

OCCUPATIONAL FOLLOW-UP  
OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION GRADUATES,  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1953-1972

Paul E. Hemp  
Professor and Chairman

Division of Agricultural Education  
University of Illinois

Accountability is the watchword of many educational groups today. For staff members in teacher education programs, it means that we must accept responsibility for delivering appropriate, relevant educational services to our students and for placing our graduates in teaching positions where they can be of service to others. One way of judging the value of a teacher education program is to determine what happens to students after graduation. If the purpose of teacher education programs is to prepare persons for employment in the teaching profession, it seems reasonable that the placement record of graduates should be used to help determine accountability.

At the University of Illinois, 595 persons were graduated from the Agricultural Education curriculum during the period 1953-1972. Of this group, 340 or 57.1 percent accepted positions as agriculture teachers the first year after graduation. The data in Table 1 show the numbers and percentages of graduates placed in various occupational categories during the year following graduation.

Table 1: Occupational Status of 595 Agricultural Education Graduates During the First Year after Graduation, University of Illinois, 1953-1972

Occupational status	Number	Percent
Agricultural occupations teacher	340	57.1
Military service	65	10.9
Graduate student	50	8.4
Farmer	33	5.5
Agribusiness worker	32	5.4
Agriculture Extension worker	24	4.0
Teacher, other than agriculture	18	3.0
Nonagricultural jobs	13	2.2
Unknown or deceased	12	2.0
Agricultural Missionary or Peace Corp worker	8	1.3
Total	595	99.8

What standard should be used in judging the accountability of an institution for the placement of its graduates? Using a common standard for all institutions would suggest that the factors which influence placement rates are the same for all situations and that the objectives for all programs are identical. It seems reasonable to expect that the following factors should be considered in judging the placement record of an Agricultural Education program:

1. Program objectives. Is the program designed exclusively to prepare teachers of agriculture at the secondary level? At some institutions the Agricultural Education program is considered to be the best preparatory program for extension workers, agricultural missionaries or farmers.
2. Student admission and retention standards. To what extent does the institution admit and retain only those students who are firmly committed to employment in teaching? Are steps taken to screen out students who fail to meet academic or other standards?
3. Employment opportunities. What opportunities exist in the state or elsewhere for the employment of teacher education graduates? To what extent do alternative employment opportunities attract teacher education graduates away from the teaching profession?

The on-the-job performance of Agricultural Education graduates is another indicator of the success of a teacher education program. In this follow-up study, no teacher-performance data were collected; however, the rate of retention in agriculture teaching was calculated at various intervals. Of the 340 graduates who were initially employed as agriculture teachers during the period 1953-72, 158 were still employed as teachers of agriculture in 1972-73. The number of graduates employed as agriculture teachers during the first year after graduation and the number and percentage who were still employed as agriculture teachers in Illinois in 1972-73 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of University of Illinois Graduates in Agricultural Education Who Were Employed as Teachers of Agriculture During the First Year after Graduation and in 1972-73

Year of graduation	Number teaching first year after graduation	Number and percentage teaching in 1972-73	
		Number	Percent
1953	21	6	28.6
1954	18	3	16.7
1955	15	5	33.3
1956	26	13	50.0
1957	30	10	33.3
1958	22	6	27.3
1959	22	8	36.4
1960	18	7	38.9
1961	20	7	35.0
1962	15	7	46.7
1963	14	9	64.4
1964	18	4	22.2
1965	13	6	46.2
1966	16	8	50.0
1967	14	10	71.4
1968	12	6	50.0
1969	14	12	85.7
1970	14	12	85.7
1971	8	9	112.5
1972	10	10	100.0
Totals	340	158	

The data in Table 2 show that the retention rate in agriculture teaching was highest for those who had been teaching less than six years. The percentage figures suggest that time is not the sole factor related to the retention of teachers in agriculture teaching; however, much of the attrition from the teaching ranks seems to occur between the third and sixth or seventh year of teaching.

### Discussion

The national placement data for the period 1965-1970 show that 51.0-64.6 percent of the Agricultural Education graduates were employed as teachers of agriculture during the first year after graduation.<sup>1</sup> The University of Illinois placement percentage of 57.1 percent is at least equal to or perhaps higher than the national average.

Of the approximately 43 percent of the University of Illinois graduates who did not take teaching positions during the first year after graduation, 19.3 percent continued their education or entered military service. Slightly more than eight percent were employed in occupations closely related to agriculture teaching (Peace Corps, missionary work, or teaching nonagriculture subjects) and nearly 10 percent were employed in agribusiness or farming.

#### FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Woodin, Ralph J. Supply and Demand for Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in 1970, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, p. 11.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRY-OUT OF A SYSTEM FOR EVALUATING PROGRAMS IN VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

John Hillison  
Assistant Professor

Occupational Education  
Western Kentucky University

Sue Ellen Bird  
Graduate Assistant

Vocational teachers and teacher educators have long desired an effective means to evaluate vocational teacher education programs. While vocational teacher educators have in the past been somewhat concerned with evaluation, the present thrust for accountability in all aspects of education has focused many of its questions on teacher preparation. To further emphasize the importance of evaluation for teacher education programs, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has adopted a recommended standard concerning evaluation of graduates of these programs. Standard 5.1 reads: "The institution conducts a well-defined plan for evaluating the teachers it prepares."<sup>1</sup>

A major problem faced by those realizing the need for evaluation in vocational teacher education has been the lack of an effective evaluation model. In 1972, with this problem in mind, the Kentucky Bureau of Vocational Education funded a project whose major purpose was to develop such a model. The basic purpose of the project entitled "The Development and Try-out of a System for Evaluating Programs of Vocational Teacher Education," was to establish a model for evaluating vocational teacher education programs and to try-out the model at Western Kentucky University.