

DEMONSTRATING A PROGRAM IN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS PRODUCES RESULTS

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In the spring of 1965 the U. S. Office of Education approved the program in Agricultural Occupations--Sales and Service, Reidland High School, Paducah, Kentucky to be set up as a Demonstration Center for two years--July 1, 1965 through June 30, 1967. Eighteen months preceding the establishment of the Demonstration Center there had been a successful pilot program in agricultural occupations in operation at Reidland. During the pilot program, under the direction of Mr. Clayton Riley, the department had grown from one teacher with 35 students to 108 students requiring two teachers.

Purposes of the Demonstration Center

The Demonstration Center was established as a teaching device to make effective use of observation in attempting to make clear to those who visited and studied it how such a program could be set up and operated in a very practical and effective manner--to make clear to visitors what could be done in initiating such a program.

The specific objectives of the Center were:

1. To demonstrate an on-going program which had as its purpose the training of 12th-grade students of vocational agriculture in agricultural-supply businesses--sales and service.
2. To further develop the training program at the Center.

Visitors to the Center

Invitations to visit the Center were extended to head teacher educators and head state supervisors in agricultural education and their staff in all 50 states. Along with a request that they in turn invite teachers, school administrators, and leaders in agricultural business and industry to visit the Center. Brochures, flyers, and reservation forms were provided in quantities.

During the two-year period 315 people from 24 states visited the Center, as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Individuals</u>	<u>Number of States</u>
Teachers of Agriculture	165	11
Teacher Educators	43	19
Coordinators/ Supervisors	47	13
Administrators	29	8
Others	31	
TOTAL	315	

The director of the Center recommended that visitors arrive the afternoon before the scheduled visit. The evening was spent in orienting visitors to the community, town, and for general discussion of the program. Slides and movies were shown and a copy of the course of study was provided each visitor. Teaching aids and materials were presented and discussed. The schedule of events the next day followed this general plan:

Hour

8-9 a.m.	A tour of the Center facilities
9-10 a.m.	A meeting with the principal, assistant superintendent, advisory committee members, the guidance counselor, and cooperating businessmen.
10-11 a.m.	A meeting with the other teachers of agriculture in the department. An overview of total program in vocational agriculture at Reidland and the county-wide program was presented and discussed.
11-12 noon	Observation of demonstration class being taught through one-way glass.
12-12:30 p.m.	A visit with students enrolled in program--at lunch.
12:30-2 p.m.	A tour of other agricultural occupations programs in the county (horticulture and agricultural mechanics).
2-3 p.m.	Visits to agricultural-supply businesses to observe students working at training stations.

A majority of the visitors spent one-and-a-half days at the Center.

Surveying the Visitors a Year Later

In September, 1966, a questionnaire was mailed to all who visited the Center between June 1965 and June 1966. In September 1967, the same questionnaire was sent to all visitors to the Center during the period July 1966, and July 1967.

The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Center in transmitting ideas and in getting new programs started.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts:

1. A section dealing with what programs had been started, resulting from a visit to the Center.

2. A section relating to plans for starting such a program.
3. A section inviting suggestions for improving the Center in its job of demonstrating a program in agricultural occupations.

Teacher Actions Resulting from Visiting the Center

There were 80 replies from the 165 teachers who visited the Center. The survey revealed that 51 schools had started programs and that there were two major areas of program development. They were: (1) agricultural-supply businesses--sales and service--32, and (2) agricultural mechanics--eight.

Average number of students per program was 11; average number of agricultural business in the community which could provide opportunities for experience programs was eight; and the average number of these businesses the teacher planned to use was six.

Of the teachers who had not started programs; 17 planned to start, 14 did not plan to start programs; and nine were undecided. All except two planned to start programs in agricultural-supply businesses--sales and service.

Average number of agricultural-supply businesses which had a potential for experience programs was 12; and average number of businesses per school who would be willing to cooperate was nine.

There was a relationship between the age of teachers and their starting programs. Seventy-four of 80 teachers gave their ages in responding to the questionnaire. Thirty teachers were below 35 years of age; and 44 teachers were 35 or older. Of the 30 teachers below 35 years of age, 47 per cent had started programs, 37 per cent planned to start programs, and 16 per cent not planning to start programs, for a total of 82 per cent who had started or planned to start programs. Of the 44 teachers 35 or older, 40 per cent had started programs, eight per cent had plans for starting, and 52 per cent were not planning to start programs, for a total of 48 per cent who had started or planned to start programs.

More than 90 per cent of all students enrolled in the programs were seniors. There were a few juniors and almost no freshmen or sophomores enrolled in the programs.

Reaction of Teacher Educators, Supervisors, and Administrators

Forty-five teacher educators, supervisors, and administrators from a twelve-state area returned the questionnaire. These groups represented 1,964 departments of agriculture. Four hundred fifty-one departments or 23 per cent had developed programs in agricultural occupations. In response to "how effective was the Center in demonstrating the program?", 44 of 45 or 98 per cent said the program was adequately demonstrated.

Of the 45 respondents, 36 or 80 per cent said it was of great interest; 30 or 70 per cent stated the program had good possibilities; 22 or 50 per cent thought the program was needed in their school; 11 or 24 per cent said the program had limited possibilities; and three or seven per cent said the program was not needed in their schools.

Major Ideas Picked Up at the Center

Major ideas picked up at the Center which helped to get programs underway included:

- The use of props and of student enactment of on-the-job situations.
- Location of shelves and the counter in the classroom; what to have in the school store; and the overall view of the program.
- Classroom surroundings and store atmosphere was impressive.
- Public relations, use of an advisory committee, and teaching units.
- Work agreements with employers.
- Course of study.
- Methods of expanding a program where industry and urbanization are moving in and replacing farms.
- Realized the need for a similar program.
- The approach to use in organizing such a program.
- Facilities that could be developed in my school.
- Supervision of students on the job.
- The need for the program in many schools.
- The importance of selling school administrators on the program.
- The use of instructional materials.
- The use of business places for cooperative educational training.

Conclusions and Implications for Vocational Agriculture

The findings regarding the value of a demonstration center suggests several conclusions and implications for vocational agriculture. These include:

1. Demonstration programs have an important place in vocational agriculture because of their effectiveness in causing the development of new programs and methods of teaching.
2. Because of the radical differences that exist between production agriculture courses and the programs in agricultural occupations, it is imperative that teachers have opportunities to see and study such programs as a part of their preparation for developing new programs.
3. Demonstration programs should be set up in schools following a test or pilot period in order to disseminate the sound features of programs after they have been tested and proven.
4. Supervisors and teacher educators in the various states should select and use sound and proven programs as demonstration centers to help prepare teachers for their new responsibilities.
5. Teachers under 35 years of age are more likely to develop new programs in agricultural occupations than those that are older.
6. The unrestrictive nature of the 1963 Vocational Education Act makes opportunities for programs possible which must be explored, developed, and implemented as rapidly as possible. Demonstration centers, in part, are workable answers to this problem.
7. The Demonstration Center at Reidland is only one small step in the direction of attaining the objectives of the 1963 Vocational Education Act. The use to be made of this type of center, to meet the growing needs of students, is limited only by the imagination of the leadership in agricultural education.

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