

The finding with considerable implications is that generally teachers did not accurately estimate students' level of mastery. Does this imply that students are not learning what teachers say they are teaching, or should there be renewed emphasis on evaluation of programs and teaching? Teachers need to evaluate what they are teaching and follow up teaching with measures to assess student competencies.

As the quotation at the beginning of the article mentions, are students understanding what we think they are, and are we saying what we think?

This article is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, "Criterion-Referenced Assessment of Ninth and Tenth-Grade Instruction in Vocational Agriculture," which was completed at The Ohio State University, 1973.

* * * * *

ON THE CONSOLIDATION OF VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Gary E. Moore
William S. Farrington

Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University

As a family was sitting down to the noon meal one Sunday, the husband asked his wife a question. "Why do you always cut both the ends off the ham?"

His wife replied, "That is the way my mother taught me."

A few weeks later this family had the opportunity to visit with the wife's mother. The husband asked his wife's mother the question, "Why did you teach my wife to cut off the ends of the ham before she cooks it?"

The mother replied, "That was the way my mother taught me."

Some time later a trip to the wife's grandmother was planned. When the family arrived at Grandma's house, the husband immediately asked, "When you cook, why do you cut both ends off the ham?"

The grandmother replied, "I have only one pan to cook ham in and I have to cut the ends off the ham to make it fit into the pan."

This story is humorous, but yet it points out that despite the fact that we are a nation of scientific minds and intelligence, we are still tied to tradition. Often we do not question why we do certain things; we do them because that is the way it has always been done.

Why are fire trucks red? Why do we eat three meals a day? Tradition. Research has shown that there are better colors than red for fire trucks and better ways of gaining nutrition than the standard three meals a day.

Why don't vocational service areas merge into one administrative unit for teacher education? For years we have had Agricultural Education, Trade and Industrial Education, Home Economics Education, Distributive Education, and Business and Office Education. Why don't we consolidate these departments at the university level into one Department of Vocational Education? The answer may be tradition.

Examination of the issues involved in the merger of vocational service areas into one administrative unit at the university level will enable decisions based on fact, logic, and research--not tradition. Approximately 40% of the Agricultural Education departments in this country are in consolidated vocational departments while the remainder are not.² Why are the remaining 60% separate?

In the early days of Vocational Education it was vital that each service area have a unique and separate position. People were not acquainted with Vocational Education. It was a new concept. It was easier to explain Vocational Agriculture to a rural person and Industrial Education to the person that lived in the mechanized cities. People needed to know that Vocational Education was different from general education. By breaking Vocational Education down into each service area it was much easier to explain it to the people that had never heard of Vocational Education.

Categorical funding for each service area increased the separateness of the vocational service areas. Categorical funding was needed to insure that all programs would develop and grow. Some of the vocational programs were weak and needed this type of support to survive.

We now have the two main reasons why vocational service areas needed to be unique and separate. These are good, sound, logical reasons for the 1930's. But this is 1974.

The "Model T" automobile served our grandparents well. It was a good car, but today the Model T is not appropriate for our needs. Automobiles have changed to meet the needs of the people. Vocational Education must also be willing to change to meet the needs of the people.

There are several reasons why consolidation into one single department of Vocational Education should be considered. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Vocational Amendment of 1968 emphasize the need for a consolidated, coordinated Vocational Education program. The different vocational service areas have many professional competencies that are the same. Research by the Center for Vocational-Technical Education shows that 86% of the professional competencies required by vocational teachers are the same regardless of service area.³

The old reasons for separateness are not viable today. Categorical funding from the federal government for each service area has been eliminated. Vocational Education is proving its worth and no longer has to be treated as a foster child. It can stand on its own merit.

Why do people hesitate to consolidate? In corresponding with 16 universities that train teachers of Vocational Agriculture, two main reasons for not consolidating emerged. The reasons given were:

1. Funding difficulties, and
2. There is better cooperation and planning with students and faculty in the College of Agriculture.

Six universities reported that funding was easier to get in the College of Agriculture than it would be in the College of Education. Because these states were primarily agriculturally oriented it was felt that the College of Agriculture would understand their needs more fully. However, it should be noted that the remaining ten universities did not mention any difficulty in obtaining funds.

Another major concern that was voiced was the visibility of the Agricultural Education program. By being in a Department of Vocational Education instead of a College of Agriculture, it was felt the students would not be as aware of the program. Also, it would be more difficult to gain cooperation from the professors in the agricultural college.

In response to this, one of the Western universities wrote, "The one argument that areas such as agriculture, home economics, and business frequently have dual relationships with other colleges in the university does not prevent the development of integrated teacher education programs. This tie can be used as an excuse for not bringing about integration and coordination, but that is not the way it ought to be."

One of the authors recently visited the University of Kentucky. A close working relationship between the College of Agriculture and the College of Education where Agricultural Education is located was

apparent. Being located in a Department of Vocational Education does not necessarily mean poor cooperation with the College of Agriculture.

The advantages of consolidating all vocational service areas into one department are numerous. Following are the main advantages listed by sixteen universities that train Vocational Agriculture teachers:

1. A combined faculty can share their expertise in a number of problem areas (research, teaching, etc.).
2. A consolidated department can operate more efficiently. A department composed of 25 members is much more effective and efficient than five small departments of five members.
3. There are opportunities to develop inter-disciplinary programs and common courses can be taught.
4. A graduate program in Vocational Education would be easier to administer and conduct. Many graduate courses are common courses. Graduate student recruitment would be easier.
5. Students are not isolated from other vocational students, thus increasing awareness of other vocational areas and cooperation.
6. Teacher education courses are professional teacher education. Teacher education is a function of the College of Education. The staff in the Colleges of Education should know more about teaching.

Other reasons for consolidation could be advanced, but these six are the main advantages listed by the 16 universities.

A skeptic might say, "Sure, it sounds good, but does it really work?" Of the 68 land-grant universities, 12 do not train teachers of Vocational Agriculture, or they are so small that they train only one or two types of vocational teachers. Twenty-five of the remaining 56 have merged into consolidated departments of Vocational Education.⁴

How is consolidated Vocational Teacher Education viewed at the university level? A Western university writes, "I'm sold on the idea of consolidated teacher education programs in Vocational Education." A Midwestern university writes, "All programs of Vocational Teacher Education should be in the same administrative unit." One of our Southern universities states, "This is an ideal arrangement, in my opinion, and we have no complaints whatever to offer. We are

very proud of this arrangement and think that we have much more to offer than our sister institutions who are handicapped by various problems growing out of the proliferation of programs and departmental services. "Consolidation of vocational areas into one unified department at the university level can be accomplished.

In conclusion, we advocate the consolidation of vocational service areas for teacher education at the college level. We no longer can operate on tradition. We must think about the people we serve and forget about our "little empires." If Vocational Education is to become the united, dynamic, vibrant force that it should be in the future, it must consolidate.

FOOTNOTES

¹This paper is based on information gathered by the authors who are graduate students at The Ohio State University. Gary E. Moore is a graduate teaching associate. He has taught Vocational Agriculture for four years and is a native Texan. William S. Farrington is a graduate research associate and is from Alabama where he taught two years.

The information in this paper was gathered for two purposes. The different vocational service areas at The Ohio State University are considering the possibility of some type of consolidated graduate program. Information was gathered from 16 universities that have had experience with consolidated departments of Vocational Teacher Education to be used in this deliberation.

The authors were also involved in a debate in a course in Problems and Issues in Vocational Education. They were assigned the topic of advocating consolidation of Vocational Education. This article reflects some of the research used in that debate.

²This figure comes from a survey conducted by Dr. Leon W. Boucher of The Ohio State University, Department of Agricultural Education, in 1973 of all the institutions that train Vocational Agriculture teachers.

³Cotrell, Calvin J. "Developmental Highlights and Procedures," Emerging Teacher Education Models. Columbus: The Center for Vocational-Technical Education, 1971. p. 19.

⁴See Footnote 2.