

ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE 70's¹

Cayce Scarborough
Professor

Agricultural Education
Auburn University

Issues in teacher education have been around at least 2400 years. Notables such as Aristotle and Socrates discussed the problems of teaching and learning. Today some of these issues have moved from the books and educational journals to the front pages, the T. V. and radio. In the past few weeks in North Carolina, only the peace talks and the POW releases have received more attention in the news media than has the certification of teachers. Close behind in publicity has been the question of Career Education. These are seen as major issues affecting education in North Carolina for years to come.

So, issues in teacher education are easy to find. The question is one of priorities, urgency, or need. Perhaps we need to take a realistic look at trends and which of these we can influence, which we might influence and how to stop worrying about those trends that we cannot influence. The last may be the most difficult. Then we should try to identify issues that have special implications for teacher education in occupational and/or vocational education. Finally, are there issues that we in Agricultural Education face that are not faced by others? The outline then, will be something like this:

- I. Issues in Teacher Education in All Areas
- II. Issues in Teacher Education in Occupational Education
- III. Issues in Teacher Education in Agricultural Education

I. Issues in Teacher Education in All Areas

Certification

Easily the number one issue in teacher education today is certification. Not only what is required, but who will see that the requirements are met. The public as well as educators have never been so concerned about any issue as they now are about certification. Let's look at some of these.

¹Excerpts from a paper prepared for the Teacher Education Section, Southern Region Agricultural Education Conference, Mobile, Alabama, February 27, 1973. Dr. Scarborough was at North Carolina State University until June, 1973.

Competency-Based Approach

This question might have remained in the professional education courses and in the state department of education except for some related issues! At any rate, for better or worse the competency question is being cussed and discussed over the country, especially the Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE).

First, this is not a new question for this group. In fact, a program on this very topic took place at a Southern Regional Conference about 20 years ago. Also, my long-time partner in such discussions, Obed Snowden, reminded you last year of another effort we made to work on the competency approach. Elton Rhoad did his doctoral study at Ohio State more than 20 years ago around the problems of identifying technical competencies needed by teachers of agriculture. (Incidentally, if I remember correctly, there were more than 800.) However, because we recognized the problem years ahead of some in teacher education, does not mean that we have solved the problem. Do we see competencies as discrete items to be added, the result being an effective teacher? Put into a mathematical model, it would look like this:

$$C_1 + C_2 + C_3 + \dots + C_{47} = \text{Effective Teacher}$$

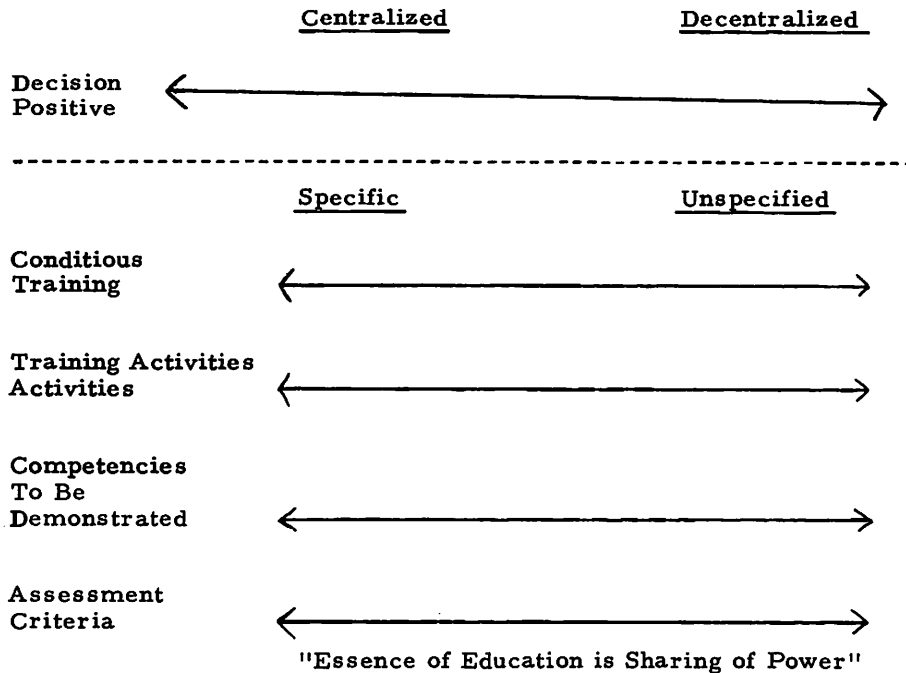
or does it?

Who Controls Certification?

Again, there are several issues within this major question. One of these is state vs. local control. A person who spent years in the Certification Division in a state department of education and now a university professor, illustrated his ideas on this issue by the following model on the next page.

Whether you agree with the man on power in education, the struggle for the control of certification is a lively one in a number of states. It is complicated and differs from state to state. Underlying much of the controversy is the emerging role of the teacher organizations. The days are over when the superintendent decided what was to be done, told the teachers to do it and they did it. Some states are considering a Licensing Bureau approach completely outside the state department of education.

CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS



The major issue for us, however, is what role, if any, will the teacher educators have, whoever becomes the decision makers? This is more than you or I wanting a piece of the action. More importantly is the question of the relationship of programs in teacher education at the universities and certification. If performance is pushed to the extreme, or if tests become the major criterion, teachers might well be certified without any teacher education at a university, or any other special program. Some years ago a teachers examination was used to certify to teach without the benefit of any college program.

A professor who has been teaching teachers for more than 50 years says that there has grown up a "Folklore of Beliefs" in teacher education that hinders our looking clearly at the issues. These are in three areas as follows:

1. Academic: If you know subject matter, you know how to teach.
2. Theory: If you know how people learn, you know how to teach.

3. Practice: A university trains teachers and proves it through student teaching.

He suggests all of these are myths. In fact, that our university student teaching is a waste of time-unless the student teacher sets up a set of skills to be learned and done, and does them until he is skilled! Incidentally, from his research in many classrooms, he concludes that a major need of teachers is to improve their language. No, not clean it up nor increase their vocabulary, but to say what they mean and to help their students do the same!

II. Issues in Vocational Teacher Education

Of course, teacher educators in Vocational Education face the same general issues as other teacher educators. In this section, some of the issues that are peculiar to Vocational Education will be discussed.

Manpower Needs

The number one issue is to what extent should vocational education programs be developed to meet manpower needs of industry, business, agencies and institutions? This is a philosophical question as well as a practical economic problem. As you know, a key point in the argument against educating "for the world of work" is that we are supporting the status quo, assigning young people work roles, favoring the haves over the have-nots, taking over the family role of occupational decision-making, and similar philosophical arguments. Sociological factors are also part of this complex picture of meeting manpower needs; for example, if you refer to local manpower needs, what is "local"? How far will people commute to work? Who will move in order to take a job?

Such questions as these indicate to me that meeting manpower needs, even if accepted as a legitimate objective for vocational education programs, is a very complex problem. When you apply this to supply and demand for teachers, it remains a very complex problem. For example, here are the projected manpower needs for additional teachers of agriculture in North Carolina:

<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
72	37	78	55

As you can see, we could not meet such up-and-down demands with a 4-month program; certainly not with a 4-year program.

State Coordination of Vocational Teacher Education

Historically, teacher education programs developed at colleges and universities strong in the subject matter areas. Thus, we have programs scattered throughout the state in private as well as public colleges and universities. In these days of across-the-board needs, especially in-service programs, state-wide coordination is an urgent need. The issue is how can the coordinated effort be best planned and sustained. Experiences in our state indicate that it is not easy and sometimes seems "nigh impossible!" But each state must learn how.

Certified in Two or More Vocational Areas

One of the strong points of vocational teachers through the years has been the requirement of skills in a certain vocational area. At least this is what we have told ourselves and others. This has been generally accepted in the schools. However, this has been off-set by the criticism that the vocational teacher is too narrowly educated. This too, probably is an acceptable argument in many cases. Whether the two competencies are mutually exclusive has not been determined. At any rate, we face the question of certification in more than one vocational area. In short, many vocational agricultural teachers, as well as vocational teachers in the other areas, are being asked to teach in other vocational areas. In some cases, this is seen as a mandate in the 1963 Act while others are trying to add other vocational programs through use of agriculture and home economic teachers.

Still another reason is found in the question by a state certification officer, "Why don't we certify them all as occupational teachers?"

Finally, the issue of Career Education. What will be the working arrangement of programs dealing with awareness, exploration, and preparation? Much is heard on the definition of Career Education. More important, I think, is the concept and the implementation of the concept. Will these be "on their own" or will we have the concepts developed as part of traditional vocational programs?

III. Issues in Teacher Education in Agricultural Education

Again, it seems clear that the issues and problems discussed in the two previous sections of this paper will also apply to Agricultural Education. So, we will try to limit our discussion here to those problems particularly important in Agricultural Education.

Specialist vs. Generalist

Although this issue has been around a long time, it is still the number one question before us. It's like the story of the old professor who was teaching his same old course on alumni day when a former student stopped by and said:

"Well, Professor, I see you are asking the same questions you used to ask."

"Yes," replied the professor, "but the answers are different."

I'm not sure that I know the answers, but the problem is still there. Furthermore, some of us who grew up in a time where you could at least know a little about most productive agriculture in our areas, are complicating the problem by trying to get our students to follow this idea today.

Basis for What to Teach

Here is another closely related problem that has been around a long time. This problem persists in spite of many "answers" that have been developed through the years. Here are a few of the answers:

Job Enterprise Analysis

Field Crops
Animal Husbandry
Horticulture
Farm Management

Cross-Sectional Approach

Ag. I
Ag. II
Ag. III
Ag. IV

Problem-Solving Approach

Community Needs
Job Analysis
"Things to Do, Things to Know!"
Forked-Road Situation

Individualized Instruction

Individual Needs
Supervised Practice Program
Individual Study
Notebook!

Career-Oriented Approach

Core Program
Clusters
Instructional Areas
Cooperative Programs

_____ ?

These are decisions concerning local vocational agricultural programs. However, they become teacher education problems when we try to help our graduates take their places as beginning teachers and do a good job of deciding what to teach in their agricultural classes.

An essential part of working on the problem of what to teach is who does what. That is, what is the major role of the teachers, the supervisors, the teacher educators, and the curriculum specialist in the process? For example, is there to be a Basic Core of one year? Two years? Who decides? To answer by saying "jointly" or "all are involved," still does not answer who does what. We probably differ from state to state on this question more than any other we face.

Who Enrolls in Vocational Agricultural Classes?

This may be one of those questions that we can do nothing about in some cases. However, it is one of the major issues facing us today. Failure to answer this question makes it impossible to answer many other problems. Furthermore, if students are enrolled for any reason other than for pursuing an agricultural career, how can we assume "officially" that all enrolled in agricultural courses are pursuing an agricultural career in that particular area of agriculture?

Again, we are talking about a local problem that becomes a problem for us all. Factors making up the problems include why an individual enrolls, who does the enrolling, the requirements for enrolling and continuing in vocational agricultural and parents understanding and expectations of the vocational agricultural program.

Role of Agricultural Teacher in Career Education Programs

The ways in which local schools use the agricultural teacher in programs on Career Awareness and Exploration will influence our programs. These vary widely, partly because of interest of teachers. The issue is whether the teacher can build this into a broader program of vocational agriculture or if vocational agriculture gets lost in the shuffle. (One example of the former is the New Holland, Pennsylvania model explained at the 1971 National Agricultural Education Conference in Denver.)

More Specific Teacher Education Issues

The key question that faces us now is an old one too. That is, are the graduates of our Agricultural Education programs able to do an effective job as beginning teachers? How do we answer that question? How can we answer it? As the old professor said, we probably need a different answer than we've had before. For example, the job analysis approach is no longer adequate. As indicated earlier, the jobs that face many beginning teachers vary so much until they do not lend themselves to analysis and advanced preparation. Rather, we must provide a program for the self-study and self-direction of the Agricultural Education student so that he will develop into an educational program planner in a school-community.