

CHANGES FACING TEACHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE

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*Journal of the American Association of  
Teacher Educators in Agriculture  
Volume 4, Number 1, pp.11-14  
DOI: 10.5032/jaatea.1964.01011*

The passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963, will undoubtedly have a great impact on the future of all American citizens in the years ahead.

This Act creates an extreme challenge for all workers in vocational education. Teacher educators feel this challenge vitally, since they play an important role in preparing personnel to carry out the intent and purposes of this Act.

Many questions are prevalent today among teacher educators in agriculture as to what changes in teacher training programs are necessary to adequately prepare teachers and administrators to cope with their new opportunities and responsibilities.

Many problems become evident, among which is the recruitment of high quality trainees. Traditionally, most states have had the problem of recruiting a sufficient number of high caliber trainees. However, now with the anticipated expansion and the need for more teachers, which will undoubtedly result from this Act, this problem becomes even more acute. All institutions training teachers of vocational agriculture must study and inaugurate procedures for the recruitment of high caliber students to prepare them for teaching vocational agriculture and non-farm agricultural occupations.

The necessity for stepped up recruitment procedures is evident and cannot wait. Efforts must begin now in order to interest and enroll qualified trainees. By the time these prospective trainees have become qualified to teach, the expansion of vocational agricultural programs will most likely have progressed to an unprecedented level, and the need for well trained teachers will become the greatest experienced in the history of the program.

In the past, most of the recruitment efforts have been directed toward the high schools offering vocational agriculture, and more specifically the vocational agriculture students. Some incidental and effective recruitment has been done on college and university campuses through organizations such as the Alpha Tau Alpha, Collegiate FFA Chapters, and various agricultural clubs. Young men with several years of farm or ranch experience have been selected for their job competency. Perhaps it will now become necessary to consider the selection of a portion of the trainees whose experience background may be in areas of agri-business, horticulture, farm machinery, etc., and superimpose upon this background additional technical and professional training to prepare them for teaching certain non-farm agricultural occupations. The need will continue for the training of vocational agriculture teachers with strong backgrounds in farming and ranching. However, here it is becoming evident that the increasing complexity of the farm business, may give rise to the necessity for more specialization of teachers for the regular vocational agriculture program as it has operated in the past.

To further the needed recruitment program, a critical look must be taken at certain aspects of the situation and answers found to the following questions.

1. Is our public relations program adequate to inform prospective trainees from high schools where there is no vocational agriculture program in operation as to the advantages and opportunities in the field of agriculture, non-farm agriculture occupations and agricultural education?

2. Are the present teachers of vocational agriculture doing their full part in informing and encouraging high caliber high school junior and senior students of the opportunities in agriculture and in agricultural education?

3. Are teacher educators using all available resources to inform present college students of the advantages and opportunities in agricultural education?

Perhaps the largest problem looming in the minds of teacher educators in agriculture is that of the changes that must be made in the vocational agriculture teacher preparation curriculum. As a result, a most vital question becomes, shall there be one basic curriculum or shall there be more diversified specialization in specific areas of training? Theoretically, the best instruction would be given by a specialist prepared to teach each of the different areas of specialization in agriculture and non-farm agricultural occupations offered. Practically however, this can not be done in most instances for two main reasons: First, many school districts that will offer training in agriculture and non-farm agricultural occupations are too small to justify the cost of more than one teacher; and secondly, there will not be sufficient qualified specialists available to fill future emerging positions.

With these facts in mind, it seems our present task is not primarily to train the vocational agriculture teachers to be specialists but to train them in their ability to organize programs, manage personnel and coordinate and correlate the student work experience so that instruction in related agricultural fields may be offered by competent persons in the cooperating establishments.

Research results from pilot programs in agriculture related occupations indicate that a cooperative program similar to that offered in Distributive Education and Diversified Occupations in Trade and Industrial Education is an effective means of offering training in non-farm agriculture occupations.

If this proves to be the most effective way of offering this type of training, provisions must be made to expand the teacher training curriculum to include new approaches in the preparation of present and prospective vocational agriculture teachers.

Some suggested areas of training that will be needed to adequately prepare instructors to teach and administer the expanded program under the Vocational Education Act of 1963 are:

1. Training in public and human relations so the teachers may have the ability to:

- a. Maintain a favorable environment with people from business and industry as well as those directly associated with farming and ranching.
  - b. Gain acceptance by students, the school, and the community for this new type of program.
2. Training in conducting and using community surveys to help the teacher to:
    - a. Determine the types of training needed.
    - b. Determine the number of possible training stations in the community.
3. Training in initiating an agricultural occupations program so the teacher will have the ability to:
    - a. Determine what occupations can be included in this area.
    - b. Understand the objectives of training for agricultural occupations.
    - c. Select a functional advisory committee.
    - d. Determine facilities needed for the program.
    - e. Determine the instructional material that is needed and its availability.
    - f. Properly select students
    - g. Select desirable training stations
    - h. Schedule and register students with a minimum of conflicts.
4. Training in coordination and correlation techniques which would include the proper methods to be used to:
    - a. Determine coordinators responsibility
    - b. Budget coordinators time
    - c. Visit students at training stations
    - d. Rate students
    - e. Visit parents of present and prospective students
    - f. Recruit new students
    - g. Follow-up previous students
    - h. Prepare records and reports
    - i. Organize and advise clubs or organizations
    - j. Cooperate with organized labor
5. Training in instructional methods in agricultural occupations to enable the teacher to:
    - a. Determine the course content in various agricultural occupations
    - b. Develop and use training guides
    - c. Determine the correct method to use in offering related instruction
    - d. Use related material properly
    - e. Train cooperating instructors to be effective teachers.

6. Training in cooperating in the total vocational program at a school which would include:
  - a. Ways of using other vocational instructors in teaching and coordination
  - b. Ways of using other vocational facilities
  - c. Methods of using present vocational agriculture courses as prerequisite for agricultural occupations training
  - d. Ways of changing the present farm mechanics instruction to offer the most specific skills needed in the various agricultural occupations
  - e. Methods of incorporating agricultural occupations training into the present vocational agriculture program where needed.

TEACHER EDUCATION TOMORROW \*

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We have at our University a program in which certain professors are invited to speak before student groups and to give what is called "his last lecture on earth." I have prepared my presentation to you this morning somewhat in this climate since, according to our custom, you seldom, if ever, invite anyone to appear before you twice. Therefore, this should, in reality, be my last lecture to this group. I should like, in the time allotted to me, to do two things this morning; first, to view with some alarm a situation which has some implications for teacher education in agriculture today, and to take a look at tomorrow and the challenges it should bring to those of us who have the responsibility for preparing teachers of agriculture for our public schools.

Not long ago in California we acquired a new Chief of the Division of Instruction in the State Department of Education, and our State Director of vocational education thought it would be good orientation for him to visit some departments of vocational agriculture in our high schools to see the kind of instruction that was being done. An itinerary was arranged. An entire day was set aside for this and several departments were visited. Imagine the chagrin of the State Director when, in not one of these departments did they see a single case where the teacher was teaching; where they saw any formal instruction in agriculture. Not a single class! Planning for some Future Farmer activity, yes; doing many of the little chores which occur around the department, certainly; but no teaching. I'll confess I don't know to what extent this is a problem in other states, but I'm convinced that, in our state, many of our teachers really don't spend much time in teaching.

There was a time when I was convinced that our agriculture teachers, in general, were the best teachers in the school; that they used the most progressive methods, in the very best sense of that word; that in the use of problem-solving procedures, the use of community resources, the fine utilization of the supervised farming programs and the individual instruction that accompanied

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\* Presented at the Annual AATEA Breakfast, Atlantic City, N. J., 1963.