



## The Agriculture Teacher In Illinois Community Colleges

Paul E. Hemp

The first occupational education program in agriculture to qualify for state and federal vocational reimbursement in Illinois was started at Joliet Junior College in 1965. Since that time, agricultural occupations programs have been established in 29 postsecondary institutions in the state. In 1977-78, agriculture department chairpersons at 29 Illinois community colleges reported the names of 158 agriculture teachers employed to teach courses in agricultural production, agricultural supplies and products, horticulture, agricultural marketing, agricultural mechanization, forestry, agricultural resources, and agricultural management.

In addition to occupational programs and courses, community colleges in Illinois offer transfer courses in agriculture, certificate programs of less than two years in length, and adult education courses and workshops.

To learn more about the agriculture teaching personnel at the community college level, a study was undertaken in 1977-78 to collect demographic data on the 158 agriculture instructors identified by community college administrators. The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How many full-time and part-time teachers are teaching in various taxonomy areas?
2. What academic and certification qualifications do these teachers have?
3. How many years of high school teaching experience and agriculture work experience do community college teachers have?
4. What percentage of agriculture instructors belong to various professional organizations?
5. What is the length of teaching contract for agriculture teachers?

A survey form designed to answer the five research questions was sent to 158 agriculture teachers employed in 29 postsecondary institutions. The demographic form was a part of a comprehensive questionnaire used in a research project conducted by a team of teacher educators at the University of Illinois.<sup>1</sup> Responses were received from 109 teachers employed in 22 Illinois postsecondary institutions. The results of the demographic phase of the study are presented in this report.

### Program Areas Taught

Agricultural department chairpersons were asked to classify their staff members by taxonomy areas. The taxonomy or program areas taught in Illinois community

Hemp is a professor of Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Campus.

colleges and the number of teachers assigned to each area were as follows:

|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Agricultural Production    | 60 teachers |
| 2. Horticulture               | 42 teachers |
| 3. Agricultural Mechanization | 24 teachers |
| 4. Agricultural Supply        | 20 teachers |
| 5. Forestry                   | 12 teachers |

Of the 158 agriculture teachers included in the population to be studied, 91 or 58 percent were classified as full-time teachers and 67 or 42 percent were classified as part-time teachers. Survey forms were distributed to the 158 agriculture teachers, and usable returns were received from 109 teachers. Of the 109 respondents, 83 percent classified themselves as part-time instructors. Thus, the respondent group was weighted heavily in terms of the full-time teacher. All of the 109, except four, were male teachers.

### Academic and Certification Qualifications

In Illinois, teachers employed in postsecondary institutions are not required to hold a teaching certificate. Most community college teachers hold a baccalaureate degree or higher, but in some occupational areas instructors with strong technical background who do not have academic degrees are employed. The highest level of education attained and the type of teaching certificate held by the teachers included in this study are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Highest Level of Education Reported by 109 Community College Teachers of Agriculture

| Degree or Level                   | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| High School                       | 5                  | 4.6        |
| AAS Degree or<br>2 yrs of College | 5                  | 4.6        |
| B.S. Degree                       | 15                 | 13.8       |
| M.S. Degree                       | 47                 | 43.1       |
| M.S. Degree + 30 hrs.             | 31                 | 28.4       |
| Ph.D. or Ed.D.                    | 6                  | 5.5        |
| Total                             | 109                | 100.0      |

Table 2. Type of Teaching Certificate Held by 106 Community College Teachers of Agriculture

| Certificate   | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Not Certified | 36                 | 34.0       |
| Licensed      | 9                  | 8.5        |
| Temporary     | 5                  | 4.7        |
| Provisional   | 11                 | 10.4       |
| Permanent     | 45                 | 42.5       |
| Total         | 106                | 100.0      |

## Experience Qualifications

Many community colleges in Illinois have recruited agriculture instructors from secondary schools. Industry has served as another source of teacher candidates for some of the occupational programs. The number and percentage of teachers with varying amounts of high school teaching experience are shown in Table 3. The number and percentage of teachers with varying amounts of agriculture work experience are shown in Table 4.

**Table 3. Number of Years of Experience as Secondary Teachers of Agricultural Occupations**

| Years | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|------------|
| None  | 45                 | 42.0       |
| 1-5   | 30                 | 28.0       |
| 6-10  | 23                 | 21.5       |
| 11-15 | 3                  | 2.8        |
| 16-20 | 6                  | 5.7        |
| Total | 107                | 100.0      |

**Table 4. Years of Non-teaching Agriculture Work Experience After Age Eighteen Reported by 109 Community College Teachers of Agriculture**

| Years       | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| None        | 15                 | 13.8       |
| 1-5         | 46                 | 42.3       |
| 6-10        | 24                 | 22.0       |
| 11-20       | 15                 | 13.7       |
| 21 or more  | 8                  | 7.2        |
| No response | 1                  | 1.0        |
| Total       | 109                | 100.0      |

## Membership in Professional Organizations

In 1968-69, the Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors (IACCAI) was formed. This organization has attracted a larger number of community college agriculture teachers in Illinois than any other professional organization at either the state or national level. In this study, agriculture teachers were asked if they held membership in seven professional organizations active in Illinois. A summary of their responses is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Number and Percentage of Community College Agriculture Teachers who Belonged to Selected Professional Organizations in 1977-78. (N - 109)**

| Organization   | Number of |            |
|--|-----------|------------|
|  | Teachers  | Percentage |
| IACCAI - Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors | 58        | 53.2       |
| IVA - Illinois Vocational Association                                      | 38        | 34.9       |
| AVA - American Vocational Association                                      | 34        | 31.2       |
| IAVAT - Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers            | 33        | 30.3       |
| NVATA - National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association               | 29        | 26.6       |
| IEA - Illinois Education Association                                       | 14        | 12.8       |
| IFT - Illinois Federation of Teachers                                      | 9         | 8.2        |
| Others   | 15        | 13.8       |

Percentage figures in Table 5 do not add to 100 percent because some teachers belong to more than one professional organization. In the "other" category ten different organizations were mentioned with no more than two respondents listing a particular organization.

## Length of Teaching Contract

Community colleges in Illinois are not required to employ vocational teachers on an extended contract. The length of contract varies from nine months to twelve months. The number and percentage of teachers who reported various lengths for their contracts are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Length of Teaching Contract for 98 Community College Teachers of Agriculture**

| Months | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------|------------|
| 9      | 54                 | 55.1       |
| 9½     | 3                  | 3.1        |
| 10     | 7                  | 7.1        |
| 11     | 17                 | 17.3       |
| 11½    | 4                  | 4.1        |
| 12     | 13                 | 13.3       |
| Total  | 98                 | 100.0      |

## Major Findings

1. During the past 15 years, agriculture occupations programs have been established in 29 public community colleges in Illinois which employ approximately 158 teachers of agriculture.
2. Approximately 65 percent of the agriculture teachers employed by community colleges in Illinois teach in the Agricultural Production or Horticulture areas. About 28 percent of the teachers teach courses in Agricultural Mechanics or Agricultural Supply and Products.
3. Approximately 42 percent of the community college agriculture teachers included in this study were part-time teachers. All but four were males.
4. Slightly more than 90 percent of the agriculture teachers have at least a B.S. degree. Approximately 77 percent have a M.S. degree, work beyond the Master's degree, or a Ph.D. degree.
5. Approximately 42 percent of the agriculture teachers included in this study have a regular secondary teaching certificate. About 34 percent do not hold a teaching certificate of any type.
6. More than half (58 percent) of the agriculture teachers included in this study have taught agriculture at the high school level. About 86 percent have one or more years of agriculture work experience.
7. Fifty-eight (53 percent of the respondent group) reported that they belong to the Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors. Other professional organizations which the community college agriculture teachers join are the

Illinois Vocational Association, American Vocational Association, Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.

8. More than half (55 percent of the community college agriculture teachers are employed on nine-month contracts.

### Summary

Teachers of agriculture in Illinois community colleges are a diverse group of professionals. Their educational qualifications and their work experience in teaching and in agricultural industries vary considerably from college to college and from program to program. Since most community colleges employ more than one agriculture teacher, candidates who have specific expertise in a particular taxonomy area or specific ex-

perience in agricultural industry are in great demand.

The demographic data presented in this report should be of interest to teacher educators and others who design and conduct in-service education programs for agriculture teachers in community colleges. These in-service programs need to be designed for specific subgroups of teachers with unique interests and needs. A wide range of educational services needs to be considered by state staff and teacher educators who are engaged in professional development efforts for teachers of agriculture at community colleges.

---

Walker, Robert W., Lowell Hillen, and Paul Hemp. Standards for Agricultural Occupations Programs in Illinois Community Colleges. Division of Agricultural Education, University of Illinois and Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, Illinois Office of Education.

---

# A Mini-Sabbatical Program — An Approach To Instructional Improvement

Jimmy G. Cheek

## Abstract

*This paper describes a complete course revision resulting from an instructional improvement activity supported by the mini-sabbatical program of the Office of Instructional Resources, University of Florida. Purposes, procedures, and accomplishments are reported. Evaluative data indicated that this activity had a significantly positive influence upon student achievement and the way students viewed the instructor, course, visual materials, and supplemental materials. Faculty and graduate student evaluation also yielded positive results.*

## Introduction

The Office of Instructional Resources (OIR) at the University of Florida provides a variety of services to support and improve instructional programs. As part of this effort, competitive proposals are requested annually from faculty for the "Mini-Sabbatical Program." This program supports instructional improvement activities. Upon project approval, funds are allocated to provide 50 percent release time for one quarter for the faculty members involved, as well as professional assistance in production of materials and development of specialized instructional procedures. Thirty-five proposals were submitted for the 1976-1977 academic year, 14 were approved with full funding and six received some support (Webb, 1978). This is a report of a project supported through the Mini-Sabbatical Program for the 1976-1977 academic year.

---

Cheek is an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 32611.

## Purpose and Objectives

The central purpose of this project was to develop innovative instructional procedures and materials for Development and Philosophy of Agricultural Education (AED 321). To achieve this purpose, the following objectives were developed and served as the framework for executing the project:

1. Develop instructional objectives for the course.
2. Develop and/or revise instructional plans.
3. Develop and/or revise student instructional materials (handouts).
4. Develop appropriate visuals for each unit of instruction including 35mm slides and overhead transparencies.
5. Develop one self-instructional module.

## Procedure

To achieve objective one, research studies concerning competency-based vocational teacher education, and specifically agricultural education, were reviewed to assist in determining the specific competencies that should be developed. Of primary concern was the study by Cheek, Beeman, and Adams (1977) regarding professional competencies needed by agribusiness and natural resources teachers in Florida. Also, the course outline and purposes of the course in relation to other courses within the department served as a basis for determining the competencies that should be addressed. Specific instructional objectives were then developed using the identified competencies.

Objective two was accomplished by developing a detailed plan of instruction based on the competencies and instructional objectives identified in objective one. Also, the method or methods of teaching were examined and