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Delivering Career and Self-Awareness

A summary of key points from research conducted by SageFox Consulting Group documenting how Georgia state pilot of YouScience shows aptitude assessment improves high school student self-awareness and attitudes toward career choices.

BACKGROUND

Georgia schools piloted the YouScience Discovery aptitude assessment to determine its effectiveness in helping students with college and career choices. The pilot showed that taking YouScience Discovery improved students' attitudes toward their career decisions and positively impacted students' self-awareness.

The final evaluation of the pilot was done by SageFox Consulting Group, that specializes in comprehensive evaluation, monitoring, and reporting services for educational projects. The evaluation found that overall, the improvement in students' attitudes about career choices was greatest for females, students who receive free/reduced lunch (62% of all Georgia students), and students who spent at least 20 minutes reviewing their YouScience results.

PILOT GOALS AND ROLLOUT

The goal of the pilot as outlined in an effort led by Georgia State Senator Lindsey Tippins was to identify an online profile that would help Georgia high school students discover their aptitudes and apply those strengths to find direction for their pathway, college, and career choices.

With state funds designated for the pilot, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) partnered with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) to administer and evaluate the YouScience Discovery aptitude assessment pilot program.

Fifty-one of Georgia's 510 high schools with 20,000 10th graders were selected to participate in the pilot. Participating schools were selected as representative of the entire state and located in both urban and rural areas.

The selection ensured that at least one high school from each of the 16 regional educational service agencies (RESA) was included. It also ensured that the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch in the selected schools was comparable to the state's entire percentage of high schoolers eligible for free/reduced lunch.

School-based "ambassadors" were elected to work with YouScience staff and GOSA to ensure the pilot was implemented successfully at each school. Ambassadors attended a four-hour training and worked with the YouScience project manager to determine the optimal implementation plan for their school's setting.

YOUSCIENCE DISCOVERY SHOWS POSITIVE RESULTS

After taking YouScience Discovery:

69%
said they've considered a wide range of careers

55%
said it was impactful in opening their eyes to new career possibilities

80%
said it enhanced their college and career readiness

68%
said they could identify their future pathway

PILOT EVALUATION

To assess the impact of YouScience Discovery on the overall student population and subgroups of students with various characteristics, SageFox Consulting Group evaluated three key areas:

1. To what extent did YouScience Discovery broaden students' vision or awareness of career pathways?
2. Were students more willing to engage in a career pathway because of YouScience Discovery?
3. To what extent did YouScience Discovery enhance students' college and career readiness?

Evaluation areas were assessed using data from three sources: a Student Survey to gauge perceptions and measure attitudinal growth; an Ambassador Survey to understand implementation; and State Administrative Data to understand student demographics.

PILOT FINDINGS

Overall, results showed that YouScience Discovery was effective in improving students' attitudes toward career decisions. The size of the effect of Discovery on students' attitudes was classified as small to medium. Results showed that YouScience Discovery had the largest impact on students' self-awareness, or their ability to describe their natural strengths and identify careers that align with their strengths.

While the 10th graders in the pilot study appear to be more aware of career pathways, it was recommended that the effect could be improved if schools:

- Provide follow-up guidance to students in small group settings. While guidance in a large group setting is preferable to no guidance, a small group setting is ideal.
- Build YouScience Discovery into the curriculum-planning process so that teachers can incorporate the assessment into their curriculums.
- Schedule adequate time in the computer lab or on laptops for students to complete YouScience Discovery at school.
- Consider strategies to better communicate to both students and faculty the reason YouScience Discovery is being used and the benefits.
- Schedule at least 20 minutes for students to review YouScience Discovery results when finished with the assessment, so that students can review their entire profile and internalize the results immediately.

Overall, the evaluation of the YouScience Discovery pilot study suggests that students have small but meaningful attitudinal gains by taking Discovery. Gains are most pronounced among females, students who receive free/reduced lunch, and students who spent at least 20 minutes reviewing their YouScience results. The outcome points to the effectiveness of YouScience in enhancing students' career attitudes when provided sufficient time to review results.

"Before I completed YouScience I had no idea what I wanted to do, or what jobs are out there. Now I know not only real jobs that are waiting for me, but I know which jobs are most likely to be the best fit for me. I don't yet know what I want to do, but I do know that YouScience has helped me and when it comes time for me to pick a job it will be easier for me than it was before."

- Student Survey Respondent