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PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE SENIORS ENROLLED IN COOPERATIVE OFFICE EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

By

Anne L. DeRose

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE SENIORS ENROLLED IN COOPERATIVE OFFICE EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

By

Anne L. DeRose

Cooperative Office Education is a triad composed of the student, the coordinator, and the employer. Studies have been completed showing how two parts of the triad perceive the components of the COE program. However, very little work has been done to determine how students enrolled in Cooperative Office Education programs perceive those programs.

Statement of the Problem. As so little work has been done to determine how COE students perceive the program, the problem of the study was to determine their perceptions toward the program.

Research Procedures. The questionnaire survey method was selected for this study. It was developed with the help of both current and former enrollees in the COE program, together with the help of a COE coordinator. In order that students from all areas of the State would be represented in the study, the State was divided into

six geographic areas and a sample of schools selected from each area to participate. Coordinators from 54 schools agreed to participate in the study. Participating coordinators were first asked to supply information about their local programs. Then all COE students in the participating schools who were enrolled on or before October 1, 1975, were asked to complete the Student Opinionnaire. The data were analyzed both descriptively and statistically.

Findings. While students expressed some minor dissatisfactions with the COE program, they overwhelmingly expressed positive perceptions of the overall program. Only 11 out of 937 participants held negative perceptions of the total program.

Regardless of the type of program; i.e., whether or not there was a teacher-coordinator, training plan, youth organization, advisory committee, etc., the students still felt positively about the overall program.

COE students gained both tangible and intangible benefits from their COE experiences. Increases in self-confidence and ability to make decisions were two of the intangibles gained, while the opportunities to practice skills already learned, learn new skills, and receive pay for working were some of the tangible benefits of the COE program.

Youth group participation and student participation in the development of the training plan are not being

utilized by one half or more of the programs included in this study.

Advisory committees, required under the State Guidelines, were reported by only 55 percent of the participating schools to have met at least one time during the school year 1975-76.

Statistical significance was achieved showing that

1. Students who belong to office-related youth organizations hold higher perceptions of COE than students who do not belong to an office-related youth organization.

2. Students enrolled in COE programs where the advisory committee meets at least twice each year hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students enrolled in programs where the committee does not meet at least twice each year.

3. Students who are visited at least twice each semester by their coordinator hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who are not visited at least twice each semester.

4. Student participation in the development of the training plan contributes to positive perceptions of the COE program.

5. Students in programs without teacher-coordinators hold higher perceptions of the importance of the related class to success on the job than students who have teacher-coordinators.

6. Students whose coordinators located their work stations hold higher perceptions of the program than students who located their own work stations.

7. Students who feel satisfied with their COE positions hold higher perceptions of the program than students who are dissatisfied with their COE positions.

Although these hypotheses were significant at the .05 level, and in some cases, the .00 level at two decimal

places, the differences in the means were relatively small. In translating the statistical results into information to be used for decision making, data such as cost effectiveness and practicality should be considered in addition to the fact that significant differences were achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to acknowledge the support and assistance of the many people who helped make this study and doctoral program possible.

This study was made possible through the cooperation of the 58 coordinators and their students who participated in the study. Without their cooperation, there could have been no investigation of student perceptions of Cooperative Office Education.

Dr. Peter G. Haines, who served as chairman of the guidance committee and director of this study, has helped me throughout my doctoral program with his friendship, his professional advice, and with his constant encouragement and willingness to help.

I am also indebted to Drs. Helen Green, J. Franklin Bobbitt, and James Nelson, who served on both the guidance and dissertation committees. Each of these professors gave of their time and lent support to me both during my doctoral program and during the time this study was being conducted. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Bruce Mitchell, who graciously agreed to serve on my dissertation

committee after Dr. Nelson left Michigan State University to accept another position.

Recognition must also go to my parents who have always encouraged me to set goals and carry through to reach those chosen goals. They both have served as an inspiration to me not only during this program, but also as I continue to pursue both personal and professional life goals.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and love provided by my husband, Tony. Without his continued sacrifice, understanding, and moral support, the entire doctoral program would not have been possible.

Anne L. DeRose
Marshall, Michigan
1976

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963, Business and Office Education was recognized at the Federal level as a vocational program and thus was declared eligible for Federal funding. Prior to 1963, many schools nationally had recognized that just classroom preparation for an office position was not adequate and had instituted either on their own or with State funds Cooperative Office Education programs. A study completed in 1960 showed that at least 16,800 students were enrolled in Cooperative Office Occupations programs which were reported to State Departments of Vocational Education.[1] With the availability of Federal funds, Cooperative Office Education has become an integral component of the office education curriculum in many states. A comprehensive definition of Cooperative Office Education is as follows:

> Cooperative Office Education is the capstone of a student's occupational training program in office occupations. This program provides for the

[1]Lawrence Thomson and Peter G. Haines, "Cooperative Office Training in the U.S.: Some Significant Facts," Delta Pi Epsilon Journal, III, Number 1 (Fall 1960), p. 31.

> coordination of classroom study and on-the-job training, each complementing the other. In this program, the students have their schedules arranged so that they attend classes part of the school day and are employed in an office capacity during the other part of the day. The office instruction is to be considered as an extension of the instruction which they receive in the classroom.[2]

As the article says:

1. The Cooperative Office Education experience is the capstone of a student's training. Therefore, this is the final chance to give the student any additional skills necessary for job success.
2. The program is a cooperative effort between the school and the actual "on-the-job" experiences the student receives.

Since cooperative training is presumed to be student oriented (it is designed to give each student the skills and attitudes necessary for success in the employment market), it appears that those people involved with the Cooperative Office Education program should look at how the student perceives the Cooperative Office Education program both at school and on the job so that any changes necessary can be made in this capstone experience to better prepare students for full-time positions in office settings. According to White, cooperative vocational education has several advantages:

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[2]Business Education Service, Division of Vocational Education, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia, Teaching Guide For Cooperative Office Education, April 1970, p. 1.

1. The student learns under actual job conditions so that his instruction is as realistic as possible.

2. It often leads to classroom instruction that has been modified to make it relate to occupational needs.

3. The student frequently goes on to full employment after his cooperative training.[3]

Almost every business, government, or professional enterprise has a need for support people who are trained in office skills. Thus, office careers offer job opportunities in every conceivable interest area and at many different skill levels. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, some examples of job opportunities in office occupations are file clerk, office machine operator, bookkeeping worker, receptionist, typist, stenographer, and secretary.[4] Jobs for graduates of office education programs are literally found everywhere in the world in every type of business. In the United States, more than 14 million people worked in clerical jobs in 1972. Projections of employment needs in clerical occupations show that employment of clerical workers is expected to increase rapidly through the mid-1980s.[5] Many clerical positions

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[3]William E. White, "Cooperative Work Study: A Mini-Alternative for Business Education," The Balance Sheet (November 1975), p. 113.

[4]United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bulletin 1785 (Washington: Government Printing Office 1974-75), pp. 87-105.

[5]Ibid., p. 86.

demand less than a college degree; therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that high school office education programs will continue to train a large portion of the office workers needed in this country. It is thus important that the capstone experience, the on-the-job experience, be made as meaningful as possible to the student.

Statement of the Problem

There were 300 Cooperative Office Education programs operating in the State of Michigan during the 1975-76 school year which met the standards of the Michigan Department of Education. Seven thousand six hundred sixty-six (7666) students were enrolled in these programs. It appears that no formal research has been done to discover how students enrolled in COE perceive the experiences they have in the program. This information could be used to help structure the curriculum in harmony with the needs of the students.

This study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are COE student perceptions of:
   a. The related in-school class?
   b. The on-the-job experience?
   c. Personal experiences related to holding a job while still in school?
2. Does the number of students supervised by the COE Coordinator affect the students' perceptions of the program?

3. Does a requirement that all COE students belong to an office-related youth organization affect their perceptions of the program?
4. Does an active COE advisory council make a difference in students' perceptions of the program?
5. Do the number of coordinator visits to the student's work station make a difference in the student's perceptions of the program?
6. Does student participation in the development of the training plan make a difference in student perceptions of the program?
7. Does the manner in which the co-op job was acquired affect student perceptions of the program?
8. Do students who fall in the upper half of their high school class academically differ in their perceptions of the COE program from students who are in the lower half of their class academically?
9. Does student satisfaction with the level of the co-op job make a difference in how she perceives the COE program?
10. What motivates a student to enroll in a Cooperative Office Education program?
11. At what levels do students feel they have curriculum needs that have not been met?

The above questions have led to the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis One

Students who have coordinators who do not supervise more than 15 students per released hour up to a maximum of 60 students for four released hours per day will hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students whose coordinators' released time for coordination does not fall within these limits.

Hypothesis Two

Students who belong to an office-related youth organization will hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who do not belong to an office-related youth organization.

Hypothesis Three

Students in COE programs who have an advisory committee that meets at least twice each year hold higher perceptions of the COE program where the advisory committees do not meet at least twice each year.

Hypothesis Four

Students whose coordinators visit them at least twice each semester will hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who are not visited at least twice each semester.

Hypothesis Five

Students who participate in the development of their training plans will hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who do not participate in the development of their training plans.

Hypothesis Six

Students who have a teacher-coordinator will hold higher perceptions of the importance of the related class to their success on the job than students who do not have a teacher-coordinator.

Hypothesis Seven

There is a relationship between a student's perception of the importance of the related class to her success on the job and whether the related class is taught by a teacher-coordinator.

Hypothesis Eight

Students who perceive themselves to be in the upper half of their high school class academically will hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who see themselves in the lower half of their high school class.

Hypothesis Nine

Students whose coordinators located their work stations will hold higher perceptions of the program than students who located their own work stations.

Hypothesis Ten

Students who feel challenged by their COE work station will hold higher perceptions of the program than students who do not feel challenged by their work station.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide information on student perceptions of Cooperative Office Education programs that would assist educators at all levels in developing, operating, and evaluating existing COE programs.

It is expected that this study will provide a basis for:

1. Developing an overall description of how students view the Cooperative Office Education program.
2. Ascertaining what critical components are present in Cooperative Office Education programs where students hold positive perceptions of that program. This analysis should be helpful to those coordinators and/or State Supervisors who are trying to set up new programs, revise existing ones, or develop overall program policies and guidelines.

3. Determining whether academic standing in class affects student perceptions of the program. Knowledge gained from this portion of the study should assist coordinators in tailoring individualized programs for different levels of academic achievers.
4. Deciding whether satisfaction with job placement is a determining factor in forming students' perceptions of Cooperative Office Education. Findings from this portion of the study should be of value both to in-service and pre-service coordinators as they work to achieve a balance between the school program, the work station, and the individual student's abilities.
5. Learning why students enroll in a Cooperative Office Education Program. It was expected that this information would be useful to coordinators in recruiting for their programs.
6. Determining in which areas Cooperative Office Education students felt they needed more instruction. After looking at this portion of the study, it is hoped that coordinators and curriculum consultants will be able to see where students feel that additional emphasis needs to be placed.

Need for the Study

In the past, office education teachers, Cooperative Office Education coordinators, State Supervisors and

employers planned for a Cooperative Office Education curriculum and experience. This planning was usually without the input, direct or indirect, of students who were enrolled in the program. However, as the Cooperative Office Education experience is a triad (school-student-employer), it appears that it may be important to consider how the student views the experiences received in a Cooperative Office Education program. This knowledge combined with that of the school and employer should lead to a more effective program in Cooperative Office Education.

The Fleischman Report was an attempt by a New York State Special Commission to Evaluate Present Education Policy. It contained the following statistics on the differences of how students and teachers perceived school-related situations.

> More than 66 percent of the students sampled indicated that they did not enjoy school . . . . Students generally felt that teachers did not help them to do their best, did not understand their problems, did not help them to improve their skills, and were not concerned with their future.
>
> . . . Teachers appeared largely unaware of the negative feelings of their students. When asked to rate school morale as "positive," "average," or "negative," 52 percent of students picked "negative" while 64 percent of the teachers picked "positive." Asked to assign the same ratings to the overall education program, 52 percent of the teachers chose "positive," compared with only 28 percent of the students.[6]

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[6]Charles Cooper and Anthony Petrosky, "High School Students' Perceptions of Science Teachers and Science Classes," The Science Teacher, February 1974, p. 22.

If Robert Mager is accurate when he stated, "The teacher's task is to increase the student's approach behavior and lessen his avoidance behavior," then educators should begin considering where the students' perceptions of their educational experiences fit into the planning of their education.[7]

The amount of research conducted on students' perceptions of office education programs is sparse. Albert Masterson[8] looked at the perceptions of rural high school girls toward office work and concluded that there was no difference in the perceptions of office work between advantaged and disadvantaged rural high school girls. Franklin Dye[9] looked at perceptions of office work as held by tenth grade female students in urban high schools that served both advantaged and disadvantaged youth and discovered that differences existed in four cities between groups while in the other four cities, no significant differences were evident. As these are the only two major studies done recently on perceptions as seen by students,

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Albert C. Masterson, "Advantaged and Disadvantaged Rural High School Girls' Perceptions of Office Work" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1968).

[9]Franklin H. Dye, "Office Work Perceptions Held By Tenth Grade Female Students Enrolled in Urban High Schools Serving Disadvantaged Youth" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1968).

it becomes apparent that more basic research needs to be undertaken in this area.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Participants were limited to twelfth grade females who enrolled in a secondary Cooperative Office Education program on or before October 1, 1975, and who were students in the randomly selected schools which participated in this study.
2. The study was limited to Class A and B high schools in the State of Michigan who operated State-approved Cooperative Office Education programs in the school year 1975-76.[10]

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to the extent that the participants could communicate their perceptions on the basis of "yes," "no," "strongly agree," etc. as responses to a series of both questions and statements.
2. Of the 137 coordinators who were asked to participate, 58 responded "yes," 26 responded "no," and 53 did not reply. This meant that of the coordinators originally contacted, 42 percent agreed to participate in the study.

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[10]Complete definitions of Class A and B high schools are found on page 14.

3. As only students whose coordinators agreed to cooperate in the study were asked to participate, the results of the study may reflect only the uppermost levels of perceptions toward the COE program.

Definition of Terms

In order that the reader will understand how key terms in this study are being used, the following definitions are provided:

COE--Cooperative Office Education. ". . . a method of education that integrates learning in the school with work experience made available in some cooperating agency outside the school."[11]

Student. A female senior student in a secondary school cooperative office education program who has been working in the same COE position beginning on or before October 1, 1975.

Regular On-Site Visitations. This is defined as the coordinator making at least two visits per semester to the job site.

Training Agreement. For this study, a training agreement is defined as a plan of what the student will do

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[11]Douglas, Lloyd V.; Blanford, James T.; and Anderson, Ruth I., Teaching Business Subjects (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 447.

while in the COE program both on the job and in the related in-school class.

Training Sponsor. The employer or supervisor who is responsible for conducting the learning experiences of the student-learner on the job as defined by the training agreement.[12]

Teacher-Coordinator. The person employed by the school who is responsible for both in-school and on-site job experiences for COE students.

Related Class. The in-school class attended by COE students where the student with the coordinator's help has the opportunity to work both on new job skills and knowledges as well as to sharpen skills in the areas in which she is weak.

Training Station. The business establishment providing cooperative experiences for the student learner.[13]

Advisory Committee. A group of persons, usually from outside the field of education, selected because of their knowledge and expertise in certain areas to advise educators regarding vocational programs.

Office Occupations. All those duties performed by individuals in public or private enterprises that serve

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[12]Vocational-Technical Education Service, Guidelines For Regular Secondary Cooperative Vocational Education Programs (Lansing: Michigan 1974).

[13]Ibid.

business management through planning, organizing, recording, communicating, interpreting, and storing the financial and other data about the enterprise.[14]

Class A and B Michigan High Schools. According to the Michigan High School Athletic Association, Class A Michigan High Schools have 1,459 or more students enrolled; Class B schools, 723-1,458; Class C schools, 371-722; and Class D schools 370 and under.

Procedures for the Study

The procedures for the study were: (1) method, (2) population, (3) selection of participants, (4) instrumentation, (5) analysis of data.

Method

The questionnaire survey method was chosen for this study. This method was selected so that a high percentage of the COE students in Michigan could be surveyed. The background information necessary to develop the questionnaire was obtained by interviewing 30 students who are currently enrolled in COE programs.

Population

Cooperative Office Education is offered by 229 Class A and B high schools in the State of Michigan. In

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[14]Ralph E. Mason and Peter G. Haines, Cooperative Occupational Education and Work Experience in the Curriculum (Danville: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc. 1965), p. 105.

order that all areas of the State would be represented in the study, the State was divided into six geographical areas with schools in each area who had been randomly selected being asked to participate in the study.

Participants

Selecting student participants was accomplished on a two-step basis. First, the COE coordinator in a randomly selected school was contacted to determine if he/she would be willing to participate in the study. If the coordinator responded "yes," then student opinionnaires were mailed directly to the coordinator for administration and return. Only female, twelfth grade COE students in the cooperating schools who were enrolled and working on or before October 1, 1975 were chosen.

Instrumentation

A Coordinator Questionnaire (Appendix C) and a Student Opinionnaire (Appendix A) were used to obtain data pertaining to the study from participants. The Student Opinionnaire was developed after interviewing current COE students and COE graduates to determine their perceptions of the program. The Student Opinionnaire was checked for validity by COE students, a COE coordinator, and a consultant for the Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University. Reliability of the instrument was

established through the use of the Split-Half Method and also the Coefficient Alpha.[15]

Analysis of Data

The data collected from both the Coordinator Questionnaires and the Student Opinionnaires was analyzed with the assistance of the staff at the Computer Center at Michigan State University. The SPSS program was used for the analysis.[16]

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies of response, percentage of response, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations in addition to Chi Square tests and t-tests between means were compiled.

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[15]William A. Mehrens and Irvin J. Lehmann, Measurement and Evaluation in Education and Psychology (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), pp. 112-114.

[16]SPSS is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. This is a computer program that has been adapted for use at Michigan State University by the Vogelback Computing Center at Northwestern University.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature pertaining to the student's role in Cooperative Office Education is sparse. A review of the literature revealed that no studies have been completed that dealt primarily with the perceptions held by COE students toward the experiences they have had while in the COE program. This is supported by Louise J. Keller, who wrote in an article for the National Business Education Yearbook that:

> The major academic contributions to cooperative office education have been the professional articles, guides, and published notes from conferences and seminars. The lack of research studies dealing directly with cooperative office education was a prevailing fact throughout the review process.[1]

The researcher looked at formal studies and literature that had any comments to make about the role of the student in the COE program whether it concerned perceptions or was descriptive. The literature reviewed herein is presented in five categories:

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[1]Louise J. Keller, "The Teaching and Coordination of Cooperative Office Education," National Business Education Yearbook, No. 9 (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1971), p. 115.

1. Background Information on Cooperative Office Education
2. Studies Regarding the Status of Cooperative Office Education
3. Effectiveness of Cooperative Office Education
4. Relation of Perceptions to Cooperative Office Education
5. Summary

Background Information on Cooperative Office Education

Keller, in the 1971 National Business Education Yearbook, stated that "Cooperative Education since its founding in 1906 has combined vocational instruction and planned employment experiences to increase the quality of the educational process."[2] She pointed out that cooperative education is really a sleeping giant due to the fact that this concept has been present for such a long time and that the schools really have not yet utilized it in the massive proportions needed. With the advent of the 1963 Vocational Act, the recognition of the vocational curriculum objectives concerned with the preparation of people for employment in business and office occupations became a reality and cooperative office education began to grow. Keller mentioned that the cooperative plan has not only gained prominence but also congressional support and the

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[2]Ibid.

program is said to be the best program in vocational education. Among its attributes she lists high placement records, high employment stability, and high job satisfaction.

Lanham has proposed the following characteristics that, if attained, would make the cooperative plan worthy of recognition in the educational structure:

1. The coordinator is forced to treat the individual as an individual at least in job placement and, dependent upon the quality of program personnel, in individual counseling and guidance and in job-related instruction.

2. because of the wide diversity of jobs and job requirements, the program is adaptable to a wide range of individual needs and abilities;

3. in "less than college" grade programs, i.e., secondary schools and community colleges, the work experience (in the "real live world") comes at a time when many youth feel the need to put aside "paper dolls" and learn to participate as an adult in an adult world;

4. job instructional content and method can be "personalized" to the current job-related experiences of the learner;

5. job-related and school-related experiences can reinforce each other and thus motivate more learning in all school subjects;

6. job-related experiences can provide social and economic learnings unavailable through simulation or school laboratories;

7. the job can provide a practical standard against which the student can measure and develop a self-image of worth and, frequently, adjust his level of aspirations; and

8. the economic benefits of a paid work experience can provide incentive and, sometimes, the wherewithal for continued learning.[3]

Even though each of the program characteristics listed by Lanham as a projection for the future is oriented toward the student, the student is rarely the subject in the COE literature. Rather, the objective is on characteristics of the program organization. If Lanham's projections are to become a reality, it seems that research must be undertaken to learn how students perceive the program, their expectations of it, and improvements they would make in the program.

Studies Regarding the Status of Cooperative Office Education

Masterson[4] investigated the perceptions of rural high school girls of varying ethnic backgrounds toward office work and compared their perceptions with those held by persons currently employed as office workers. Masterson drew the conclusion that no differences existed in the perceptions of office work between disadvantaged and advantaged rural high school girls. However, a significant difference toward office work was discovered

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[3]Frank W. Lanham, "Cooperative Part-Time Programs--Projections for the Future," National Business Education Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association 1968), pp. 222-223.

[4]Albert C. Masterson, "Advantaged and Disadvantaged Rural High School Girls' Perceptions of Office Work" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1968).

between the perceptions of the total groups of rural high school girls and the office workers who participated in the study.

Franklin Dye[5] through the use of a questionnaire, looked at the perceptions of office work held by tenth grade female students who were enrolled in urban schools serving disadvantaged youth and compared these perceptions with those held by tenth grade female students in urban high schools that served advantaged youth. He concluded that office work perceptions held by disadvantaged students in an urban high school are different from perceptions held by advantaged students in an urban high school in some cities but not in others.

A third study by Shultz[6] done primarily to study the Cooperative Work Experience Program in Pennsylvania did contain a short section in which students responded concerning their feelings toward Cooperative Office Education. Shultz found that 78 percent of the students felt that COE had added to their self-confidence; that 90 percent of the students enjoyed their work; that 99 percent of the

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[5]Franklin H. Dye, "Office Work Perceptions Held by Tenth Grade Female Students Enrolled in Urban High Schools Serving Disadvantaged Youth" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1968).

[6]K. A. Shultz, "A Study of Cooperative Office Work-Experience Programs in a Selected Group of Secondary Schools of the State of Pennsylvania for 1957-58" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1961).

students felt that the experience would be of at least some to great value to them for advancement later; that 34 percent of the students rated the work experience as more valuable than in-school experience while 60 percent rated both as equals; and that 90 percent of the trainees rated themselves as satisfactory on a self-evaluation. The students in the Shultz study gave four reasons for enrolling in COE which were (1) discussions with classmates, (2) discussions with enthusiastic former trainees, (3) experience, and (4) encouragement by parents.

Murphy[7] did a study to determine whether certain selected factors of business education programs were significant in the success of high school graduates in securing initial employment in office positions. Graduates who had participated in a cooperative office plan or a general office work-experience plan and had been classified as office majors by their respective schools were selected at random from 10 high schools in Phoenix to participate in this study. Even though this is not a perception study, Murphy did reach a conclusion that falls into the perceptual realm. He concluded from his findings that participation in a cooperative plan while in high school increased a student's self-concept. This increase in self-concept

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[7]Sam Murphy, "Selected Factors in Office Education Programs Relating to the Success of High School Graduates in Securing Initial Employment" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1972).

helped give the student more self-confidence when applying for the first job after graduation.

Descriptive studies have been completed to determine the status of COE nationally and within states. In most instances, the studies were directed to employers, coordinators, administrators, and classroom teachers. A few studies, however, did speak briefly about the student's role in COE and these studies and findings are reviewed here.

Kingston,[8] in her study on the status and effectiveness of Cooperative Education in New Jersey in 1968-69 concluded from her study of COE students and their employers that the COE program was of most benefit to those students who wished to begin working immediately after high school. She also concluded that employers were better satisfied with new employees who had been COE students, and that even though it did not appear to influence beginning salaries, it did affect salary increases in a positive manner.

Kingston found that the number of COE programs in New Jersey had increased 300 percent from 1959-1969, that a wide variety of student selection processes were used, and that over half of the coordinators reported using an advisory committee to assist in the development of the

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[8]Carmela C. Kingston, A Study of the Status and Effectiveness of Cooperative Office Education in New Jersey, 1968-69, Monograph No. 8 (Trenton: New Jersey State Department of Education, 1970).

program. Ninety percent of the students believed that the COE program was satisfying their needs and that it had inspired them to do better work. The students felt that the best way to improve the program was to have students with the interest, aptitude, and ability for office work to consider the COE program. Students also believed the program could be improved by placing more emphasis on current business techniques and emphasizing the development of a good business personality. After the students graduated, Kingston found that 80 percent were working full time in office positions. Of those graduates not working, more than one-half were in programs of higher education.

A descriptive study was done in Michigan in 1967 by Uthe and Schroeder[9] to determine the status of cooperative office education programs in Michigan on selected elements involved in the cooperative method. Questionnaires were mailed to 246 teacher-coordinators of vocationally reimbursed cooperative office education programs. One hundred seventy-eight COE programs were represented in the results given below.

Findings by Uthe and Schroeder that parallel the data in this study are as follows:

1. The majority of the COE programs (91 percent) were located in the Class A and B high schools.

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[9]Elaine Uthe and Betty Schroeder, "The Status of Cooperative Office Education Programs in Michigan 1967-1968" (East Lansing: Michigan State University 1969), p. 2.

2. The average number (mode) of hours of coordination time allotted was 11-15 hours per week.

3. Only 72 of the 178 programs surveyed utilized the Advisory Committee.

4. The students in 75 percent of the 178 programs belonged to a variety of youth organizations. Forty-one clubs limited membership to COE students. Thirty-four clubs included students from cooperative and/or vocational programs in other occupational areas.[10]

In addition, Uthe and Schroeder also investigated the educational and professional backgrounds of the teacher-coordinators who participated in the study, prerequisites for enrollment as a COE student, equipment and facilities, and special problems of the beginning teacher-coordinator.

Two descriptive studies completed in Michigan, one by Shupe and another by the Southeastern Michigan Coordinator's Association, were both surveys of teachers' opinions of cooperative education and therefore dealt with students only indirectly. However, in each study weaknesses or disadvantages of the program as perceived by teachers are pointed out. In Shupe's study, two program disadvantages mentioned were (1) students should render more services to the school and (2) lack of study time for students.[11] In the Southeastern Michigan Coordinator's study, the greatest weaknesses of the cooperative program

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[10]Ibid., pp. 3-23.

[11]Richard J. Shupe, "The Values of Cooperative Education as Held by Teachers" (unpublished Master's study, Michigan State University, 1962).

were believed to be (1) it limits extra-curricular activities and (2) it causes students to neglect their school work.[12] Three of these perceived weaknesses or disadvantages are looked at from the student's point of view in this study.

Robert Driska investigated on a national scale the practices and procedures in office education. The participants in this study were State Supervisors of Business Education and members of NABTE, The National Association of Business Teacher Educators. In the parts pertinent to Cooperative Office Education, Driska found the following:

1. COE programs and block programs are and should be the most frequently offered vocational office education programs at the secondary level.

2. Cooperative students are and should be working a minimum of fifteen hours per week; receiving pay and credit for the office work phase of Cooperative Education.

3. Few office education programs are utilizing advisory committees. These programs should be utilizing advisory committees to recommend minimum standards for student workers, to help secure proper training stations, to assist with community surveys, to assist with job placement after graduation, to recommend curriculum changes, and to suggest and help secure sponsors.

4. Future Business Leaders of America is and should be recommended as the official youth organization for all office education students.

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[12]Southeastern Michigan Coordinators Association, Opinions of Michigan High School Faculties Concerning Cooperative Occupational Education (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Vocational Instructional Materials Laboratory, 1960), p. 32.

5. Fifty percent of the Department Chairmen in the study recommended that coordinators have one-half of each school day as released coordination time. In actuality, Driska found that only 14 percent of the State Supervisors reported that coordinators had this much time allotted for COE.[13]

Marguerite Crumley touched on many of the individual elements involved in operating a COE program. She corresponded with coordinators and State and City Supervisors on a national scale and came up with the following information.

1. Advisory committees. In gaining know-how in working with businessmen and in getting the support of employers for cooperative education, no greater allies can be found than members of an advisory committee made up of top business people in the community.

2. Youth organizations. Many correspondents considered lack of participation in extra-curricular activities a major weakness of cooperative education programs.

3. Coordination time. The lack of sufficient coordination time was suggested by many coordinators and supervisors as a major weakness of the cooperative program. Periods allotted to coordination activities during the school day rarely provide sufficient time. Any responsible coordinator will be found working many hours after school closes making downtown visitations and community contacts in the later afternoon, attending meetings and contacting parents and pupils at night.

4. Number of students per coordinator. Once a coordinator is employed, the number of students that one coordinator can handle is not clearly understood by the administration and often the coordinator has too many students to be able to give the proper attention to each one individually. When coordinators have too many students to visit

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[13]Robert S. Driska, "An Analysis of the Office Education Program at the Secondary Level" (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1967).

> on the job and not enough time for the visitation, the program loses its vocational value.[14]

Carol Norris has these thoughts on the use of advisory committees in vocational programs.

> In its best arrangement such a committee can become a most effective body; it can be highly selective in its processes, and its degree of efficiency generally dictates its involvement with the educational spectrum.
>
> In its least desirable form, an advisory committee can become a detriment to the cooperative enterprise between education and industry. A poorly selected, nonrepresentative group of members, combined with a lack of direction and/or sense of responsibility, can deteriorate into a one-in-a-while, polite gathering of so-called interested persons. This form of committee usually is unable to accomplish anything constructive; it has no sense of continuity, direction or purpose.[15]

Effectiveness of Cooperative Office Education

Through the use of a follow-up study of cooperative occupational education graduates, Haines and others measured the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program in Michigan by looking at the status of the employment of the COE graduate. In this respect, the findings revealed that the unemployment rate was low. In fact, only a fraction more than one percent were unemployed 10 months after graduation. Haines' follow-up study also revealed that 37 percent of

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[14]Marguerite Crumley, "Cooperative Part-Time Program--Weaknesses of the Past and Present," National Business Education Yearbook, No. 6 (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1968), pp. 212-215.

[15]Carol Norris, "How Education and Industry Can Work Cooperatively," National Business Education Quarterly (Summer 1969), p. 36.

the trainees were attending college or enrolled in a school beyond high school; that close to 90 percent of the office trainees were working in an office occupation, and that cooperative students were average or better than average students academically.[16]

In a thesis regarding cooperative office education, three separate components of COE were investigated: (1) The Cooperative Plan versus the In-School Plan, (2) The values, practices, and outcomes of cooperative plans, and (3) Cooperative plans and employment. She found that: (1) The total number of cooperative students show higher mean scores of achievement when all skill and ability scores are combined. (2) Cooperative students, as a whole, are superior in terms of vocational capacity, performance, and achievement in comparison to in-school students. (3) The achievement scores of cooperative and in-school students vary considerably between plans.[17]

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[16]Peter G. Haines and others, How High School School Cooperative Trainees Fare in the Labor Market: Phase D, Educational Research Series, No. 39 (East Lansing: College of Education, Michigan State University, 1967), pp. 2-4.

[17]Merline Touchet Broussard, "Student Achievement Under Two Plans of Secondary Office Education--Cooperative Plan Versus In-School Plan" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1973).

Relation of Perceptions to Cooperative Office Education

"Perception is the process of observing and interpreting the world around us."[18] Thus, it seems reasonable that in every facet of a person's life as he or she interprets their "world," perceptions are constantly occurring. When people with their varying backgrounds face both familiar and unfamiliar situations, it becomes clear that many varied perceptions of the same stimulus will be obtained even though the stimulus itself has not been altered.

Combs and Syngg have brought the concept of perceptions as dealt with in this study into a closer frame of reference:

> In the personal, or perceptual frame of reference we attempt to observe behavior from the point of view of the individual himself. People do not behave according to the facts as others see them. They behave according to the facts as they see them. What governs behavior from the point of view of the individual himself are his unique perceptions of himself and the world in which he lives, the meanings they have for him.[19]

The same concept applies when looking at how students perceive cooperative office education. Up to this time, coordinators and others responsible for the COE

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[18]Gerald L. Hershey and James O. Lugo, Living Psychology (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1970), p. 215.

[19]A. W. Combs and D. Syngg, Individual Behavior (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 16-17.

program have been trying to judge how students perceived the many facets of COE based on how they perceived them. According to Combs and Syngg, no one other than the person involved can speak for his/her perceptions as each person is an individual entity.

This individuality of perception becomes a critical factor when attempts are made to "guess" how students are perceiving situations within the COE program. Where one student may see the "whole" picture involved in COE and be able to organize in his/her mind the relevance of each part to another and act accordingly, another student may see a fragmented picture with only small parts seeming to have relevance. This fragmentation may cause the student to become dissatisfied with the program and fail to see the value in it.

The Fleischman Report, as described in Chapter I, pointed out in its findings that students felt that teachers did not help them to do their best, did not understand their problems, etc.[20] This appears to be a situation where perception of the overall picture has been fragmented and has resulted in an overall picture of dissatisfaction for the student. Only when a picture is available of how students, coordinators, and employers perceive the COE program can progress be made toward meeting the individual needs of the students within the program.

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[20]Cooper, op. cit., p. 22.

Summary

A comprehensive search of the literature available in the area of cooperative office education revealed that no studies have been done that dealt directly with students' perceptions of the COE program. However, portions of some studies and articles did contain small sections that spoke to the students' feelings toward the program. The following statements summarize the literature reviewed:

1. Cooperative office education has not only gained national prominence and congressional support, but also is worthy of recognition as a part of the educational structure.
2. Studies have been completed concerning students' perceptions of office work.
3. Although no studies have been done that deal directly with students' perceptions of COE, parts of studies and articles have dealt with some students' feelings. These studies have found that:
   a. Students felt that participation in a COE program had added to their self-confidence.
   b. Students felt that the COE program was satisfying their needs.
4. Descriptive studies have been conducted at the local, state, and national levels to determine the status of COE at these various levels. Data are available on number of programs, number of

enrollees, advisory committees, youth organizations, coordination time, etc.

5. Two different methods of measuring the effectiveness of cooperative education were reviewed.

   a. A follow-up of cooperative graduates revealed that the unemployment rate for this group was only slightly over one percent.

   b. A study was completed to compare differences in those students who were in COE and those students who received all their education in-school with the cooperative students receiving as a total group much higher scores.

6. Perceptions were found to be individual ways of interpreting the world that surrounds each of us. A frame of reference was built for the use of the term "perception" in this study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

The research procedures and methods utilized in conducting this study consisted of: (1) method, (2) population, (3) selection of participants, (4) instrumentation, and (5) analysis of data.

Method

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perceptions that Cooperative Office Education students hold regarding the program in which they are taking part. Because of the large numbers of students involved in this study, it was determined that the most efficient and comprehensive survey technique was the questionnaire. Student opinionnaires were mailed to the 58 coordinators who had agreed to have their students participate in the study. All student participants in the study had the guarantee of anonymity as they were to be identified only by a number within their school. After receipt of the opinionnaires, the coordinator at each school had a two-week period in which to determine what would be the optimum time to administer the opinionnaire to his/her

students, to administer the instrument, and then return it.

Martin Trow has made the observation that the education setting is nearly ideal for survey research; the prospective subjects are articulate and familiar with questionnaires, they are easily enumerated and sampled, and questionnaires can be administered under controlled conditions in the classroom.[1] Ary et al. observed that:

> The direct contact with subjects involved in interviewing is time consuming and expensive. Much of the same information can be gathered by means of a written questionnaire presented to the subjects. As compared with interviewing, the written questionnaire is typically more efficient and practical and allows for the use of a larger sample. It is widely employed in educational research.
>
> Further advantages of this technique are that standard instructions are given to all subjects and the personal appearance, mood, or conduct of the investigator will not color the results.[2]

Population

In the 1975-76 school year, 300 secondary schools in Michigan operated Cooperative Office Education programs which met standards of the Michigan Department of Education for reimbursement. This study consisted of female, twelfth

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[1]Martin Trow, "Education and Survey Research," in Charles Y. Glock (ed.), Survey Research in the Social Sciences (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967), pp. 315-375.

[2]Donald Ary, Lucy Cheser Jacobs, Asghar Razavieh, Introduction to Research in Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1972), pp. 169-170.

grade students who were enrolled in a State-approved Cooperative Office Education program in Michigan on or before October 1, 1975 and who were still working during the second week in April 1976 when this study was conducted. As some control was desired over the time students in the study had to develop perceptions, it was felt that more consistent answers could be obtained by limiting participants to those who started work on or before October 1, 1975.

Selection of Participants

The State was divided into six geographic areas to assure that students from all areas of the State would be represented in this study. The number of schools in each area can be found in Table 1.

Area 1--Schools in Oakland and Macomb counties
Area 2--Schools in the City of Detroit
Area 3--Schools in Wayne County and south of Detroit
Area 4--Schools in the Saginaw and Flint area
Area 5--Schools in Lansing and southwest of Lansing
Area 6--Schools north of Harrison, Michigan and in the Upper Peninsula

It was believed that from the 229 Class A and B schools offering COE programs, a sample of 15 percent of the schools in which coordinators agreed to participate in each of the six areas would be sufficient for the purpose of this study. To secure a high rate of return, it was decided that the student opinionnaire would need to be administered by the local coordinator and then returned by the coordinator rather than by individual students.

Table 1

Sample Selection and Participation

Area	Number of Class A and B Schools in Area with approved COE programs	Number of Schools Participating	Percent of Total schools in area participating	Number of Students Participants	Percent of study participants from each area
1	56	9	16	230	24.5
2	23	5	22	87	9.3
3	43	10	23	179	19.1
4	43	15	35	233	24.9
5	51	11	21	168	17.9
6	13	4	31	40	4.3
Totals	229	54		937	100.0

A cover letter and coordinator questionnaire were mailed out to help secure the necessary coordinator participation in this study. One-hundred thirty-seven coordinator questionnaires were sent asking for participation in the study. Fifty-eight coordinators agreed to participate; twenty-six coordinators replied that they did not wish to participate; and fifty-three coordinators made no reply to the initial inquiry.

In all, usable Student Opinionnaires were received from 937 of the 1,086 students who were enrolled in COE in the 54 participating schools before October 1, 1975. This represented an 86 percent return. After the questionnaires were returned, the percentage of participating schools in each area varied from 16 percent to 31 percent. No attempt was to be made to compare differences between the six geographic areas, but it was necessary that students from all areas of the State be represented in the study. Therefore, it was determined that all of the schools who agreed to participate in the study would be utilized. As Smith points out:

> The larger the groups are, the smaller will be the probable distortion by the chance factors, and the greater the likelihood that the findings will apply generally to similar groups.[3]

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[3]G. Milton Smith, A Simplified Guide to Statistics for Psychology and Education (Fourth Edition New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1970), p. 61.

Ary et al. also support using all schools who agreed to participate when they state:

> The best answer to the question of size is to use as large a sample as possible. A larger sample is much more likely to be representative of the population. Furthermore, with a large sample the data are likely to be more accurate and precise.[4]

Table 1 shows the relevant data concerning the number of Class A and B schools in each area with approved COE programs, the number of schools participating in the study from each area, the percent of total schools in each area participating in the study, the number of students participating from each area, and the percent of study participants from each area.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study consisted of two survey-type devices:

1. A coordinator questionnaire
2. A student opinionnaire.

The Coordinator Questionnaire

This instrument asked specific questions about the COE program in a particular school. Information obtained on this questionnaire was utilized not only to know how many student opinionnaires were needed at a particular school but also so that some comparisons could

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[4]Ary, op. cit., p. 167.

be made between program elements and student perceptions. (See Appendix C for Coordinator Questionnaire.)

The Student Opinionnaire

The student opinionnaire was developed after talking with COE coordinators, 30 students who were currently enrolled in COE programs, and five former COE students. (See Appendix A for Student Opinionnaire.)

Original Perception Instrument Pretest

The original form of the Perception Instrument was pretested with the group of 30 COE students mentioned above who were enrolled in COE in a Class A high school in Michigan. After testing the instrument, both the COE coordinator and the students who pretested the instrument gave suggestions for revisions.

Pretest of Final Perception Instrument

The final form of the perception instrument was pretested with a group of forty-four COE students who were chosen at random by their coordinators. The participants were students from three schools that seemed to be representative of those schools who had agreed to participate in the study. One pretest school is located in the inner city, another is located in a suburb of the same city, and the third is located in a rural area outside the city.

Validity

The validity of this instrument was established by utilizing the following three steps:

1. Before the development of the student opinionnaire, interviews were held with 30 students who were currently enrolled in COE programs and five who were graduates of COE programs to discover their perceptions of COE.
2. The COE coordinator whose students participated in the initial pretest phase and her students were asked whether they felt the opinionnaire was valid and changes were made in the final draft according to their suggestions.
3. A research consultant from the Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University was asked to judge the face validity of the instrument.

Both the coordinator and the students who examined the final pretest instrument together with the research consultant agreed that the opinionnaire appeared to be valid for this study.

Pretest Reliability

Reliability coefficients were obtained on the directional items used in the opinionnaire. These were the items used to determine whether students held positive or negative perceptions of the program and included numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21,

23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 on the final form of the opinionnaire as shown in Appendix A. All other items included on the opinionnaire were items considered to have neither positive nor negative reflections on the COE program and thus were not included in the reliability coefficients. The split-half method was utilized to determine the reliability of the above-named items. This method yielded a reliability coefficient of .93. The Coefficient Alpha developed by Cronbach is another method of expressing reliability based on a variation of the Kuder-Richardson test-retest method of determining reliability. The Alpha Reliability Coefficient for the pretest was .87. Based on the reliability scores and the validation procedures, it was determined that the opinionnaire was ready for further administration.

Analysis of Data

The methods of analyzing the data compiled for this study are explained in this section. The section has been organized into five parts: descriptive analysis, description of the chi square test, description of the t-test, presentation of the analysis, and student comments.

Descriptive Analysis

Item Responses. The data collected were tabulated according to the number of total students who responded in each available response category. Persons who did not

respond to items were placed in a separate group. The item responses were converted into percentages and reported in this manner so that comparisons between and within items could more easily be made.

The descriptive responses obtained on the first 30 student opinionnaire items are reported in Chapter IV as the sum of the percentages of respondents who marked Strongly Agree or Agree to an item. Data compiled from the remaining four parts of the opinionnaire were reported as frequency of response, response percentages, and means and standard deviations when applicable are also shown. Complete response percentages for the entire student opinionnaire together with means and standard deviations when applicable are available in Appendix B.

Chi Square Test

The chi square test was used for testing the hypotheses formulated for this study. For this study, the .05 level of significance was used.

t-Test

In addition to the Chi-Square tests done on the hypotheses in this study, t-tests were also run to determine whether differences existed in perceptions between groups of students whose COE programs contained specific elements and groups whose programs did not contain the element in question. The .05 level of significance was

used as the line between significance and non-significance.

Presentation of Data

Data is presented in Chapter IV in narrative form and in Tables following the narrative descriptions of findings and in Appendices B and D that contain the summary figures for the Student Opinionnaire and Coordinator Questionnaire, respectively.

Student Comments on Opinionnaire

Students participating in the study were given the opportunity to add additional comments on two sections of the opinionnaire. Question 32 asked students their first and second most important reasons for enrolling in COE. Seven possible reasons were given for the students to check with an eighth blank stating other. Student comments from those participants who gave reasons for enrolling in COE other than the seven listed reasons are listed in Appendix H.

Students also were given an opportunity in Question 34 to list any additional curriculum areas they felt were needed. These comments can also be found in Appendix H. All comments are listed exactly as received on the opinionnaires.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings from this study are organized into two major sections:

1. Organization and Operation of the Cooperative Office Education Program in Michigan
2. Student Perceptions of COE in Michigan.

Brief discussion are included with each finding.

Organization and Operation of the Cooperative Office Education Program in Michigan

The following data regarding the organization and operation of the COE program in Michigan were based on a geographically stratified sample of 24 percent of the Class A and B high schools that operate Cooperative Office Education programs which were approved for funding under state guidelines for approval and reimbursement. With the exception of the section on "Obtaining Work Stations," the data in this section on the organization and operation of programs were based on information received from 58 coordinators who coordinate the COE programs in the 54 schools included in this study.

Number of Students Per Program

The mean number of students enrolled in each COE program on or before October 1, 1975 was 20 students. This mean average had climbed to 29 students per program by March 15, 1976.

Enrollment varied widely from school to school; i.e., the number of students enrolled on or before October 1, 1975 ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 43 while enrollment on March 15, 1976 ranged from a low of 5 to a high of 94. However, the arithmetic mean reveals an enrollment of 18.5 on or before October 1, 1975 and 26 on March 15, 1976. The data showed two facts: (1) Enrollment in a COE program is not set as in the regular academic sense. In most programs, enrollment tends to increase throughout the school year as more work stations become available and students reach skill levels which enable them to function in the real world. (2) The coordination time allotted to coordinators may appear large because of fewer students in the fall, but it appeared that coordinators used this time to locate additional work stations so that more students could be included in the program. According to Evans,

> . . . cooperative work experience has suffered from trying to find suitable training stations for all cooperative work experience students in a single month (September) . . . problems could be eased by laboratory instruction which prepared students in advance of placement in cooperative work experience programs.
>
> The most able students would be available for placement early in the school year, while less able students

> would continue in the school laboratory for longer periods. This arrangement could tend to spread the need for job placements more evenly over the calendar year.[1]

It appeared from the data in this study that schools are operating as Evans has suggested with placements being made throughout the school year. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of Students Per COE Program

	Number of Students Enrolled on or before October 1, 1975	Number of Students Enrolled on or before March 15, 1976
Actual Range	1-43	5-94
Mean	20	29
Median	18.5	26

Coordination Time

The mean time which each coordinator has per week for coordination activities is 10.5 hours. This is a mean average of 10.5 hours per week with a range of 0-20 hours per week.[2] Because the range in total coordination time

[1]Rupert N. Evans, "Cooperative Education--Advantages, Disadvantages, and Factors in Program Development, American Vocational Journal, XLV, No. 3 (1970), 16-18 cited by Rupert N. Evans in Foundations of Vocational Education (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1971), p. 199.

[2]Three coordinators reported receiving no released time for coordination. Two of the coordinators gave no

was so great, the median and mode were also examined and both found to be 10. These findings are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Coordination Hours Per Week

	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Coordination Hours Per Week	0-20	10.5	10	10

Dropouts from the COE Program

A mean of two students dropped from each COE program included in this study. No attempt was made to ascertain why students left the program early, although many coordinators wrote to say that students graduated early or transferred to another school system. As the range in number of drops was wide; i.e., 0-12, other indicators, the median and mode, were determined and found to be one drop per program. The results of this finding are displayed in Table 4.

The implication of this finding seemed to be that if over two students drop from a COE program for reasons

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explanation. However, the third coordinator did report that her school plan provided her with a $10 per student per six-weeks agreement in her contract in lieu of released time. In addition, she received $100 at the end of each semester contingent on having a minimum of three co-op students per semester. This may provide one answer to the problem of providing coordination time in a small school.

Table 4

Student Dropouts From the COE Program

	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Number of Students Who Dropped COE	0-12	2	1	1

other than early graduation or transfer to another school system, that the coordinator should begin to discover the reason(s) why and attempt to correct them as the COE program overall has a very low dropout rate.

Training Station Visitations

Each coordinator was asked to give the number of times each training station was visited every semester (or approximately every 18 weeks for those schools that do not operate on a semester plan). Coordinators reported visiting training stations on the average of 2.9 times each semester with the range being from 0 visitations to 10 visitations each semester. These results are shown in Table 5. Three implications seemed to arise from the data. (1) Zero visitations were reported by one of the coordinators who is given no coordination released time. This means that this is not truly a cooperative program. (2) Zero visitations were reported by coordinators who were responsible for both distributive education and cooperative office education programs. Their comments seemed to be

Table 5

Frequency of Training Station Visitations

	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Number of visitations per student per semester	0-10	2.9	2	2

along the line that COE students never seemed to have problems on the job, so they were not visited very often if at all. It may be that COE students do, in fact, have problems on the job but have learned to solve them on their own. (3) At the other end of the spectrum, the coordinator who visited students on the job 10 times per semester may have been too concerned with the student's on-the-job performance and offended the employer by making this many visitations.

Obtaining the Work Station

Student participants were asked to answer the question, "Did your co-op coordinator find your job for you?" Eighty-two percent of the students reported that the coordinator located their jobs, with 18 percent reporting that they had located their own work stations. This shows that coordinators are locating the majority of the work stations; and therefore, are able to match students with jobs that fit their abilities and skill levels at a certain point in time. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Obtaining the Work Station

	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Coordinator Obtained Work Station	766	81.8
Student Obtained Work Station	165	18.0
No Student Response	6	.01
Totals	937	99.81

Training Plan Preparation

When coordinators were asked the question, "Does each co-op student help with the development of her own training plan?", 24 coordinators (44 percent) responded positively and 30 (56 percent) responded negatively. Regardless of the fact that Mason and Haines state that the training plan is derived jointly by the teacher-coordinator and training station sponsor,[3] it appears that close to half of the coordinators are now realizing that student participation in the preparation of the plan may be important. The results are shown in Table 7.

[3]Ralph E. Mason and Peter G. Haines, Cooperative Occupational Education and Work Experience in the Curriculum (Danville: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc. 1965), p. 416.

Table 7

Training Plan Preparation

	Number of Programs	Percentage of Programs
Student Assists with Development of Plan	24	44
Student Does Not Assist with Development of Plan	30	56
Totals	54	100

Advisory Committees

Coordinators were asked to respond to a two-part question on advisory committees.

1. How many times does your whole (total) advisory committee meet each year?

2. How many times do advisory committee sub-groups meet each year?

The data showed that both whole advisory committees and sub-committees each met on the average of 1.4 times per year with a wide range in the number of times groups met; i.e., 0-9 times per year for whole advisory committees and 0-10 times per year for sub-committees. It was apparent from this data, that even though the State Guidelines for Cooperative Education require advisory committees for cooperative programs,[4] that these guidelines are not being being implemented.

[4]Vocational-Technical Education Service, Guidelines For Regular Secondary Cooperative Vocational Education

When other indicators such as the median and mode were examined, some differences appeared. For the whole advisory committee the median was one meeting per year while the mode (which represents 19 of the 54 participating schools) was 0. For sub-committees of the whole advisory committee, both the median and mode were 0. (Thirty-seven of fifty-four participating schools show sub-committees holding no meetings.)

Table 8

Frequency of Advisory Committee Meetings

	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Whole Advisory Committee Meetings Per Year	0-9	1.4	1	0
Sub-Committee Advisory Committee Meetings Per Year	0-10	1.4	0	0

Youth Organizations

When coordinators were asked whether they required COE students to belong to a COE-related youth organization, 16 responded "yes" (30 percent) and 38 responded "no" (70 percent). Coordinators listed the names of the organizations in which COE students were required to hold membership. In addition, many coordinators who did not require

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Programs (Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, 1974), Section E, p. 38.

membership, listed the youth organization that was available to students in their program. It appears that little emphasis is being placed on the importance of a youth organization to the cooperative program. Mason and Haines state that:

> Youth organizations are an integral part of a cooperative program because youth activities enhance the total instructional program. The youth group activities bring to the student-learner occupational understandings, leadership development, and participation in projects as well as social development. A commitment of time by both the students and the teacher-coordinator to a program of youth club activities should be recognized by the school administrator as a concomitant of the instructional program.[5]

Cooperative program guidelines for the State of Michigan also highly encourage but do not require an active youth group.[6] Evans however, adds a new dimension to the question of youth groups when he states that:

> These clubs have done a great deal of good by providing opportunities for leadership development and education outside the school. It is interesting however, that the youth organizations of vocational education have proved much more resistant to change than have the vocational education programs which gave birth to them.[7]

Therefore, the lack of required youth group participation may be due to one or all of the following:

1. Youth group participation is not required by State Guidelines.

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[5]Mason and Haines, op. cit., p. 251.

[6]Vocational-Technical Education Service, op. cit., p. 39.

[7]Evans, op. cit., p. 38.

2. Teacher-coordinators and/or students are not willing to make the time commitment necessary to a viable youth group.
3. Youth groups may have been so resistant to change that coordinators and/or students do not see them as relevant at this point in time.

Teacher/Coordinators

The State Guidelines for Regular Secondary Cooperative Vocational Education Programs list three types of approved coordination: (1) The teacher-coordinator concept whereby the coordinator has the COE students in a related in-school class in addition to coordinating their on-the-job experiences. (2) The prescription concept whereby the coordinator does not teach the related class but meets with the related instruction teacher to discuss and plan for individual needs within the related class. (3) The prescription concept whereby the preparatory instructor coordinates the cooperative experience in cases where the preparatory and cooperative experiences are concurrent.[8]

The data revealed that 39 (72 percent) of the coordinators who participated in this study were teacher/coordinators while 15 (28 percent) were not. The data thus showed that approximately three-fourths of the programs in this study were supervised by teacher-coordinators and

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[8]Vocational-Technical Education Service, op. cit.

Table 9

Youth Organization Participation by COE Students

Name of Youth Organization*	Number of Schools Requiring Membership	Number of Schools Where Membership is Optional	Percent of Schools in Study in Organization
Business and Office Education Club (BOEC)	3	5	15
Junior Office Training Society (JOTS)	5	0	9
Office Education Association (OEA)	1	0	2
Local Co-op Association	7	1	15
Organization Name Not Supplied by Coordinator	0	3	5
No Youth Organization Membership Required	0	29	54
Totals	16	38	100

*Organization names were furnished by coordinators and are listed exactly as received.

therefore fit the first type of State-approved coordination listed above. The results are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Degree to Which Coordinators Teach the Related Classes

	Number	Percentage
Teacher/Coordinator	39	72
Not a Teacher/Coordinator	15	28
Totals	54	100

Student Perceptions of Cooperative Office Education Programs in Michigan

This study, after looking at program characteristics, then looked at student perceptions of the COE program. In all, thirty questions were used and a Likert scale response pattern employed. The scale utilized a five-point value system with a five being assigned to Strongly Agree; four, Agree; three, Undecided; two, Disagree; and one, Strongly Disagree.[9] A complete breakdown of data gathered on the thirty questions is found in Appendix B.[10]

[9]Earl R. Babbie, Survey Research Methods (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 269-270.

[10]Each finding will be represented by telling the reader what percentage of the total respondents either marked Strongly Agree or Agree to the perception statements given on the Student Opinionnaire. In the case of reverse questions Numbers 7 and 12 as follows (numbers 12 and 19 respectively on the actual opinionnaire) they have been

General Perceptions of COE

1. Ninety-four percent (94 percent) of the students in this study believed that experiences on their co-op job were giving them confidence that they can succeed in a full-time job after graduation. This finding follows that of Shultz who found that 78 percent of the students in her study in Pennsylvania felt that COE had added to their self-confidence.[11] This finding is also in agreement with Murphy who concluded in his study that participation in a cooperative plan while in high school increased a student's self-concept.[12]

2. Sixty-eight percent (68 percent) of the study participants observed that experiences in the related, in-school class helped them to succeed on the job. This was in line with the belief of Mason and Haines that "The instruction in school is particularly important in developing occupational competence . . . ."[13]

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reworded so that Strongly Agree and Agree are the desired responses.

[11]K. A. Shultz, "A Study of Cooperative Office Work-Experience Programs in a Selected Group of Secondary Schools of the State of Pennsylvania for 1957-58" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1961).

[12]Sam Murphy, "Selected Factors in Office Education Programs Relating to the Success of High School Graduates in Securing Initial Employment" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1972).

[13]Mason and Haines, op. cit., p. 231.

3. Seventy-one percent (71 percent) of the students believed that they were learning to budget the money earned in their jobs. As working for pay is an element of the cooperative experience, learning to budget the money earned is an important economic by-product of the COE experience.

4. Forty-six percent (46 percent) of the students learned about fringe benefits offered by their employers through their co-op experiences. Knowledge of fringe benefits is an important part of not only working but of knowing what to look for when looking for a full-time position. This data indicates that about half the students are becoming knowledgeable in the area of fringe benefits. However, it also indicates that this is an area where more instruction needs to be given.

5. Eighty-four percent (84 percent) of the students said that their co-op job gave them the feeling of accomplishing something worthwhile. This feeling of accomplishment has most probably contributed to the students' positive overall perceptions of the COE program.

6. Ninety-eight percent (98 percent) of the students responded that they can see for themselves how important it is to project a good image to an employer when going for a job interview. Haines found in a follow-up study that close to 90 percent of students trained as office employees found work in that occupation and that

employment was secured within 10 months of graduation.[14] Thus, it appears that students have discovered the need for projecting good images to future employers.

7. Sixty percent (60 percent) of the study participants felt that co-op did not take too much time away from their other school activities. Both the Shupe[15] and the Southeastern Michigan Coordinator's[16] studies mentioned that teachers believed students in cooperative programs were limited in their extra-curricular activities and in their services to the school. It is apparent from this study that more than 60 percent of the students do not believe that co-op participation has had these effects upon them.

8. Sixty-six percent (66 percent) of the students believed that they could discuss their on-the-job problems with their co-op coordinators. As the coordinator needs to be made aware of the problems that arise on the job in

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[14]Peter G. Haines and others, How High School Cooperative Trainees Fare the Labor Market: Phase D, Education Research Series, . 39 (East Lansing: College of Education, Michigan Stat niversity, 1967), pp. 2-4.

[15]Richard J. Shupe, "The Values of Cooperative Education as Held by Teachers" (unpublished Master's study, Michigan State University, 1962).

[16]Southeastern Michigan Coordinators Association, Opinions of Michigan High School Faculties Concerning Cooperative Occupational Education (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Vocational Instructional Materials Laboratory, 1960).

order to solve them, it is encouraging to note that two-thirds of the students would discuss their problems with their coordinators.

9. Ninety-eight percent (98 percent) of the students reported they have learned that no matter how they feel, they should try to appear friendly and cheerful on the job. Demeanor on the job is important to success, and it appears that the COE experience has communicated this to the participants.

10. Eighty-four percent (84 percent) of the students concluded that their co-op experiences were helping them learn how to make decisions about their futures. This was an all-inclusive area concerning "decisions about their futures." No attempt was made to define specific decision areas concerning the future but to get an overall picture of what the student believed the program was doing for her. "Decisions" might have included such things as: (1) Do I want to work in an office for a living? (2) Will I be able to support myself on the money I make as an office worker? (3) Do I see another type of job that I think I would like better? and (4) Do I need more education?

11. Eighty-eight percent (88 percent) of the study participants said that having a job had given them more confidence in themselves. This follows Murphy's conclusion that participation in a cooperative plan while in high

school increased a student's self-confidence when applying for the first job after graduation.[17]

12. Forty-one percent (41 percent) of the students felt that the related in-school class helped them be more successful on the job. The answer to this question did not appear to correlate with the answer to Question 2 where 68 percent of the students felt that the in-school related class contributed to their success on the job. It may be that students believe the related class helped them succeed but did not help them to be more successful on the job.

13. Eighty-four percent (84 percent) of the students have been able to see why employers want them to be on the job every day. As attendance is a prime concern of employers, it is apparent that this concern has now been transferred over to the students in this study who have worked in offices.

14. Ninety-one percent (91 percent) of the study participants would recommend the COE program to others who are interested in becoming office workers. This finding seems to indicate personal satisfaction with the COE program and is in line with Kingston's finding that 90 percent of the students in her study believed that the COE program was satisfying their needs. In addition, these students believed the best way to improve the program was

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[17]Murphy, op. cit.

to have students with the interest, aptitude, and ability for office work to consider the COE program.[18]

15. Eighty-eight percent (88 percent) of the students believed that their co-op experiences are making them more sure of themselves when meeting people at work who are in a different age group. Most teenagers have been interacting, up to the time of paid employment, primarily with their own peer groups. Much has been said about "age" and "generation" gaps. It seems to be apparent from this finding, however, that a large percentage of COE students are now more comfortable dealing with other workers who are most probably older than themselves.

16. Seventy-nine percent (79 percent) of the students have found that working at a paid job has given them a new appreciation of the value of money. Lanham had listed as a valuable characteristic of co-op that job-related experiences can provide social and economic learning unavailable through simulation or school laboratories.[19] It appears that earning money at a co-op job provides one of these experiences. Only through having one's own money

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[18]Carmela C. Kingston, A Study of the Status and Effectiveness of Cooperative Office Education in New Jersey, 1968-69, Monograph No. 8 (Trenton: New Jersey State Department of Education, 1970).

[19]Frank W. Lanham, "Cooperative Part-Time Programs--Projections for the Future," National Business Education Yearbook (Washington: National Business Education Association 1968), pp. 222-223.

and budgeting it to see how far it will go and what it will buy can one learn its value. It seems that a large percentage of the participants have learned this lesson.

17. Seventy-four percent (74 percent) of the study participants reported that their co-op experiences have helped them learn to dress appropriately for full-time office positions. In addition to the technical skills needed by office workers, a good personal appearance is necessary for success in most businesses. The COE students in this study appear to have learned the importance of dressing appropriately for the job.

18. Eighty-nine percent (89 percent) of the students reported that they can see why an employer insists that employees come to work on time each day. Regardless of the fact that students may be chastized in various ways for lateness in school-related matters, it is never quite the same as it is in the "real" world where the holding of a job and the receiving of a pay check depend on things such as being on time. Lanham refers to this as learning to participate as an adult in an adult world.[20]

19. Ninety-five percent (95 percent) of the study participants felt that they needed a positive attitude at work to succeed. This perception is probably due to observations made by participants at work both of their own attitudes and the attitudes of those around them toward the

[20] Ibid.

work situation. It appears from the high percentage of those participants who felt that a positive attitude was necessary that this is a lesson learned through the COE experience.

20. Ninety-eight percent (98 percent) of the students said they have learned that all jobs have some elements they do not like but that have to be done regardless of their feelings. This finding seems to back up Lanham's statement once again that students should "learn to participate as an adult in an adult world,"[21] and indicates that the COE program has been successful for the participants in this study in this particular area.

21. Seventy-one percent (71 percent) of the participants reported that the job skills they had when they started their co-op jobs had been adequate for those jobs. This seems to indicate that coordinators placed approximately three-fourths of the students in jobs where they would succeed and feel comfortable skill-wise.

The answers to the above 21 questions were used in arriving at an overall perception score for each student. Student perceptions were also obtained for the following nine questions, but the responses were not used in the overall perception score as the answers were considered to be neither positive nor negative toward the COE program.

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[21]Ibid.

22. Forty-two percent (42 percent) of the students believed they need better shorthand skills before looking for full-time positions. This may be due to the fact that students have made on-the-job observations of the shorthand skills necessary for the level of job they desire and have decided their skills did not measure up to observed employer standards.

23. Eighteen percent (18 percent) of the students reported they need help with their telephone techniques. Apparently the large majority of study participants felt comfortable with their knowledge of the telephone and its use on the job. This may be due to employers having COE students do much of the telephone work while they are on the job.

24. Thirty-one percent (31 percent) of the students felt that more time should have been spent in the related class on skills such as typing, shorthand, and business machines. Approximately one-third of the students in the study felt inadequate in the skills area. This may be due not only to a "real" lack of skill but also to being placed in a work station where a very high level of skill not yet developed by the beginning worker was required.

25. Fifty-eight percent (58 percent) of the participants reported they have learned from their co-op experiences that they need further education to reach

their chosen goals. This seems to be a higher percentage than that found by Kingston or Haines in their follow-up studies. Kingston found that 80 percent of the graduates were working in full-time positions and of those not working, more than one-half were in programs of higher education.[22] At the maximum, this would be 10 percent. Haines found that 37 percent of the students in his 1965 study were attending a school or college 10 months after graduation.[23] Ten years later, it now appears that even more COE students (58 percent) have realized that further education is a necessity for them.

26. Thirty percent (30 percent) of the students reported that more time needed to be spent in school developing personal data sheets and talking about how to look for full-time positions after graduation. This could be due to these students still having a feeling of inadequacy about the mechanics of looking for their first jobs.

27. Sixty-six percent (66 percent) of the respondents indicated that their typing skills needed to be better. Apparently, two-thirds of the study participants have made the on-the-job observation that their typing skills need improvement.

28. Forty-five percent (45 percent) of the students felt their job skills were good enough so that they

[22]Kingston, op. cit.

[23]Haines, op. cit.

could have succeeded in a more demanding co-op position. Almost one-half of the students have tried out their skills on the job, have succeeded, and thus have determined the level of job they are qualified to hold.

29. Forty-five percent (45 percent) of the students reported that their co-op jobs helped them to decide their careers were in office work. Lanham states that "the job can provide a practical standard against which the student can . . . adjust his level of aspiration . . . ."[24] Almost half of the students have measured the abstraction of taking an office job against actual experience and found they liked what they experienced.

30. Thirty-five percent (35 percent) of the students felt they would have worked just as hard in a co-op job where they were not paid as they have in their present positions. To explain this answer, one has to make the assumption that some students see the value in the cooperative experience with or without pay. They are motivated by something other than the money involved.

Overall Perceptions of Students

One of the purposes of this study was to ascertain which students held positive perceptions of the COE program and which students held negative perceptions of the program. To do this, an overall perceptions average was

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[24]Lanham, op. cit.

computed for each student using the first twenty-one questions as listed previously in the findings.[25] In an attempt to determine which elements of the COE program appeared to have affected student perceptions, t-tests were calculated between the scores of students whose COE programs contained stated elements and the scores of students whose programs did not contain the elements in question.

Hypothesis One--Effect of Coordinator's Supervision Time on Student's Perceptions of COE Program

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who have coordinators who do not supervise more than 15 students per released hour up to a maximum of 60 students for four released hours per day and students whose coordinators' coordination time does not fall within these limits.

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[25]It was planned to split the students who held positive perceptions from the students who held negative perceptions by placing all students who had average scores of three or above in the Positive Group and all students who had averages of 2.9 or below in the Negative Group. Chi square tests could then be run to determine whether various program elements such as number of coordinator visits per semester, student participation in development of training plans, membership in an office-related youth organization, etc. seemed to have a relationship to student perceptions. This plan, however, had to be abandoned due to the finding that out of 937 study participants, only 11 held negative perceptions of the program. In other words, 99 percent of the participants in this study when scores on their answers to the first 21 questions as given in this findings section were analyzed, came up with a score of 3 or above. This result thus rendered the use of the Chi Square test invalid as the distribution was skewed so far to the left. It was then determined that possibly some significance could be found by using a t-test to compare the means of those students who were in programs containing certain elements with students who were in programs not containing those same elements. By using this method and setting an alpha level of .05, statistical significance could be achieved in several instances.

The hypothesis could not be rejected at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the amount of coordinator released time may have had no effect on student perceptions of the COE program. As no apparent differences existed between those students whose coordinators have adequate coordination time according to the State Guidelines and those students whose coordinators do not have adequate coordination time as defined by the State Guidelines, the assumption appears to follow that coordinators could coordinate more students per coordination hour without affecting the way in which students feel toward the program. However, another factor seemed to be pertinent in this case and would need to be investigated before a coordinator assumed responsibility for more co-op students and that is the view of the employer. How often the employer believes calls on students should be made, would be important to the changing of guidelines already existing in this area. The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 11.

Hypothesis Two--Effect of Membership in Office-Related Youth Organization on Student's Perceptions of COE

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who belong to an office-related youth organization as part of their COE experience and students who do not belong to an office-related youth organization.

Table 11

Effect of Coordinator's Supervision Time on Student's Perceptions of COE Program

Program Element	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Coordinators do not supervise more than 15 students per released hour	610	3.98	.38	.50
Coordinators supervise more than 15 students per released hour	327	3.97	.40	
Total Students	937			

In this case, the hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, a youth organization membership does appear to contribute to a student holding more positive perceptions of the COE program. This hypothesis supports the views of authorities such as Mason and Haines[26] on the importance of youth organizations. However, before additional time, energy, and dollars are committed to a COE youth organization, it should be noted that the means of the perception scores for the two groups are only .06 apart on a scale of 5. Data from this hypothesis are displayed in Table 12.

Hypothesis Three--Effects of an Active Advisory Committee on Students' Perceptions of COE

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who are enrolled in a COE program where the advisory committee meets at least twice each year and students who are enrolled in COE programs where the advisory committee does not meet at least twice each year.

The hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, it appeared that the presence of an active advisory committee does make a difference in the way students view the COE program. The results of this finding are displayed in Table 13.

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[26]Mason and Haines, op. cit., pp. 260-261.

Table 12

Effect of Membership in Office-Related Youth Organization on Students' Perceptions of COE

Program Element	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Membership Required	288	4.02	.37	.02
Membership Not Required	632	3.96	.40	
Missing Observations	17			
Total Students	937			

Table 13

Effects of an Active Advisory Committee on Students' Perceptions of COE

Program Element	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Have Active Advisory Committee	506	4.01	.38	.00
Do Not Have Active Advisory Committee	431	3.94	.40	
Total Students	937			

Hypothesis Four--Effects of Number of Coordinator Visits to Job Site on Student Perceptions of COE

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who are enrolled in a COE program where the coordinator visits their work stations at least twice each semester and students whose coordinators do not visit them at least twice each semester.

For this hypothesis, all students whose coordinators reported visiting each student's work station at least twice each semester were put in one group and students whose coordinators reported visiting them less than twice each semester were placed in another group. No significant difference was found between the number of coordinator visits and effects on student perceptions of the COE program. Therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected at the .05 level of significance. It appeared that in this case, the number of on-the-job visitations did not influence student perceptions of the COE program. Here again, though, as in Hypothesis One, the employer plays a part in whether a visitation schedule should be curtailed. Data for this hypothesis are displayed in Table 14.

A second test was done on this hypothesis using visitation data obtained from students. Students were asked whether their coordinators had visited them twice each semester since they had taken their COE positions. Students then were placed in two categories. Using data supplied by the students, the hypothesis was rejected at

Table 14

Effects of Number of Coordinator Visits To Job Site on Students' Perceptions of COE (N=937)

	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
A. Coordinator				
Two or more visitations per semester	895	3.98	.39	.93
Less than two visitations per semester	42	3.98	.38	
Total Students	937			
B. Student				
Two or more visitations per semester	592	4.02	.37	.00
Less than two visitations per semester	326	3.90	.41	
Missing observations	19			
Total Students	937			

the .05 level of significance in favor of one which states that the number of visitations does affect students' perceptions of the program. It should be noted that some students mistook this question to mean, "Did the coordinator visit with me as a person on the job?" This may have biased the results on this question and the statement that the number of coordinator's visits to the job site is a significant factor in students' perceptions of the program is in question. The data from this analysis are shown in Table 14.

Hypothesis Five--Effects of Student Participation in Development of Training Plan

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who are enrolled in a COE program where they participate in the development of the training plan and students who are enrolled in COE programs where they do not participate in the development of the training plan.

Students whose coordinators reported they had participated in the development of their training plans were placed in one group while students whose coordinators reported they did not have students participate in the development of their training plan were placed in another group. Using the data supplied by the coordinators, the hypothesis could not be rejected at the .05 level of significance. This seemed to say that it does not matter whether the student is involved in the development of the training plan and the teacher-coordinator and employer can

undertake this task without alienating the student. The results of this finding are shown in Table 15.

Students in the study were also asked whether they had helped in the development of their own training plans. Those who replied that they had helped were placed in one group while those who replied that they had not helped were placed in a second group. Using the data supplied by the students, the hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, this means that students who felt they participated in the development of their own training plans did hold higher perceptions of the COE program. It should be noted, however, that the mean perception scores for the two groups were only .08 apart on a five-point scale. Thus, before any definite plans were made to include students in the development of the training plan, a judgment would have to be made as to whether the additional time involved justified the small gain in perception score. The data are displayed in Table 15.

Hypothesis Six--Effect of Having a Teacher/Coordinator on Student Perceptions of Importance of Related Class

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the importance of the related class to their success on the job between students who have a teacher-coordinator for the related class and students who do not have a teacher-coordinator for the related class.

Coordinators were asked to specify whether they were teacher-coordinators (had most or all of the COE

Table 15

Effects of Student Participation in Development of Training Plan

Program Element	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
A. Coordinator				
Student Participation in Development of Training Plan	450	3.98	.38	.55
No Student Participation in Development of Training Plan	470	3.97	.40	
Missing observations	17			
Total Students	937			
B. Student				
Student Participation in Development of Training Plan	465	4.02	.38	.00
No Student Participation in Development of Training Plan	431	3.94	.39	
Missing observations	41			
Total Students	937			

students in a related class) or whether they were coordinators of students who had other teachers for the related class. The mean perception score on Question 19 (I could have been just as successful on my co-op job even without a related class in school) for all students who had teacher-coordinators was placed in one group and the mean perception score for all other students was placed in another group. The hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Students who did not have a teacher-coordinator held higher perceptions of the importance of the related class to their success on the co-op job than did those students who had teacher-coordinators teaching their related class. This could be due to two different reasons: (1) The students who did not have a teacher-coordinator may have believed their in-school instruction was giving them all the essential skills for job success. They did not miss having their coordinator for the in-school class. (2) Students with a teacher-coordinator for the in-school class may not have believed the class content was contributing to their success on the job. The data are displayed in Table 16.

Hypothesis Seven--Relationship Between Student Perception of Importance of Related Class and Presence of Teacher-Coordinator

> There is no significant relationship between a student's perception of the importance of the related class to her success on the job and whether the related class is taught by a teacher-coordinator.

Table 16

Effect of Having a Teacher-Coordinator on Student Perceptions of Importance of Related Class

Program Element	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score Questions 19	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Student has Teacher-Coordinator	739	2.86	1.25	.01
Student does not have Teacher-Coordinator	152	3.15	1.28	
Missing observations	46			
Total Students	937			

A Chi Square test was run on this variation of Hypothesis Six. Answers to Question 19 in the opinionnaire (I could have been just as successful on my co-op job even without a related class in school) were compared between students who had teacher-coordinators and students who did not have teacher-coordinators. This was a reverse direction question with Strongly Disagree being a 5, Disagree a 4, etc. At the .00 level it appears that a student's perceptions of COE are affected by the presence of a teacher-coordinator although it is not clear in which direction perceptions are affected. This indicates that further research needs to be done to determine the importance of the teacher-coordinator to the student. The data are shown in Table 17.

Hypothesis Eight--Effect of Student's Academic Class Standing on Student Perceptions of COE Program

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who perceive themselves to be in the upper half of their high school class academically and students who see themselves in the lower half of their high school class academically.

Students were asked to state whether they believed they were in the upper half of their high school class academically or in the lower half. Students were then placed in two groups based on this information and a comparison was made of their means on the perception test. The hypothesis could not be rejected at the .05 level of

Table 17

Relationship Between Student Perception of Importance of Related Class and Presence of Teacher-Coordinator (N=937)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number of Students Who Have a Teacher-Coordinator	119	213	123	217	67	739
Number of Students Who Do Not Have a Teacher-Coordinator	17	43	12	60	20	152
Totals	136	256	135	277	87	891

Missing Observations 46

Significance Level = .00

significance. This finding does seem, however, to have significance in that both students in the upper and lower halves of their classes academically seemed to perceive the overall picture of COE in the same way. Thus, no major treatment adjustments appeared to be necessary. This result is probably due to the individual attention given each COE student in matching jobs to students and the help given to succeed on the job once placed. The results are displayed in Table 18.

Hypothesis Nine--Effect of Coordinator-Located Work Station on Student Perceptions of the COE Program

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students whose coordinators located their work stations and students who located their own work stations.

Students whose coordinators located their work stations for them were placed in one group while students who located their own work stations were placed in a second group. The hypothesis that it does not make a difference who located the work station was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Although students whose coordinators identified their work stations held higher perceptions of the program than students who located their own work stations, the difference between the two groups was only .08, which on a scale of five does not seem to present a case

Table 18

Effect of Student's Academic Class Standing on Student Perceptions of COE Program

	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Upper half of Class	698	3.99	.37	.81
Lower half of Class	52	3.97	.49	
Missing Observations	187			
Total Students	937			

for not allowing some students to locate their own work stations. The data are shown in Table 19.

Hypothesis Ten--Effects of Perceived Job Challenge on COE Perception Score

> There will be no significant difference in student perceptions of the COE program between students who feel that their co-op job is too difficult for them, students who feel that their co-op job does not challenge them enough, and students who feel that their co-op job is right for them.

Students were asked to respond in one of three given ways to how they felt about the challenge they received on their COE jobs.

1. I feel like my job is too difficult for me.
2. My job does not challenge me enough.
3. My job is just right for me at this time.

A one-way analysis of variance was run on the data. The hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance. Those persons falling in Group 1 who felt that their jobs were too difficult held the lowest mean perception scores. Students in Group 2 who need more challenge held higher perceptions than students in Group 1. Group 3 is the group that was satisfied with their jobs. This group held the highest perceptions of the COE program. When the mean perception scores of the three groups were considered, it appeared that wide ranges existed within categories. The students who believed their jobs were too difficult held positive perceptions of the program with a relatively small spread in the scores while the other two groups held higher

Table 19

Effect of Coordinator-Located Work Station on Student Perceptions of the COE Program

	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Coordinator Located Work Station	766	3.99	.38	.01
Student Located Work Station	165	3.91	.42	
Missing Observations	6			
Total Students	937			

overall perceptions of the program but had large spreads in their overall perceptions. In addition to statistical significance, it seems reasonable to make the assumption that a student who considers her job "right for her" will hold the highest perceptions of the program. This seems to indicate that coordinators need to be concerned with matching students to suitable jobs. The data are displayed in Tables 20 and 21.

Job Challenge

Students were asked to choose one of three ways in which they felt about their co-op work stations. They responded in the following manner:

1. One percent felt that their jobs were too difficult and that they would be happier in an easier position.
2. Thirty-four percent felt that their jobs do not challenge them enough and wish the work were more difficult.
3. Sixty-two percent felt that their jobs were just right for their skills and abilities.
4. Three percent did not answer this question and/or circled more than one answer.

Reasons for Enrolling in COE

When asked why they enrolled as COE students, participants in this study listed in the following order

Table 20

Effects of Perceived Job Challenge on COE Perception Score

Response Item	Number of Students	Mean Perception Score (Minimum and Maximum)	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
"Job Too Difficult"	10	3.56 (3.19-4.14)	.29	
"Job Needs to be More Challenging"	319	3.92 (2.35-4.95)	.42	.00
"Job Just Right"	578	4.02 (2.62-4.86)	.37	
Missing Observations	30			
Total Students	937			

Table 21

Analysis of Variance

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Probability
Between Groups	2	4.0672	2.0336	13.743	.000
Within Groups	904	133.7694	.1480		
Total	906	137.8366			

their most important reasons as (1) to get experience on an office job; (2) to see whether I liked office work; (3) to make money. This compares with the findings by Shultz that students enrolled for four basic reasons: (1) discussions with classmates; (2) discussions with enthusiastic former trainees; (3) experience; (4) encouragement by parents.[27] It seems that students' reasons for enrolling in COE have changed drastically in the last 15 years since the completion of the Shultz study.

Students were also asked to supply any reasons for enrolling in addition to the ones given on the opinionnaire. Some of the more common reasons given were: it was required (for the job); to have office experience on my record; to occupy my time; to get a job. A complete listing of all student comments received is given in Appendix H.

Academic Status

From the response to the question, "Are you in the upper half or lower half of your high school class academically?", it is apparent that most COE students see themselves as being in the upper half. In fact, of the students responding to this opinionnaire, 74 percent see themselves in the upper half while only 6 percent see themselves in the lower half. For an unknown reason, 187

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[27]Shultz, op. cit.

students (20 percent) did not respond to this inquiry. This finding agreed with that of Haines who found that 75 percent of the office trainees in this follow-up study of 1965 graduates were in the upper half of their high school class academically.[28]

Youth Club Membership

Twenty-eight percent of the participants reported that they were required to belong to an office-related youth organization. Sixty-nine percent reported no such requirement and three percent did not answer the question. Even though youth club participation was encouraged by the State Guidelines, it was apparent that most students were not receiving the benefits of a youth club membership. A complete discussion of youth club membership is found on pages 53, 54 and 55.

Coordinator Visitations

When asked whether the co-op coordinator has visited them two times each semester since they had been working, 63 percent of the students replied "yes," 35 percent "no," and two percent did not answer. However, it was pointed out by several coordinators when the opinionnaires were returned that this question was interpreted by many students as meaning, "Did the coordinator visit with them personally on the job twice each semester?"

[28]Haines, op. cit.

In many cases, the coordinator visits when the student is not on the job. Therefore, the answers to this question may not be valid and/or reliable and should not be used to prove or disprove any hypothesis or theory.

Training Plan Development

Fifty percent of the student participants reported they had helped develop their own training plans. Forty-six percent said they did not participate in the development of their training plans; and four percent gave no response to this inquiry. State Guidelines do not require or speak of student participation in the development of the training plan. Therefore, it is encouraging to find that approximately half of the students are in programs where they do participate in the process of developing their own training plans. Apparently coordinators are beginning to believe that a student will perform better if she knows about the various facets of her training.

Locating the COE Work Station

COE students reported that 82 percent of their work stations were located by the COE coordinators, while 18 percent apparently located their positions on their own. Only six students (.006 percent) did not respond to this question. For discussions of the implications of work station identification, please see pages 50 and 84.

Curriculum Content Needs

Twelve curriculum content areas were presented to student participants. For each area the student was to rate herself as (1) I need a lot of work in this area; (2) I need just a little more work to feel confident; (3) I feel like I am "OK" here. The following results were obtained from the curriculum content needs survey.

Typing. Fifty percent (50 percent) of the students indicated they felt the need for more work in this area to feel confident, while 38 percent felt their typewriting skills were "OK" as is. Only 12 percent felt they needed a lot of work in this area.

Shorthand and Transcription. Fifty-three percent (53 percent) of the students reported needing a lot of work in this area. Twenty-five percent (25 percent) reported needing some additional help and 11 percent reported they felt sure of themselves. Eleven percent (11 percent) of the study participants did not answer this question.

Bookkeeping. Thirty-five percent (35 percent) of the students reported that they needed a lot of work on bookkeeping. Thirty-eight percent (38 percent) felt they needed some work in this area. Twenty percent (20 percent) reported they felt confident of their bookkeeping skills. Seven percent (7 percent) did not answer this question.

Business Machines. Nine percent (9 percent) of the students believed they needed a lot more work in business machines. Thirty-five percent (35 percent) would like just a little more work in this area and 54 percent felt confident of their skills. Three percent (3 percent) of the participants did not answer this question.

Filing. Four percent (4 percent) of the participants felt the need for a lot of work in filing. Twenty-two percent (22 percent) need just a little more work and 73 percent believed their skills are adequate. One percent (1 percent) of the students did not respond to this question.

Telephone Techniques. Six percent (6 percent) of the students held the opinion that they needed a lot of work in telephone techniques. Thirty-one percent (31 percent) needed a little more work and 62 percent felt confident in this area. One percent of the participants did not answer this question.

Grammar Skills. Twelve percent (12 percent) of the respondents observed that they needed a lot of work in the grammar skills. Forty-nine percent (49 percent) felt they needed a little more work in this area and 37 percent believed they have mastered this area. Two percent (2 percent) of the participants did not answer this question.

Letter Writing. Seventeen percent (17 percent) of the students believed they needed a lot more work in this area. Fifty-one percent (51 percent) felt they could use a little more work in letter writing and 30 percent were confident of their skills in this area. Two percent (2 percent) of the students did not respond to this question.

Personal Appearance. One percent of the respondents felt they needed more help with their personal appearance. Fourteen percent (14 percent) felt they could use a little help and 84 percent believed they were "OK" in this area. One percent (1 percent) of the students did not respond to this question.

Public Speaking. Twenty-eight percent (28 percent) of the students felt they needed a lot of work in the area of public speaking. Forty-five percent (45 percent) believed they could use a little help in this area and 25 percent of the students felt confident of their skills. Two percent (2 percent) of the participants did not answer this question.

Applying for a Job. Six percent (6 percent) of the students felt they needed a lot of work in this area. Fifty-one percent (51 percent) believed they could use a little more instruction and 42 percent felt their job application skills were adequate. One percent (1 percent) of the students did not respond to this question.

Getting Along With Others. One percent (1 percent) of the participants felt they needed a lot of help in learning how to get along with others. Eleven percent (11 percent) believed they could use a little help and 85 percent were sure of their skills in this area. Three percent (3 percent) of the students did not respond to this question.

Table 22

Curriculum Content Needs*

	I Need A Lot of Work Here	A Little More Work	I'm OK	No Response	Mean	Standard Deviation
Typing	12	50	38	1	2.3	.66
Shorthand and Transcription	53	25	11	11	1.5	.70
Bookkeeping	35	38	20	7	1.8	.75
Business Machines	9	35	54	3	2.5	.66
Filing	4	22	73	1	2.7	.54
Telephone Techniques	6	31	62	1	2.6	.60
Grammar Skills	12	49	37	2	2.2	.66
Letter Writing	17	51	30	2	2.1	.69
Personal Appearance	1	14	84	1	2.8	.40
Public Speaking	28	45	25	2	2.0	.74
Applying for a Job	6	51	42	1	2.3	.60
Getting Along With Others	1	11	85	3	2.9	.38

*Student responses are expressed as percentages of the total group of study participants. Rows may not equal exactly 100 percent as all percentages are rounded to the nearest integer.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cooperative Office Education can be defined as ". . . a method of education that integrates learning in the school with work experience made available in some cooperating agency outside the school."[1] The purpose of the cooperative occupational program is to give the office education student the chance to apply in an actual job situation the skills he/she has learned in the classroom. In addition, the student experiences such intangibles as the business atmosphere, attitudes of fellow workers, etc., that are difficult to simulate in the in-school class. Cook has stated that:

> . . . students need real work experience--experience that will help them determine for themselves the real value of their education and that will provide them one of their greatest needs, financial independence. They need experience that will get them out of the classroom--which uses antiquated equipment and play

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[1]Lloyd V. Douglas, James T. Blanford, and Ruth I. Anderson, Teaching Business Subjects (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 10.

money in the form of grades--and into the real world of work.[2]

With projections of employment needs in clerical occupations showing rapid expansion through the mid-1980s,[3] it is not only for the students' welfare that the best office education possible be offered, but also for the employers who need the services of trained clerical workers to make their businesses function.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to survey students who have participated in Cooperative Office Education programs and discover the perceptions these students hold toward the program. The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are COE student perceptions of:
   a. The related in-school class?
   b. The on-the-job experience?
   c. Personal experiences related to holding a job while still in school?
2. Does the number of students supervised by the COE coordinator affect the students' perceptions of the program?

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[2]Fred S. Cook and Frank W. Lanham, "Research and Development," Business Education World, October 1968, p. 7.

[3]United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bulletin 1785 (Washington: Government Printing Office 1974-75), pp. 87-105.

3. Does a requirement that all COE students belong to an office-oriented youth organization affect their perceptions of the program?
4. Does an active COE advisory council make a difference in students' perceptions of the program?
5. Do the number of coordinator visits to the student's work station make a difference in the student's perception of the program?
6. Does student participation in the development of the training plan make a difference in student perceptions of the program?
7. Does the manner in which the co-op job was acquired affect student perceptions of the program?
8. Do students who fall in the upper half of their high school class academically differ in their perceptions of the COE program from students who are in the lower half of their class academically?
9. Does student satisfaction with the level of the co-op job make a difference in how she perceives the COE program?
10. What motivates a student to enroll in a Cooperative Office Education program?
11. At what levels do students feel they have unmet curriculum needs?

Need for the Study

Although the student participates in a three-way partnership involving the student, the employer, and the school, very little research has been completed concerning the student's reactions toward the program. The way a program as a whole and in part is perceived by the student can be important to the value(s) the student receives from participation in the program. It is necessary to ascertain these perceptions so that any shifts necessary in procedure or content can be made. It is expected that this study will provide a basis for:

1. Developing an overall description of how students view the Cooperative Office Education program.
2. Ascertaining what critical components are present in Cooperative Office Education programs where students hold positive perceptions of that program.
3. Determining whether academic standing in class affects student perceptions of the program.
4. Deciding whether satisfaction with job placement is a determining factor in forming students' perceptions of Cooperative Office Education.
5. Learning why students enroll in a Cooperative Office Education program.
6. Determining in which areas Cooperative Office Education students felt they needed more instruction.

Procedures for the Study

The procedures for the study were: (1) method, (2) population, (3) selection of participants, (4) instrumentation, and (5) analysis of data.

Method. The questionnaire survey method was selected for this study. The background information necessary to develop the questionnaire was obtained by interviewing students who were currently enrolled in COE programs or who were graduates of COE programs.

Population. Cooperative Office Education is offered by 300 secondary schools in the State of Michigan. Two hundred twenty-nine of these programs are located in high schools who enroll over 723 students. As over 70 percent of the programs are in the larger schools, it was determined that the sample for this study would be selected from students attending schools that enrolled at least 723 students.

In order that students from all areas of the State would be represented in the study, the State was divided into six geographic areas and a sample of schools was selected from each area to participate in the study. Students from 54 schools (24 percent of the Class A and B schools who ran COE programs during 1975-76) participated in the study.

Selection of Participants. Students who participated in this study had to meet three criteria:

1. Be enrolled in a COE program in a Class A or B high school where the coordinator had volunteered his/her students as participants in this study.
2. Be enrolled in COE and working in a COE job on or before October 1, 1975.
3. Be female.

Instrumentation. The instrumentation for this study consisted of two parts: (1) A coordinator questionnaire and (2) A student opinionnaire. The coordinator questionnaire asked specific descriptive questions about COE programs within particular schools. Information gained from this questionnaire was utilized to know how many student opinionnaires were needed by a participating school and also to later make comparisons between specific COE elements and student perceptions. The student opinionnaire was developed with the help of students currently enrolled in COE and graduates of the COE program. The instrument was devised to discover not only perceptions of the program but also descriptive data needed by those who plan the curriculum for COE programs.

Analysis of Data. The data obtained in this study were analyzed in two ways: (1) descriptively and (2) statistically. The descriptive analysis of the data was completed by first tabulating frequency of response to each category within each question both by frequency of response and by percentage of total response within each item.

Ranges, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations were also reported when applicable to particular situations.

The responses to the 21 questions designated as being perceptual were then analyzed as follows:

1. An average perception score was obtained for each student on the 21 perception questions.
2. All students who had a 3.0 or above average were placed in one group and students with a 2.9 or less average were placed in another group.
3. Chi square tests were run to determine whether individual program elements showed relationships to perception scores.
4. Students were then re-grouped by whether their programs contained certain program elements. t-tests were then run to determine whether the differences between the means of the two groups was statistically significant.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Participants were limited to twelfth grade females who enrolled in a secondary Cooperative Office Education program on or before October 1, 1975, and who were students in the randomly selected schools which participated in this study.

2. The study was limited to Class A and B high schools in the State of Michigan who were operating State-approved Cooperative Office Education programs.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to the extent that the participants could communicate their perceptions on the basis of "yes," "no," "strongly agree," etc. as responses to a series of both questions and statements.

2. Of the 137 coordinators who were asked to participate, 58 responded "yes," 26 responded "no," and 53 did not reply. This meant that of the coordinators originally contacted, 42 percent agreed to participate in the study.

3. As only students whose coordinators agreed to cooperate in the study were asked to participate, the results of the study may reflect only the uppermost levels of perceptions toward the COE program.

Findings

The findings from this study are reported in two major categories: (1) Organization and Operation of the COE Program in Michigan and (2) Student Perceptions of Cooperative Office Education Programs in Michigan.

Organization and Operation of the COE Program in Michigan

1. The mean number of students enrolled in each COE program on or before October 1, 1975 was 20 students. By March 15, 1976 this mean average had climbed to 29 students per program. A .95 confidence interval drawn around enrollment data showed that enrollment on or before

October 1, 1975 fell in the range of 17-23 students while enrollment on March 15, 1976 was in the range of 24-33 students.

2. The mean time which each coordinator had assigned per week for coordination time was 10.5 hours with the median and mode both being 10 hours per week. This was approximately 25 minutes per student per week. Coordination hours per week reported by participating coordinators ranged from 0-20 hours per week.

3. A mean of two students dropped from each program included in this study. As the range in the number of drops was wide; i.e., 0-12, the median and mode were determined and found to be one drop per program. No attempt was made to ascertain the reason for student drops; however, many coordinators listed such reasons as early graduation or transfer to another school system.

4. Coordinators reported visiting training stations on the mean of 2.9 times each semester, with the range being 0-10 visitations each semester. The median and mode number of visitations was two per semester.

5. Students reported that 82 percent of their COE positions were located for them by their coordinators, while 18 percent reported they had located their own work stations.

6. Forty-four percent of the coordinators reported that students helped with the development of their own

training plans, while 56 percent reported that students did not help with the development of their own training plans.

7. Coordinators reported that both overall advisory committees and sub-committees of the whole committee met on the mean of 1.4 times each year. The ranges again were wide with whole advisory committee meetings ranging from 0-9 times per year and sub-committee meetings ranging from 0-10 times per year. When the median and mode were examined, some differences appeared. For the whole advisory committee, the median was one meeting per year and the mode (which represented 10 of 54 schools) was 0 meetings per year. For sub-committees of the whole advisory committee, both the median and mode were 0. (Thirty-seven of 54 participating schools reported that sub-committees held no meetings.)

8. Only a third (30 percent) of the coordinators reported that membership in a youth organization was required of all COE students. Seventy percent responded that no membership requirement was made. However, many of the schools included in the 70 percent not requiring membership did have a youth group in which membership was optional.

9. Seventy-two percent of the coordinators stated that they were teacher-coordinators while 28 percent were not. (The criteria for being a teacher-coordinator was

determined by asking the coordinator whether he/she had most or all of the COE students in a related class.)

Student Perceptions of Cooperative Office Education Programs in Michigan

General Perceptions of COE

1. Ninety-four percent of the students in this study felt that experiences on their co-op jobs were giving them confidence that they can succeed in a full-time job after graduation.

2. Sixty-eight percent of the study participants felt that experiences in the related, in-school class helped them to succeed on the job.

3. Seventy-one percent of the students believed that they were learning to budget their co-op job earnings.

4. Forty-six percent of the students learned about the fringe benefits offered by their employers through their co-op experiences.

5. Eighty-four percent of the students said that their co-op job gave them the feeling of accomplishing something worthwhile.

6. Ninety-eight percent of the students responded that they can see for themselves how important it is to project a good image to an employer when going for a job interview.

7. Sixty percent of the study participants felt that co-op did not take too much time away from their other school activities.

8. Sixty-six percent of the students felt that they could discuss their on-the-job problems with their co-op coordinators.

9. Eighty-four percent of the students felt that their co-op experiences were helping them learn how to make decisions about their futures.

10. Ninety-eight percent of the students reported that they have learned that no matter how they feel, they should try to appear friendly and cheerful on the job.

11. Eighty-eight percent of the study participants said that having a job has given them more confidence in themselves.

12. Forty-one percent of the students felt that the related in-school class helped them be more successful on the job.

13. Eighty-four percent of the students have been able to see why employers want them to be on the job every day.

14. Ninety-one percent of the study participants would recommend the COE program to others who are interested in becoming office workers.

15. Eighty-eight percent of the students believed that their co-op experiences have made them more sure of

themselves when meeting people at work who are in a different age group.

16. Seventy-nine percent of the students have found that working at a paid job has given them a new appreciation of the value of money.

17. Seventy-four percent of the study participants reported that their co-op experiences have helped them learn to dress appropriately for full-time office jobs.

18. Eighty-nine percent of the students reported that they can see why an employer insists that employees come to work on time each day.

19. Ninety-five percent of the study participants felt that they needed a positive attitude at work to succeed.

20. Ninety-eight percent of the students said they have learned that all jobs have some parts they do not like but that have to be done regardless of their feelings.

21. Seventy-one percent of the participants reported that the job skills they had when they started their co-op jobs have been adequate for those jobs.

22. Forty-two percent of the students believe they need better shorthand skills before looking for full-time positions.

23. Eighteen percent of the students believe they need help with their telephone techniques.

24. Thirty-one percent of the students felt that more time should have been spent in the related class on skills such as typing, shorthand, and business machines.

25. Fifty-eight percent of the participants reported they have learned from their co-op experiences that they need further education to reach their chosen goals.

26. Thirty percent of the students reported that more time needed to be spent in school developing personal data sheets and talking about how to look for full-time positions after graduation.

27. Sixty-six percent of the respondents indicated that their typing skills needed to be better.

28. Forty-five percent of the students felt their job skills were good enough so that they could have succeeded in a more demanding co-op position.

29. Forty-five percent of the students reported that their co-op jobs helped them to decide their careers were in office work.

30. Thirty-five percent of the students felt they would have worked just as hard in a co-op job where they were not paid as they have in their present paid positions.

Overall Perceptions of Students

It was ascertained that on the 21 questions pertaining to student perceptions of the COE program that

only 11 students out of 937 participants held negative overall perceptions of the program. This result rendered the use of the Chi Square test invalid as the distribution was skewed so far to the left.

t- Results. In order to determine which program elements affected perceptions, students were placed in two groups. One group consisted of students whose program contained a specified element. The second group consisted of all the students whose programs did not contain specified elements. Students could move back and forth between groups depending on what specific program element was being examined.

1. No significant differences were found in perception scores between students whose coordinators' released time fell within the State Guidelines and students whose coordinators did not have the released time specified in the State Guidelines.

2. It was determined that membership in a youth organization does contribute to a student holding more positive perceptions of the COE program. The mean perception score of youth club members was 4.02 while the mean score of non-youth club members was 3.96.

3. At the .00 level of significance, it appeared that the presence of an active advisory committee did make a difference in the way students viewed the COE program. The mean perception score of students who were in programs

with active advisory committees was 4.01 while students in programs without active advisory committees had a mean score of 3.94.

4. (a) Students were placed in two groups based on whether their coordinators said they had been visited at least twice each semester and those visited less than twice each semester. The hypothesis could not be rejected that the number of coordinator visits to a student's work site does not affect student perceptions of the COE program. The mean perception score of both groups was 3.98.

(b) Students were then asked whether they had been visited at least twice each semester on the job. Students who said "yes" were placed in one group and the others in a second group. At the .00 level of significance, it was found that the number of visitations did affect student perceptions of the program. The mean score for the students who were visited at least twice was 4.02 and the mean for the second group was 3.90.

5. (a) No significant statistical differences were found between students whose coordinators reported they helped with the development of their training plans and students whose coordinators reported they had not helped with the training plans. The mean perception score for the students who participated in the training plan

development was 3.98 while the students who did not participate had a mean perception score of 3.97.

(b) Students were asked whether they had helped in the development of their training plans and were placed in two groups based on their answers. At the .00 level of significance, it was found that students who participated in training plan development had higher perception scores than students who did not participate in the development of the training plan. The mean score for the students who helped with the training plan was 4.02 while the mean score for the second group was 3.94.

6. Students who did not have a teacher-coordinator held higher perceptions of the importance of the related class to their success on the co-op job than did those students who had a teacher-coordinator. The mean score of the students who had a teacher-coordinator was 2.86 and the mean score of the group not having a teacher-coordinator was 3.15. In a variation of this hypothesis, a chi square test was run to determine whether a relationship existed between a student's perception of the importance of the related class to her success on the job and whether the related class was taught by a teacher-coordinator. At the .00 level of significance, it appeared that a student's perceptions were affected by the presence of a teacher-coordinator, although it was not clear in which direction perceptions were affected.

7. No significant statistical differences in perceptions of the COE program were found between students who identified themselves as being in the upper half of their high school class academically and those students who identified themselves as being in the lower half of their high school class academically.

8. Students whose coordinators located their work stations held higher perceptions of the COE program than students who located their own work stations. The mean perception score for those students who located their own work stations was 3.91 and the mean perception score for the other students was 3.99.

9. Student perceptions of the COE program were found at the .00 level of significance to be affected by the way they felt about the challenge they received on their COE jobs. The lowest perception scores were held by students who felt their jobs were too difficult for them. Students who believed their jobs did not challenge them enough held higher perceptions than those who felt their jobs were too difficult. Students who were satisfied with their COE jobs held the highest perceptions of the COE program.

Job Challenge. When asked to choose one of three ways in which they felt about their COE work stations, students responded as follows:

1. One percent felt that their jobs were too difficult and that they would be happier in an easier position.
2. Thirty-four percent felt that their jobs do not challenge them enough and wish the work were more difficult.
3. Sixty-two percent felt that their jobs were just right for their skills and abilities at this time.
4. Three percent did not answer this question and/or circled more than one answer.

Reasons for Enrolling in COE

Students listed the following as the most important reasons why they enrolled in COE: (1) to get experience on an office job; (2) to see whether I liked office work; (3) to make money.

Academic Status

Seventy-four percent of the participants see themselves in the upper half of their high school class academically while only 6 percent see themselves in the lower half. Twenty percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Youth Club Membership

Twenty-eight percent of the participants reported that they were required to belong to an office-related youth organization. Sixty-nine percent reported no such requirement and three percent did not answer the question.

Coordinator Visitations

Sixty-three percent of the students reported that their coordinators had visited them two times each semester on the job. Thirty-five percent said that their coordinators had not visited them at least twice each semester, and two percent did not answer this question.

Training Plan Development

Fifty percent of the student participants reported they had helped develop their own training plans. Forty-six percent said they did not participate in the development of their own training plans; four percent gave no response to this inquiry.

Locating the COE Work Station

The students reported that 82 percent of their work stations were located by their COE coordinators. Eighteen percent apparently located their positions on their own.

Curriculum Content Needs

Typing. Fifty percent of the students indicated they felt the need for just a little more work in this area to feel confident, while 38 percent felt their typewriting skills were "OK" as is. Only 12 percent believed they needed a lot of work in this area.

Shorthand and Transcription. Fifty-three percent of the students reported needing a lot of work in this area. Twenty-five percent reported needing some additional help and 11 percent reported they felt sure of themselves. Eleven percent of the study participants did not answer this question.

Bookkeeping. Thirty-five percent of the students reported that they needed a lot of work on bookkeeping. Thirty-eight percent felt they needed some work in this area. Twenty percent reported they felt confident of their bookkeeping skills. Seven percent did not answer this question.

Business Machines. Nine percent of the students believed they needed a lot more work in business machines. Thirty-five percent would like just a little more work in this area and 54 percent felt confident of their skills. Three percent of the participants did not answer this question.

Filing. Four percent of the participants felt the need for a lot of work in filing. Twenty-two percent need just a little more work and 73 percent believed their skills are adequate. One percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Telephone Techniques. Six percent of the students held the opinion that they needed a lot of work in telephone techniques. Thirty-one percent needed a little more work and 62 percent felt confident in this area. One percent of the participants did not answer this question.

Grammar Skills. Twelve percent of the respondents observed that they needed a lot of work in the grammar skills. Forty-nine percent felt they needed a little more work in this area and 37 percent believed they have mastered grammar skills. Two percent of the participants did not answer this question.

Letter Writing. Seventeen percent of the students believed they needed a lot more work in this area. Fifty-one percent felt they could use a little more work in letter writing and 30 percent were confident of their skills in this area. Two percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Personal Appearance. One percent of the respondents felt they needed more help with their personal appearance. Fourteen percent felt they could use a little help and 84 percent believed they were "OK" in this area. One percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Public Speaking. Twenty-eight percent of the students felt they needed a lot of work in the area of public speaking. Forty-five percent believed they could use a little help in this area and 25 percent of the students felt confident of their skills. Two percent of the participants did not answer this question.

Applying for a Job. Six percent of the students felt they needed a lot of work in this area. Fifty-one percent believed they could use a little more instruction and 42 percent felt their job application skills were adequate. One percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Getting Along with Others. One percent of the participants felt they needed a lot of help in learning how to get along with others. Eleven percent believed they could use a little help and 85 percent were sure of their skills in this area. Three percent of the students did not respond to this question.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the findings in this study.

1. Students overwhelmingly expressed positive perceptions of the overall program. Only 11 of 937 participants held negative perceptions of the total program. This appears to mean that the COE program is having a

positive effect on the students enrolled in the COE program.

2. Students still felt positively about the overall program regardless of the type of program; i.e., whether or not there was a teacher-coordinator, training plan, youth organization, or advisory committee. This does not, however, mean that these various program elements do not make contributions to the student's learning and to the overall impression she receives from the program. Just as when one drives down a beautiful highway, the overall perception of it can be extremely positive without thinking about all the engineers, heavy equipment operators, planners, clerical workers, etc., that were involved and have contributed to the final product one views and forms perceptions from, so it is with the COE program. The feelings of self-confidence and independence color students' feelings in a positive way toward the COE program. All of the individual program elements have helped the student achieve on the job and thus have helped lead to her feelings of success, self-confidence, and independence.

3. COE students gained both tangible and intangible benefits from their COE experiences. Increases in self-confidence and ability to make decisions were two of the intangibles gained while the opportunities to practice skills already learned, learn new skills, and receive pay

for working were some of the tangible benefits of the COE program.

4. Youth group participation and student participation in the development of the training plan were not being utilized by one-half or more of the programs included in this study. State Guidelines do not require students to participate in these activities but strongly urge participation. If student participation in these two activities is seen as profitable for the student, it may be that the State Guidelines should make these activities requirements of the program.

5. Advisory committees, required under the State Guidelines, were reported by only 55 percent of the participating schools to have met at least one time during the school year 1975-76. It must therefore be concluded that a large proportion of the schools in the state are not following the State Guidelines concerning Advisory Committee utilization.

6. When the average number of students per COE program is compared with the average number of coordination hours, it appears that the average program falls within the guidelines set up by the Vocational-Technical Service of the Michigan State Department of Education. These guidelines state that there will be a maximum of 15 students per coordination clock hour with the number of students

not to exceed 60 with four clock hours of coordination time per day.

7. From the answers received on the survey, it has to be concluded that a majority of the study participants feel they have learned to function as office workers.

8. Statistical significance was achieved showing that:

a. Students who belong to office-related youth organizations hold higher perceptions of COE than students who do not belong to an office-related youth organization.

b. Students enrolled in COE programs where the advisory committee meets at least twice each year hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students enrolled in programs where the committee does not meet at least twice each year.

c. Students who are visited at least twice each semester by their coordinator hold higher perceptions of the COE program than students who are not visited at least twice each semester.

d. Student participation in the development of the training plan contributes to positive perceptions of the COE program.

e. Students in programs without teacher-coordinators hold higher perceptions of the importance of the related class to success on the job than students who have teacher-coordinators.

f. Students whose coordinators located their work stations hold higher perceptions of the program than students who located their own work stations.

g. Students who feel satisfied with their COE positions hold higher perceptions of the program than students who are dissatisfied with the COE positions they hold.

Although the above hypotheses were significant at the .05 level, and in some cases, the .00 level at two decimal

places, the differences in the means involved were relatively small. In translating the statistical results into information to be used for decision making, data such as cost effectiveness and practicality should be considered in addition to the fact that significant differences were achieved.

Recommendations and Implications

The statement of recommendations and implications that emerged from this study are as follows:

1. It is recommended that coordinators and employers compare student perceptions in this study with their own so that differences can be ascertained and adjustments made accordingly.

2. Both the Michigan Guidelines for Cooperative Programs and leaders in the field of COE stress the importance of program elements such as youth organizations, training plans, advisory committees, the number of coordinator visits to the training station per semester, etc. In many cases in this study, students in programs that were lacking these program elements were just as positive about the programs as students in programs containing the program elements in question. As many of the program elements involve monetary expenditures, usually in the form of coordinator's salary, it seems that further research needs to be undertaken to ascertain the cost/benefit of the individual program elements. This would enable schools to

know where cuts could be made with the least amount of damage to the total COE program.

3. As the related in-school class is an integral component of COE, research should be completed on the reason why 40 percent of the students felt they could have been just as successful on the job even without the related class in school.

4. In-class time should be taken to familiarize each COE student with the various program elements involved in COE and to explain the purpose of each element. An explanation of the importance and relevance of all aspects of the program could conceivably lead to changed perceptions of some of its aspects. Research could be done using a group who had received no explanations compared with a group who had,to ascertain whether this is a necessary activity.

5. Student feedback concerning curriculum content needs was obtained for this study to give an overall picture. It is recommended that this type of survey be given by each coordinator to determine individual needs.

6. Further research needs to be done to determine the importance of the teacher-coordinator to the student.

7. A longitudinal study should be conducted to determine if students' perceptions change during their COE experience and if so, when. This would give coordinators a basis for planning the best times to present content materials.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT OPINIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A

STUDENT OPINIONNAIRE

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Student Number _____

School Number _____

Are you in the upper half or lower half of your high school class academically?

Circle One Upper Lower

Each of the following statements describes something about your Cooperative Office Education Experiences. Here is what the letters following the statements stand for

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle one answer for each statement. If you can't make up your mind how you feel, circle the U for undecided.

1.	My experiences on my co-op job are giving me confidence that I can succeed in a full-time job after graduation.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	My experiences in the co-op related class that I attend in school have helped me to succeed on my co-op job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.	I am learning to budget my earnings from my co-op job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.	My shorthand skills need to be better before I look for a full-time job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	Through my co-op experiences, I have learned about the fringe benefits offered by my employer.	SA	A	U	D	SD

6.	We should have spent more time in the related class working on skills such as typing, shorthand, and business machines.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	My co-op job has given me the feeling that I have really accomplished something worthwhile.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8.	My telephone techniques really need help!	SA	A	U	D	SD
9.	I can see for myself how important it is to project a good image to a future employer when I go for a job interview.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10.	From my experiences, I see that I need to seek further education to reach the career goal I have chosen.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11.	We should have spent more time in school developing our personal data sheets and talking about how to look for a full-time job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12.	Being a co-op student takes too much time away from other school activities.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13.	When I have a problem at work, I feel I can discuss it with my co-op coordinator.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	My co-op experiences are helping me learn how to make decisions about my future.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15.	From my job experiences, I have learned that no matter how I feel, I should try to appear friendly and cheerful on the job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16.	Having a job this year has given me more confidence in myself.	SA	A	U	D	SD
17.	My typing skills need to be better than they are now.	SA	A	U	D	SD
18.	My job skills are good enough so that I could have succeeded in a more demanding co-op job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
19.	I could have been just as successful on my co-op job even without a related class in school.	SA	A	U	D	SD

20.	From my job experiences, I can see why employers want me to be on the job every day.	SA	A	U	D	SD
21.	I would recommend an office co-op program to anyone interested in becoming an office worker.	SA	A	U	D	SD
22.	My co-op job has helped me decide that my career is in office work.	SA	A	U	D	SD
23.	My co-op experiences are making me feel more sure of myself when meeting new people at work who are in a different age group than I am in.	SA	A	U	D	SD
24.	Working at a job where I am paid has given me a new appreciation of the value of money.	SA	A	U	D	SD
25.	My co-op experiences have helped me learn how to dress appropriately for a full-time office job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
26.	From my job experiences, I can see why an employer insists that employees come to work on time each day.	SA	A	U	D	SD
27.	I need to have a positive attitude at work to succeed!	SA	A	U	D	SD
28.	I have learned that all jobs have some parts that I don't like but that have to be done regardless of the way I feel about them.	SA	A	U	D	SD
29.	The job skills I had when I started my job have been adequate for that job.	SA	A	U	D	SD
30.	I would have worked just as hard in a co-op job where I was not paid as I have in the co-op job where I have been paid.	SA	A	U	D	SD

31. Each sentence below describes a way you may feel about the co-op job you now have. Circle the number by the sentence that best describes how you feel right now about your job.
    1. I feel like my job is too difficult for me. I would be happier in an easier job.
    2. My job doesn't challenge me enough. I wish the work would be more difficult.
    3. My job is just right for my skills and abilities at this time in my office career.

32. Why did you enroll in the Office Co-op Program? Please place a 1 by the most important reason and a 2 by the second most important reason.

____a. To get experience on an office job.

____b. To see whether I liked office work.

____c. To make money.

____d. To make the business teacher happy.

____e. To make my parents happy.

____f. To earn credit for graduation.

____g. All my friends were in the program.

____h. _____
(If you had another reason, list it here.)

33. Please circle either yes or no to the following questions.

a. Yes No Are you required to take part in an office education club as part of your co-op experience?

b. Yes No Has your coordinator visited you two times each semester since you've been working?

c. Yes No Did you help develop your own training plan?

d. Yes No Did your co-op coordinator find your job for you?

34. Here are several of the subject areas you have studied while an office student and have put into practice on your job. Choose the number that appears in the column following each subject area that best describes your feelings about the area and circle the number.

	1 I need a lot of work in this area	2 I need just a little more work to feel confident.	3 I feel like I am O.K. here.
a. Typing	1	2	3
b. Shorthand and Transcription	1	2	3
c. Bookkeeping	1	2	3
d. Office Machines	1	2	3
e. Filing	1	2	3
f. Telephone Techniques	1	2	3

		1 I need a lot of work in this area.	2 I need just a little more work to feel confident.	3 I feel like I am O.K. here.
g.	Grammar Skills	1	2	3
h.	Letter Writing	1	2	3
i.	Personal Appearance	1	2	3
j.	Public Speaking	1	2	3
k.	Applying for a Job	1	2	3
l.	Getting along with others	1	2	3
m.	Other	1	2	3

_____
(Please list any other areas here.)

APPENDIX B

STUDENT RESPONSES TO OPINIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B

STUDENT RESPONSES TO OPINIONNAIRE (By percent of participating group)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Mean	SD
1. My experiences on my co-op job are giving me confidence that I can succeed in a full-time job after graduation.	46.3	47.3	4.7	1.4	.2	.1	4.38	.66
2. My experiences in the co-op related class that I attend in school have helped me to succeed on my co-op job.	22.3	46.0	12.0	13.7	5.1	.9	3.67	1.12
3. I am learning to budget my earnings from my co-op job.	23.5	47.3	14.4	11.7	3.0	.1	3.77	1.03
4. My shorthand skills need to be better before I look for a full-time job.	21.1	20.9	25.5	17.6	8.1	6.7	3.32	1.25
5. Through my co-op experiences, I have learned about the fringe benefits offered by my employer.	10.0	35.9	16.4	28.7	8.2	.7	3.11	1.17
6. We should have spent more time in the related class working on skills such as typing, shorthand, and business machines.	9.8	21.5	19.6	40.7	7.7	.7	2.85	1.15

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Mean	SD
7. My co-op job has given me the feeling that I have really accomplished something worthwhile.	40.2	44.2	10.2	3.7	1.3	.3	4.19	.86
8. My telephone techniques really need help.	3.4	14.3	14.5	47.7	19.6	.4	2.34	1.06
9. I can see for myself how important it is to project a good image to a future employer when I go for a job interview.	66.1	32.1	1.0	.5	.2	.1	4.64	.56
10. From my experiences, I see that I need to seek further education to reach the career goal I have chosen.	27.9	29.9	25.1	14.3	2.2	.6	3.67	1.10
11. We should have spent more time in school developing our personal data sheets and talking about how to look for a full-time job.	6.1	24.2	22.1	41.8	5.5	.2	2.83	1.05
12. Being a co-op student takes too much time away from other school activities.	15.4	44.6	13.1	18.6	8.1	.2	3.41	1.19

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Mean	SD
13. When I have a problem at work, I feel I can discuss it with my co-op coordinator.	18.6	47.6	17.8	10.6	5.1	.3	3.64	1.06
14. My co-op experiences are helping me learn how to make decisions about my future.	25.7	57.8	11.6	4.2	.6	0	4.04	.77
15. From my job experiences, I have learned that no matter how I feel, I should try to appear friendly and cheerful on the job.	52.4	45.4	1.7	.5	0	0	4.50	.56
16. Having a job this year has given me more confidence in myself.	36.5	51.1	7.8	4.3	.2	.1	4.20	.77
17. My typing skills need to be better than they are now.	19.0	47.2	15.2	16.9	1.8	0	3.65	1.03
18. My job skills are good enough so that I could have succeeded in a more demanding co-op job.	11.1	33.5	42.4	11.2	1.5	.3	3.42	.88

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Mean	SD
19. I could have been just as successful on my co-op job even without a related class in school.	9.7	30.9	15.2	28.6	15.2	.4	2.91	1.26
20. From my job experiences I can see why employers want me to be on the job every day.	27.7	56.6	11.5	2.7	.6	.8	4.10	.75
21. I would recommend an office co-op program to anyone interested in becoming an office worker.	52.1	38.4	5.5	2.5	1.5	0	4.37	.82
22. My co-op job has helped me decide that my career is in office work.	16.2	28.5	28.7	15.3	11.2	.1	3.23	1.22
23. My co-op experiences are making me feel more sure of myself when meeting new people at work who are in a different age group than I.	32.7	55.2	7.2	4.5	.4	.1	4.15	.77
24. Working at a job where I am paid has given me a new appreciation of the value of money.	30.6	48.0	12.5	7.0	1.6	.2	3.99	.93
25. My co-op experiences have helped me learn how to dress appropriately for a full-time office job.	20.7	53.0	10.7	12.4	2.9	.3	3.77	1.01

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Mean	SD
26. From my job experiences, I can see why an employer insists that employees come to work on time each day.	28.9	59.6	7.6	3.6	.3	0	4.13	.72
27. I need to have a positive attitude at work to succeed.	47.4	47.1	3.4	1.9	0	.2	4.40	.65
28. I have learned that all jobs have some parts that I don't like but that have to be done regardless of the way I feel about them.	53.0	44.6	1.3	.6	.4	0	4.49	.61
29. The job skills I had when I started my job have been adequate for that job.	17.5	53.6	12.6	13.4	2.6	.3	3.70	.99
30. I would have worked just as hard in a co-op job where I was not paid as I have in the co-op job where I have been paid.	9.0	25.9	28.7	21.6	14.7	.1	2.93	1.19

Each sentence below describes a way you may feel about the co-op job you now have. Circle the number by the sentence that best describes how you feel right now about your job.

		Number of Students	Percent of Respondents
31. 1.	I feel like my job is too difficult for me.	10	1.1
2.	My job doesn't challenge me enough. I wish the work would be more difficult.	319	35.2
3.	My job is just right for my skills and abilities at this time in my office career.	578	63.7
4.	Missing observations	30	
	Total Students	937	

32. Why did you enroll in the Office Co-op Program? Please place a 1 by the most important reason and a 2 by the second most important reason.

(Below are the figures for the reasons checked as most important.)	Number of Students	Percent of all Students in Study
1. To get experience on an office job.	522	55.7
2. To see whether I liked office work.	181	19.3
3. To make money	114	12.2
4. To make the business teacher happy.	2	.2
5. To make my parents happy.	2	.2
6. To earn credit for graduation	11	1.2
7. All my friends were in the program	1	.1
8. Other reasons (see Appendix A)	61	6.5
9. Missing observations	43	4.6
Totals	937	100.0

Question 32 continued.

(Below are the figures for the reasons checked as second most important reasons for enrolling in COE)	Number of Students	Percent of all Students in Study
1. To get experience on an office job.	212	22.6
2. To see whether I liked office work.	307	32.8
3. To make money.	259	27.6
4. To make the business teacher happy.	0	0
5. To make my parents happy.	7	.7
6. To earn credit for graduation.	49	5.2
7. All my friends were in the program.	3	.3
8. Other reasons (see Appendix H)	36	3.8
9. Missing observations	64	6.8
Totals	937	100.0

33. Please circle either yes or no to the following questions.

	(Yes) Number of Students	Percent of Question Respondents	(No) Number of Students	Percent of Question Respondents
a. Are you required to take part in an office education club as part of your co-op experience?	267	29.3	644	70.7
Missing observations = 26				
b. Has your coordinator visited you two times each semester since you've been working?	592	64.5	326	35.5
Missing observations = 19				

Question 33 continued

		(Yes) Number of Students	Percent of Question Respondents	(No) Number of Students	Percent of Question Respondents
c.	Did you help develop your own training plan?	465	51.9	431	48.1
	Missing observations = 41				
d.	Did your coordinator find your job for you?	766	82.3	165	17.7
	Missing observations = 6				

34. Here are several of the subject areas you have studied while an office student and have put into practice on your job. Choose the number that appears in the column following each subject area that best describes your feelings about the area and circle the number.

(Answers are in percentages of students participating in the study.)

		(1) I need a lot of work in this area	(2) I need just a little more work to feel confident	(3) I feel like I'm OK here	No Response	Mean	SD
a.	Typing	11.7	49.5	37.9	.8	2.26	.66
b.	Shorthand and Transcription	52.7	25.1	10.8	11.4	1.53	.70
c.	Bookkeeping	34.7	38.0	20.1	7.2	1.84	.75
d.	Office Machines	8.9	34.7	53.9	2.5	2.46	.66
e.	Filing	4.2	21.7	73.0	1.1	2.70	.54
f.	Telephone Techniques	5.7	30.9	61.7	1.7	2.57	.60
g.	Grammar Skills	12.4	49.4	36.5	1.7	2.25	.66
h.	Letter Writing	17.2	50.6	30.2	2.0	2.14	.69
i.	Personal Appearance	1.1	14.3	83.9	.7	2.83	.40
j.	Public Speaking	27.5	44.6	25.3	2.5	1.98	.74

Question 34 continued

	I need a lot of work in this area	I need just a little more work to feel confident	I feel like I'm OK here	No Response	Mean	SD
k. Applying for a Job	6.2	50.6	41.5	1.7	2.36	.60
l. Getting Along with Others	1.3	10.7	84.6	3.5	2.86	.38

m. Other _____ (see Appendix H)

APPENDIX C

COORDINATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX C

COORDINATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please return by March 12)

Name _____

School _____

Address _____

_____

Telephone at School ____ _____
Area Code Telephone Number

If you do not wish to participate, please circle NO here and return this sheet to me. This will enable another school of your size to be in the study.

NO

If you are going to be a part of this study, please fill out the following information.

1. How many female senior (12th graders) office co-op students do you have in your program who started work on or before October 1, 1975?

   _____

   (I need to know this number to send you the proper number of opinionnaires--and to be sure that I place enough postage on a self-addressed envelope in which you can return the completed opinionnaires.)

2. How many total office co-op students do you have in your program at this time?

   _____

3. How many students have dropped co-op this year? _____

4. How many hours of coordination time do you have each week? (Do not include your planning hours.)

   _____

5. How many times each year does your advisory committee meet?

   Whole Advisory Committee? _____ Sub-groups? _____

6. How many times each semester do you visit each student's work station? (Or approximately each 18 weeks)

   _____

7. Do you require your co-op students to belong to an office-oriented youth organization?

   _____

   a. If yes, which one? _____

   b. If no, about what percent belong anyway? _____

8. Does each co-op student help with the development of her own training plan?

   _____

9. Are you a teacher-coordinator? _____
   (This means that you have all or most of the students in class.)

APPENDIX D

COORDINATOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX D

COORDINATOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
1. How many female senior (12 graders) office co-op students do you have in your program who started work on or before October 1, 1975?	20.11	18.50	12 & 32	11.04
2. How many total office co-op students do you have in your program at this time?	29.00	26.00	26.00	19.44
3. How many students have dropped co-op this year?	2.35	1.00	1.00	2.88
4. How many hours of coordination time do you have each week?	10.50	10.00	10.00	6.70
5. How many times each year does your advisory committee meet?				
Whole Committee?	1.39	1.00	0	1.85
Sub-Committees?	1.37	0	0	2.99
6. How many times each semester do you visit each student's work station?	2.91	2.00	2.00	1.67
7. Do you require your co-op students to belong to an office-oriented youth organization?	Yes = 29.6 percent		No = 70.4 percent	
8. Does each co-op student help with the development of her own training plan?	Yes = 44.4 percent		No = 55.6 percent	
9. Are you a teacher-coordinator?	Yes = 72.2 percent		No = 27.8 percent	

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF INITIAL LETTER TO COORDINATORS

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF INITIAL LETTER TO COORDINATORS

618 East Drive
Marshall, MI 49068
March 5, 1976

Dear Colleague:

Will you and your office co-op students participate in a study to determine students' perceptions of Cooperative Office Education? I am conducting a study for my Ph.D. at Michigan State University to determine these perceptions. At the present time, no research has been done in this area; and if we are to serve students in the most effective manner, we must add their perceptions of the program to those we already have of coordinators and employers.

Your school, along with 34 other high schools in the State of Michigan who operate Cooperative Office Education programs, has been chosen at random to represent the entire office co-op population of the State. The study will be conducted during the second week of April. (If this is your spring vacation, you can conduct the study during the third week.)

As the coordinator, your part in the study will involve:

1. Filling out and returning the enclosed coordinator questionnaire.

2. Assigning a number to each of your co-op students who participates in the study and placing this number along with the student's name on a roster that will be returned to me together with the student opinionnaires. (You may wish to have one of your students do this task for you.)

Filling out the opinionnaire itself will take your students one-half hour or less. Of course, the source of all information received from participants in this study will be confidential and will be reported only as summary data--not even your school name will be attached to the information when it is reported in the study.

If you participate in this study, I will mail you a summary of the results early in the 1976-77 school year so that you can utilize them in your curriculum planning. If you feel you cannot participate in this study, please take time to circle NO on the enclosed sheet and place it in the mail so that another school similar to yours can be asked to join the study.

As a former office coordinator myself, I understand how busy you are at this time of the year, but I hope you will agree to lend your support to this project so that an important gap in the research of our discipline can be filled.

Sincerely,

Anne L. DeRose

Enclosure

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF LETTER AND ROSTER ENCLOSED WITH STUDENT OPINIONNAIRES

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF LETTER AND ROSTER ENCLOSED WITH

STUDENT OPINIONNAIRES

618 East Drive
Marshall, MI 49068

Enclosed are _____ Student Opinionnaires--one for each female twelfth grade student you indicated had been enrolled in your Office Co-op Program on or before October 1, 1975. (Opinionnaires are to be completed only by these students.) Please follow the procedures listed below to administer the "filling out" of the opinionnaires.

1. Determine the date you wish to administer the opinionnaire. Pretest results show that it takes students between 15-25 minutes to complete the opinionnaire.

   Please choose a date to administer the opinionnaire between the time period of April 5-16.

2. List each student who will be participating in the study on the Student Participant Roster. (You may wish to have one of your students do this for you.)

<u>On The Day You Have Students Fill Out The Opinionnaires</u>

1. Assure the students that all their answers are confidential.

2. Assure the students that this is not a test. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We are interested only in opinions.

3. Please help the students fill out the first three blanks on the opinionnaire.

a. School Number _____ You will find your school number on the Student Participant Roster.

b. Student Number _____ Give each student her number from the Student Participant Roster you have prepared.

c. Have each student circle whether she feels she is in the upper or lower half of her high school class academically. This is an opinion question and is not to be based on looking up each student's actual class standing.

4. When the students are finished with the opinionnaires, place the completed opinionnaires in the enclosed envelope and mail it back to me.

Thank you for your help. I'll be back in touch with you this coming fall with the results.

Sincerely,

Anne L. DeRose

P.S. If you have any questions or need more copies of the opinionnaire, call me Collect at 616-781-9079 after 5 p.m.

STUDENT PARTICIPANT ROSTER

School Number _____

Date Opinionnaire Completed by Students _____

Student Number	Student Name
01	_____
02	_____
03	_____
04	_____
05	_____
06	_____
07	_____
08	_____
09	_____
10	_____
11	_____
12	_____
13	_____
14	_____
15	_____
16	_____
17	_____
18	_____
19	_____
20	_____
21	_____

Student Participant Roster
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APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP LETTER

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP LETTER

618 East Drive
Marshall, MI 49068
April 30, 1976

Early in April a packet of Student Opinionnaires was mailed to you for completion by your Cooperative Office Education students. As you had indicated to me earlier on the Coordinator Questionnaire that you would like to participate in the study, I am puzzled as to why I have not received the completed opinionnaires. If there is a problem with postage, etc., please call me collect at 616-781-9079 after 5 p.m. If the study is to be an accurate reflection of student perceptions of the Cooperative Office Education Program, it is important to have as many student opinions as possible.

If you have mailed the opinionnaires this week, thank you for your help. If not, please return them as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Anne L. DeRose

APPENDIX H

COMMENTS BY STUDENTS

APPENDIX H

COMMENTS BY STUDENTS

Comments Given By Students As Their Most Important Reason For Enrolling In COE

1. To see whether I liked the medical field.
2. To meet people and learn more about office work for future job.
3. I already know that this is what I wanted.
4. Wanted to advance myself in learning office skills.
5. To get job experience.
6. I was asked by my employer.
7. To help better prepare me for college and working my way through.
8. Because I wanted to get a job at the local newspaper in hopes of being a future journalist.
9. In order to work I had to be on coop because I was only 17.
10. I got the job myself--why not get credit too.
11. It was required.
12. For a summer job.
13. To get experience and meet people.
14. Because I decided to make secretarial work my career.
15. To have a job as an experience.
16. To have more experience with horses.

17. To learn how to support myself, so I can be completely independent after I graduate.

18. I enjoy business.

19. To get experience to put toward an office job.

20. It was required to obtain job.

21. I was just given the job.

22. I was recommended for it by my business teacher.

23. For responsibility and my future.

24. To become more aware of responsibilities that I want and need.

25. I was offered a job that required that I be enrolled in the office co-op class.

26. Typing teacher's recommendation.

27. It sounded interesting.

28. To get a good job and good hours and maybe be able to form my career from that.

29. Because last year's teacher insisted.

30. To get experience in the teaching field.

31. Required.

32. Experience for another job.

33. I had the job before I enrolled.

34. I needed a job not only during school but after graduation as well.

35. I didn't want to take fill-in classes at school that I didn't want, so I wanted to spend the time working.

36. Co-op coordinator's encouragement.

37. The hours fit well with outside activities.

38. I like to do what I'm doing.

39. To get experience working with older people.

40. To get experience in the career I have chosen.

41. It's good reference on a data sheet for a full-time job after graduation.

42. Work experience.

43. My teacher advised it to me.

44. I like the kind of classes.

45. I couldn't get the job I wanted unless I was on the program.

46. I was offered a convenient job that pays.

47. So I could get out of school at 10:00.

48. The teacher made it sound like it would be a great job and interesting.

49. I wanted a job.

50. To have a good job after graduation.

Comments Given By Students As Their Second Most Important Reason For Enrolling In COE

1. To occupy my time.

2. I need it to help raise my child.

3. To get into the company I want.

4. Being around and meeting people.

5. To save for college.

6. To do something constructive with my free time.

7. Because its what I wanted to do.

8. To get me started and headed in the right direction.

9. Give me something to do.

10. I love office work.

11. I had to get the credit.

12. So I could get a job.

13. Just to be in an office.

14. To get away from my first job into something better.

15. To get an office job.

16. To get out of physical education.

17. It would be a new experience.

18. Because this job is a lot better than the job I had before.

19. To help the co-op program.

20. To get an office job.

21. To get experience in a field that I plan to major in.

22. I like office work.

23. To get a decent job.

24. To get out of school at 11:30 and get credit for my job.

25. Get out of school at 11:30 a.m.

26. To be doing something, not just sitting around.

27. Because I don't want to work in a family.

28. Job experience.

29. To have a full-time job after graduation.

30. To meet some people.

31. To be able to get out of school at 12:00.

32. To see how the business world operates.

33. I like working very much.

34. I knew I would like it.

35. To have something to do beside school.

36. Field seemed like it had a lot of openings.

37. Full time job after graduation.

38. To meet people my own age.

39. For good references in other jobs.

40. My sister was in the program and enjoyed it.

41. To get experience in the working world.

42. Experience for future careers.

43. To work in a hospital.

Comments By Students On Personal Learning Needs

1. At the beginning of the year I think the student should be a little more informed of what is to be expected of them.

2. Graphic Machines.

3. Billing and banking techniques.

4. Keypunching.

5. Able to handle criticism. I can take criticism but am very emotional about how it's put to me.

6. Spelling.

7. Finding a job that's not too boring or easy.

8. Getting to work on time.

9. Correcting errors.

10. Better handwriting.

11. Advice in writing a resume. What to say at a job interview.

12. Conversation.

13. Keeping my temper.

14. Getting along with managers.

15. Common knowledge.

16. Being pressured or hurried.

17. Being left in an office by yourself for awhile.