write, spell and do mathematical calculations." Experts disagree on the number of learning disabled people in the United States population. Several believe that from 10% to 35% of American students have...
some form of disability. The United States Office of Education estimated that there are 2,000,000 disabled students in the United States. Specialists disagree and provide data indicating that one out of four has some problem in regard to learning. A new book just published states that there are approximately 10,000,000 students with learning disorders at all levels of education. Suffice it to say, many of these students become community college aspirants and are not equipped to handle higher education. Public Law 94-142 mandates public schools to provide services to meet the special education needs of students from ages 3 - 21. A case study will be presented, tracing the learning disabled person through his college experience.
Needs assessment, long an area of concern for community colleges, has become a much broader topic as community colleges begin to consider the value of assessing both the needs and the resources of a community. Community analysis is replacing needs assessment as a process through which a community college examines its surrounding community as a base for institutional planning. This presentation points out that while we have been concerned with needs assessment for many years, community colleges have not come very far in sharpening skills or developing research techniques for analyzing communities. This presentation will lead to a discussion of current needs assessment programs and areas in which improved research techniques are needed.

Facilitating Instructional Research In Community Colleges

This presentation focuses on the need for improved instructional research in individual community colleges and the ways in which academic administrators and executive officers can foster more and better instructional research. The roles of staff development, information systems, specialized personnel, and faculty incentives are examined.
BARON R. HERRSCHER
University of Houston

Developmental Research: A Natural for Classroom Instructors

This session will briefly review the several types of applied research, then deal in depth with one -- developmental research wherein a product (new course) is developed, tested and revised. Since many faculty members regularly change, update, enhance, and/or create college courses, developmental research is not only much needed but is a natural for them. Participants in this session will be led through a complete research proposal. This process should result in full understanding of developmental research as a method to be utilized in practicum and MARP writing.
Research Needed on Transfer Students

Research studies are badly needed on the various types of transfer students. Institutional investigations, including attitudinal and value-oriented research, are seldom reported. Even success-failure and persistence studies appear to be lagging. Without such knowledge, transfer students cannot be served adequately. The importance of this issue to institutions is highlighted in recognizing the considerable economic and reputational impact of these students.

The transfer student represents a significant population in the traditional institution of higher learning. The community college student in recent decades presents a unique group of students for they are enrolling, usually not out of dissatisfaction with their previous institution, however, out of a desire to further their education. Research and recent findings will be highlighted, and the further research needs explored.

Research Questions in Governance

How should community colleges be governed during a period when policy making is rapidly shifting to state government, and when local board-administrator relations are deteriorating? This question opens many opportunities for investigation. Session participants will be encouraged to identify leading research questions and to suggest approaches to studying them.

Governance procedures and the influence of administrative actions in educational agencies will be focused upon based upon the behavioral sciences, and the literature of the field of applied practice.
Stress in Education: Sources, Reactions, and Control

The presentation explores definitions of educational stress, examines sources of such stress, and suggests means of controlling or preventing excessive stress.

Research is needed to further our understanding of this area of human development, and possible topics and recommendations for further research will be presented.
The performance of an achieving organization is best measured by observing the quality and accountability of its leadership. Measuring managerial effectiveness is taking on increased importance as institutions face the stressful years ahead.

The lecturer will discuss fundamental principles involved in setting up a sound managerial appraisal system. The managerial process requires not only the skills of successful administration, but also a knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences. Practical live situations will be reviewed, and the theories of administration and governance as applied to real situations will be presented. The research possibilities in management will be explored.
Focus will be on guidelines for the proper development and use of questionnaires in research. Topics covered will include wording, sampling, return rate, determination of bias, statistical analysis, and interpretation. Strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires as a tool for gathering data for practicums and MARPs will be elaborated.

Reliability and Validity

Each term is first defined and elaborated with respect to procedures available for determining different types of reliability and validity. These include test-retest, split-half, alternate form and Kuder-Richardson reliability, as well as face, predictive, content and construct validity.
Reviews developing conditions forcing PSE institutions to re-examine their missions and goals. Assesses current practices in goal definition and measurement with special attention to magnitude estimate scaling. Academic institutions are not the only institutions requiring goal definition and measurement. Other agencies in the professions may learn from these organized attempts towards planned change. Projects for needed future research shall be presented.
Impact of Community College Attendance on Upward Socio-Economic Mobility

The two-year college has been described as the only truly American invention in post-secondary education. It has been widely pictured in the literature as open-door, low cost, opportunity college, geographically accessible to the total community it purports to serve. Without attempting to evaluate the accuracy of these descriptive terms, there has developed a widespread conviction that such an institution providing learning experiences for a broad cross-section of the population offers a mechanism for upward social and economic mobility for those who choose to use its services. In some ways, the community college has been marketed to the American public as an opportunity-based college, community based education.

But to date there are few data to support the belief that the community college does, indeed, provide a viable avenue of social and economic mobility, especially in the lower levels of the socio-economic structure. An attempt will be made to describe the parameters of a research study which could provide some indicators of whether community colleges affect significantly the socio-economic status of students who enroll. Appropriate criteria will be considered, definitions of terms outlined, possible procedures will be examined and strategies explored. The major question to be addressed will be in what ways, if any, is an individual's socio-economic status in our society affected by attendance at a community college?
The need for some appropriate means of assessing basic skill levels of community college students has always been recognized but its importance is increasing daily as the composition of student populations shifts in a variety of directions.

The influx of older students, many of whom have not had extensive formal educational experiences in recent years and the increase of the non-high school graduate has resulted in a student group who can produce little evidence of their competency level in basic reading and writing skills. These present an especially acute problem for community colleges as appropriate programs are designed to meet their educational needs. Unfortunately, the assessment devices which are suitable for these students are not available in appropriate forms.

The problem of the student whose basic skills competency are especially low will be considered. Some alternative means of assessments for these students will be explored. Several models for attacking this problem will be considered and criteria for evaluation of alternative models will be explored. Some attention will be given to why data gathered from such assessment might be utilized in the design of programs in the community college.
Exemplary practices in placement and follow-up will be described. These practices will include discussion of the actual development of survey instruments and the methodology for data collection and analysis. We will discuss methods which are rather unique in terms of integrating the placement and follow-up assessment into the ongoing operation of the community college or technical institute. Discussion will include such areas as: how to deal with low response rates; how to increase response rates; how to implement program modifications, changes, and deletions; how to communicate findings back to managers, counselors, and students. Emphasis will be placed upon the utilization of results of placement and follow-up reporting. The session will be a good one for persons who are tired of sending out placement and follow-up reports merely for the sake of reporting and who are looking for innovative and challenging ways to actually utilize the information for program management and planning.

Needs Assessment for the Eighties

The entire process of developing and conducting needs assessment studies will be explored. Much emphasis will be placed on the practical aspects of how to develop and validate a survey instrument and how to utilize community support in conducting the assessment. We will discuss how to determine which methodologies are most appropriate and cost effective for each target. Various types of assessments including employer needs assessment, public opinion surveys, high school surveys, specialized populations, such as minorities and women, etc., will be discussed in detail. Analysis
of the impact will be covered. The primary focus will be on the utilization of findings for the subsequent planning and action.
For centuries, people have been debating the philosophical merits of free will versus fatalism. More than a thousand separate studies have come up with overwhelming support for the belief in free will. In counseling it is called "internality" or "internal locus of control." Julian Rotter's idea of control expectancy and such social failings as delinquency, low marks, poor mental health, poor work adjustment, poor performance in training programs, a high divorce rate, and drug use. Studies on altering control expectancies show some success in shifting externally oriented persons toward internality. Conditions can be created wherein a student can achieve self-directed success and see the relationship between his/her behavior and the payoffs.
The most fundamental political fact of social science research is that it costs money, and since the economic returns for expenditures on such research are indirect, long-term, and widely diffused, there are few, if any, incentives for private sector involvement. Therefore, non-profit foundations and the federal government fund nearly all significant social science research, with the federal government being by far the largest single supporter. This means that research becomes a matter of public policy. How much should we spend on research? How should the money be allocated? Who decides? These and other similar questions are answered in a political environment. This session will explore how this system works and who participates.
This presentation will focus upon the results of a marketing plan for an educational institution. This session will utilize the experience of an operating institution, and how this institution developed, implemented and evaluated this plan.

Participants attending this session will learn how to utilize this marketing plan in their own institutions.

Descriptive Research: What You Wanted To Do, But Your Research Lecturer Wouldn't Let You

The purpose and role of descriptive studies in education will be discussed. Descriptive research can be used to collect data to assist in educational decision making, however, it is often discarded for more empirical research.

This session should assist participants in determining the appropriate use of descriptive research within the guidelines of the Center for Higher Education by utilizing examples and previous studies from the literature.

Survey Research -- The Easiest, but Most Difficult

Survey research is perhaps the most common educational research tool. This seminar will address itself to the role and place of survey research. This session will help participants to understand what is involved
in survey research, what conditions should be met, how to select samples, how to determine sample size and how to collect and treat data. Participants will learn how to apply survey research to an educational investigation assessing the characteristics of a population.
Enrollment decline at all levels of education has focused strong attention on the twin problems of retention and attrition. The presentation is designed (1) to help clarify the concepts of retention and attrition; (2) to examine evidence from the research literature in terms of their implications for policy and decision making within educational institutions; and (3) to suggest areas for future research. The ethnographics of a local community may be vitally important to the planning process for educational administrators.

Retention and Attrition: An Examination of the Literature in Terms of Its Implications for Research, Policy and Decision Making

The literature on retention and attrition is extensive but evidences no attempt towards a synthesis of research results. The presentation delineates one organizing framework. The presentation also evidences a search for more precise terminology, indicators, and measures for attrition and retention. Factors impacting the roles of attrition and retention are examined in concert with practical strategies for reducing attrition and suggestions for institutional research. The strategies presented should provide possible designs for replications in other institutions as possible practicum or MARP projects.
CLIFFORD L. SHISLER  
University of Illinois at Carbondale  

Sampling  

Many research studies in the social sciences use sampling procedures. This presentation will discuss sampling theory, the advantages of sampling, how to define the population, different types of sampling, selection of samples and appropriate sample size. Problems of sampling when using questionnaires will also be discussed. The utilization of sampling from actual institutional experience will be presented, and opportunities to actively seek appropriate sampling designs for participants' home institution.

Evaluation Studies  

Educators in community colleges are often asked to evaluate a particular program within the institution. Several evaluation strategies and models for conducting such an evaluation will be presented, with emphasis on a formative/summative model. Definition of goals, measurement of the goals, and assessment of attainment of program goals will also be discussed. Evaluation techniques have wide applicability, and are appropriate for a variety of institutional settings. The presentation will be cognizant of these settings and the various social systems which utilize these techniques.
Institutional Assessment for Quality Control

This topic will deal with the types of quality control used in the 1980's. Accreditation procedures and self studies will be the focus of the discussion. Organizing for institutional self study and the research techniques involved will be discussed. The assessment for quality control is not confined to only institutions of higher education. The wider social system includes other educational agencies, and these too will be explored.

Futurism and Institutional Research

The use of the research techniques of Futurism and the application of these techniques in an institutional setting will be the primary purpose of this discussion. The current emphasis on the studies of the future as emphasized in research techniques used by forecasters and the application of these data to an institutional situation is one of the tasks of the manager. Higher educational management must use all available tools. Futurism will be discussed in a context of social science exploration, based upon the theories and research of history, sociology, and social psychology.
Collaboration between Community Colleges and the Private Sector in the 80's

It is no secret in Washington, D.C. that educational institutions working collaboratively with private industry will fare much better when it comes to receiving federal support than institutions isolated from the "real world" of commerce and industry. Community colleges are already leaders in this area and the Reagan Administration will clearly push them even further in this direction. It will be most evident in vocational education and CETA activities. It will also be evident in projects under the Departments of Energy, Transportation, and Commerce. Research is needed to test current collaborative efforts and to develop models of collaboration that can be used by community colleges. Topics for research and alternative planning will be discussed.

Do Student Financial Aid Programs with "Tuition Sensitivity" Increase Tuition?

Tuition sensitivity is a formula designed to reduce cost differences between students attending expensive colleges and students attending inexpensive colleges. Critics of tuition sensitivity assert it is pushing tuition upward at an alarming rate, reducing access to post-secondary education, and destroying the dream of affordable education. Advocates of tuition sensitivity deny these assertions and insist that choice of college is just as important as access, implying a willingness to deny access if choice cannot also be offered. The right to choose an expensive college is just as
important as the right to attend any college, the advocates insist.

Research on this topic could have a profound effect on the funding of colleges and student financial aid programs. It is possible that tuition sensitivity protects high tuition colleges but also discourages people from enrolling in colleges. This could be especially true for independent part-time students who have family responsibilities and cannot afford high tuition. The 1980 State Report from Washington suggests this may be happening there because the number of full-time students increased while the number of part-time students decreased and the proportion of the adult population enrolled in community colleges declined. The effects of tuition sensitivity need to be identified and weighed as soon as possible to make certain the consequences are not seriously eroding or eliminating the goals of postsecondary education for all who desire it, regardless of financial status, and of postsecondary education for a growing proportion of the population.
This topic represents a broad area of knowledge that must be explored to fully understand its significance in terms of providing quality education and a success model in institutions of higher education. As we search for educational truth and fact via research channels, some routine errors are made. Therefore, inadequate information is passed on and faulty designs for future research serve as models. It is my intent to assist in the development of keen research insights and knowledge that can best serve participants in educational development, practicum writing, and MARP construction.

In addition to analyzing each component in the development of a practicum, some time will be spent investigating areas in higher education where there seems to be a paucity of research and information.