THEME: Adult/Young Adult Education
The AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE

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Editor's Page - Keeping Adult/Young Adult Education in Perspective

What is the place of adult/young adult education in today's vocational agriculture programs? There is considerable fear that it does not have the same priority in programs as it did a few years ago. Vocational agriculture teachers no longer have the responsibility of providing adult/young adult education in some states. This is one aspect of vocational agriculture which needs to be given careful study and placed in proper perspective.

Adult/young adult instruction has never had a very prominent place in a majority of local vocational agriculture programs. There has been more lip service to what programs have had than there has been actual systematic instruction. Today's younger teachers need not feel guilty when they hear the older folks talk about programs of yesterday. Much of yesterday's instruction lacked relevance, was not systematic, and did not provide for the development of the competencies needed for success in agricultural industry. Some of the instruction encouraged individuals to stay in farming when in fact the individuals did not have sufficient motivation nor scope to earn a satisfactory income for the needed level of living for their families. Some programs (often unknowingly), the emphasis was not on modern commercial agriculture but rather on perpetuating a self-sufficient (and often subsistence) way of life.

Nature of Agriculture

Individuals who have the responsibility of providing adult/young adult education must be aware of the nature of today's agricultural industry. Enrollment of adults in educational programs in production agriculture has declined. This has been because of the number of individuals available has declined. We must realize that the agricultural industry of the 1980s is quite different from that of the previous 25 years. There are approximately 500,000 commercial farms in the United States. These farms are served by millions of individuals who are not farmers but who are in agriculture industry and need specific competencies in order to perform their work efficiently.

The nature of agricultural industry is such that adult/young adult education is needed in all areas: farming and ranching, supplies and services, agricultural mechanics, and agricultural products processing. Further, vocational agriculture is also charged with serving the needs in forest, natural resources, and horticulture.

The Teacher

Many more and more responsibilities have been added to vocational education. Very little is ever removed. Instruction has been broadened to include additional areas. FFA activities have been expanded into new areas. Students are enrolled with widely varying backgrounds whereas in the past more had farm backgrounds. Supervised occupational experience has been broadened. Standards for programs established at the Federal and state levels are merely guidelines with teachers in local schools being allowed to plan their own instructional content. Compliance regulations have increased. With all of these, it is only natural that adult/young adult education will be of less importance in traditional vocational agriculture programs.

New approaches in staffing and curriculum design are needed to insure that adult/young adult education is placed in proper perspective. The responsibility for adult/young adult education should not be added to the responsibilities of teachers who are all ready in full-time teaching. Specific time, staff responsibilities, and funding must be provided for adult/young adult education. Full-time teachers or teachers with released time from other responsibilities are needed if adult/young adult education is to be taken seriously. Teacher education programs must provide for the development of needed adult/young adult teacher competencies.

Quality

The great need in adult/young adult education is quality. Systematic, substantive instruction is essential. It is unfortunate that many of the activities in the past which were provided in the name of adult/young adult education had limited educational value. We must provide instruction that is meaningful in improving agricultural efficiency and the productivity of the individuals who participate. Design on the superfluous adult/young adult programs in the end do more harm than good for vocational agriculture.

We must keep adult/young adult education in proper perspective.

June, 1981

The theme for this issue of the Magazine is "Adult/Young Adult Education." The assistance of Dr. Larry Miller of The Ohio State University in serving as Theme Editor is appreciated. He has contributed several articles which address adult/young adult education.
Adopting The Stepchild

Education is rapidly facing a development that it has never before encountered in its history. That development is a decrease in enrollments. Educators at the elementary, secondary, postsecondary and university levels are growing aware of the erosion of the tide of more and more students each year. School closings, released educators, and re-entries are becoming familiar reports in publications throughout the Nation. This development is causing many educators to broaden their concept of education to include the adult segment of the population.

Education for adults is not a new concept. Provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act provided for adult education in vocational education. The growth of the secondary programs, and the expansion of vocational agriculture into elementary grades with career education, has been the main concern over the past 60 years. Postsecondary programs, and the broadened concept of vocational agriculture brought about by the 1963 Act, provided additional expansion and drew appropriate attention and emphasis.

Throughout the time span covered by these developments adult education was the stepchild, the segment of the program that was nice to have if there was time. Teachers, teacher educators, and supervisors continually stated that adult education was an important segment of a total program of vocational agriculture, but seldom provided the actions or support to fulfill these claims.

Enrollment trends for secondary students may necessitate the full adoption of the stepchild. When secondary or postsecondary enrollments reach the point that programs and personnel are to be cut, attention to adult education may finally be forthcoming.

Schools and programs may conduct educational assessment of the total ag-industry in their service area to determine what services they can provide. Teachers may be designated with part-time or full-time responsibilities for adult education. Small business management, selling, marketing, distribution, and advertising may become familiar topics in the curricula of adult vocational agriculture.

Teacher educators and supervisors should be ready to adequately adapt. Teacher educators need to prepare pre-service teachers to work with adults, and be prepared to meet the in-service needs of a clientele heavily engaged in adult education. Teacher education programs may find an increased need for specialists in agricultural taxonomies areas to keep teachers up-to-date in appropriate technology.

Research into adult education in agriculture should proceed immediately. Teacher educators and supervisors may need to renew their own skills and expertise in the pedagogical and supervisory skills appropriate for adult vocational agriculture.

Declines in secondary enrollment may actually allow a renewed emphasis upon a quality total program in vocational agriculture that includes, as intended, adult young adult education. Education in agriculture can be provided so as to meet the needs of people throughout their lifetimes. Adult education can then aid in drawing together schools and communities, and doing its part to make education available to all people.

Challenges in Adult/Young Adult Education

By Les Olsen
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Will young/adult education programs be expanded or deleted in your school, community or state? What procedures are used by leaders in agricultural education to assess the need for young/adult education in the 80's? While the answers to these and other challenging questions concern theavelability of young/adult education may not be easy to find, some suggestions which follow may offer some solutions to these challenges.

Local, regional, state, and national programs and teacher educators shape the destiny of young/adult education in agriculture. Guidelines for planning and funding programs are developed by state administrators. The procedures used in determining state guidelines, the type of funding for adult education, and the state's model plan for young/adult education are the keys to successful programs.

In a state, the procedures which are adopted determine the priorities on adult education in relation to the other elements of vo-ag programs. The specific techniques which have been very successful in Kansas for assessing the priorities in agricultural education might also prove helpful to others. As we started the decade of the 80s, a project was established for the purpose of determining the priorities in secondary, postsecondary, and adult agricultural education. The project is a model for other vocational service areas in planning for the 80s.

The Kansas Model

Key resource personnel were selected representing government agencies, production agriculture, farm management, horticulture, agribusiness, ag-industry, post-secondary education, and adult education. The specialists were invited to identify trends, issues, and problems in agricultural education. The resource persons and teachers representing each Kansas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (KVATA) district and postsecondary institutions were selected by the KVATA executive committee to assist in prioritizing the issues along with determining the ways and means of achievement and target dates for accomplishment.

A state meeting of the selected resource personnel and instructors followed the National Seminar held in Kansas City, July, 1980. The state committee, identified by the task committee, were discussed and ranked by secondary, postsecondary, and adult instructors attending state in-service meetings. The final ranking and report of activities will be disseminated at the annual summer conference in July, 1981.

Major priority items for adult education focused on increased emphasis on adult education as a part of the vocational agriculture program, increased emphasis on adult education in preserving and improving education, and providing a state adult coordinator. A similar meeting in the 70's resulted in a core curriculum for production agriculture, agribusiness, and horticulture; revised record books for production and agribusiness students; and an expanded adult education program in farm business and analysis.

In planning the strategy for young/adult education programs for the 80's, leaders in agricultural education need to examine the key educational issues in Kansas. Although there may be some differences in the overall educational issues to adult education, there are some striking similarities. To illustrate, the key issues of education in Kansas were identified by the members of the legislative education committees.

Involvement of community in program development. Although PL 94-482 specifically mandates local advisory council involvement in program planning, involvement should also include administration, local boards of education, industry, students being served, community organizations, and local news media. Successful young/adult education programs are not conceived without community involvement but are quickly terminated because of the lack of community support.

Maintain quality programs in both urban and rural communities. The national standards for agricultural education programs have been helpful in establishing a benchmark to measure quality. More refinement and adaptation needs to be done, however, as young/adult education programs change. The evaluation instruments currently being used may not be effective measures of quality of young/adult education programs in the future.

Use existing quality resources and materials. Anyone who has ever participated in a National Young Farmer Institute could attest that states have tremendous resources.

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Management Education: Old MacDonald's Farm Is Gone!

When Old MacDonald had his farm, with a quack-quack here and a moo-moo there, he was likely running a small-scale operation. But today, managing a farm is an in-depth, complex undertaking that requires a lot of knowledge and skills. Here, we will explore the current state of management education and how it can help farmers.

By EDGAR PARSONS
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Challenges in Adult/ Young Adult Education (Continued from Page 5)

To conduct quality Young Farmer programs, the obvious question is why are not more states involved with not only young but also adult education programs?

Prepare the right number of teachers in the right areas. Although the number of adult education instructors in Kansas has not changed dramatically since 1969, the number of postsecondary instructors increased from seven to 59. In 1979, there were seven instructors in Kansas, and one statistical analysis instructors. Now there are eight. In order that agricultural education may not only survive but also expand in the 80s, the immediate need is for more agricultural education programs that will be flexible and address state needs.

Promote excellence of instruction. For too long agricultural educators have stated that to conduct a young farmer program, all the teacher needed to do was open the door and put on the coffee. There really is no excuse today for poor teaching techniques. The public sentiment is definite- ly for better utilization of educational funds. Teacher preparation and in-service programs should parallel the technological growth in agriculture.

Provide leadership at state level. Implementing state identified priorities and changes for young/adult education programs takes time, staff, financial resources, and commitment. Of these, often the most important ingredient is commitment. The needs of young/adult farmers keep changing, but the leadership at the state level must be committed to meet these needs.

Cooperation with other agencies and businesses. In implementing the adult farm business analysis programs in Kansas in 1979, a decision was made to utilize the Extension farm management specialist assistant to train our agricultural education instructors and to utilize the existing farm account book. That decision has proven fruitful. The cooperation between Extension and agricultural education has been excellent. Extension specialists not only have assisted with instruction for adult instructors, but also have been willing to provide technical assistance. This kind of cooperation may not be unique to Kansas, but it certainly is indicative of the kind of cooperation between agencies which legislators are requesting.

In addition to determining procedures and techniques for prioritizing adult education and becoming aware of key educational issues, leaders must also be aware of their state's enrollment trends. A recent survey of 300 public school districts in Kansas projected a decline in the number of students ages 5 through 19, during the period 1980 to 1985. After 1985, the number of persons in that age group is expected to increase, although not to the 1980 level. The projected results indicate fewer students will be available for secondary programs.

An Important Role
Young/adult education has an important role in production agriculture. The U.S. farmer has not kept production records in major commodities. Today, one U.S. farmer produces enough farm goods for 68 other people compared with 26 in 1960. That includes 48 others in the U.S., and 20 people in other nations. To maintain and expand the pro- ductive capabilities of the American farmer, technology in the 80's will require that farmers possess higher levels of skill. The role which young/adult education programs should play in other areas of agriculture also should be identified. Leaders need to involve the reader early in the process through young/adult education programs to mold the country's future agricultural progress. Will we accept the challenge?

What is Management Education?
Some would contend that everything taught to adults would be remembered if they were taught in farm management education. In a sense they are right. Few of the ideas, concepts, knowledge, and skills taught to adults in these programs are promptly forgotten. Farmers claim that a good program of farm management education will better equip them to make profitable use of the farm business data and planning the optimization of resources of the farm. The course of study should place considerable emphasis on the application of the com- mon economic and business principles. In addition it should lead to building management competence in the various functional areas of planning, controlling, and evaluating the component parts of the farm in the context of the whole business. Educating farm managers to view each decision as a component of the "big picture," the whole business, should be one of the goals of the instruc- tional program.

Management Education Programs
Although there are several models for management edu- cation for adult and young farmers, they all have some ele- ments in common. They are:

Goal Orientation. Good management programs recognize that different farmers have different goals. The pri- mary aim of a management program is to improve the effec- tiveness of the farming operation as to assist farm families in reaching their goals. The vo-ag instructor who thinks he is teaching more profitable farming is the primary aim of the program. Elling and in large medium to large businesses simply does not understand the complexity of the goal setting process. In fact, a large group of farm managers have been quoted by Richard- son (1) ranked increased earnings third in a long list of "benefits of management in farm business" and "better knowledge of the capabilities of yourself and your business" as higher priority reasons for participating in a management program than the mere increase in con- 

Managing a Data Base. Good managers play the facts, not the hunches. To be a good decision maker the manager must have accurate up-to-date information about the busi- ness. The farmer needs the manager information about how to keep accurate farm records. The record system must be complete enough to provide not only financial planning, but also the management of the farm's operations. To point out the possible weaknesses and strengths in each of the sub- 

units or enterprises in the farm business. Records that pro- vide comprehensive information are not adequate for the discriminating manager.

Analyzing Farm Record Information. To be useful, the management program must provide some form of analysis and record form. The farm record form. The farm records provide a summary of the records of cooperating farmers which serves as benchmark data for judging the efficiency and organ- ization of the individual farm businesses.

A Planned Course of Study. If there is a body of knowl- edge in farm management, then it is logical that the body of knowledge be organized in a course of study. Several models for management instruction organize this material around central themes that relate to: establishing a management dummy, analyzing and interpreting the farm busi- ness data; and planning the optimization of resources of the farm. The course of study should plan content emphasis on the application of the com- 

mon economic and business principles. In addition it should lead to building management competence in the various functional areas of planning, controlling, and evaluating the component parts of the farm in the context of the whole business. Educating farm managers to view each decision as a component of the "big picture," the whole business, should be one of the goals of the instruc- tional program.

Personalized Instruction. Effective management pro- groms can exist only if the time and attention are paid to personalized instruction. It is part of the organized teaching plan. It makes management instruction unique. It provides the opportunity to plan the evaluation, and applying the component parts of the farm in the context of the whole business. Educating farm managers to view each decision as a component of the "big picture," the whole business, should be one of the goals of the instruc- tional program.

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The Minnesota Model

Although there are several "models" for management-based instruction for adult and young farmers, many states use the Minnesota Model than any other. Currently the Minnesota Model is used in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Utah, North Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania and Connecticut. In some of these states all programs of management instruction follow the Minnesota model. Other states have used the program of the model, and have adopted the procedures. Programs operate in high schools, community colleges, area vocational technical schools, and in one state in the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service. There are as many different schemes for providing funds as there are states with programs.

In Minnesota there are about 120 full-time adult farm management instructors. Each instructor services about 50 farm families. Of the approximately 50,000 Minnesota farm students about 3,500 are enrolled in programs, and about 6,500 are tuition paying members of farm business management programs. It is important to note that these farmers are only part of the adult population served. Other courses in enterprise technology, agricultural mechanism and beginning farmers enroll an additional 200,000-200,000 persons.

Courses of study are formal. There is a suggested topic for each group session for each of the first three years the farm family is enrolled. The overall aim of the formal course of study is to build competence in the functions of management (i.e., planning, controlling and evaluating). Familiarity with the program that is more difficult years and a major extent their enrollment for several more years.

The primary emphasis in the development of a good data base and an objective procedure for summarizing and analyzing the data. All of the states using the Minnesota Model have agreed on an analysis of a farm business from the Nebraska sandhills and has been developed using exactly the same procedures as an analysis of a farm business from Washington or a beef ranch from North Dakota. The analysis procedure for a selection of over 800 different crop enterprises and 145 livestock enterprises.

Summaries compiled from the individual analyses of cooperating farms by states or areas within states serve as benchmark guides to determining the factors of efficiency and organization to which the farmers attention should be directed. The instructor's job is to teach farmers how to use and interpret the analysis data for the improvement of the enterprise.

Technical Support

Management education programs do not grow and prosper in a vacuum. They need equally as much philosophical, financial, and administrative commitment as do programs in other areas of farm improvement. The central thrust for adult farm management is to provide materials, to coordinate teacher activities, to administer and supervise, and to carry the message to the legislative staffs that provide the financial backing. They do not emerge overnight either. Developing a management program thrust requires a long range plan that can put into place each of the support components as they are needed. But planning cannot be done without planners. Someone has to emerge in a position of leadership to make planning happen.

What's Ahead?

While states that have already instituted a strong thrust in management education programs and which are continuing to find programs strengthened in the years ahead, those who do nothing in the immediate future to generate a management thrust will lose the opportunity. Farmers in the high production groups previously described can ill afford to wait until the educational agencies decide that they are worthy clients. There is a great incentive as the structure of agriculture forced more attention to the functions of management. As planning, controlling, and evaluating becomes increasingly important to the survival of farms in an era of increasing risk and uncertainty, failure to gain skills in these essential functions can only spell disaster. Farmers are not apt to sit idly by while programs.

But farmers are not the only ones to notice that the management needs are unmet. Farmers have always relied on some extent on the private sector to provide specialized skills. Management associations and private management firms have grown in a response to this demand. More recently, however, big business interest in the private sector are participating in the management needs of farm families. One of the recent additions to management service opportunities is the generation of CENEX stockholders in between CENEX and the Control Data Corporation. Their objectives are to eventually provide a complete comprehensive management information and services ranging from complete crop management, including irrigation scheduling, to providing a complete system for farm business records and analysis. It is intended that the service and for profit. It is conceivable that a CENTRIL unit can be located wherever farmers have access to cooperative marketing or purchasing agencies.

CENTRIL is but one venture into providing management services. There will be others. The question is if the private sector will be the only source of such services or if agriculture will provide an alternative service and who want and can profit from an investment in adult education.

Agricultural educators do not often have the opportunity to choose. Programs are frequently prescribed by public laws or mechanisms. The financial resources are already exist; they are permitted by the laws, but not prescribed. It is up to us to decide if we will constitute the body of planners to initiate management education for our beginning and established farm clients or if we will step aside and leave the task to the private sector.

Reference

Richardson, Victor, Rewarding Returns from An (Agricultural Investment) Paper, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Farmers Union, St. Paul.

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JUNE, 1981

Many adult education programs of vocational agriculture departments are aimed at full-time farmers. In doing this, many of the highly skilled and motivated group of farmers who need adult education programs just as much as the full-time farmer, I am referring to the part-time farmers who manage farms and work for most of their lives as farm managers. These people are becoming more common in our communities; yet, many have not been the target for much of our adult work. The number of part-time farmers will increase in the future, therefore, in planning adult programs, the needs of the part-time farmers will have to be considered.

Their Characteristics

Before planning instructional programs for part-time farmers, it is essential for us to understand the unique characteristics of this group. The following characteristics which need to be considered reflect the instructional needs for these individuals: limited financial resources, limited time to spend with the farm operation, limited size of the farm, and limited knowledge of production agriculture and farm management. These four characteristics are not applicable to all part-time farmers but are most important to many of them. Also, these characteristics apply to full-time farmers, but are more limiting factors in part-time farm operations. These four characteristics need to be the major guidelines for developing instructional programs for part-time farmers.

In the planning stages for adult programs for part-time farmers, we need to realize and plan for the individual differences that will exist among these farmers. The clientele will tend to be more heterogeneous than full-time farmers. These differences stem from the fact that part-time farmers do not have the responsibilities, and full-time farmers there are also some structural differences. This group may include professional workers such as physicians, lawyers, and others who are farming to invest their extra time and for fun. Part-time farmers also include students in postsecondary education who may want to farm full time upon graduation, and the migrating urbanites and hobbits who are drawn to the back to the earth movement. The reasons for part-time farming vary tremendously and so do the goals for the part-time farm. Instructional programs developed will have to be flexible enough to allow for these differences.

Their Needs

As far as the specific topic area which need to be offered are concerned, we must remember the distinguishing characteristics of part-time farmers that were previously mentioned. These are financial resources and time limitations. Part-time farmers need instruction that will maximize the use of capital and natural resources, minimize labor demands, and enhance their knowledge of production agriculture and farm business management.

Part-time farmers usually lack the high financial resources needed to farm full time, and are often limited in their ability to borrow. They enjoy an improve or expand their operation. Instructional programs on keeping records, using credit, and managing money will be needed. Topics include justifying machinery purchases and comparing benefits and costs of owning versus leasing. Leasing, building livestock, land, and equipment will prove most valuable to the part-time farmer. Hiring custom work will have to be looked at seriously. They will need more guidance and assistance on investments in the farm business.

Programs aimed at labor use and efficiency will need to be considered such as available labor can be a serious problem on part-time farms. Labor saving equipment and techniques will be welcomed. It may mean that some part-time farm operations need to be more automated to save precious time. This will imply presenting programs on automated feeding systems, automatic waterers, belt blowers, and other topics concerned with labor efficiency. Part-time farmers may need help in locating sources of labor. They are not able to enjoy the long and leisurely, feeding livestock during the winter. When presenting programs on labor related topics make sure the spouse of the farmer is invited. As a matter of fact, since the spouse may do much of the work on the part-time farm, it will be most critical to involve the spouse in much of the instructional program.

Programs for part-time farmers must be designed with the smaller farm in mind. For farmers who wish to expand their operation on the same acreage, programs on certified livestock production and farm business management will be needed. Other programs that will help in utilizing their acreage to maximize returns would be successful. While presenting these programs, emphasis will be given to conservation and care, as well as soil, air, and water pollution. All of these topics areas will be of interest to part-time farmers and need careful consideration when planning instructional programs.

Another area of instruction that needs attention is basic agriculture production and farm business management. For the hobbyist, those that are migrating from urban
Providing Adults Opportunities for Personal Growth and Enjoyment

Diversity is a key word when discussing adult education; diversity in the kinds of programs offered, in the training of instructors, in the teaching methods employed, in the interests of the local population, and in the sponsoring organizations. The following examples demonstrate the assorted educational opportunities available in the field of agriculture for adult students: an 8-week small engines class taught by the local vo-ag instructor, a one-day lawn care workshop sponsored by the area garden center, a once-a-week seminar on attracting birds to your home administered by the county Extension Service, and a two-evening program on beekeeping offered by the district apiary society.

Although these programs are varied in composition and intent, they do have some similar characteristics. A primary objective of each is to provide specific agricultural, skills and knowledge for a group of interested adults. The programs are also designed to satisfy the avocational interests of the adult learner. The classes are taken for enjoyment in addition to an individual's regular work or profession.

Need For Avocational Education

With an increase in life expectancy, an earlier retirement age, and an expanding awareness of maximizing individual potential, adult education is experiencing unparalleled growth. The adult population has begun to recognize that education is broader than the K-12 setting. There is a dramatic change in the schooling of adults during the past several years. In 1980, there were approximately 1 million students over the age of 35 enrolled in various educational programs. While some of these adults were upgrading their job skills or receiving initial career training, many of the students were enrolled in classes for personal satisfaction or enjoyment. Adults are discovering that avocational learning can be a satisfying and gratifying experience. Vocational agriculture can provide many meaningful activities for personal growth and enjoyment throughout a lifetime. Flower arranging, home landscaping, lawn mower repair, tree identification, and basic woodworking are just a few of the avocational classes that can be offered by departments of vocational agriculture. In addition to serving the avocational interests of the community, these types of programs can also spark new career interests and opportunities for the enrollees.

Sponsors For Adult Education

Providing effective adult education for the local community can be a time consuming job. Local vo-ag departments usually have one or two instructors who have a wide range of responsibilities and commitments at the secondary level. Their ability to furnish comprehensive avocational adult training is unintentionally limited. Areas vocational centers are in a much better position to efficiently serve the avocational interests of the community. A full-time adult supervisor is employed who can coordinate the avocational interests and needs of the area. The vocational school has a broader population base to draw upon when selecting and filling specific classes. Physical facilities are usually excellent and can be put to optimum use with high school classes during the day and adult courses in the late afternoon or evening. As secondary schools gradually decline during the 1980's, vocational administrators will be challenged to evaluate their involvement in the education of adults.

Determining Adult Interests

An accurate assessment of local agricultural interests is an initial step in successful implementation of specific program offerings. Adult interests are highly personal and vary widely. Therefore, the avocational needs of a community cannot be adequately estimated by a single teacher or administrator. Relying upon a small group of persons for adult interest evaluation, who are assuming what people are interested in, can result in poorly attended courses and dissatisfaction with the offerings. Several methods are available to determine adult interests in the agricultural fields. Reviewing successful adult education programs in surrounding areas can provide a general indication of popular, well-attended classes. County Ex...
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Understanding the adult learner is another essential component in program organization. School in-structors must realize that the adult student differs greatly from the high school student they may be taught to teaching.

Adult learners have several unique characteristics:

Most of the members of the class are there because they want to be. They attend the class as a part-time activity. The students are no longer children. They've had experiences, developed opinions, and acquired know-how. They have more prejudices. They are more fixed in their ways. They like to talk more in class — and they do.

Adult classes also have some unique features. The class is likely to be less formal. Paper and pencil examinations aren't likely to be as important. The students will learn a lot from each other. The instructor will have less authority over the adult learner than over secondary students. The class will involve more group interaction.

Acknowledging these characteristics of the adult learner can aid instructors in effectively meeting the needs of their students.

Evaluating Program Effectiveness

To improve program organization and content some means of evaluation will be necessary. Informal evaluation is a process conducted throughout the course as the instructor and adult director encounter successful or questionable practices. At the conclusion of the program a formal written evaluation may be completed by the adult student. This type of evaluation can indicate enrollment satisfaction or dissatisfaction with class organization, content, or delivery. Student comments should be continually sought with program development. Program evaluation of avocational courses ultimately seeks to answer two questions: What procedures have proven effective for meeting the agricultural interests of the enrollment? To what extent has the teacher followed the guidelines for conducting avocational courses for adults? (A sample form for adults to use in evaluating education accompanies this article.)

With an established commitment at the secondary level, vocational agriculture can have a similar impact in the area of adult education. Vocational agriculture can provide constructive alternatives for adults seeking meaningful use of their leisure time. The challenge for the vo-ag teacher is to begin to consider his or her role in serving the avocational interests of the adults in their community.

References


Getting Technical Information to Adults

How do we get good technical agricultural information into the hands of commercial farmers? Most of you will agree that millions and millions of dollars are spent each year on economic and technical information out to serve the goals and interests of the local adult population. A sample community agricultural interest questionnaire accompanies this article.

Coordinating Programs

With State and Local Personnel

With public schools, museums, libraries, agribusinesses, government agencies, and voluntary organizations as some of the possible sponsors for adult education, the idea of coordination quickly becomes overwhelming. Lack of program coordination among diverse sponsors is a perennial problem confronting adult educators. When the courses are offered through an established organization, such as the public school system, the adult program can conform to the present administrative structure. Education of adults becomes one of the functions of the system and communication between state and local personnel can follow existing avenues. You can see why the agriculture department offering adult education can assist state and local staff by reporting the types of courses taught, the number of adults served, and the results of the programs. State and local planning and budgeting can be formulated utilizing this type of data. An adult supervisor, employed by the school system, can enhance the coordination between specific local program objectives and overall adult education goals of the state department of education.

Organizing and Conducting Programs

Program organization is a responsibility of both the adult supervisor and the adult instructor. Administrative tasks necessary for effective program delivery include the following: recruiting and training qualified adult leaders and teachers, providing adequate physical facilities for producing instruction, preparing specific class offerings by a variety of media (i.e., newspaper ads, radio announcements, printed brochures), conducting systematic record keeping, and keeping accurate financial records for budgeting purposes. These supervisory responsibilities are essential for effective adult instruction. However, the specific program planning and implementation by the adult instructor is also imperative for quality instruction.

Prior to the beginning of a course, the teacher or leader must decide on the units of instruction that will be discussed. Defining measurable teaching objectives and listing specific questions to be answered by the unit can be additional aids to program organization. The adult instructor is also responsible for selecting the appropriate teaching methods and identifying the materials and references needed for instruction.

By Jim Riley

Enrichment Day: Riley a Vocational Agriculturist Instructor at Cameron High School, Cam-eron, Missouri 64029

Another method is for each teacher to work on one technical area and develop strong expertise. Teachers would then make the rounds to other schools to teach that area. With this approach we are doing two things: we are using people with good technical information and people who have sound teaching backgrounds.

These are a few ideas on delivering technical information to adults. Try them and see for yourself if they will work.

THEMES

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Computers in Agricultural Education Image Building January
Year-Round Programs Problem-Solving Instruction February
Just for Teachers Using Laboratories March
Urban Programs Horticulture Programs April
Horticulture Programs Economic Literacy Through May
Agricultural Education Economic Literacy Through September
Secondary-Foreschool Articulation Student Organizations October
Student Organizations Student, Teacher and Program November
Evaluation December
THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE

THEME

The Role of Teacher Education in Adult/Young Adult Education

The case for adult/young adult education in vocational agriculture has been made. Therefore, this article will concentrate on the role of teacher educators with regard to adult/young adult education. Teacher educators have a responsibility and an obligation to do their part in improving and expanding adult/young adult education in vocational agriculture. This article will concentrate on the areas of preserve and inservice education and pose questions regarding postsecondary and off-farm agriculture.

Preserve

Ideally, individuals who have completed a teacher education program should have the desire to work with adults/young adults and possess the necessary skills in the field of adult education. At the bare minimum upon completion of a teacher training program, they should believe that the education of adults in the field of agriculture is just as important as the education of secondary students, if not more.

It has been the author's experience as a teacher educator to find that most university undergraduate students upon entering student teaching have not thought about adult/young adult education. Some see it as a special area of teaching, while others see it as part of their college. In either case, some see it as a part of their education. In reality, most of these students are not aware of the importance of adult/young adult education and its impact on the field of agriculture.

With these concerns and attitudes in mind, what is the change to teacher education at the postsecondary level? Teacher educators have three responsibilities: to provide experiences that will increase the desire of prospective teachers to work with adults/young adults and provide entry level skills needed to establish and conduct adult/young adult education programs in vocational agriculture; and to provide experiences that will boost the confidence level of prospective vocational agriculture teachers in the area of adult/young adult education.

Inservice

A student teaching center that does not have adult/young adult education is saying adult/young adult education in vocational agriculture is not important. Regardless of what happens on campus in a course in adult/young adult education in vocational agriculture or through outside field experiences, the student teaching experience is of utmost importance and may have the most influence on the attitude the prospective teacher develops toward adult/young adult education.

Inservice and Support Services

A teacher education program without inservice activities is just like a vocational agriculture program without adult education: only doing a portion of the job. Probably no group of adults has a greater need for inservice and support activities than do adult teachers. Two characteristics of adult/young adult education create a paradox. Prospective, up-to-date teachers are demanded by the clientele to expand their programs and services. Expansion takes time and effort. Keeping up-to-date in agriculture also takes time and effort. If the adult/young adult teacher is to remain progressive and up-to-date, he/she must receive progressive, up-to-date training and support services.

Effective inservice is a must. Some of the most effective inservice training for adult teachers is the type that teaches the teacher how to teach the adult. In other words, an adult teacher teaching an inservice class to adult/young adult teachers on small engine overhaul should teach the class using the same method the adult/young adult instructor uses with their students. An inservice class for adult/young adult instructors should contain a desirable balance between technical agriculture and "how to teach it."

Another possible means to help adult teachers help themselves is encouraging adult teachers to do preliminary curricula and evaluations. The adult teachers in one district of Missouri felt the need for an adult curriculum in soils. This particular group of teachers developed a course for their own use.

Two other areas to be considered by teacher educators are postsecondary and off-farm agriculture. Do we have an obligation to provide training to teachers for off-farm adult/young adult education? In many states we can say that we do not have teachers teaching adult/young adult classes who do not employ these teachers in agriculture. Therefore, we may feel there is not a need for the development of inservice training. The result is that the adult/young adult classes are not being taught because institutional materials and inservice materials and inservice programs have not been provided.

In many states teacher educators have done very little to serve postsecondary instructors of agriculture. In our respective states we must determine what our responsibilities to the postsecondary field are. If postsecondary instructors feel teacher educators have something to offer in the area of adult education, then we have an obligation to the postsecondary field. In summary, the complete teacher education program is responsible for the development of teacher educators with the skills and confidence to conduct a viable adult/young adult program. Vocational agriculture educators working with adult/young adult programs have a high level of need for inservice training and instructional material development. Teacher education programs must develop programs that accommodate the needs of adult/young adult programs by postsecondary instructors. As teacher educators, we have an exciting challenge and opportunity to make a positive contribution to postsecondary and adult/young adult education.

By Don Claycomb

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baby pigs may feel less than qualified to work with adults/young adults in a class on feeder pig production. Teacher educators have an obligation to make known to their colleges of agriculture those things of "hands on" experiences that are important to the success of a teacher of adults/young adults.

If we truly believe that adult education is important, a methods class in adult/young adult education in vocational agriculture will be required as a part of the professional training. A teacher training institution that fails to place as much emphasis on a methods class in adult/young adult education as is placed on a methods class in secondary education is, in fact, saying we don't believe the education of adults/young adults is as important as it is the education of secondary students. As a part of such a class, prospective teachers should not only be taught methodology, but should also have the opportunity to practice that methodology through "mini-teaching" experiences in front of their peers.

Prospective teachers should also be encouraged to gain a variety of supplemental experiences relating to adult education. Many adult teachers could have the opportunity to visit successful adult classes. They should be exposed to activities such as young farmer tours and conventions when possible. Teacher educators have traditionally involved prospective teachers in student leadership activities at the secondary level such as FFA contests with the purpose of acquainting the prospective teachers with the activity and motivating them to want to involve their students when they become teachers. The complete teacher training teacher will provide their students just as much of an opportunity to participate in adult/young adult activities as the prospective teachers have to participate in secondary activities.

Another important aspect of a student's professional development is the influence of the student teacher center. Prospective teachers are quite important to the professional development of a prospective teacher. A student teaching center that does not have an active adult/young adult education program in vocational agriculture is not an adequate student teaching center and should not be used.

JUNE, 1981

Teacher educators have the responsibility to see that teachers develop the skills needed to teach adult/young adult students. In this photograph, Robert Denker of the University of Missouri shows teaching a group of teachers how to use a portable computer terminal.
Illinois Young Farmers Conduct Development Program

By Leonard A. Harmsen
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In Illinois, was written to assist vocational agriculture teachers and other interested persons in organizing a Young Farmers Chapter.

A booklet entitled, "Directory of Resource Persons for Young Farmer Chapters in Illinois" was developed to assist in identifying and locating resource persons to assist in conducting the educational programs.

A slide tape was developed to assist in describing the program through pictures and sound.

A display was constructed to describe the Young Farmer Program and the activities involved. The display has been used at the State FFA Convention, Illinois Agriculture Teachers Summer Conference, Illinois Young Farmer Institute and Summertime and National Young Farmer Institute.

During the third year, a series of 24 workshops was conducted throughout Illinois for vocational agriculture teachers, administrators, and other interested persons. The workshops were designed to provide information about the Young Farmer Program and its importance for adult education.

The Young Farmer State Officers assisted in discussion at the dinner meeting. The materials developed in Phase II of the program served as resources and provided a guide to the benefits of the program. A list of chapters and its members was developed.

A key element in the future success of the Young Farmer Program was the increasing in funding by DAVTE from 9 cents to 30 cents per contact hour for the coming school year. A school district was encouraged to provide matching funds to the program from DAVTE.

In Phase IV, the program includes giving assistance to vocational agriculture teachers who have expressed interest in the Young Farmer Program. In addition to tips on how to determine interest by local youth, the teachers engaged in agriculture assistance is provided to the teachers and local vocational agriculture programs.

The 14 workshops conducted during Phase II of the project resulted in a total of 121 persons attending. A total of 35 schools were represented in the workshops.

Eleven Young Farmer Chapters have been organized, with seven more in the forming stage.

An annual Young Farmer Conference "in the arm" from DAVTE, is anticipated that the Young Farmer Program in Illinois will continue. The workshop is used as a base for the local adult education program in agriculture. Part of the Cooperative Extension Department's responsibility is to provide at least 20 hours of adult farmer instruction each year. The local YF program is a means to meet that responsibility.

Young men and women in agriculture are realizing that education is a life-long process. The Young Farmer Programs throughout the state have been successful in meeting the educational needs of adults in agriculture, and especially valuable in keeping the agriculture teacher, up to date.

Ripley, Oklahoma
A Small Community BIG on Adult/Young Adult Education

By Steve Forstche and Donny Rieke
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Some kind of adult agricultural education program has been in existence at Ripley since 1949. The present state director of all Oklahoma Young Farmer chapters was the ag teacher and YF advisor at Ripley for many years. The local agriculture teacher has the key to providing some kind of adult education in agriculture at Ripley. Can this hold true across the other small agricultural communities of the United States?

Outcomes

For the Ripley Young Farmer Chapter has existed for many years and is a part of a statewide effort to provide adult education in agriculture through the vocational agriculture programs in the local school. Ripley’s adult agricultural education program (Young Farmers) is one of the 730 p.m. at the agricultural building.

Areas of Work

The four areas of work for the local group are education, community service, recreation, and leadership development.
When does a farmer stop educating and begin providing a service to farmer clients? Are you educating your clients or servicing their various farm business needs? This perplexing problem is hard to define and even more difficult to practice. The purpose of this article is to raise the question: "Are our activities really servicing your adult farmer client?" It is hoped that more adult farmer educators will realize that education is a far more valuable function than any service they may render.

Perhaps the introductory questions are a matter of semantics. When viewed by strict definition, we educate; when viewed in the broad sense, we bring about desired behavioral change. We service when we provide some specific labor, use or benefit. Do the two areas overlap? This writer believes they do. Education and service are one and the same in many cases.

Our employers (local boards of education) hire us to educate. We develop educational programs based on community needs, set objectives, and initiate teaching methods that meet those desired changes. This works well with secondary students of vocational agriculture. With adult farmers, the process is the same. Regular on-farm instruction alters this process with the out-of-school client by its nature. However, the educational process becomes a "service" of the school system to farmers. Keeping the service educational seems to be the crux of the situation.

On-farm instruction is perfect for applying practices discussed in the classroom. A discussion on balancing dairy rations must be carried to the "doing" stage. Your farmer-students may accept the lesson part to heart, but may not secure the necessary forage analysis kits to commence the doing stage. If you provide the test kit, are you educating or providing a service? If the test kit is used to determine forage quality, and the ration is balanced accordingly, then both education and service have taken place. A careful watch on the benefit provided can keep our service activities educational in nature.

Perhaps a few guidelines can provide direction. Consider the following:

1. Can what you are providing be secured from some other local source?

2. Rather than performing a deemorning demonstration is an example. Providing the service is not a part of our responsibility. A demonstration of a different demonering technique than that which is currently being used is educational however.

3. Are you carrying out the labor or activity for the client? If the farmer is off doing chores when the teacher is going over a cash flow projection, little education can occur. Some prior information gathering is necessary on our part, but should be part of the presence of the farmer-student.

4. Some activities may begin as services with the idea of changing a behavior pattern. Carrying a soil test kit for an on-farm instructional visit may provide the stimulus for a farmer to conduct a soil testing program. Emphasis on the service being a one time occurrence usually provides the only mention that needed to be there to educate. A true measurement of behavioral change can be noted the following year. Does the farmer carry out the procedure of securing the soil test kit?

5. To serve and to educate may be one and the same. The manner in which both are carried out will determine the long-range effectiveness of the young adult farmer education program. A program based upon service will soon become stagnant. A sound educational offering based on community needs will flourish. All young adult-farmer advisors should determine if they are educating or merely servicing farmers. Some critical self-analysis may help. If a little service is needed for education, then we must resign the two concepts are complementary.
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Agriculture Education Magazine
Recruiting Vo/Ag Students

Vocational agriculture teachers are just like all other busy and involved people. They become so involved and dedicated that they forget to share what they are doing and appreciate their efforts. They thinkingly assume that every one else must surely understand what they are doing and appreciate their efforts. Because of this, the community that is served by a vocational agriculture department soon loses personal contact with the program and becomes unaware of what the program has to offer. As a result, these activities and experiences that can help encourage young people decide to enroll in the vocational agriculture classes. Assign one IFA member to serve as host to each prospective new student.

3. Conduct a supervised occupational experience program tour for eighth grade students and their parents. Plan for refreshments at the last stop.

4. Throughout the year invite eighth grade students and their parents to FFA activities such as Chapter Farmer initiations, national career development contests and chapter banquets.

5. Make summer visits to prospective students.

- Arrange to have one or two FFA members with good SOE programs visit prospective students to discuss how they initiated their SOE programs.

- Have a committee of former students work with incoming students to help them get their SOE programs started.

- Organize a loan fund.

- Provide a program with experience opportunities for those who do not have the opportunity at home by using school facilities.

As a teacher, visit all prospective students and their parents to discuss the vocational agriculture/FFA program.

6. Write a personal letter to each graduating eighth grader telling them about vocational agriculture and the FFA. Enclose an illustrated brochure that tells the story of the agriculture program.

7. Participate in "open houses" and "back to school nights" at schools having well planned programs, attractive displays, and planned tours of the agricultural department with exhibits of work by students on display.

8. Provide bulletin board displays about agriculture and the FFA in the schools the eighth graders are attending.

9. Have regular articles in the newspapers discussing the activities conducted through the vocational agriculture/FFA program.

10. Provide a subscription to The National FFA/Future Farmer magazine for the library in each grade school.

11. Distribute the FFA Calendar to parents of prospective students.

12. Have a ready reserve of students who are capable of putting on a demonstration at the FFA meetings and chapter banquets.

13. Invite grade school teachers and their administrators to FFA activities such as parent/teacher conferences and community events.

14. Select an outstanding elementary teacher to receive the Honorary Chapter Degree.

15. Use elementary teachers as judges for public speaking and other similar contests.

16. Use the "Food for America" program with grade school students. Follow up with a tour of a farm in the community.
Stories in Pictures

Don Claycomb of the University of Missouri is shown speaking to the Missouri Young Farmer and Young Farm Wives President’s Conference. All members of the vo-ag family have responsibilities in improving and expanding adult/young adult education. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)

Individual instruction is important when adults are learning new skills. (Photograph courtesy of Jan Henderson, Piqua, Ohio.)

Bob Stewart of the University of Missouri is shown reporting to an advisory committee on farm management. Such committees are very important in the conduct of relevant instructional programs. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)

Prospective teachers should have the opportunity to practice the methodology they are taught, as this University of Missouri student is doing. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)