
INTRODUCTION
Although orientation seems to be common vernacular among educators, there appears to be some degree of diversity in understanding what specifically is meant by orientation. In one perspective, Mueller (1961) suggests that orientation is the final stage of the overall admissions process. There are others who consider orientation as the beginning of a "continuing" program of personal development of the student. There are those, too, who view orientation as merely a "flirt" to the educational experience.

In a recent study, Moore, et al (1973) identified three goals for orientation programs: (1) to ease the entry process with regard to items like placement tests, advising, and registration; (2) to offer students the opportunity of realistically assessing campus life; and (3) to familiarize students with the student affairs component of the university.

In a more philosophical sense, however, orientation can be viewed as being both microcosmic and macrocosmic in scope and depth of purpose. (Dannells and Kuh, 1964). Wigent (1971) identified the microcosmic programs as those that are primarily concerned with the student's immediate relationship with the institution, while the macrocosmic emphasis is more concerned with helping the new student understand the philosophy and general purposes of higher education.

Perhaps this diversity is more understandable when one considers that various forms of orientation are found in all walks of life and under varying labels. For instance, the military has boot camp or basic training and business corporations have detailed management trainee programs. No matter what they are labeled, however, the underlying or fundamental purpose is the same: to bridge some existing gap between the familiar past and the unfamiliar future.

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this research was to follow up a 1963 study of orientation programs for new students in twelve selected colleges and universities across the United States. A secondary purpose was to expand the initial survey in order to obtain additional data on orientation practices as well as to increase the sample from the original twelve institutions. The 1961 survey resulted in 110 colleges and universities responding to the questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY
The 1963 study involved a survey of twenty colleges and universities selected from a review of the literature at that time. The institutions were selected...
based on various text and journal references made concerning the particular work being carried out in their respective orientation programs. From the initial sample of twenty, twelve institutions responded to the 1963 study.

These institutions were again surveyed in 1981, along with a random sample of 128 institutions across the United States. One hundred and ten of the 128 questionnaires (86%) were distributed in 1981, includes eleven of the twelve original institutions responding to the 1963 survey.

**Institutional Data Comparison - 1963 and 1981 Studies**

Table One presents a summary of the eight "duplicate" items surveyed in both the 1963 and 1981 studies. The response items were selected from a review of the literature at the time of the 1963 survey. Based on this data, the following findings are noted:

1. Eight of the original twelve respondents to the 1963 survey indicated they had orientation programs. In 1981, eleven of the 126 respondents reported having orientation programs.

2. In both the 1963 and 1981 surveys, eight of the respondents indicated having orientation programs lasting four or more days. It should be noted that two institutions increased the length of their program from 1963 to 1981 while three shortened their orientation program.

3. In the 1963 study, one institution reported having group counseling sessions; whereas in 1981, eight institutions conducted group counseling sessions during the orientation program.

4. Although two institutions responding to the 1963 survey held an orientation course for credit, the 1981 survey found that none of the institutions offered an orientation course for credit. It should be noted that five institutions offered an orientation course for non-credit.

5. Of the twelve respondents to the 1963 survey, only one indicated having a summer camp or pre-orientation program. The 1981 survey found that seven of the eleven responding institutions had summer camps or pre-orientation programs. (See Table Three)

**Findings of the 1981 Survey**

Table Two summarizes the composite findings of the 1981 survey as reported on the original questionnaire. The following observations are made with regard to these findings:

1. Of the 110 questionnaires returned, there were forty-three public and forty-four private institutions responding to the survey.

2. One hundred six (96%) of the institutions responding indicated they had an orientation program. The length of the orientation program was less than four days for forty-nine (45%) of the respondents.

3. In the orientation program, five of the institutions responded administered a personality test (4%), six institutions administered intelligence tests (5%), fifty-two institutions administered achievement tests (51%) and twenty-four (25%) administered interest inventories.

4. Eighty-three of the responding institutions (75%) indicated having a session for parents included in the orientation program. An additional twenty institutions (19%) did note that they held a "parents' day" sometime during the academic year.

5. Over eighty-seven percent of those institutions responding indicated the involvement of student affairs staff, faculty, and upperclassman in the orientation program. Following is the breakdown: One hundred six institutions indicated involving the student affairs staff (96%); ninety-nine involved faculty (90%); ninety-six involved upperclassmen (87%); and twelve involved alumni (11%). Titles of individuals who assume direct responsibility for coordinating orientation programs are presented in Table Four.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the original 1963 study was to obtain comparison data on orientation programs for selected colleges and universities. The particular institutions were selected based on the techniques and practices being utilized in their respective programs. The 1981 study was conducted partially as a follow-up to this original study because current literature suggests that the practices and programs being used in 1981 seem to have little difference from those used eighteen years previous.

The study revealed that despite institution differences and dissimilarities and, consequently, programs one of these commonalities is the fact that the majority of schools involve parents in the orientation activities. Previous studies have suggested that orientation programs acknowledge parents only for public relations purposes, (Butts, 1971; Cantor, 1974; Stenatakos, 1963). The authors feel that although the aspect of good public relations constitutes one significant factor, there are others that need to be noted. In their attempt to respond to the helping and developmental component of the students' education, colleges and universities have begun to realize that "sharing information with parents, with discretion and adequate preparation of the parents, has a dual value. First, parents are taxpayers; they support or reject school programs in the light of perceived benefits. Second, parents can provide valuable data about developmental patterns" (Rothney, 1972). In addition to these two observations, it is suggested that educators responsible for orientation programs include parents in an effort to reduce parental anxiety and apprehension.

Another finding reveals that most schools conduct orientation programs involving both academic and non-academic personnel as well as upperclass students. A small percentage of the institutions responding (11%) indicated the involvement of alumni in their orientation programs. It seems that with the student pool of applicants becoming smaller each year, schools are utilizing whatever resources available for attracting and keeping students, including alumni and local business and community agencies. Also, identified as personnel who were involved with orientation were military commanders and parents of upperclass students.

The findings with regard to the use of testing in the orientation program were particularly interesting. In this area, it was found that the use of personality tests and intelligence tests was minimal while the use of achievement and interest inventories was more widespread. Perhaps this reflects the current emphasis being placed on vocational education among institutions of higher education. With regard to the personality tests specifically, it is felt that the decrease in their use may be related to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Buckley Amendment) and the impact this legislation has had on higher education.

As a possible explanation of the apparent minimal use of intelligence tests in orientation programs, educators generally express that these tests reflect mastery of middle class cultural symbols and values, and therefore, are not suitable for a heterogeneous college population. Recent research has further suggested that "I.Q. tests measure only a portion of the competencies involved with human intelligence" (Phye, 1979). Consequently, the overall value of I.Q. testing for college-age students is questionable.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The prompt and rather unusually high percentage of respondents to this survey (65%) suggests that orientation practices and programs are still a major
interest among educators in both today's college setting and the setting
eighteen years ago. Although there is no "all-purpose" formula for orientation
that can be applied to all institutions, the surveys revealed several commonal-
ities being utilized. To further identify the extent of these commonalities, there
needs to be subsequent research to provide factual data on the value of
orientation programs.

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TABLE 2

Composite Data of the 1981 Orientation Survey

For our purposes, orientation is defined as that period of time directly before
the start of classes that is used to orient freshmen/new students to college life.

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

1. Type of Institution: 2 year (15) 4 year (92) Private (44) Public (43)
2. Enrollment (full-time undergrad): Below 1000 (12) 1-2000 (19) 2-4000 (19)
   Over 4000 (58)
   Res. & Comm. (31)
4. a. Do you have an orientation program? YES (106) NO (2)
   b. If yes, is your orientation program mandatory for all new students?
      YES (55) NO (53)
   c. How many days are devoted to your orientation? 1 Day (14) 2 Days (19)
      3 Days (16) 4 Days (9) 5 or more (41)
5. a. Do you have a pre-orientation program prior to the official orientation
      program? YES (46) NO (58)
      b. If yes, please describe: [see Table 3]
      c. Is your pre-orientation program mandatory? YES (10) NO (46)
6. Does your orientation program include the following testing programs?
   a. Personality Test YES (5) NO (89)
   b. Achievement Test YES (52) NO (48)
   c. Intelligence Test YES (68) NO (25)
   d. Interest Inventory YES (24) NO (72)
7. Does your orientation program include:
   a. Individual counseling YES (69) NO (25)
   b. Group counseling YES (78) NO (22)
8. Does your institution offer your orientation program for:
   a. credit YES (2) NO (97)
   b. non-credit YES (41) NO (43)
9. Do you have a session for parents in your orientation program?
   YES (83) NO (21)
10. If Item 9 is "NO", do you have a Parents Day? YES (20) NO (19)
   If "YES", indicate when:
11. Which of the following personnel are directly with your orientation program?
    a. Student Affairs Staff YES (106) NO (2)
    b. Faculty YES (99) NO (6)
    c. Alumni YES (12) NO (57)
    d. Other YES (32) NO (15)
    e. Upperclassmen YES (96) NO (4)
    Please indicate title of individual directly responsible for orientation:
    [see Table 4]
12. Do you include a student evaluation for your orientation program?
    YES (77) NO (27)
13. Please feel free to offer any additional comments on the back of this sheet.

THANK YOU!!

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO:
The Pennsylvania State University, Hazleton Campus
Hazleton, PA 18201
ATTN: J. Staudenmeier/J. Marchetti

Total No. of questionnaires distributed - 128
Total No. of questionnaires returned - 110
Percent Returned - 86