The Beginning Teacher

The next generation of vocational agriculture teachers is facing many challenges and responsibilities. No teacher in a school has as many responsibilities and clientelle as a vo-ag teacher.

One of the keys to the adjustment of beginning teachers is realizing that a vo-ag teacher must be different than a classroom teacher. A beginning teacher could quickly become disillusioned by observing an academic teacher (history, for example) and comparing the observations to the demands made in vo-ag. This is further compounded by the responsibilities of other vocational teachers as related to those in vo-ag. Only the vo-ag teacher has program responsibilities.

The fact that vo-ag is a program and not a class should be viewed with positive enthusiasm. The vo-ag teacher is in a leadership position and has the opportunity to make substantive improvements in the attitude and discipline of the United States. Individuals who are self-starters are required to effectively develop a vo-ag program.

The Climate: Is It A Mirror?

The conditions under which people work are important in making a successful beginning. Some schools need new vo-ag teachers almost every year. In other schools, vo-ag teachers may spend a lifetime teaching vo-ag. What makes the difference? It is something known as "climate".

In vo-ag, climate for the beginning teacher includes the general attitude in the school and community toward education, the attitude of the school administrators, the kind of freedom the teacher has in the operation of the vocational agriculture program, and the performance of previous vo-ag teachers. Individuals can be successful or failures in any climate. The teacher's attitude is the key to the beginning teacher. The attitudes of others toward vo-ag are largely the products of vo-ag teachers toward their own programs. Vo-ag teachers who have enthusiastic attitudes toward vo-ag are also likely to have administrators, committees, agricultural representatives, and students who have enthusiastic attitudes.

Much of the vo-ag climate in a school is merely a reflection of the attitudes of vo-ag teachers themselves. To a large extent, teachers create their own climate.

Retention

Much has been written and spoken about a shortage of vo-ag teachers. The question that is sometimes raised is, "Does a shortage of teachers exist?" If we look at the number of vo-ag teachers in the past ten years, we will find that an adequate number is usually prepared. Many of those who are prepared do not teach, but choose to pursue other careers, primarily in the field of agriculture.

Another problem is that some individuals teach only one or two years. Some of these are very capable teachers, but they become dissatisfied with teaching. This is due to a number of factors. The need exists for close follow-up by teacher educators and district supervisors.

Teacher Supply

Each year since 1965 a study has been made of the supply of and demand for teachers of vocational agriculture. Initiated by Ralph Woodin at The Ohio State University, the study is now carried out by David G. Craig at The University of Tennessee. Entitled "A National Study of the Supply and Demand for Teachers of Vocational Agriculture," the study is partially supported by the Agricultural Education Division of the National Agricultural Association.

The 1980 version of this study reported that teacher turnover was 12% in the 10 year history of the study. All of the vo-ag profession needs to be concerned about the retention of the quality teachers. Helping beginning teachers adjust to the one year way of relating to the turnover and solving the problems caused by a shortage of teachers.

Support from Profession

Beginning teachers need support from the profession. Beginners should be provided with individual aid by teachers, supervisors, and teacher educators and by professional organizations. The performance of individuals in the vo-ag field has a strong influence on beginning teachers.

One of the areas in which members of the vo-ag family need to work is to portray a positive, enthusiastic image to beginning teachers. This is comprised of a myriad of elements, including what is said and what is done. An example is when experienced teachers complain about job demands [long hours, etc.] in the presence of beginning teachers. The vo-ag family needs to work toward building an enthusiastic, positive attitude among beginning teachers.
The theme of the beginning teacher. The start of a new school year with many beginning teachers about to begin their careers can be intimidating. We have asked people representing the various phases of the profession to reflect on the initial experience and provide suggestions for its enhancement.

Teachers who have recently completed their first year have provided suggestions for those beginning and as well as those who might provide assistance. A high school principal suggests how the beginning teacher can be helped; identifies warning signs of difficulty and suggests how the new teacher can help themselves. Supervision and how it can be most effectively delivered and received so as to enhance teacher effectiveness is also addressed.

In summary, I hope that after reading the articles we can all see ways in which we can help the beginning teacher and be so inclined as to follow through. I also hope that the new teacher will find the articles enlightening and will stay in and help perpetuate a wonderful profession.

Themes for 1982

The Agricultural Education Magazine

Computers in Agricultural Education

January

February

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August

The Cover

Rob Turley, a first-year vocational agriculture teacher at Dysart High School in Peoria, Arizona, is shown explaining a condition to students in his class. (Photograph courtesy of Phillip Zurbrick, University of Arizona.)

The First Year: Help When Help Is Needed

The teacher of vocational agriculture in America should be considered an endangered species. Many times we have heard the reasons why our NACTA membership is falling. The list of closed departments grows with each passing year. Qualified vocational agriculture teachers leave the profession for a variety of reasons. Let us not go the way of the Carrier Pigeon. Each of us has within us the ability to turn the situation around. My mission is to outline our problems, but to outline the future — the future of the first-year teacher. The neophyte vocational agriculture teacher is our future because if he or she is not fully aware of the job that lies ahead, they too will leave.

What then of that first year? Our agriculture teacher must be trained and prepared for the job of preparing vocational agriculture teachers. When they exit college, new ag teachers are prepared to begin teaching; but perhaps only prepared to begin teaching. What are the challenges and concerns which lie ahead in the next 12 months? Where are the answers to the questions that were not covered in school and the student teaching experience?

The new teacher is a professional and will proceed forward. He or she has many decisions to make. The hardest decision is the one of time. Time management is a difficult tool to get a handle on. Wasted steps, extra trips to the principal or maintenance yard all teach valuable lessons in time management. Other decisions include program thrust, which direction to take, change or remain the same.

What must be taught? What kind of competencies must the student possess to enter and advance in the agricultural community? The FFA and SOEP offer new challenges. The successful program has an active FFA and again time is critical. The SOEP? means summer employment but what benefit is there in one or the other? All of these questions, challenges, concerns and more leave the first-year teacher anxious and hopefully ready to seek some help.

Ask Questions!

The best advice that can be offered to the new teacher is the same words offered to the incoming freshman, "Don't be afraid to ask questions." Once philosophy and policy have been outlined, procedure must be addressed. Procedure will help prevent one from being a victim to the ills of the community. The new teacher must learn about the program, the department, the school and their role. Is the job too much? Are they working too hard? Is it possible to reduce the load? The best way to find out is to ask questions. The key contact person — a farmer, agriculturist, farmer, can offer anyone who can give aid. If there is an active advisory council, they will prove invaluable. Use anything you can. Cultivate a relationship with the administration. They want you to succeed. Your success will make them shine. Follow school procedures and pay attention to details in working with administrators. Think ahead and make the right moves. They will help you smooth your path.

Another tip is to use your telephone and the mail to keep in contact with the state staff. They know procedures to follow in the matters of schedules and deadlines for vocational funding and FFA activities.

Get Help!

Another valuable resource includes the experienced ag teachers in nearby departments. Some state agricultural teachers associations operate on a buddy system and informally assign a nearby teacher to help. Most will help willingly whether assigned or not. We all want the new members in our profession to do well. New teachers, ask the formal and informal questions of your neighbors. Each of us needs someone to whom we can talk and blow off steam. Experienced teachers can keep you aware of local, county, district, state or national events. They can help you avoid pitfalls peculiar to your area. Experienced teachers should "keep in touch." Ask about activities and upcoming events and share experiences when you are together. Make the extra effort to see that the new teacher does it right the first time. That first year is rough and we can help smooth the road.

Experience is the best teacher — we believe this! New teachers must learn from their experiences. Look forward to each new challenge. Test yourself and try to accomplish more with less effort. Don't be afraid of making a mistake as this will only prevent you from trying something new. Use your students, school and community to help provide the best program you can with what you have. Be prepared for the best and expect nothing less. Have faith in your ability and plan ahead. Each year will bring a new set of problems and rewards. You will avoid many problems the second year. Who knows, next fall a new vocational agriculture teacher may ask advice from you on how to survive the first year!
The First Year: A Series of Challenges

It is difficult to capture in a word or two what that first year was like. It was enjoyable...but not always. It was inspiring...but not always. It was challenging...yes, it was always challenging.

As I recall now, the challenges began that first day. By some administrative fluke, both my class and another were assigned to the same room. Seeing no other alternative, I elected to take my class to the parking lot. There, the students dutifully stood or leaned against cars as I detailed my classroom rules, the threats of God upon all transgressors. I stood with handouts under each foot and notes tucked precariously beneath my arm, all the while quietly cursing the wind and the塑理 that the ever-present northwest rain spars us fifty minutes. It did.

The days following held their challenges, too, of a different sort. Becoming accustomed to "Mr. Mulcahy" was no small chore. Even now, I glance fretfully about at the mention of it, expecting to see my father. And, too, there was the challenge of learning to discipline. Each of us recalls, I suspect, that first time a student said, "And what if I don't want to?" Most of us resisted the urge to strangle the offending party, and instead reminded them that they were not asked but told.

Learning to discipline also required a certain thickening of the skin. Many teachers never expect to be popular. Others, I suppose, secretly hope that they can be "friends" with their students. Yet, more than a few beginning teachers have found that popularity breeds indifference and contempt. Few students will obey a teacher they cannot respect.

Lesson Planning — In Search of a Teacher's "Holy Grail"

The daily task of writing and revising lesson plans was a definite challenge. Many nights were occupied with the endless chores of locating information, composing questions and devising teaching aids. At other times, the ongoing search continued for a teacher's "holy grail" that introduction to a lesson which spurs students on to joyous, self-directed learning! (I must say that if such an introduction exists, it somehow eluded me).

Delivering lessons proved to be no less a challenge than preparing them. Balancing the opposing acts of speaking, listening, watching, twisting ears and confounding积极推进 required some getting use to. It was also necessary to learn to vary the instructional format. Still, flexibility is important. In my case, setting aside one afternoon a week when students were allowed in the depot to succeed. This approach allowed me to collect my thoughts, to survey the facilities, and most importantly to work uninterrupted for several hours.

Maintain discipline. Tip out of teaching is the 40 hours week, which must be utilized rather than used with the pressured teacher.

Most administrators, if they are honest with themselves, would look back upon their first year as teaching as something less than satisfactory. Yet, we progress from...
The First Year:
More Than Survival Training
(Continued from Page 7)

assessment vs. Improvement
A great deal of effort is used in assessing the performance of beginning teachers. Assessment is merely the first step towards the improvement of instruction, if properly done. An assessment provides us with a true picture of what is taking place. Unfortunately, by the time thorough assessments are completed, the time is left to the other components, such as analyzing, conferencing, planning for improvement, reassessing, reconferring, and replanning.

A greater commitment of time, resources, and personnel must be provided if we are to be truly effective at improving instruction. Implicit in all of the above is a clear understanding of the teacher's role and the proper operation from a common definition of teaching competency or effectiveness; that the teacher must have confidence in the evaluator; and that the evaluator must be sure that the teacher understands how to use the recommendations to bring about improvement.

Perhaps we need to use a little different approach with the new teacher. It might be well to very thoroughly explore the instrument used to be rated in the evaluation, coming to agreement on the items that can be utilized. This will enable beginning teachers to be aware of just what is expected of them. Teachers need to get to know their evaluators, during which time a level of trust can be established. Once this has been accomplished, suggestions made by the evaluator will become more believable and acceptable.

Rewarding Effective Teaching
This point is perhaps the most crucial. It seems that we tend to reward our beginning teachers on the basis of survival rather than effectiveness or competency. Few beginning teachers are dismissed due to poor performance, either for lack of background or for lack of creativity or enthusiasm in their teaching. Many are dismissed for failure to maintain "proper discipline," failure to utilize the school's and its procedures and policies. If this is done properly, accuracy of reporting, meeting deadlines, and adherence to policy and procedure will be greatly enhanced.

"Buddy" teachers can be a ready resource for the new teacher as questions arise. Sessions with the supervisor and successful disciplinarians on the staff will assist the beginning teacher with many techniques which may be utilized as the need arises. In-service sessions for new staff members should be provided on a regular basis to ensure that all possible assistance is given during the first years of teaching. These in-service sessions might address such things as individualization in the classroom, creativity, motivation, discipline, and the teaching of a specific specialty.

Teaching is a dignified profession and should be treated as such. Since we have invested much time, money, and energy in selecting the teacher who will work in our school, it seems prudent that we should protect our investment by being sure that we do everything possible to insure the success of the new teacher on our staff.

The First Year: A Demanding Experience

The one thing all teachers, both past and present, have in common is that they have all experienced "that first year of teaching." There are general, and sometimes very large extent, why some are still teaching and others are not. The first year has been described in many different ways. Some have described it as rewarding, exhilarating, interesting and educational and others as disappointing, discouraging, tumultuous and unsparing. All would agree that the initial classroom experience is filled with highs and likewise with many lows. One veteran teacher, who obviously survived the initial year said, "This is a lifetime happening that every adult should experience, but which no man should have to repeat. Another teacher observed that the worst time for the first year was the "first term" in which she survived and was equally sure that if subsequent years were as demanding, few if any would have more than two years of teaching tenure.

A question might be raised as to why the first year is such a traumatic and demanding experience. Kevin Ryan in his book entitled Bringing the Apple to the Classroom describes experiences and raises questions which might help explain the importance of the first year. One important factor seems to be the beginning teacher's attitude and expectations with which they approach the initial assignment. When the beginning teacher's expectations do not match the realities of the job, difficulties or as least frustrations are the inevitable result. Often times such experiences are beyond the control of the teacher and come with the "territory."

The fact that the new teacher is commonly assigned to those schools and courses which veteran teachers have rejected is an example. Typically, such assignments involve school wide discipline problems, classes with less capable teachers, and classes with less capable students. Yet, the neophyte is expected to perform as a veteran teacher while carrying a greater teaching load and dealing with new students, new and familiar situations. All of these add to the intensity of the first year's experience.

Importance of Experience
While the difficulties of the first year are easy to identify, the importance of the experience must not be overlooked. During the first couple of years a vocational agriculture teacher is on the job, the successes and failures which are not experienced directly or not the individual chooses to stay in the profession. Furthermore, these experiences will significantly influence the future effectiveness of the individual.

It is during this time, and especially during the first year, that work patterns are formed and philosophies developed which tend to become career habits. If these habits include lowered expectations or the attitude of "just getting by," the teacher is likely to develop an ineffective philosophy and conduct an inferior vocational agriculture program. On the other hand, when the beginning teacher is placed in a situation where he or she can experience successes and can work under conditions where the total program can function as designed, a strong, capable teacher is generally produced. These situations generally include strong moral support and a program of regular and timely supervision.

Quality Supervision is Essential
The most effective use of supervisory assistance to the teacher occurs during the formative years. Assistance in planning instruction, budgeting professional time and constructive analysis of the vocational agriculture program are useful activities when properly timed and offered. Supervision is further enhanced when it is provided by individuals knowledgeable of both the local situation and of the vocational agriculture program. Often it is difficult if not impossible, to identify an individual with knowledge of both areas. Therefore, supervision may need to be provided by more than one individual agency. Supervision provided by the local school administration can take many forms and because of its day-in and day-out

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
The First Year: Making The Trip

By Robert A. Martin and David L. Howell

Editor's Note: Mr. Martin is Instructor and Graduate Student and Dr. Howell is Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education, the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802. The article was approved by the Pennsylvania State University Review, 62:220-257, March, 1963.

known to revert to practices, some good, many bad, remembered from their own school days. Others are found to rely entirely on their own imagination or initiative to solve the problems that confront them. Some of the novices survive and become masters in their profession. Unfortunately, too many potentially good teachers fail and eventually seek new employment.

With qualified teachers of agriculture in short supply, intervention is needed to control the defection of new teachers. The question is — what help? Is there a series of initiatives that can help teachers survive? What is the key that unlocks the door to survival?

The Supervisory Procedure

Clinical supervision was the brainchild of Morris Cogan of Harvard University in the late 1950's. At the heart of clinical supervision is the concept of product specification. Another term often used is management-by-objectives. The term "clinical supervision" has often been used to imply what has been accomplished by teachers and supervisors to begin to solve instructional problems.

Regardless of the term used, the emphasis is on communicating, testing performance, and problem-solving. Practitioners of clinical supervision assume that teachers possess the drive and personal resources to solve their own instructional problems.

Clinical supervision is a five-step process that aims at helping the teacher identify and clarify goals and objectives as well as instructional problems and solutions to which they are to be related. Clinical supervision emphasizes that teachers detect and all too often cast the supervisory in the role of a superior telling the teacher what needs to be done; clinical supervision is the opposite: it tends to produce a self-directed teacher. Traditional supervision tends to produce a supervisor who directs the classroom teacher.

The five steps in clinical supervision include: the preobservation conference, observation, analysis, post-observation conference, and critique.

The objective of the preobservation conference is to establish what is planned for the lesson; become familiar with the performance objectives, student outcomes, and teacher strategies; and to include the group of students the supervisor will be observing; decide on what is to be observed; and develop a contract.

The observation is to record in writing what goes on during the lesson. The supervisor must collect data based on the original contract. Supervisors using traditional methods have always tried to list all the teacher weaknesses and problems and to later check them off in the teacher's presence. These lists are then conveniently filed away. Supervisors using clinical supervision collect data on a smaller number of items, as agreed to in the initial contract.

After the observation, the supervisor analyzes and organizes the data collected. The analysis reflects the intent of the original contract objectives established during the preobservation conference. The supervisor then prepares for the post-observation conference. He/she considers the nature of the teacher and the ability of the teacher to implement any mutually agreed upon changes. The supervisor then considers alternative ways to perform in various teaching situations.

The objective of the post-observation conference is to develop the original contract objectives established during the preobservation conference. This involves the supervisor and the teacher developing a plan for what happened or didn't happen. The discussions are to be critical, dwelled on one or two items that perhaps need modification. A number of alternatives are discussed. The supervisor and teacher systematically address the problem and develop a strategy to deal with it. The supervisor and teacher then prepare for the next observation.

The ultimate goal of both traditional in-class supervision and clinical supervision is the same — to improve instruction. However, in traditional supervision, emphasis is placed on the process of teaching. There is also an assumption that the supervisor is the expert. By contrast, in clinical supervision, the emphasis is on the student and the product of the learning situation. There is an assumption that both teachers and instructional experts with the teacher identifying her/his concerns and the supervisor giving specific data on observations. Together, they select alternatives to address the teacher's concerns.

Communications

There is no magic in the clinical supervision model itself. Just mechanically following the steps outlined above will not achieve significant improvement. The model merely provides the framework for
Preparing for the First Year

By Fred Rineau and Mike Murray

Perhaps House and Lapan (1978) said it best when they noted,
"One enters teaching much like a space satellite enters the Earth's atmosphere except the beginning teacher enters without a heat shield. The heats up progress-ively more intense and many burn up."

Adequate supervision can provide the heat shield needed to help new teachers remain in the profession and develop a desire to make teaching a lifetime career.

**Conclusion**

It has become increasingly clear that vocational educators, administrators, supervisors, and master teachers need to carefully consider supervisory strategies that will help new teachers adjust to the profession.

**References Cited**


**Basic Techniques and Procedures of Instruction**

To adequately become acquainted with the teaching environment, each student must complete ten activities at the local high school vocational agriculture program site. One-half day per week for 13 weeks must be spent at the assigned vocational program for the purpose of completing the activities. Each activity has specific items which must be completed and turned in. The evaluation and feedback of the professions.

Activities of the prospective teacher include:

1. Observe the teacher and student during a daily class session.
2. Obtain the names of the students and conduct a process activity assessment.
3. Identify the subject taught and record the teacher and student actions.
4. Become familiar with the teaching materials and equipment available to the assigned class.
5. Participate in two of the following: A. taking roll, preparing lab demonstration, scoring objective tests, putting material on chalkboard, working with youth club officers, or finding instructional resources in library or files.
6. Prepare the mini lesson (15 minutes) to the vocational agriculture class.

**Field Experiences**

The purpose of field experiences is to provide the presence of the vocational agriculture education student the opportunity to observe and participate in experiences in secondary vocational agriculture programs. All hours of participation must be completed by all agriculture education majors.

The student chooses 12 of the 14 experiences listed below.

1. Determine the purpose and function of the professional.
2. Visit a vocational agriculture program to determine — Why does the teacher teach what he/she teaches?

**Book Review**


*Principles of Animal Environment* presents a detailed discussion of the environmental factors involved in raising livestock and poultry.

Some of the topics discussed in the text include the facility and effect on animals, heat loss from animals, heat and vapor transmission in buildings, and energy conservation principles.

**August, 1981**
ARTICLE

A Rookie Sounds Off

By BRAD GIZMAN
Editor’s Note: Mr. Gizman is the Teacher of Vocational Agriculture at Alcena Community Schools, Alcena, Iowa 50011.

September 30, 1981

Dear Professor,

How are things at the university? Things have sure changed at high school. I don’t remember my high school days like they were now. We had no more respect then. Let me tell you how it really is now.

I’m working like crazy. Some of the students call me by the previous ag teacher’s name. Even my mail is addressed to that ag teacher and the superintendent talks about him all the time.

I have a custodian who thinks he’s the principal, a faculty who thinks I run a fix-it shop in my free-time, a coach who swears that the 11th commandment is “Thou shalt not miss football practice or thy days shall be short upon the griller,” and students who want to know when the third test will be given so the half-year of “shop” will start.

Well, it’s for now as I have to do my lesson planning.

Sincerely,
Rookie Ag Teacher

October 4, 1981

Dear Rookie,

Sounds like you’re going through the “Rookie Syndrome” cured only by 100 hour days or you can work smarter rather than longer.

Concentrate on building the program with a blend of freshmen, sophomores and interested juniors and seniors. You will have the most influence on the underclassmen, especially the freshmen.

Recognize that if juniors and seniors are not involved in FFA and 4-H now, they will never be. Rather than using valuable time trying to motivate them for those activities, see if they can help freshmen, sophomores and their parents. They will be your solid base in the future built by your aims and goals.

Work your strong areas to cut down on preparation time. When your students seem to be losing interest in class, it is probably time to shift the burden of preparation (lecture) from you to student activities, resource persons, workbooks, role-playing, contests or field trips.

Remember, if you overcome these problems now, your chances of being successful is excellent.

Sincerely,
Professor

Parts of all of the above letters will sound familiar to voc-ag instructors. Although we might have forgotten many of the problems and 13eals of our our first teaching year, they were awful. I was a rookie teacher three years ago. I want to share some things that were helpful to me.

I was a rookie teacher three years ago. I want to share some things that were helpful to me.

Patience

Realize that respected and successful running voc-ag programs take more than one or two years to develop. Have three or four main goals you wish to accomplish during the year, but don’t lose sight of your long-range goals for the program.

Many times beginning teachers look at top voc-ag programs in the state and feel they should be at that level, but five years down the road instead of immediately. A voc-ag program is built one step at a time.

Emphasize Strong Area

Work your strong area — whether beef, crops, mechanics, or agriculture — as there is less preparation for those areas. When people asked what I was teaching, I said, “animal science.” Also, have one class in the mechanics laboratory at all times so you have one less classroom preparation. Of course, laboratory activities also require preparation, often more than teaching in the classroom.

Get Help

If you don’t ask for help, you won’t receive any. Beg or borrow hands, student activities, and teaching materials. Visit with neighboring ag teachers and community college instructors who have specialty areas. Your cooperating instructor during student teaching will be helpful to you.

I would especially like to emphasize the importance of joining your state voc-ag teachers association and becoming involved on the local level. Many questions and problems can be solved the first year at the local level. Your sub-district has developed the policy of riding in car pools to the local meetings. This saves money and time.

Beginning teacher workshops can be very helpful. I attended some of the first one held in the state. These workshops were very helpful. We all had many of the same first year problems and the time spent discussing solutions was most beneficial.

Discipline

Every article in this magazine could deal with discipline and classroom management, but experience is still the best teacher.

Some key points to note are discussed here.

1. Beginning teachers must expect high school students to test their ability early in their teaching career. Your expectations for their behavior will become evident quickly. Students will soon know the answers to those questions: Can I be late for class? How much talking can I do in class? Will he or she take points off of my assignments are late? Do I have to wear safety glasses in the shop? Do I have to take notes?

2. Respect from students is gained by being fair, honest and firm. Students expect you to control the class. It is especially important as you get to know the students and their home situations to not relax your standards. There is a fine line between being a friend and a teacher.

3. Correct a small problem before it becomes too serious. Talk one-on-one with an uncooperative student or make a home visit to better understand the situation. Stress that a cooperative spirit is needed so your role as teacher can be carried out and students may learn.

4. Students expect you to promptly handle discipline problems such as talking and late assignments. Only in extreme cases, such as insubordination or damage to school property, should a student be sent to the office for the principal to deal with.

5. For a class whose members have a difficult time getting into their seats and is noisy at the beginning of class, have an assignment on the board, a test or a worksheet to start on. A seating chart seems like elementary school tactics, but just separating good friends does wonders for classroom control. Before to change the seating arrangement often to create a new look. (I knew of a student teacher who put the tables in a different arrangement every week for a full quarter.)

6. Never make rules or threats you cannot back up. Also don’t give ultimatums or place students in a position where they have to make decisions. Example: The class has been noisy so you say, “Next time you talk without permission goes to the office” or “If anyone misbehaves on this field trip it will be your last.”

7. Remember that a well-prepared teacher who uses good student activities is a prerequisite for good classroom management.

Make Things Happen

If we set up a climate for learning, our students are far more likely to sense that something not only can happen in our class, but probably will. If you feel comfortable and special about your teaching, classroom and mechanics laboratory, students will also. We all know the importance difference between a house and home. The same is true of a classroom.

Every classroom should display student work. Important work should be shared with others. Have your students plant a crop and soil samples, advertisements, feed tags, posters, herbicide cans, and weed samples. Start a scrapbook. Have the judging teams and contest winners on the wall. Start plaques for top judges, fruit salmers or State Farmers.

Make the vo-ag room special and start tradition.

Maintain Your Sense of Humor

If the first year of teaching is so bad you can’t laugh once in a while, it probably isn’t worth it. So what if your judging team writes Suffolk Yoss and Hampshires U’s on the card. Hang onto these cards and on those really bad times pull them out and remind yourself of the progress you have made.

Teaching voc-ag is a demanding profession, but we should look at each difficulty as a challenge rather than a wall. Each student comes to us with different wants, needs and abilities. It’s easy to see why problems can overwhelm and dominate us if we don’t look upon them as professional challenges rather than personal obstructions. We must take the attitude of working with our students rather than against them.

Count Successes

Remember to count your successes. Too often we count only our failures. Our successes far outnumber our short comings and this will give us more enjoyment out of teaching. We will be better teachers in the future.

IDEAS UNLIMITED

Constructing A Fire Rake

By ROBERT M. POLLICK
Editor’s Note: Mr. Pollick is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Dan River High School at Ringgold, Virginia 24366.

A fire rake is a practical, easy to build construction project. Students can apply a number of skills in building the one shown here, including measuring, cutting, drilling, welding, and riveting.

The bill of materials is:
One piece of 1 inch metal conduit 60 inches long (This is the handle.)
Four 1/4 inch rivets
One piece 1/8 inch x 3/4 inch angle iron as long as the four sections when placed beside side
Eight 3/16 inch x 1/2 inch iron rivets
The procedure involves:
Clamping the mower sections to the angle iron and drilling the handle to the angle iron rivets
Riveting the mower sections to the angle iron and welding the handle to the top and center of the angle iron.

Fire rake, complete and with needed materials.

AUGUST, 1981
Priorities for the First-Year Teacher

By Richard Norrier
Editor's note: Mr. Norrier is Vocational Agriculture Teacher, Northwood Junior High School, Mendon, Michigan 48856.

All vo-ag teachers have been told to set priorities in their jobs. As difficult as this task is for the experienced teacher, it can seem impossible for those just starting out. Having just finished my first year as a vocational agriculture teacher, I feel there are four major items that first-year teachers must place high on the priority list if they are to be successful. Each of these items requires much large portions of time that it is sometimes easier to neglect them than to see that each is done properly.

The areas which I have found to be of critical importance in trying to develop a solid program as a first year instructor of vocational agriculture are: classroom instruction, supervised occupational experience, farm visits, and record keeping.

Classroom Instruction

Each teacher must keep in mind that he or she was hired first of all to teach vocational agriculture. It is easy at times to become involved with other activities, that the day to day classroom instruction is neglected. If a first year teacher does nothing else, spend first enough time in preparation for each day's classes so that you are confident when it comes time to teach. A cooperating teacher is no longer around to make sure you have prepared lesson plans, use motivational methods, or gather together all the materials you need for classes. You are now on your own. Teachers who come to class prepared will find their problems to be fewer and their jobs more enjoyable, while those who are ill prepared give their classes an open invitation to misbehave.

In preparing for each day's classes, don't be afraid to use imagination and try new ways to present lessons. If something fail, just chalk it up to experience. You'll have a lot of that before your first year is over. Nothing turns off students faster than a class that is predictable from day to day. Work to make class an enjoyable experience for you and your students.

Finally, if discipline problems should arise, and they will, deal with them quickly and fairly. Do not ignore a situation in the hopes that it will go away. It won't! Try to be fair and consistent with your students. When dealing out punishment, try to make it fit the "crime." Remember, if a first-year teacher must lean one way, it is better to be too strict than too easy.

Supervised Occupational Experience Programs

Finding each of your students an SOE program can be a difficult task, especially if you have a large number in the classroom. It's not as easy as it sounds. It will take time to realize that those students who have programs are the same ones who work hardest in the classroom. Take a greater interest in the FFA and are willing to help you out when you need help. Not only will you be benefiting the student by requiring and helping him or her find a suitable SOE program, but you will receive rewards knowing that this program will help the student to get out more of vo-ag classes. I have found that helping students find projects that are right for them, and then watching them work, are some of the most rewarding parts of the job.

Farm Visits

Making farm visits is one of the easiest areas to neglect. We have so many other things pressing for our time that we can let our number of monthly farm visits drop. I know of no quicker or easier way to gain the respect of students than through the use of on-farm visits. If a new teacher shows genuine interest in students by visiting them and helping with their problems, the students will repay you with respect not just as a teacher, but as a real person.

Remember, don't let the size of the program influence how you treat students in the student. The student with one pig must be as important as the one with 50 cows.

Record Keeping

A final major priority lies in the area of monthly record keeping. You will be saving not only your students, but yourself, a great deal of time and trouble if you teach proper record keeping and require all students to turn in monthly records. It is so much easier to fill out reports and proficiency award applications if the students have kept good monthly records. You may find that students complain about the practice of turning in monthly records at first, but they will soon become accustomed to the routine and the time saved in the long run will be great.

Success

There are many important items for first year teachers, FFA activities, state reports, local school responsibilities, and many others are important. In looking back over my first year, the two items that helped the most are the first are the best items that have been most important. It is my feeling that if new teachers do a good job in these areas, all the other things required of them will fall in place and they will be successful.

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor is a feature to encourage dialogue among readers of the Magazine. Selected letters will be printed without name, title or organization. Your letter will be welcomed! Send letters to Editor, THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, P.O. Drawer AV, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Editor:
I want to congratulate you upon your recent forhright editorial commenting upon those in Washington who would sacrifice educational reforms in order to please a new administration. Such public statements as yours are the best means I know of to keep our fair weather friends in proper alignment. This problem is of course not new for we had a similar experience during the early Eisenhower years.

I find it refreshing to read your editorials dealing with some very real problems and issues brought about by history-making changes in our society.

Sincerely,
Richard C. Woodin, President Emeritus
The Ohio State University and
The University of Tennessee
208 Agricultural Administration Bldg.
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Editor:
I enjoyed reading your recent editorial "The Big Sell in the May issue. I could not agree more with one of your conclusions: "During economic adversity, good vocational education is needed more than ever." Furthermore, to quote Tom Jones, "vocational education is part of the solution not part of the problem!"

The only part you had to leave out of your article was to name the vocational educators who no longer represent us. I think we need to know who they are so we can, as you suggest, purge them as leaders.

May I hear from you?

Sincerely,
Joe Sabol, Teacher Educator
Agricultural Education Department
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, California 93407

Editor:
Thanks for the fine statement placed in the front of the January, 1981, AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE. There are many unsung heroes that work long hours to improve the program and provide service to FFA members. Many of these individuals work at the school, state and university level, but we are fortunate to also have many dedicated people at the FFA Center. They work on important matters that cause good things to happen to young people preparing for agriculture careers.

Again, thanks for your fine statement. It really helps to receive some praise and a pat on the back.

Sincerely,
James Harris
National Executive Secretary
National FFA Center
Alexandria, Virginia 22309

DEVELOPING SHOP SAFETY SKILLS by Clinton O. Jacobs and J. Howard Turner


DEVELOPING SHOP SAFETY SKILLS provides readers with an opportunity to become acquainted with essential shop safety principles. The writers use color pictures and illustrations, and charts to supplement the book's easy to read print. The color presentations will serve as reading incentives for students who prefer to read books that contain a variety of effective pictures.

Appropriately, the first chapter of the book focuses on the reasons why an individual should develop a concern for safety. Subsequent chapters of the book provide information about the kinds and types of clothing one should wear while engaging in shop work, common bodily injury, and safety concerns and practices that should be integrated into one's work habits. The cleaning, securing and storage of tools is emphasized in one of the chapters which also details several tasks that should be accomplished by a shop worker prior to leaving a work area. The book also features the names and addresses of fourteen safety agencies and two effective charts that provide information about fire extinguishers and safety color and coding for shop machines and equipment.

In addition to their knowledge and experience, the authors have also obtained information from several industries and individuals who possessed expertise in agricultural engineering, educational construction and safety and agricultural mechanics. As noted by the authors, the concepts presented in the book have common application for school or laboratory personnel, the homeowner, farm worker or skilled industrial worker. Information presented in the book also serves as an ideal text for high school and junior college students.

All students, non-professionals, and professionals who are engaged in shop activities or possess a common concern for shop safety will find this book useful as a reference and text.

Daniel M. Lyman
North Carolina A&T
State University
Greensboro, North Carolina

AUGUST, 1981
A Heritage and Philosophy for Training Skilled Agricultural Workers

I know of no pursuit in which more real and important service can be done, to any country than by improving its agriculture." These were the thoughts and words of Thomas Jefferson, the father of our country, nearly two hundred years ago. The greatest service which can be rendered any country," Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "is to add a useful plant to its culture." During the 19th century, the basic industry that was being developed was agriculture.

By Charles C. Drawbaugh

Editor's Note: Dr. Drawbaugh is Professor of Agricultural Education at Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

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Professionalism In Teaching Agriculture: What and How

By Richard W. Tenney and Arthur L. Berkey

There is general agreement that members of the teaching profession ought to be "professional." There are differing opinions, however, as to what constitutes professionalism and how best to achieve this goal. This article presents two positions about professionalism and professional development.

First, that professionalism needs to be focused on the individual teacher role. Second, that professional organizations continue to be a unique and primary means for professional development.

Professionalism and Teacher Role

One of the current challenges for both the profession and the individual teacher is to define a realistic role for the teacher. The key question is, "how to meet this challenge and what factors must be considered?" Historically, agricultural education has been continually added to the teacher's role without offsetting deleteries—help that comes from the entitled and need experienced peers or administrators see them as not being "worth their salt" unless all of the teacher's program activities are carried out. At the same time there is pressure to take on additional responsibilities such as new FFA contest, accept and work with special and urban and file additional reports.

Since professionalism is reflected in job performance and continuing professional development, professionalism for the teacher of agriculture is directly related to that job, i.e., role. Thus, role definition is one of the most important needs in agricultural education. The profession should define a realistic overall role, and then the individual teachers is expected to set job priorities at the local school level to reflect this need to work collectively to assure that comprehensive information is available to political decision-makers. Professional organizations are the only current available means for collective professional decision-making. The National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (NVATA) and the American Vocational Association (AVS) provide a means to influence educational policy. These organizations have been effective with legislators from individual states.

Are Professional Organizations Worth The Price?

Deciding on how to spend money is a process of setting priorities. In most cases, state organization dues are less than the cost of a dinner out for two, and yet the difference in cost is less than the cost of one vacation week end. Such comparisons are useful to prioritize.

Professional organizations provide a means for professional development to be offered as a professional investment the same as tuition costs for courses to meet certification requirements. Professional dues are tax deductible and therefore cost is reduced by the percentage of the teacher's highest tax bracket.

The problem of convincing nonmembers that "it's worth the price" is not that the evidence is lacking, rather, that members who are aware of the value need to take time on a personal basis to tell non-members. Also, non-members often correctly point out imperfections which will continue to exist in professional organizations. However, the professional challenge is to get involved and make things better rather than to expect perfection.

Summary

Professionalism in agricultural education is defined in terms of a realistic job role for teachers of agriculture. Group efforts and interprofessional cooperation are a unique and necessary part of professional development. Also, service organizations provide important educational opportunities for agricultural education. The only current available means for collective professional organizations to provide collective input to political decisions affecting agricultural education.

References:

1. The Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Young Farmers of America (YFA) programs of work are built around the needs of their respective memberships. The organizations develop the abilities needed in individual students to become effective and efficient leaders in fulfilling occupational, social, and civic responsibilities. Both organizations sponsor activities which develop and strengthen human relations qualities within members.

2. The National Vocational Education Act of 1966 has heightened interest in agriculture and stimulate their memberships to greater achievement, and the big brother/sister programs is a considerable leadership not only to agriculture but to the entire business, civic, and political community as well.

3. Agriculture in the United States has always and continues to be a focal point of professional organizations. It has been blessed with fertile land, favorable climate, dedicated professionals, and technological inventions that continue to add to the country's crop yields and livestock gains.

4. Teachers frequently ask the questions, "Why does it cost so much?" and "What will membership do for me?" if professional organizations are worthwhile, then answers to these questions need to be available in order to attract and retain professional membership.

5. Professional growth through group interaction: Problems faced by teachers of agriculture are far more complex than individual problems. Teachers can help each other by sharing solutions to common problems, ideas on teaching strategies and materials, and content. Also, just knowing that others face the same problems is a psychological lift. The solutions to some problems may be simply a change in how the situation is perceived. Discussions with other teachers can often bring a more realistic perception which in turn can face and solve the problem.

6. Group interaction provides an important source of inspiration and renewed enthusiasm for teaching — which is not available through individual activities. The friendships developed through sharing are also important. What may be important for group interaction is limited only by how much they put in.

7. Social service is an important dimension of our society and the needs of social service is an important dimension of our society and the needs of our society. The social service unit provides an opportunity to meet people and to involve them in the educational process.

8. FFA contests, working with youth, and the need for education in identification and development of priority instructional materials, and the big brother/sister program for new teachers. Those and other service activities are carried out in most agricultural education programs.

9. In a few states, teaching and services to agricultural education from state education agencies (SSA) have been significantly reduced. The FFA Executive Secretary has been reduced for the FFA Executive Secretary. Recognizing the importance of such services, the FFA National Educational Programs has increased the number of educational programs in state agricultural organizations that have raised their dues to employ staff to provide these services.

10. A major aspect of professionalism is the commitment to provide quality educational programs for students. Services provided by professional agricultural organizations are important in the prevention of a significant part of meeting that commitment. It should also be remembered that quality programs both merit and receive community support — which often determines which programs are retained when local school board funding is cut.

11. Also, the benefits of professional growth through group interaction mentioned above and the advantages for teachers working together to help students and themselves.

12. Professional organizations and political decision-making. The interests of agricultural education are directly affected by many decisions at a political level. It is therefore necessary to have an effective means to move timely input with a united voice toward such decisions. A current example on the national scene is the reauthorization of vocational education legislation.

13. At the state level, professional organizations can have important impacts on the level of state education department staffing, and services to the teacher of agricultural education. For example, in New York State the Association of Teachers of Agricultural Education was effective in supporting the decision to retain a separate Bureau of Agricultural Education.

14. The need for timely and united input to political decision-making is a reality. In our governmental system, it is important that history shows needs more recognition by educators. If funding priorities in educational programs are to receive fair consideration, teachers will need to work collectively to assure that comprehensive information is available to political decision-makers.
BOOK REVIEW

The National Convention
Awakening Enthusiasm

By Richard Maki
Editor's Note: Mr. Maki is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Admiral Noye A.V.T.S., Elmhurst, Pennsylvania 19352.

The FFA has been and will continue to be a source of direction for young people. At no time does this become more apparent than at the annual National FFA Convention. At the Convention, held each fall in Kansas City, Missouri, the participants share two experiences that do indeed disquiet the clouds of doom many individuals forecast for our society and give hope for the future. First, FFA members are swept into an unprepared year of enthusiasm. Secondly, these same FFA members discover themselves and the potential contained within each and every one of them.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm, that sometimes missing link at the local chapter level, is the salvation of each year's National Convention. There is no isolating oneself from it. Enthusiasm touches all who attend. FFA members become enthusiastic at the general session held in convention hall. The nation's ag team, guest speakers, national congress, and band participants are infected with enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is an intense or eager interest. It can be seen in 20,000 FFA members collectively brought together and in each individual FFA member. A good example occurred at the 1980 Convention. Programs were being distributed at the entrance to the Career Show. A female delegate from Florida spent much of one afternoon not just passing out programs, but passing on programs with enthusiasm. It appeared that no one gained entrance to the Show without either the young woman giving them a program or her being assured that one had previously been obtained. In addition to the written program, there was a bonus for those individuals fortunate enough to encounter this FFA member from the state — a smile that radiated enthusiasm.

Advisors and chaperones are by no means left out. Teachers from Alabama bama talk with those from Oregon. Ideas are exchanged and plans are made. All look forward to the return home when the implementation of these plans can actually begin. Teachers of agriculture know how important enthusiasm in their individual classroom style, and the National Convention seems an excellent place to bolster both beginning and experienced teachers. Without doubt, all this is good, but the bottom line is the local chapter. The local chapter must not only experience enthusiasm; it must also become a carrier agent of it. At the Convention, chapter members talk among themselves about future plans once they return home. If an FFA chapter in South Carolina has conducted a community workshop on solar energy, why can't a chapter from Pennsylvania do the same? There's no doubt about it — the Pennsylvania chapter can!

The Changing Student

Metamorphosis is the biological change that takes an insect from one state of its life to another — egg, larva, pupa, and then the fully grown adult. As you-ag teachers, we observe an even more amazing metamorphosis taking place in our students. Each of your students does indeed undergo a dramatic change from the time he or shefirst enrolls in vocational agriculture until he or she graduates. At some point an awakening process occurs.

The ways of a child are for some reason abandoned. Assuming responsibility, developing a genuine desire to learn, developing confidence in oneself, and becoming a productive worker are some of the changes. Horseplay in the mechanics laboratory and anticipation of the bell ending class take on lesser, unimportant roles. Sometimes the major goal of the season is to graduate during the course of the school year while at other times it happens over the summer. The Nation's ag teachers serves as a causal agent for this change.

At the Convention, there is without doubt an opening up of untapped personal ability. FFA members from Pennsylvania find out that they do have thoughts and ideas that they want to share and express. They may have had trouble expressing themselves in front of their classmates. Confidence in oneself becomes seemingly natural in the Convention atmosphere. The reason or rationale for this behavior may remain unexplained. The only thing for sure is that the Convention is at least partly responsible.

The Future

Enthusiasm will by no means solve all the problems facing the United States in the decades to come. Neither will the FFA members, anxious and confident in themselves, solve these problems. However, none can argue that the enthusiasm and self-esteem discovered at the Convention will not help in one way or another. There are too many states in America who are eager, intense and confident about the challenges of the future.

The Conventions are long remembered as sources of varied and numerous experiences for each and every individual who attends. The important point is that there are experiences at the National Convention that cannot be had in a local chapter or a state convention. Plans are being made now for the 1981 National FFA Convention. Perhaps you and your chapter should be making plans to be there.
NVATA Outstanding Young Member Awards went to these teachers in 1980 (left to right):

Cy Vernon, Yanceyville, North Carolina
Donald Bumpurs, Hearne, Texas
Robert Wendt, Manchester, Iowa
Dennis G. Epperly, Cassville, Missouri
Roy S. Walls, Keymar, Maryland
David Hall, Wallowa, Oregon

John Coy (third from right), Public Relations, Deere and Company, Moline, Illinois, is shown presenting the awards.

The award is designed to recognize the participation of members in the professional activities of the NVATA. Limited to one member from each NVATA Region, it is open only to vocational agriculture teachers who have taught at least three years but not more than five. (Photograph courtesy of Sam Stenzel, NVATA.)