

A COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENT
TEACHERS TOWARD VOCATIONAL
AGRICULTURE BASIC CORE
CURRICULUM BEFORE
AND AFTER STUDENT
TEACHING

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Education Department at Oklahoma State University has the challenge of training future teachers of Vocational Agriculture. They provide training in many areas of education, as well as training in methods of instruction using the instructional materials available. The Agricultural Education Department and the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education have always had a very close working relationship in the training of future vocational agriculture teachers. Even with the outstanding job that has been done, both staffs are still faced with providing useful instructional materials to vocational agriculture programs. Also, they are faced with the problem of student teachers' use of the instructional materials provided to them.

Since 1969 the Oklahoma Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center (CIMC) has been established under the auspices of the Special Services of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. The function of the center is as follows:

The primary purpose of the Center is to develop and provide quality instructional materials and other ancillary services for all vocational and technical education teachers in Oklahoma.

Materials provided include learning packages which contain performance objectives, information sheets, assignment sheets, job sheets, transparency masters, and criterion measures (22, p.2).

Since establishment, the CIMC, has developed a Basic Core Curriculum for Vocational Agriculture I, II, III, and IV. In the Basic Core, units of instruction have been developed in six sections: Careers and Orientation, Leadership, Supervised Farm Training, Animal Science, Soil Science, and Agriculture Mechanics. These units of instruction are designed to account for sixty percent of the class time and the remaining forty percent is left to the instructor in order for him to use his own initiative in making content selection that fits the needs of his local community.

In the past few years all of the agricultural education students at Oklahoma State University have been required to purchase the teacher editions of the Basic Core I, II, III, and IV as the basic text. Throughout their four year program they receive training in teaching methods and techniques.

The student teaching experience is a vital and important part of the total curriculum provided for preparing teachers of vocational agriculture. It is at the beginning of this experience that prospective teachers really come to grips with the management of curriculum and students within the classroom. They are instructed in the use of the Basic Core Curriculum to help answer questions such as, "What should I teach?" "Which curriculum materials should I choose?" "What knowledge and skills are best for what level?" and "What

materials apply?" Most of them enter student teaching with apparent feelings that the curriculum materials are quite useful and useable teaching guides. One test of these assumptions is their use of the materials in real classroom settings during student teaching. As a result of this experience, they may confirm or refute those previous assumptions.

With the new Vocational Education Amendments for 1976 coming into effect, state staffs are going to be faced more and more with the problem of funds for curriculum development. It is going to be very important that quality instructional materials be developed and to do this the attitudes and input from future teachers are definitely needed(27). Under the present 1976 Vocational Amendments no funds shall be made available for the development of curriculum unless the application can demonstrate a reasonable probability that the contract will result in improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials or other learning situations within five years after the termination date of such contract.

Problem Statement

Since the CIMC has been established vocational agriculture teachers have been provided with many available instructional materials. But, today's new teachers are still faced with the problem of what to teach and what method or technique to use. Many observations have been made regarding the influence and use of curriculum materials. The fact

remains that new teachers need help in the use of the Basic Core.

With a tremendous turnover in vocational agriculture teachers the past few years a large number of young teachers are needing help with the use of their instructional programs. This help might be provided not only in pre-service training but with in-service workshops to help them utilize better the Basic Core Curriculum.

With these problems in mind this study proposed to assess the attitudes of student teachers toward the use of the Basic Core Curriculum before student teaching as compared to after student teaching is completed. The results should serve as a source of information to the Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center and the Agricultural Education Department at Oklahoma State University for future training, revision, and development.

Purpose of Study

The major purpose of this study was to compare the general attitudes of student teachers before and after student teaching toward the Basic Core Curriculum and the usefulness of its components.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated in order to deal with the purpose:

1. Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of the

Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.

2. Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of individual components of a unit of instruction within the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.

Basic Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of this study the following assumptions were made:

1. Prior to student teaching, agricultural education student teachers at Oklahoma State University are able to provide accurate evaluation of the Basic Core Curriculum as a teaching resource.
2. The instruments used were adequate in determining agricultural student teachers attitudes toward usefulness of components of units of instruction of the Basic Core Curriculum.
3. Prior to student teaching, the student teachers were familiar enough with the Basic Core Curriculum to adequately assess it.
4. During student teaching the student teachers used the Basic Core Curriculum to the extent that they were qualified to adequately assess it.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions have been adapted for this study.

Student teacher is a college student usually in the last semester of college who is teaching under the direction of a cooperating teacher and a certified professor. At Oklahoma State University student teaching is done in pairs and for a period of eight weeks.

Attitude is the feeling or opinion a person has toward the Basic Core Curriculum.

Basic Core Curriculum is a guide used for the instruction of Vocational Agriculture I, II, III, and IV.

Terminal objective is an objective stating the subject matter to be covered in terms of student performance within a unit of instruction.

Specific objective is an objective stating the performance required of the student in order to reach the terminal objective.

Information sheet is a sheet containing essential facts such as: terms, equipment, materials, and processes necessary for reaching a measurable objective of an instructional unit.

Job sheet is a guide sheet giving complete references and instructions on how to perform in the proper sequence the operations necessary to successfully complete a job.

Assignment sheet is an instrument which directs the study to be done or assignment to be carried out by the student as stated in the objective.

Test is an evaluation instrument employed to assess the degree to which the performance of the student meets predetermined levels of achievement.

Suggested activities sheet is the component which aids in providing suggestions for implementation of the unit by the teacher and tests the references used in the development of the unit.

Transparency masters provides illustrations for identification and clarification of the content presented on the information sheet.

Scope and Limitations

Data for this study were obtained by the means of a questionnaire. To insure accurate collection of the instrument it was administered by the researcher during regular class periods. The instrument was given to 20 student teachers during the fall semester of student teaching before and after student teaching was done. The same procedure was followed during the spring semester with a total of 31 students. These numbers represent 100% of student teachers during the school term of 1976-77.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Since the volume and influence of curriculum materials is becoming more important than ever before, an evaluation of curriculum materials would be a helpful means to measure their potential and give new directions to development effects. This chapter consists of a review of relevant literature and a discussion of a theoretical framework for the study.

Curriculum Development

More than a decade ago, Taba (23, p.12) assumed there was an order to curriculum development and that pursuing that order would result in a more thoughtfully planned curriculum, one that was more dynamically conceived. The order prescribed by Taba follows:

1. Diagnosis of needs
2. Formulation of objectives
3. Selection of content
4. Organization of content
5. Selection of learning experiences
6. Organization of learning experiences

7. Determination of what to evaluate and the ways and means of doing it

Taba further stated, "Curriculum are designed so that students may learn."

The Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center of the Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education has been one of the leaders in the United States, and served as a model for curriculum centers in other states. The materials developed through this center have made extensive use of measurable behavioral objectives.

According to Burns (3, p.38) behavioral objectives act as a tool which a curriculum processor uses in curriculum development. Hatcher (12, p. 105) summarizes the works by Benjamin S. Bloom and David R. Krathwahl on the classification of educational goals by pointing out that objectives are categorized under three major headings or taxonomies: (1) the cognitive domain which is concerned with remembering, thinking, and problem solving, (2) the affective domain, concerned with behavioral characteristics defined in terms of thoughts, feelings, or actions, and (3) the psychomotor domain which relates to muscular action.

Once the behavioral objectives have been selected, the curriculum developer must then select the content and the learning experiences relevant to the objectives. According to Tyler (25, p.83), "In order for educational experiences to produce a cumulative effect, they must be so organized as to reinforce each other." He gives three major criteria in

order to build an effectively organized group of learning experiences. They are continuity, sequence, and integration.

According to Popham (20) four steps are used in evaluating curriculum. First, construct or select a set of operationally stated instructional objectives which you expect the curriculum materials to accomplish. Second, pre-test the degree to which the learners can already perform the behavior of the intended objectives. Third, allow the learners to use the curriculum materials as directed by the developer of the material. The fourth and final step involves post-testing learners to see whether or not objectives have been reached. Hatcher(12, p. 39) feels, if evaluation is to be used effectively, students need to know: (1) how far they are from a goal at the beginning, (2) what progress they are making as they work and where and how improvements can be made, and (3) to what extent they have achieved the goal.

Curriculum development, according to Unruh (26, p. 83) "must be a responsive process, constantly extending, expanding, and revising the curriculum." Hatcher (12, p.322) feels the major purpose in curriculum development is to produce materials which, when used as resources by teachers, will result in programs that better meet the needs of all concerned. Those materials will in general (1) provide stimulating content that is up-to-date, (2) have included all the parts of curriculum materials needed by teachers, (3) be easy to use, and (4) present a balanced program.

The development of good useable curriculum is more

important today than ever before. Many states have established curriculum centers and many states have formed together as consortium states in order to develop and disseminate curriculum materials.

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 (27) state that funds for curriculum development will be available to the states under part A, section 133. It reads as follows:

- (A) Funds available to the states under section 130 (a) may be used for contracts for the support of curriculum development projects, including
 - "(1) the development and dissemination of vocational education curriculum materials for new and changing occupational fields and for individuals with special needs, as described in section 110; and
 - (2) the development of curriculum and guidance and testing materials designed to overcome sex bias in vocational education programs, and support services designed to enable teachers to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in vocational education programs traditionally limited to members of the opposite sex."
- (B) No contract shall be made pursuant to subsection (a) unless the applicant can demonstrate a reasonable probability that the contract will result in improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials that will be used in a substantial number of classrooms or other learning situations within five years after the termination date of such contract.

Unruh (26) has identified curriculum development as,

. . . a complex process of assessing needs, identifying desired learning outcomes, planning and preparing for instruction to achieve the outcomes, and using the cultural, social, and personal needs and interests that the curriculum is to serve (p. 79).

Bruce (2) stated that a key principle to curriculum development was to make sure that the materials were usable, and he felt that a number of different people should be

involved in their development. People who should be involved in the curriculum planning are vocational teachers, state directors, teacher educators, curriculum materials specialist, and representatives from business and industry. As pointed out by a publication by the University of California Vocational Education Department A Guide for the Development of Curriculum in Vocational and Technical Education (10, p.3), "the only curriculum a teacher is likely to take seriously is one he has helped plan." Therefore, the help of teachers is required in development, utilization, and evaluation of curriculum materials.

In-service Education

Crabtree and Hughes (7) point out increased educational change emphasizes the fact that teachers are no longer completely prepared for teaching after four years of college study. Also, according to Crabtree and Hughes (7):

In-service education becomes essential when one considers changes resulting from the knowledge explosion, development of new concepts and methods, ever increasing mobility of teachers, up-dated certification requirements, development in educational media, and additional knowledge about the learner and the learning process (p. 49).

A limited amount of research has been done in the area of in-service education. However, those who have made studies have indicated a definite need for this type of education for teachers.

Lawrence (14) believes in-service programs are major means of bringing instruction, content, and methods up to

date. Chesin and Walsh (5) describe in-service as a procedure for improvement of instruction in schools and for increasing competence and professional growth of teaching personnel during their service in schools. Matheny (17) believes that all teachers should recognize the need for continues learning.

According to Evans and Terry (4, p. 189), "in-service education is the continuing education of a person who has previously developed the basic competencies required for entry into a position on the teaching team."

Bruce and Daly (2) believe that the workshop approach serves several distinct advantages to keep teachers abreast of new methods and materials.

Teachers who participate in the workshops and become familiar with the materials are likely to use them. They are also likely to discover any weakness in the materials, thus alerting the curriculum specialists to changes that should be made when materials are revised (p. 30).

Previous Research

Patton (19) developed a model for evaluating a basic core curriculum when he attempted to determine the usefulness and acceptance of Vocational Agriculture I in Oklahoma. He developed an attitude scale to measure the opinions of the instructors concerning the adequacy of basic core curriculum materials. Similar studies were conducted by Lucas (15), Cox (6), Nielsen (18), and Sawatzky (21). Lucas attempted to determine the overall acceptance of a basic core curriculum for Vocational Agricultural Programs I through IV. Cox (6) paralleled Patton's (19) study by at-

tempting to determine the acceptance and usefulness of the basic core curriculum for the Vocational Agriculture Program II in Oklahoma. Nielsen (18) did an evaluation of the Distributive Education materials in Oklahoma. All of the above studies concluded that an overall general acceptance of the curriculum materials existed among teachers using these materials.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and the extent of use of Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching. To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives had to be attained: (1) Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching. (2) Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of individual components of a unit of instruction within the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used by dividing it into the following sections: selection of the population, development of the instrument, method employed in collecting data.

Selection of Population

The population used for this study was the 1976 fall semester Agricultural Education student teachers and the 1977 spring semester Agricultural Education student teachers

at Oklahoma State University. A total of 20 student teachers were surveyed during the fall semester with a total of 31 during the spring semester. The writer used the total population of both semesters of student teachers. These students were surveyed by the use of a questionnaire during the first nine week period before student teaching and then again during their student teacher seminar after they had completed student teaching.

Development of the Instrument

The writer reviewed attitude scales developed to assess attitudes toward curriculum in Oklahoma by Patton (19), Lucas (15), Nielson (18), and Sawatzky (21). These scales were to measure favorable and unfavorable opinions and attitudes of teachers toward core curriculum developed by the CIMC.

According to Kerlinger (13), an attitude is an expression of an individual to think, feel, perceive, and behave toward a cognitive object.

Thurstone and Chave (24), in The Measurement of Attitudes, provided guidelines and offered suggestions for construction of an attitude scale. The list they developed is as follows:

1. The statements should be as brief as possible so as not to fatigue the students who are asked to read the whole list.
2. The statements should be such that they can be endorsed or rejected in accordance with their agreement or disagreement with the attitude of the reader.
3. Double barreled statements should be avoided except possible as examples of neutrality when better neutral statements do not seem to be readily available.

4. Every statement should be such that acceptance or rejection of the statement does indicate something regarding the reader's attitude about the issue in question.
5. One must insure that at least a fair majority of the statements really belong on the attitude variable that is to be measured (p. 216).

Edwards (8) says that:

. . . a well-constructed attitude scale consists of a number of items that have been carefully edited and selected in accordance with certain criteria. As in the construction of standardized psychological tests, the first step in the construction of an attitude is to obtain items (statements) that will represent in a particular test the universe of interest (p. 9).

The instrument was constructed in two parts (i. e., Part I and Part II). Part I consisted of a list of statements which required a response by the individual on the extent of use of core curriculum. In addition, one open-ended statement was included in order to elicit any responses not included in the list of statements.

Part II of the questionnaire was developed to allow the student teachers to express attitudes toward the usefulness of the components of the units of instruction.

Before the questionnaire was submitted to the Agricultural Education student teachers, it was reviewed by Curriculum Specialists, Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator of the CIMC, Agricultural Education Staff members of Oklahoma State University, and Vocational Agricultural Staff members of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. Their responses and personal comments were used in the finalization of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the general attitudes of student teachers before and after student teaching toward the Basic Core Curriculum and usefulness of its components. Further investigation was conducted to identify the attitudes of selected variables which might influence the use of the core curriculum.

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were formulated:

1. Determine attitudes toward usefulness of the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.
2. Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of individual components of a unit of instruction within the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.

The data presented in this chapter were gathered from 51 vocational agriculture student teachers. Twenty were of the fall semester 1976 and 31 were of the spring semester

1977. Questionnaires were given to all 51 student teachers before going to their cooperating schools and then again when they returned after eight weeks of student teaching.

The questionnaire was in two parts with the first part being divided into four areas (1) components of a unit of instruction, (2) utilization of the Basic Core Curriculum, (3) statements dealing with supplementation of the Basic Core and (4) evaluation techniques. This part of the questionnaire was analyzed and summarized.

A scale was used to get an average response for each statement with numerical values being assigned to each category as follows:

<u>Positive Statements</u>		<u>Negative Statements</u>	
Strongly Agree	5	Strongly Agree	1
Agree	4	Agree	2
Undecided	3	Undecided	3
Disagree	2	Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	5

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the usefulness of the individual components of a unit of instruction. These data were analyzed and interpreted by the use of a scale giving each category a numerical value.

Components of the Basic Core Curriculum

Table I represents an attempt to summarize responses to statements designed to assess student teachers' opinions regarding components which make up units of the Basic Core Curriculum. It should be noted that responses from both fall 1976 and spring 1977 student teachers before and after the

TABLE I
 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING
 COMPONENTS OF THE BASIC
 CORE CURRICULUM

Statement	Before Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			After Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			Net Change in Combined Responses From Before to After Student Teaching
	Fall	Spring	Combined	Fall	Spring	Combined	
1	4.25	4.26	4.25	3.95	4.03	4.00	-.25
*2	3.60	3.61	3.61	3.35	3.32	3.33	-.28
3	2.45	3.13	2.86	3.30	3.10	3.18	+.32
*4	3.50	3.81	3.69	4.00	3.19	3.51	-.18
6	3.70	3.90	3.82	4.10	3.84	3.94	+.12
8	3.05	2.84	2.92	2.90	3.00	2.96	+.04
10	3.65	4.10	3.92	4.00	4.13	4.08	+.16
15	3.95	4.06	4.20	4.25	3.77	3.96	-.24
20	4.15	4.29	4.24	4.45	3.94	4.14	-.10
*24	3.25	3.61	3.47	3.20	2.71	2.90	-.57

* negatively stated statement

student teaching experiences are summarized in this table.

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the use of behavioral objectives enables the teacher and students to identify the most important elements of the topics being studied. The "before" responses were very close and in the agree category. A 4.25 was recorded for the fall group and a 4.26 for their spring counterparts, leaving a 4.25 combined mean response for both groups. Although the mean responses of both groups were lower after student teaching, 3.95 for the fall group and 4.03 for the spring group, they too were in the "agree" category with a 4.00 combined response. The total net change in mean response from the "before" and "after" was a $-.25$.

A negatively inclined statement which read "the suggested activities sheets within the Basic Core are of little value in planning daily lessons", was included to measure opinions regarding this component. The before student teaching responses of the fall and spring groups were virtually the same at 3.60 and 3.61 respectively, both of which meant the two groups on the average disagreed with this statement. The closeness of the two groups held true for their after student teaching responses also, with a 3.35 calculated for the fall group and 3.32 for the spring group. These latter responses fell into the undecided category and had a net change from before to after of $-.28$.

It was asked of the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the information sheets should be

restricted to subject outlines leaving specific content to each teacher. The before student teaching responses of the fall and spring varied some with the fall group being 2.45 (disagree) and the spring being 3.13 (undecided) but the overall comparison of the two groups yielded a 2.86 (undecided). The responses of the fall and spring groups after student teaching were very close showing a combined mean response of 3.18 which falls in the undecided category. So here it can be said that there was a net increase before to after of .32.

A negatively stated statement that "the tests are too elementary and allow the students to score too high on unit tests" was responded to by the fall and spring groups before teaching as a definite "disagree", with the combined score being 3.69. Virtually the same response was indicated by the fall and spring groups after teaching with the fall being 4.00 and the spring with a 3.19. Both still in the disagree category. A .18 decline was indicated as the net change of before to after responses for the groups.

It was the attitude of the fall and spring student teachers before and after that assignment sheets provide appropriate practice students need to reach a certain specific objective in a unit of instruction. Both groups' responses fell in the agree category with a combined response of before teaching of 3.82 and of the after showing a 3.94. From these responses the respondents were more in agreement after teaching than before teaching.

Statement number eight stated "more job sheets are needed in the Basic Core units to enable the students to reach the unit objectives." It was the attitude of both groups, fall and spring before and fall and spring after, that they were undecided in their opinions on the need of job sheets with a combined score from the before group of 2.92 and a combined score from the after of 2.96. The net increase was .04.

Responses to the next three statements on the table numbers 10, 15, and 20 all fell into the agree category. The before and after responses to statement 10 which stated "the job sheets are useful in teaching a shop skill" had an increase of .16 in the responses after teaching. Statement number 15 stating, "student information sheets should be given to the students" showed the before responses of the fall group being 4.15 and the spring 4.29 with a combined mean response of 4.20. However, the response level of the fall group after teaching was a 4.25 and that of the spring group dropping to 3.77 and an overall mean response of 3.96. These responses showed a decrease in opinion (.24) after teaching as compared to before. "Terms and definitions are helpful in achieving the objectives of a unit of instruction" was statement number 20 and also drew an agree response of both fall and spring before teaching and fall and spring after teaching. The responses indicated a minus .10 in net change from before to after of both groups.

A negatively stated statement which reads, "terms and

definitions are very difficult to teach" was used to measure this component. The before student teaching responses of the fall and spring ranged from 3.25 (undecided) for the fall to 3.61 (agree), but the combined response was a 3.47 (undecided) response. The responses of the fall and spring groups after teaching differed somewhat to their former expressions. In the fall group the mean response was 3.20 (undecided), the spring respondents showed a 2.71 (undecided) and the combined response of both groups was 2.90 (undecided). The net change of the before and after was a decrease of .57.

Utilization of the Basic Core Curriculum

Table II is a summary of responses to statements designed to assess student teachers' attitude and opinions on the utilization of the Basic Core Curriculum. Again, responses of both fall 1976 and spring 1977 student teachers, before and after student teaching were summarized in this table.

When analyzing statement number five that stated "motivation is an integral part of teaching a unit of instruction" it was found that the responses of fall and spring groups before student teaching fell into the strongly agree category. The fall and spring groups after student teaching fell into two different categories, 4.70 (strongly agree) and 4.42 (agree) respectively. However, the combined mean response was in the strongly agree (4.53) category. It was also noted in this table that the respondents were less in agreement with this statement after teaching than before by a minus .16 margin.

TABLE II

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING
UTILIZATION OF THE BASIC
CORE CURRICULUM

Statement	Before Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			After Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			Net Change in Combined Responses From Before to After Student Teaching
	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
5	4.75	4.65	4.69	4.70	4.42	4.53	-.16
9	4.40	4.45	4.43	4.50	4.19	4.31	-.12
12	3.75	4.19	4.02	4.30	4.29	4.29	+.27
13	4.15	4.13	4.14	4.30	4.29	4.29	+.15
14	3.75	3.81	3.78	3.75	3.77	3.76	-.02
*16	4.00	3.94	3.96	4.05	3.97	4.00	+.04
*17	3.60	3.55	3.57	3.20	2.94	3.04	-.53
19	4.20	4.48	4.37	4.50	4.19	4.31	-.06
25	3.15	2.81	2.94	3.40	3.26	3.31	+.37

* negatively stated statement

The responses of both the fall and spring groups before and after student teaching were in the agree category dealing with the statement that, "the Basic Core Curriculum is an adequate teaching resource but its value is improved by the use of a variety of teaching techniques." Again, we see a decline in agreement of .12 after teaching from before.

A statement dealing with each student having his own copy of the Basic Core manual showed an increase of .27 in degree of agreement after teaching. The responses of all groups were in the agree category with a combined mean response for the spring and fall group before student teaching found to be 4.02 and the fall and spring group after student teaching to be 4.29.

By analyzing the findings on statement number 13 stating that, "teaching preparation time can be shortened by using the Basic Core" it was found that both groups, fall and spring, before student teaching responded with virtually the same scores of 4.15 and 4.13 respectively. Just like the preceding findings, the fall and spring groups' after teaching responses were also very close, with the fall being 4.30 and the spring 4.29. It was also noted that before and after both groups were in much more agreement after teaching than before teaching. Their level of agreement increased by .15 during this span.

"The Basic Core provides content which meets the individual needs of most students" was statement 14 on the table. It was noted by the responses of all the groups that they

agreed with the statement and indicated very little net change (-.02) before and after of the two groups.

When analyzing a negatively stated statement that read, "the Basic Core Curriculum for Vocational Agriculture keeps the teacher from being innovative in his teaching," it was noted all groups responding disagreed with the statement. It was also indicated that they were in more disagreement after student teaching than before.

Another negatively stated statement was "the format of the Basic Core is dull, boring and unmotivating." It had responses of virtually the same with the fall and spring groups before teaching. The responses fell into the disagree category. However, the fall and spring after teaching calculations showed the groups being undecided, with 3.20 and 2.94 respectively in their responses. With both fall and spring groups combined a loss of .53 was indicated as the net change. So they showed less agreement after teaching than before.

Attitudes toward the number 19 statement declined .06 during the time used for student teaching. This statement, which stated that the Basic Core Curriculum is an essential tool for the first year teacher, received responses of 4.20 before teaching from the fall students as compared to 4.48 before teaching from the spring group for a combined score of 4.37. After their student teaching experiences, the fall respondents had increased their agreement from agree (4.20) to strongly agree (4.50) but the spring group dropped back

in the agree category with a 4.19 leaving a combined score of 4.31 (agree).

The last item which indicated an attitude toward utilization of the Basic Core Curriculum stated that more assignment sheets are needed within the Basic Core units to give the students more appropriate practice to reach the unit objectives. It was noted here that the respondents for both before and after student teaching during the fall and spring were holding undecided opinions. A combined mean response of the fall and spring before teaching was 2.94 while in the fall and spring group after teaching increased to 3.31 leaving a positive net change of .37.

Supplementation of the Basic Core Curriculum

In Table III, responses to statements which deal with the supplementation of the Basic Core Curriculum have been summarized. As before, responses from both fall, 1976 and spring, 1977 student teachers, before and after the student teaching experience are presented.

Statement 11 stated that additional films, slides and other teaching aids should be developed and supplied by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education in order to supplement the Basic Core. The student teachers indicated their agreement with this statement with scores of 4.30 and 4.35 before their student teaching experience by the fall and spring groups respectively. Their activities as teachers apparently reinforced this attitude as their

TABLE III
 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING
 SUPPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC
 CORE CURRICULUM

Statement	Before Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			After Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			Net Change in Combined Responses From Before To After Student Teaching
	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
11	4.30	4.35	4.33	4.60	4.55	4.57	+ .24
21	3.95	4.13	4.06	4.70	4.52	4.59	+ .53
22	4.10	4.23	4.18	4.60	4.35	4.47	+ .29

responses fell in the strongly agree category with a 4.60 after teaching response for the fall and a 4.55 for the spring. The total net change was an increase in their attitude toward the need for more materials with a score of .24.

Agreement as reflected by mean responses to the second statement in Table III increased .53 during the time of the student teaching experience. This statement, which indicated that students should take notes on the information sheets to supplement the information, received responses of 3.95 before student teaching in the fall as compared with 4.13 before teaching in the spring, with a combined score of 4.06. After their student teaching experience, the respondents had increased from agreeing to strongly agreeing with the statements as is shown by the 4.70 and 4.52 scores for fall and spring groups respectively. Overall, the combined mean response after teaching was a strongly agree or 4.59.

The last item intended to reflect attitudes toward the supplementation of the Basic Core Curriculum stated that transparency masters provided as supplements to information sheets are helpful to the students. The combined responses of the groups for both before and after the student teaching experience fell in the agree category. There was, however, an increase in the degree of agreement after student teaching for both semesters as shown by the increase from 4.10 to 4.60 for the fall and 4.23 to 4.35 for the spring. The total net change in their responses was a .29 increase.

Evaluation of the Basic Core Curriculum

Three statements on the questionnaire referred to the evaluation portions of the Basic Core materials as detailed in Table IV. Statement number 7 stated that the criterion-referenced test measures the amount of information needed by the student to compete in the world of work. All responses of both of the groups fell in the undecided area, although there was an increase in the overall responses of a .19. Specifically, the findings of the study showed mean responses of 3.05 before and 3.45 after teaching experience for the fall group, with 3.26 and 3.35 being the comparable responses of the spring group.

The second of these statements, number 18, contended that evaluation techniques tend to measure only recall level learning rather than learning involving student attitudes, skill, and problem solving abilities. With the exception of the after student teaching responses of the spring group, all responses fell in the undecided category. It is interesting to note that the fall student teacher's responses remained the same after their teaching experience as it was before at 3.25. For those doing their teaching during the spring, an increase in their agreement level from undecided, 3.00, to 3.55 or agree or 3.55 was shown. The total increase from before teaching to after teaching was .33.

The degree of agreement shown by the respondents decreased to a statement that a teacher can use tests provided by

TABLE IV
 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING
 EVALUATION OF THE BASIC
 CORE CURRICULUM

Statement	Before Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			After Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			Net Change in Combined Responses From Before To After Student Teaching
	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
7	3.05	3.26	3.18	3.40	3.35	3.37	+ .19
18	3.25	3.00	3.10	3.25	3.55	3.43	+ .33
23	3.55	3.90	3.76	3.45	3.42	3.43	- .33

the Basic Core Curriculum as a basis for grading. In both cases, the prospective teachers answered in the agree category before their student teaching experience with scores of 3.55 for the fall and 3.90 for the spring. After this experience, however, both groups fell to the undecided category, with a 3.45 and 3.42 respective mean responses. A decreased .33 was the total net change as shown in the findings to this statement reported in Table IV.

Components of a Unit of Instruction

Part II of the questionnaire was concerned with the student teachers' opinions as to the overall usefulness of the eight components of a unit of instruction. Respondents were asked to indicate the usefulness of the Terminal Objective, Specific Objectives, Suggested Activities, Information Sheets, Transparency Masters, Job Sheets, Assignment Sheets, Tests, and the Answer to the Tests in one of five categorial response. These categories included Highly Useful, Useful, Moderately Useful, Of Some Use and Not Useful.

For the purpose of tabulating the results of this part of the study, the following points were assigned:

Highly Useful	3.50 - 4.00
Useful	3.49 - 2.50
Moderately Useful	2.49 - 1.50
Of Some Use	1.49 - .50
Not Useful	.49 - below

The Terminal Objectives were felt by the student teachers to be Useful before their teaching experience as shown by the ratings of 2.65 in the fall and 2.94 in the spring.

TABLE V

USEFULNESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS
OF A UNIT OF INSTRUCTION

Component	Before Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			After Student Teaching Mean Responses By Groups			Net Change In Combined Responses From Before To After Student Teaching
	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Combined</u>	
Terminal objectives	2.65	2.94	2.82	2.45	2.19	2.29	-.53
Specific objectives	2.90	3.52	3.27	3.05	2.94	2.98	-.29
Suggested activities	3.05	2.81	2.90	2.95	2.16	2.47	-.43
Information sheets	3.50	3.58	3.54	3.60	3.48	3.52	-.02
Transparency masters	3.40	3.61	3.52	3.85	3.61	3.70	+.18
Job sheets	3.15	3.29	3.23	3.15	3.03	3.07	-.16
Assignment sheets	2.85	3.26	3.09	3.05	3.06	3.05	-.04
Tests	2.70	3.23	3.01	2.90	2.87	2.88	-.13
Answers to tests	2.85	3.29	3.11	3.35	3.16	3.23	+.12

Combined, this produced a mean response of 2.82. After completing this experience, however, the mean combined response fell to a 2.29 on the Moderately Useful category. Of particular interest is the drop during the spring semester when the 31 prospective teachers went from a response of 2.94 before to a 2.19 after teaching. Overall, the net change from before to after student teaching was a negative .53.

In comparison with the Terminal Objectives, the overall findings in attitudes toward the usefulness of the Specific Objectives was higher in every category. Overall, the responses fell into the Useful category. Like the first area, the net change decreased from 3.27 before student teaching to 2.98 after the teaching experience for a net change of -.29.

As with the Terminal Objectives, opinions about the usefulness of the Suggested Activities fell from Useful before to Moderately Useful after the student teaching experience, as determined by comparisons of combined mean responses. Those completing their student teaching during the fall semester responded with a 3.05 before teaching as compared to a 2.95 after this experience. In the spring, those responding indicated a 2.81 before teaching and 2.16 afterward. The net decline in these mean scores was a .43.

Attitudes toward the next two components, the Information Sheets and Transparency Masters, were the highest of any of the components with both falling into the Highly

Useful category. Before student teaching, the respondents felt nearly the same about the Information Sheets as they did after the experience with combined scores from both semesters of 3.54 and 3.52. These same respondents increased their overall response by .18, from 3.52 before teaching to 3.70 after this experience for the Transparency Masters.

Both the Job Sheets and Assignment Sheets were felt by the student teachers to be Useful. The fall teachers responded at exactly the same level toward the Job Sheets before and after their experience. During the spring semester, however, the responses before teaching were 3.29 as compared with a 3.03 afterward. The net change from before to after student teaching was a .16 decrease. For the Assignment Sheets, the difference from before to after was only .04 less with the combined mean responses of 3.09 before as compared with a 3.05 after the experience.

Responses to the Tests and Answers to the Tests all fell in the Useful category. The minus .13 net change in the attitude toward the utility of Tests results from the 3.01 combined score before teaching as compared to the 2.88 afterward. The attitudes toward how useful were the Answers to the Tests increased a total of a .12 after the student teaching experience as determined by comparing combined responses.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the general attitudes of groups of student teachers before and after student teaching toward the Basic Core Curriculum and usefulness of its components.

Objectives

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were formulated:

1. Determine the attitudes toward the usefulness of the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.
2. Determine attitudes toward the usefulness of individual components of a unit of instruction within the Basic Core Curriculum by student teachers before student teaching as compared to after student teaching.

Methodology

A total of 51 vocational agriculture student teachers during 1976-77 were given questionnaires. They were asked to respond to the instrument before they did their teaching and then again after teaching was completed. The instrument was constructed in two parts with the first part being designed to deal with four areas (1) components of the Basic Core Curriculum, (2) utilization of the Basic Core Curriculum, (3) statements dealing with supplementation of the Basic Core, and (4) evaluation techniques. The second part of the questionnaire was developed to evaluate the student teachers' perceived usefulness of the nine components of a unit of instruction.

Upon collection of the questionnaires, responses were hand tabulated to disclose mean responses, then analyzed and summarized.

Findings

In summarizing the findings of this study, the researcher made reference to five areas of investigation dealing with the attitudes of student teachers. These areas were as follows:

1. Components of the Basic Core
2. Utilization of the Basic Core
3. Supplementation of the Basic Core
4. Evaluation of the Basic Core
5. Usefulness of the components of a unit of instruction

Varying numbers of statements were formulated to assess student attitudes toward each of the areas above. Also, both positively and negatively directed statements were included under some areas. The following is a summary of the major findings of the study by areas.

Attitudes Toward Components. Ten statements were developed to determine student teacher attitudes toward selected components of the Basic Core Curriculum. Mean responses were calculated for both fall and spring groups for before and after student teaching. These figures from the two groups were then combined to determine if changes had occurred in their perceptions as a result of using the Core Curriculum.

For the total group, it was found that after they student taught, the level of agreement to four statements increased. That is, as indicated by the net changes listed they were more in agreement that: (1) information sheets be restricted to subject outlines, leaving specifics to teachers, .32; (2) assignment sheets provide appropriate practice for students, .12; (3) more job sheets are needed, .04; (4) job sheets are useful in teaching shop skills, .16.

On the other hand, the level of agreement of six statements was less following student teaching. These statements and the degree of net change were: (1) the use of behavioral objectives enables the teacher and students to identify the most important elements to be studied, .25; (2) when planning daily lesson plans suggested activities pages are of little value, .28; (3) tests are too elementary and allow students

to score too high, .18; (4) student information sheets should be given to the students, .24; (5) terms and definitions are helpful in achieving objectives, .10; (6) terms and definitions are very difficult to teach, .57.

Attitudes Toward Utilization. Statements developed by the researcher concerning attitudes toward utilization of the Core Curriculum were responded to by the fall and spring groups of student teachers before and after teaching. Calculations of mean responses for both groups were combined to determine the net change as a result of using the materials.

It was found that on four statements the prospective teachers increased in their level of agreement after student teaching. Those statements and the net change were as follows:

1. Each student should have his own copy of the Basic Core Manual (.27)
2. Teaching preparation time can be shortened by using the Basic Core (.15)
3. The Basic Core Curriculum keeps the teacher from being innovative (.04)
4. More assignment sheets are needed within the core units to provide the students with more practice to reach the objectives (.37)

From the negative side, or those statements that drew a lower level of agreement after student teaching, it was found that five statements fell into this classification.

These statements and the respective degree of decline in agreement were:

1. Motivation is an integral part of teaching (.16)
2. The Basic Core is an adequate teaching resource but its value is improved by the use of a variety of teaching methods (.12)
3. The Basic Core meets the needs of most students (.02)
4. The format of the Basic Core is dull and un motivating (.53)
5. The Basic Core is essential for the first year teacher (.06)

Attitudes Toward Supplementing. Three statements were developed to determine attitudes of student teachers on the supplementation of the Core Curriculum. As in the preceding two areas of concern, the two groups', fall and spring, responses were combined and net changes were determined as a result of using the materials. It was found that on all three statements students increased their level of agreement after teaching. So, it was found they were in more agreement that: (1) additional films, slides and other teaching aids be developed and supplied by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education (.24); (2) students should take notes on the information sheets to supplement (+.53); (3) transparency masters provided as supplements to information sheets are helpful (+.29).

Attitudes Toward Evaluation. Here again three statements

were designed to determine student teacher attitudes toward evaluation techniques of the Core Curriculum. After responses were calculated it was found that two of the three statements had earned a higher level of agreement after student teaching than before. The statements to which response levels increased and their change are as follows:

1. The criterion-referenced test measures the amount of information needed by the student to compete in the world of work (.19)
2. Evaluation techniques tend to measure only recall level learning rather than learning involving student attitudes, skills, and problem solving abilities (.33)

There was only one statement that had a lower level of agreement after teaching than before. It was found there was less agreement in regards to the test being used as a basis for grading after teaching than before. Response to this decreased .33 following student teaching.

Usefulness of Individual Components. A summary of responses to nine individual components that make up a unit of instruction were used to determine student teacher attitudes towards the usefulness of each component. For both fall and spring groups mean responses were calculated before and after their student teaching experience. After these figures of the two groups were determined they were combined to show any changes of attitudes as to usefulness that occurred as a result of using the materials.

It was found that after student teaching the level of perceived usefulness increased for two of the components. These were Transparency Masters (up .18) and Answers to the Test (up .12).

Those components that student teachers expressed a decline in the level of usefulness and their net changes were (1) Terminal Objectives (.53); (2) Specific Objectives (.29); (3) Suggested Activities (.43); (4) Information Sheets (.02); (5) Job Sheets (.16); (6) Assignment Sheets (.04); and (7) Test (.13).

Conclusions

Using the data collected in this study certain conclusions can be presented. The researcher concludes the following:

1. Student teachers consider the Core Curriculum to be an adequate teaching instrument.
2. Student teachers felt that students need more involvement in class activities by the use of assignment sheets.
3. Student teachers strongly agreed that motivation was an integral part of teaching.
4. Student teachers feel that more slides, films and teaching aids should be supplied to supplement the Basic Core.
5. Student teachers are convinced pupils should have their own copy of the core material.

6. Student teachers used the Basic Core without losing initiative and were still innovative in their teaching.
7. Although there were decreases in mean responses in cases, student teachers attitudes toward Core Curriculum components, utilization, supplementation, evaluation and usefulness remained in the agree category after student teaching.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by this researcher as a result of having conducted this study.

1. The Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center continue to develop slides, films and teaching aids to be included in the Basic Core Curriculum.
2. There should be increased efforts in training student teachers to use the Basic Core Curriculum.
3. Encourage student teaching centers to allow student teachers to use the Basic Core to a greater extent.
4. Provide more assignment sheets or related materials that allow more student involvement within the Basic Core.
5. State Department personnel should strongly encourage that in cooperating centers each student has his personal copy of the Basic Core Curriculum.
6. Provide in-service training to cooperating teachers on the use of the Basic Core Curriculum, in order

that they might be more effective in training student teachers in its use.

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APPENDIX
SAMPLE OF TEACHERS SURVEY

- I. Where will you be doing your student teaching? _____
- II. What percent of the time did you use the core curriculum while doing your student teaching? _____
- III. Did you select the units you taught while doing your student teaching? Yes No
- IV. Was the Basic Core curriculum used in your high school Vo Ag classes? Yes No

This instrument is designed to allow you to express your opinions regarding Vocational Agriculture Basic Core I through IV. Please indicate your opinions by circling the response that most nearly expresses your feeling on each individual statement. Categories of response are: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

1. The use of behavioral objectives enables the teacher and student to identify the most important elements of the topic being studied. SA, A, U, D, SD
2. The suggested activities pages within the Basic Core are of little value in planning daily lessons. SA, A, U, D, SD
3. Information sheets should be restricted to subject outlines leaving specific content to each teacher. SA, A, U, D, SD
4. The tests are too elementary and allow the students to score too high on unit tests. SA, A, U, D, SD
5. Motivation is an integral part of teaching a unit of instruction. SA, A, U, D, SD
6. The assignment sheets provide appropriate practice students need to reach a certain specific objective in a unit of instruction. SA, A, U, D, SD
7. The criterion-referenced test measures the amount of information needed by the student to compete in the world of work. SA, A, U, D, SD
8. More job sheets are needed in the Basic Core units to enable the student to reach the unit objectives. SA, A, U, D, SD

9. The Basic Core curriculum is an adequate teaching resource, but its value is improved by the use of a variety of teaching techniques. SA, A, U, D, SD
10. The job sheets are useful in teaching a shop skill. SA, A, U, D, SD
11. Additional films, slides and other teaching aids should be developed and supplied by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education in order to supplement the Basic Core. SA, A, U, D, SD
12. Each student should have his own copies of the Basic Core manuals. SA, A, U, D, SD
13. Teaching preparation time can be shortened by using the Basic Core. SA, A, U, D, SD
14. The Basic Core provides content which meets the individual needs of most students. SA, A, U, D, SD
15. Student information sheets should be given to the students. SA, A, U, D, SD
16. The Basic Core curriculum for Vo Ag keeps the teacher from being innovative in his teaching. SA, A, U, D, SD
17. The format of the Basic Core is dull, boring and unmotivating. SA, A, U, D, SD
18. Evaluation techniques tend to measure only recall level learning rather than learning involving student attitudes, skills, and problem solving abilities. SA, A, U, D, SD
19. The Basic Core is an essential tool for the first-year teacher. SA, A, U, D, SD
20. Terms and definitions are helpful in achieving the objectives of a unit of instruction. SA, A, U, D, SD
21. Students should take notes on the information sheets to supplement the information. SA, A, U, D, SD

22. Transparency masters provided as supplements to information sheets are helpful to the students. SA, A, U, D, SD
23. A teacher can use tests provided by the Basic Core curriculum as a basis for grading. SA, A, U, D, SD
24. Terms and definitions are very difficult to teach. SA, A, U, D, SD
25. More assignment sheets are needed within the Basic Core units to give the students more appropriate practice to reach the unit objectives. SA, A, U, D, SD

Part II Indicate the overall usefulness of the following unit components by placing a check in the appropriate blocks.

	Highly Useful	Useful	Moderately Useful	Of Some Use	Not Useful
Terminal objectives					
Specific objectives					
Suggested activities					
Information sheets					
Transparency masters					
Job Sheets					
Assignment sheets					
Tests					
Answers to tests					

Please make additional comments.

VITA

Edward Arthur Smith

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: A COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENT TEACHERS
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BEFORE AND AFTER STUDENT TEACHING

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