The Agricultural Education Magazine

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Number 2

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Advising FFA Chapters
Responsibilities Associated With Advising

Many of our teacher education programs require a class that has expressed an interest in preparing individuals in the mechanics of being youth organization advisors. There are also often the unexpressed, affective objectives that deal with values, integrity and professionalism.

On a recent final exam in a Youth Organization in Agricultural and Extension Education class, a question was raised that addressed this affective area, plus strategies for planning banquets, selecting fund raisers, and preparing trips and awards applications. Students were asked to list what they believed to be the 10 most important duties and/or responsibilities of youth organization advisors. When the responses were tallied I was a bit surprised. I wondered if the responses were what the students believed enough to act upon or if they were just parroting what I had advocated when I climbed on my soap box from time to time. I think as advisors we can learn from their responses.

To Be Professional

The most common responses could be grouped in the area of professionalism. Acting professionally or being a good role model topped the list of responsibilities. The students included such things as taking responsibility for supervising students when they are on 4-H activities and expected to earn money.

Dressing appropriately was another item that made the list. Some shared my personal belief that if students are in official dress, the advisor should be dressed to reflect equally as well. How often would the picture of the winning team have been improved by removing the dotted blue jeans and the ball cap and blue jeans?

Being on time and meeting deadlines was also high on the list of responsibilities. Comments from these undergraduates implied that students are penalized when advisors fail to submit required paperwork or applications on time. We probably have all been guilty of mailing important documents (calling them our taxes) the day before they are due.

By JACQUELINE DEED
Dr. Deed is a Youth region editor and assistant professor of agricultural education at Mississippi State University.

(Continued on page 10)
Are You a Wiser Advisor?

The advisor...

"Here by the owl,"

"Why by the owl?"

"Because I don't give a hoot!"

By Max B. McGhee

Dr. McGhee is professor of agricultural education at the University of Florida.

No matter how facetious this opening ceremony may seem, advisors that want their FFA chapter to be “successful” must not give the impression that they don’t give a hoot. This may seem obvious to the reader, but it has been my experience that the expression “assumption nothing” should be the advisor’s motto. We cannot assume that students will become FFA members simply because the opportunity is there. We cannot assume that a group of students interested in land judging will take the initiative on their own to prepare themselves for the land judging contest. We cannot assume that the program of activities will be developed by the members without guidance and advice from the advisor. Of course not!

Just as the “wise old owl” sits quietly in the tree and observes with large, saucer-like eyes for movements or sounds that indicate she should get ready to act, the wiser advisor must watch for signs that indicate that action (advice, counsel, direction, reinforcement, praise, encouragement) is needed for member goals to be realized. The action taken by wiser advisors indicates they care (give a hoot) about the members and their organization.

Three factors that indicate to others that the advisor “gives a hoot” are: encouraging members, using instruction to stimulate member involvement in FFA, and being up-to-date in agriculture and FFA.

Encouraging Membership

Advisors that care about their chapter and itself encourage membership by taking advantage of resources such as motivational videos, instructional materials, and other promotional items available to them from the National FFA Center.

How much do you teach about FFA and its opportunities? How do you plan to reach students? Do you just do what the advisors who are important to you would do? Make a plan, and then execute that plan.

The next step is to “sign up and pay your money” booth? Would you be motivated to join if you were a student and heard your “pitch” about the advantages of membership? I would challenge you to think about that as you plan for a new school year. How can you better encourage your students to be members of the FFA?

Use Instruction to Stimulate Involvement

Becoming a member is but the first step. A wiser advisor who gives a hoot uses the instructional program to stimulate members to be active members. They make FFA truly “intra-curricular” by integrating it in courses and/or subject areas. They make the students do their homework in the classroom by submerging agricultural experience. For example, the program of activities should not be developed only by the officers and advisor; it should be developed by all the members in a systematic process. For this process to be functional, all members must understand what a program of activities is and how it can be developed. Therefore, they must be taught and have relevant practice work to help develop the program of activities. If taught in an interesting, stimulating manner, students will be motivated to help plan the year’s activities for their chapter — not the officer’s or advisor’s chapter.

Keep Up-To-Date

FFA is a new era. Changes in the awards programs, contests, governance structure, and emblems are but a few of the differences in the last few years. Wiser advisors who give a hoot are aware of these changes by reading FFA News Horizons and Making A Difference. They also take advantage of other opportunities that are designed to keep them abreast of changes in the FFA and agriculture. They read research that deals with working in groups and other youth groups for clues on being wiser and more effective advisors. They are actively involved in their professional organizations.

Are you an FFA advisor that actively encourages membership, uses instruction to stimulate active membership, and keeps current about FFA and agriculture? Are you equipped to be a wiser advisor? How can you help your chapter be all that it can be? You

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Here Come The Customers!

The bell rings! And there they come. All, shops, sizes, colors, and backgrounds. Eager to talk and share their summer exploits and adventures, which are always growing bigger every time they are told. Yes, friends, it is another chaotic opening day of school.

As the students move into Mr. Smith’s classroom, it is evident that the feelings they have for this class are different from many of the other classes in which they are enrolled. For some reason most of the students actually seem to be glad to be here. It seems as though they are enjoying it as fun. The tone of the conversation with the teacher as he stands by the door to welcome them is different. It’s sincere, kind, honest, and warm. The students detect that this teacher is different, not only because he teaches agriculture and serves as the FFA advisor, but also because he genuinely cares about them as individuals.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Smith has a strong enrollment and 100% FFA membership. His classes are filled to capacity with more students wanting to get in than can be offered. This is a great problem to have, since agriculture is an elective. One wonders if other subject areas would have this same kind of enrollment success if they were forced to recruit students and be customer-driven like Mr. Smith has to do each year. There are thousands of other outstanding, caring people, much like Mr. Smith, who serve as teachers in agriculture programs and as FFA advisors. The commitment they have to the young people they serve is extraordinary. This commitment, care, and concern for the students they serve is a major reason they are successful in getting students to enroll in their classes and join FFA.

Yes, a primary reason many students have chosen in the past and will continue to choose agricultural education is simply because they like the teacher and they perceive that the teacher likes them. An interesting, yet simple phenomenon, but it is seen in thousands of programs across the nation.

Beyond the students’ like and respect for their agriculture teacher, which is a primary ingredient in successful recruiting, there are a number of interesting approaches being taken to successfully recruit students into agriculture programs. However, all of these approaches are only successful long-term when there is a high quality, updated agriculture program being led and managed by the teacher.

Once a contemporary program led by an energetic, caring teacher is in place, a number of approaches can be taken to successfully attract and retain students in the program. One fundamental key that is becoming increasingly important is the need to develop the ability to communicate in student terminology with familiar themes. The following ideas, in no specific order, are “real-life” innovative approaches used by teachers across the nation are successfully recruiting students into agriculture programs and FFA chapters.

1. Undercover FFA. This idea uses the concept of having FFA members conduct recruitment presentations for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in non-FFA, school activity attire. A teacher would select a group of six to eight members who are also actively involved in other school activities and organizations that have high visibility in the school.

On recruitment day, a teacher has a group of FFA members that include representatives of the football team, cheerleading squad, marching band, beta club, and other groups who wear their full dress uniform for that activity to conduct the presentation. While wearing these clothes, the students talk about being active participants in FFA and why it is important to them. In effect, the teacher is positioning the FFA alongside other very popular and visible activities through the use of local, celebrity endorsers.

2. Student Recruiters. Not a new idea, but perhaps if given enough time and training this can prove successful. The teacher provides instruction on how to deal one-on-one with students, just like one would in a business/sales environment. As an outgrowth of that instruction, the teacher challenges FFA members to replace themselves by using those fundamental sales techniques on their friends.

Teachers may find it useful to offer incentives, prizes or recognition to create competitive interest and excitement. An additional thought is to turn this into a team activity. The beauty of this idea is that
teachers, in effect, create a sales force of young people who can be immensely effective at selling the merits of an agriculture program and FFA chapter to their peers.

3. Athletic Boosters. Athletics are, without a doubt, a tremendous influence on students, schools and communities. An example of how to use the athletic craze to the program’s advantage is found in a teacher who discovered she was inheriting a long-term fund split between the athletic director and FFA advisor. This fund had almost destroyed the agriculture program because of students charging for athletic equipment. Recognizing that the fund had to end, the new teacher began to seek ways of building her program in spite of the past. She discovered the athletic program in her school did not have an in-school, athletic booster club. Seeing this void as an opportunity to change student attitudes, she began having the FFA chapter create and put up posters that hyped athletic events throughout the school. For example, if her school’s basketball team (e.g., the “Bulldogs”) was about to play another school (e.g., the “Tigers”), she would have posters made that might read, “Go Bulldogs...Thank the Tigers!” Through the school these posters would appear several days before each athletic event with a line, in small type, at the bottom of each poster that read, “Sponsored by FFA.” This was a simple idea that positioned the FFA chapter as a supporter and partner with athletics, rather than an opponent. Simply put, if you can’t beat them, figure out how to use their strengths to your advantage.

4. One-on-One. Personal contact with students and parents can prove most beneficial in recruiting. Talking with students who choose not to initially enroll and finding why they do not provide valuable information. Many times it is a lack of understanding. Failure to communicate the benefits of the agriculture program can quickly be cleared by talking. Students, not to mention their parents, are amazed and usually very supportive of teachers who show personal interest and take time to talk with and advise a student. The mere fact that someone wants them can make the difference in their choice of course.

Walking the halls during school breaks/lunches and getting to know as many of the program’s students as you can is an easy way to recruit. In many ways, when done through this method, recruitment becomes an everyday activity that naturally occurs as the teachers comes in contact with students. A final approach teachers may take is to write a short, follow-up letter to the student’s home. This small token may be just the thing to seal the deal on that student prospect.

5. Membership Perks. Perks have a major controversy among today’s government and business leaders. Perks, however, are also well understood by the students in today’s classroom. Seventy percent of students feel that perks have been used effectively to recruit include:

a. Membership cards that have immediate benefits or a local business/club that has been used successfully in recruiting students. This concept may simply be a card that a local business, is willing to sponsor and provide a discount or free item to the FFA card-carrying student. Also, coupon books which encourage students to frequent local businesses or discount prices may be worthwhile. A natural outgrowth of this concept is that it gives the chapter a great opportunity to work with many local sponsors.

b. Field trips for FFA members only continue to be an effective incentive for attracting students. Although many school systems have limited the number of field trips allowed per year, when possible this perk can be very useful.

c. Money back guarantees are an effective means of intriguing students. Using this approach, the teacher breaks down the total FFA dues to include national, state, and local shares, and how the total dollar amount will be returned to local level activities. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October Coolout</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trip</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Party</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA Banquet</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total FFA Dues</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously the funds to conduct these activities must be found in an alternative source, such as a fundraiser. However, in this scenario all students can see potential benefits locally, which is essential from a student perspective.

Each of these recruitment ideas has been used effectively to increase membership and/or FFA membership by current agriculture instructors. Naturally, there are many other ideas that work, such as conducting an open house.

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THEME ARTICLE

Is Your FFA Lost?

If your FFA chapter could speak, it would say, “Where am I?” “Where am I going?” Or worse, would it say, “I’m lost!”

When you get in your car to go somewhere, you have in your mind where you want to go. If you have never been there before, or your destination is unknown to you, you probably will use a map to help you find your way. This will not only prevent you from becoming lost and not reaching your destination, but it will save you time and energy. FFA chapters also need a map to help them reach their destination recognition as an active and successful chapter.

The map used by FFA chapters is called the Program of Activities (POA). Unlike a road map that you can find at service stations, an FFA road map must be developed by the chapter members with the guidance of the chapter advisor. The chapter members, led by the chapter officers, should plan activities that are meaningful to its membership as well as beneficial to the local community. Most states require a current POA to be on file at the state FFA office before the chapter can be called a bona-fide and active chapter of the state association. The POA needs to be submitted at the beginning of the school year. Because this is a busy time, there is a tendency just to photocopy and send in last year’s POA. The idea of a POA is not to meet a requirement mandated by the state association, but rather to help the chapter develop a plan of action that will guide and direct the chapter through the wilderness of a busy school year.

The first step in the development of a POA is to educate your chapter officers about the goals and purposes of the POA.

The first step in the development of a POA is to educate your chapter officers about the goals and purposes of the POA. This is a good activity for the summer and can be a part of their leadership training. The chapter should have a copy of the Program of Activities Handbook and the filmstrip “Program of Activities — VP and the Modern Chapter.” These resources will help illustrate the process of POA development. A copy of the National Chapter Award (NCA) application should also be available. The officers need to understand the relationship between the POA and the NCA. Together, these two documents make up the planning and documentation of a chapter’s activities. By being familiar with the NCA, the officers will see what activities are important and appropriate to conduct and what records need to be kept during the year to accurately report the activities.

The next step is to have the officers review the last year’s POA. Decide which activities worked well and deserve to be retained, and which activities should be deleted because they did not work. FFA officers begin to develop ideas for activities which they can present to the POA committees when school starts. These ideas should be based upon past experiences with similar activities and requirements of the NCA.

Consideration should also be given to the chapter and activity strengths and weaknesses. If a chapter has a strong alumni association, the chapter would naturally want to include alumni activities in its POA to take advantage of this strength. On the other hand, if the alumni association is weak, the chapter should develop activities that will strengthen the alumni association and its involvement with the chapter.

Activities must be developed by the membership, not the advisor. The officers and committee members, as well as the members, should be the ones who develop these activities. Who knows better what the youth of today like to do, what activities in which they will participate, than the youth themselves? With advice and guidance from the advisor, a POA will be developed that is educational, sound, and productive for meeting the needs of the FFA members.

Committee chairmen should be selected based upon their leadership ability, willingness to work unselfishly for the chapter, and their track record of chapter involvement. They should be selected by the officers and advisor during the summer so when school starts work can begin immediately.

Committee chairmen should have the authority to call a meeting of the committee whenever need be done. Using the planning sheets developed by the National FFA Organization and included in the Program of Activities Handbook, a step-by-step to
FIND TWO NEW WAYS TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP

In the spring, the officers and committee chairmen together should complete the NCA application. If everyone has done their jobs successfully, filling out the National Chapter Award application will be a simple matter of transferring information from committee reports to the appropriate sections on the application.

For each major activity conducted by the chapter, someone should be appointed to make a written record of the activity. This should obviously be the chapter reporter. However, because the reporter cannot always be present at all activities and events, the vice president or committee chairman should be sure that someone is capable of writing a newspaper article and taking photographs is present. Good photographs are important for public relations and for completing the NCA and other FFA applications where photographs are required.

When an activity is completed, the committee responsible for conducting the activity should meet to review and evaluate the activity based on the goals of the chapter and the membership and community’s responses. They should write recommendations for next year’s committee work and prepare a report of the activity for the National Chapter Award application.

Preparing award applications such as the National Chapter Award and Proficiency Awards is much easier with the use of the microcomputer. (Photo courtesy of David Spencer, Leonards, Florida)

Here Come The Customers! (Continued from Page 6)

house, presenting Food for America programs and involving FFA Alumni. Each of these has tremendous value and can be used effectively to attract students and persuade those who influence the decisions of students. However, all of these ideas will not work in a high school.

The recruitment approach that is taken is still a decision that must be coordinated and led by the local teacher. The most important factor in making that decision is knowing the students in your school. Tailor the program and use approaches that meet their needs, and students will make the right choice.

It has often been said that “the customer is always right.” Maybe a better way to say it as it relates to agriculture programs is “the customer is always the customer.”

By DAVID KEISLER and CHARLES SPENCER
Mr. Krueger (top) is executive director of the Michigan FFA Foundation and Mr. Snyder is projects consultant with the Michigan FFA Association.

FOOD CROP INTEGRATION IN MICHIGAN

As curriculums change in Michigan, science and technology begin to transform our classes and laboratories. Thus, FFA has an opportunity to meet the instructional challenges from this new curriculum emphasis.

To meet these challenges, Michigan agriculture education programs are undergoing a radical change from a production agriculture to an agriscience/agribusiness curriculum. This change is reflected by the number of state FFA degree applications that represent agriscience/agribusiness. In 1991-92, 27% of Michigan’s State FFA degree recipients were in agribusiness.

Because of employment trends in agriscience/agribusiness — a trend that is being driven by the educational/marketplace environment — agricultural education is seeking individuals possessing these leadership skills.

The process of educating our youth for citizenship in schools is not confined to books, curriculum, and the class; schools must teach by example the shared values of a civil society. Consciously or otherwise, teachers — and indeed the older students — demonstrate the appropriate form of civic discourse and political expression by their conduct and deportment in and out of class. Inacioilously, the parents, they are role models.

— Chief Justice Warren E. Burger

The FFA must be used in our instructional programs as a motivating force to improve our currricula. No matter how much our currricula change, there is still a need for human relations skills. In fact, employers want a new kind of worker with a broad set of workplace skills — or at least a strong foundation in the basics that will facilitate learning on the job (Kanevale, 1988).

The educational basics of communication, problem solving, assessing information, and global awareness can all be taught through FFA related activities. High self-esteem, high expectations, responsibility, persistence, and teamwork are qualities sought by employers and developed through the FFA. FFA activities can be incorporated into the currriculum, providing an excellent vehicle for learning interpersonal skills required by employers.

THEME ARTICLE

FFA — Fulfilling a Purpose

When reading the aims and purposes of the National FFA Organization, the specific purpose that remains in the forefront is to develop competent and assertive agricultural leadership. Consequently, the agricultural education industry is seeking individuals possessing these leadership skills.

Is agricultural education still making room in its ever-changing curriculum for FFA leadership development? Have we been limiting our FFA activities because of a preconceived notion that new currricula (agricience) limit our opportunities?

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provide for the development of the "whole person" through leadership, personal, and interpersonal training.

Agricultural literacy is another topic addressed within the Michigan Agriscience and Natural Resources curriculum. The FFA’s Food for America Program is an important way Michigan FFA members are addressing agricultural literacy concerns. Forming comprehensive K-12 agriscience programs throughout Michigan is a goal that developed from efforts of FFA members striving to educate elementary students on issues in agriculture and food production. Food for America can be easily integrated into existing agriscience programs, providing opportunities for assertive agricultural leadership.

Many new programs in plant and animal science have adopted new strategies for teaching biotechnology while meeting the needs of FFA members in a variety of skill contests. FFA officers and the committee of the Year are now using information learned in agriscience classes to win local, regional and state competitions. Environmental concerns are also being addressed through natural resources programs using the new curriculum and through an applied hands-on approach in the FFA.

FFA Meeting the Challenge

As the FFA advances, it must keep pace with the changes in agriculture and technology. Requirements for a strong agriculture and natural resources industry correlate directly to the need for quality agriscience programs. A supply of competent, bold, young leadership is essential for maintenance and expansion of our global agricultural economy. To meet this demand, dynamic and fertile K-12 agricultural and natural resources programs must be our goal.

Building human resource potential of a young child is a cornerstone laid by FFA members involved in Project Pla.

These new agriscience and natural resource programs must be structured with a commitment to providing access for all students. The FFA, being an integral part of the development of agricultural, environmental, and natural resource curricula, will foster a sense of individual responsibility for stewardship of our resources. Furthermore, FFA career development, which focuses on preparation and retaining, will enhance economic development.

As the FFA keeps pace with advancing science and technology, our purpose still holds true — the development of competent and assertive agricultural leadership.

References

Are You a Wise Advisor?

(Continued from Page 4)

"The one is a time-honored emblem of knowledge and wisdom. Being older than the rest of you, I am asked to advise you from time to time at the need arises. I hope that my advice will always be based on true knowledge and reined wisdom."

Responsibilities...

(Continued from Page 3)

Take Responsibility

Were these students tall and have what I wanted to have? Maybe! Were they describing FFA advisors, county agents or other youth organization leaders that had influenced them? Perhaps! Or were they describing their own goals as the kind of advisor they would like to be? You and I as active members of the agricultural education profession can only hope and wait and see. But while we are waiting we can be positive role models for them.

You can’t manage time! Seconds, minutes, hours, and even years keep flowing by. The flow is one way and irreversible. The supply is fixed and the demand is insatiable. Yet everyone has all there is. Time is perhaps our most valuable resource. You really can’t save time; rather you need to concentrate on how to effectively spend your time. Managing time is actually a matter of managing yourself. If you don’t manage how you spend your time, you can be sure that others will do it for you. Advising the FFA requires a great deal of the agricultural educator’s time and represents an appropriate starting place for making better use of one’s time.

The answer to effective utilization of time begins with each of us as individuals. Individuals have a tendency to find time to do those things which are required of them and those things which they want to do. Perhaps you would like to spend more time fishing with your family, but you don’t have time with all the FFA activities. If you would really like to spend more time fishing with your family, then you need to employ techniques which will allow you to be more efficient in using your time. This article suggests ten principles to help you become more efficient.

Principle 1.

Balance Personal Life and the Job

What principle this really means is that you should not rob your personal life to perform job-related activities, or vice versa. No one can tell you what the proper balance should be for you; only you can do that. The important thing to realize is that in the teaching profession you can spend every minute teaching or preparing to do so, and there will still be things you could do.

One needs to consider her/his family obligations, community interests, and professional responsibilities when deciding the time to spend on the job. I truly believe the most effective people in the long run are those who have maintained that balance between their personal lives and the job.

To maintain a balance, one should accept responsibilities only when other responsibilities can be reduced or eliminated. When you assume increased responsibilities related to your job, you should look for ways to cut some job-related responsibility. Likewise, before committing yourself to serve as an officer in a civic group, you need to identify what you can cut from your present community activities.

The important thing is not "rob Peter to pay Paul"; you should not take additional responsibility in one area at the expense of another area. This leads to a situation of not being able to finish with the job.

Principle 2.

Learn to Say No!

One of the most effective principles related to time management is simply learning to say no! The anti-drug campaign, "Just say no," sounds easy, but it’s difficult for those who have been involved in drugs. Equally so, it’s hard for educators to say no in refusing to accept a request; it goes against much of what they believe. For example, teachers are required to continuously "pump and prime" students. If students want to do something outside of what they have to do, teachers are overcome with satisfaction and emotion. They are willing to accommodate students even if it presents a personal hardship for them. Unfortunately, their habitual response goes beyond students and into every aspect of one’s life if it is allowed to happen.

What can one do to break this compelling habit of saying "yes”? Start with taking a realistic look at your goals, responsibilities, and interests. How does a particular request fit into your goals? Second, what’s involved and how will it affect your life? Too often an internal urge will crosswire our thinking in believing that the task really won’t take a lot of time. We must be honest with ourselves and others. Tell them that at this time, because of other commitments, you can’t assume that responsibility. If you would like to do the task, encourage them to ask you again at a later date.

Principle 3.

Empower FFA members

The key to efficiently operating an FFA

(Continued on page 15)
Managing Your Time...

(Continued from Page 11)

chapter is to make sure that the FFA chapter is the students' organization. The way to achieve this goal is to make sure the chapter operates as a member-centered organization.

Several years ago, we conducted a research project to determine factors related to participation in the FFA. Several factors were identified, and the two key factors were: 1) image of the FFA chapter and, 2) whether the chapter operated as a member-centered chapter.

Operating as a member-centered organization simply means that the students are actively making decisions about the chapter, with the teacher in an advisory role. Too many teachers are reluctant to let loose and take a advisory role by delegating authority to the students. Some teachers feel they need to keep a finger on every aspect of chapter activities. In such a situation, the chapter becomes the teacher's organization rather than the students'. Many times in these situations, the teacher has to be, coerced, and/or bribe students to get them to conduct the activities of the chapter. The answer is to empower the members; let them make the decisions with your guidance. Following such a strategy might mean that traditional activities conducted by the chapter could be dumped for other activities. The key is that the members have to assume responsibility for their organization. If they do, you'll have more time!

Principle 4. Employ Basic Time Management Strategies

A lot of work has been done on identifying techniques to help people make better use of their time. One book I've read is Tom Rochester, Editor, Make All of Your Time Quality Time. It's a paperback, and you won't waste your money reading it. Let me suggest a few things most appropriate for teachers.

First, handle things once, especially mail. Agricultural teachers receive a lot of mail. When you open a letter, handle it if all possible at that time. If it's a report form from the state department, take action rather than shuffling it to another part of your crowded desk. If it can be handled at the time, file it. The important thing is to get it off your desk with out shuffling it through your hands or on top of your desk. If the item requires a response, make a few notes in the margin and draft your response. Better yet, telephone a response.

Second, utilize a "to do" list to guide your daily activities. Each day, you have some time periods committed for specific activities, which means all the other things you want to do have to be done in the uncommitted time periods. A "to do" list helps you prioritize and discipline yourself to attend to those high priority items first. It helps you keep on track and focused on achieving one thing at a time.

Third, remove as many distractions as possible from the area in which you are working or find a different place to work. Think twice before writing out that pass on your work to work on her record book. Ask yourself if the student's presence will interfere with your completing tasks. If so, don't sign the pass!

Principle 5. Utilize Community Resources

Former students, alumni members, parents, business leaders, and others can provide valuable services to teachers who are willing to use them. These people are willing and able to release the teacher of many tasks associated with the FFA. From chaperoning to training teams, interested community people can allow teachers to continue teaching.

Principle 6. Prioritize Activities

If you accept the assumption that an individual cannot do everything, then you recognize the importance of prioritizing activities. Activities do not need to be prioritized unless they compete for the same time. A well-planned FFA program of activities should help ensure that too many activities are not happening at the same time. When setting priorities, personal activities should not be competing against job-related activities. The problem of fishing with the family should be decided by determining whether it is more important than another personal activity, not an FFA activity.

The most common technique is to use the "A-B-C" method of setting priorities. Activities which are highly important are assigned as "A." "B" priority is given to those things which should be done. And "C" is assigned to those "nice to do" but not essential activities. Once priorities are set, then the challenge is in adhering by them.

Principle 7. Attack Procrastination Head On

One of the most deadly causes of inefficient time use comes from procrastinating. This is most commonly associated with unpleasant, difficult or complex tasks; things that you don't look forward to doing. Here are a few tips which will help you avoid the procrastination trap. Begin by doing those tasks which you don't look forward to doing. Delay will not make things easier, so get them out.
Just The Facts, Please!

By DENNIS C. SCALZI

In addition, we are looking for students with better math and science abilities, and in most cases we seek students with aspirations of going on to a two-year technical school or four-year university. Clearly, the new curriculum is designed to have market appeal to a different group of students than we have traditionally served.

What's an advisor to do? Remain stalwart and firm in traditional approaches to advising the FFA? In 1976, national enrollment in agriculture was an all-time high of 979,000 students, with the FFA membership at approximately 509,000. In 1994, despite the fact that agriculture enrollment had declined to less than 500,000, the percentage of students choosing to become FFA members remained steady at about 75% or 389,000. These data suggest that FFA membership is stable and is directly tied to enrollment.

Therefore, if we hope to reverse the enrollment trend and increase FFA membership, we must make programmatic changes and modify existing reward structures to accommodate and cultivate the needs of new students groups.

In addition, we must try to increase awareness of new programs and awards developed by state and national organizations that recognize and encourage the non-traditional student who enters agriculture programs. Unfortunately, many advisors do not accept these new programs and awards as a legitimate part of their program, and consequently, do little to promote them as part of a total agriculture program. If we are not successful in advising them, we must accept the organizational and structural changes which are occurring within the FFA and "just do it!"

Changing Program Goals

Just a few years ago if you asked any vocational educator to define vocational education, the response would have been similar to this "preparation for work at less than the baccalaureate level." Ask the question today, and the response might be considerably different. The changing nature of the workplace, work, and the worker might suggest that preparation for work involves something more than just a high school education. Research data suggest that the number of unskilled workers needed in the future will decline, and modern society will...
Managing Your Time...
(Continued from Page 15)

doing sight and mind. Recognize that procrastination causes unnecessary emotional anguish and that excuses will only temporarily satisfy the reality of not getting the job done. Believe in yourself and just do it!

Principle 8. Organize for Success
Organization for the agriculture teacher begins with a good filing system. Acquiring information is a key in today's world, and certainly there is nothing as time consuming and frustrating as not being able to find something you know you have.

Setting up a file system is not nearly as hard as maintaining one. When in doubt about whether to keep an item, throw it out. Only file those things you which definitely will use. The best time to review, clean out, and maintain that file is when materials are filed in it.

An FFA calendar of activities and events will help FFA members assume more responsibility for chapter operation and therefore take less of your time. The National FFA Supply Service offers wall posters listing activities and events of the chapter. These provide ready access and reference for you and your FFA members.

Keep one calendar of your activities. It gets too confusing to have a school desk calendar, an FFA calendar, a pocket calendar, and a home calendar. Use one calendar; don't depend on your memory.

Principle 9. Use "Peak Time" Wisely
"Peak time" refers to the time in which a person is at his/her mental best. Some individuals are morning people, others evening people. One should schedule those activities which require the most mental dexterity during the individual's peak time. In contrast, events requiring little mental alertness or "no-brainer" activities should be scheduled in off-peak times. Usually hands-on, doing activities don't require as much mental alertness as planning and organizing activities.

Principle 10. Keep Life in Perspective
The most important time management segregated is to keep your life in proper perspective. Ask yourself, what will happen if I don't do this? How important is it? Is this activity really necessary to realize the educational objectives desired? The sun will come up again even if your livestock judging team doesn't place gold, or the chapter's banquet doesn't go real smooth. Lou Holtz, noted football coach and speaker, emphasizes the motto, "WIN - What's Important Now." Holtz's motto provides an excellent guiding principle for one to keep things in perspective by focusing on the present, not the past or even the future.

Summary
When a minute is past, it cannot be retrieved. There is not instant replay of our time. If we want our time to count, we need to make use of it as it passes. Following sound principles of time management will allow you to make better use of your time. Do it now; your clock is ticking!

Bibliography

Just the Facts, Please!
(Continued from Page 17)

existing structure in a way that meets the needs of students. Only then will students start to focus on the inherent value of the FFA organization, and problems related to image and relevance will begin to fade.

Research! It documents the dwindling traditional base, it urges you to expand your clientele base to include urban, minority and other non-traditional support groups, and finally it challenges you to modify existing programs to include a stronger emphasis on science and emerging areas of interest. But considering all the changes which have occurred in agricultural education and the FFA, does the literature tell you how to advise the FFA in today's educational climate?

Unfortunately, the answer is no! The recipe you seek for successfully advising the FFA is not written clearly and concisely in any publication that I have reviewed. However, that is not to say that a solution does not exist. Assembling these research data into a workable plan for advising the FFA is like putting together a 3000 piece interlocking puzzle—if you have patience and a plan, the picture will eventually come into view.

Bibliography

The FFA in Middle School Agriculture Education

Applied academics has proved to be an effective approach to middle school agriculture education. Each lesson is designed to combine classroom activities and hands-on experiences focusing on the importance of agriculture in everyday life and exposing the students to the wide variety of career opportunities in agriculture and natural resources. What better way to implement these teaching/learning units than by utilizing the FFA organization?

SASE and BOAC are the basic building blocks for any agriculture/FFA program. Through supervised agricultural experiences, students develop personal responsibility and a positive work ethic, as well as achieve a sense of accomplishment. No longer can education be considered a "show me" or "tell me" situation.

By conducting an SASE project the student becomes involved in the educational process. A student's SASE may be a tomato plant grown in a container, a livestock production project, or work experience. The instructor opens the door to success for the students by stressing the need for accurate and detailed record keeping on the student's part and by personally maintaining diligent supervision of the selected project.

In relating the importance of agriculture, it is critical for the students to be familiar with their own community and how to become a functional part of that community.

BOAC is an ideal vehicle for such learning experiences. The problem-solving approach of

BOAC provides a logical set of steps to follow, beginning with a survey of recognized needs in the community. Skills that benefit an individual into adulthood are developed as the process of selecting a particular need, organizing available resources, and implementing and evaluating the project at completion. In addition, BOAC is the kind of program in which all students, regardless of age or ability, can participate.

FFA TODAY assists members to demonstrate knowledge and skills and are powerful motivators for middle school programs.

By utilizing press release materials supplied by the chapter, local media not only inform the public of FFA members' activities in the community, they also help instill a sense of accomplishment in the members.

An example of positive publicity would be the reporting of local youth returning from a state or national competition where they accepted awards on behalf of chapter. This experience relayed through photos and news copy can be a highly motivational device for fellow chapter members who were part of the project.

Individuals with a high level of interest in a given area can excel through FFA judging and demonstration contests. These events provide learning experiences and opportunities to exhibit skills and knowledge acquired in the classrooms and laboratory settings. Positive, competitive experiences encourage students to learn more about agriculture and related subjects and promote their enjoyable experiences to others.

The FFA provides many middle schoolers with their first opportunity to participate in

(Continued on page 21)
LABORATORY TEACHING
Planning Effective Method Demonstrations

T he method demonstration is a widely
used teaching technique in agricultural
education. According to Bear and
Hoerner (1986, p. 20), "Agricultural mechanics
instructor is frequently synonymous with
demonstrations as a teaching technique." This
statement can be generalized to most areas of
laboratory instruction in agricultural education
(e.g., greenhouses, land laboratories, agri-
sience laboratories, etc.).

According to Miller (1990, p. 147), "The
(method) demonstration is an instructional
method used to show and explain the proce-
dures involved in completing a task." Method
demonstrations are especially effective for
Teaching manipulative skills and scientific
principles.

Well-planned and delivered method demon-
strations enhance student learning. However,
demonstrations that are poorly planned or
delivered may actually hinder learning by con-
fusing and/or frustrating students (Newcomb,
McClench, and Warmbrod, 1986).

Purpose
This article describes correct practices in
preparing method demonstrations. It is
intended to assist in planning and delivering
effective method demonstrations.

Preparing for the Demonstration
Teachers must prepare in order to present
high-quality demonstrations. In preparing to
present a method demonstration, effective
teachers do the following: 1) specify instruc-
tional objectives; 2) conduct a task analysis; 3)
develop a written lesson plan; 4) assemble nec-
essary equipment and supplies; and 5) practice
the demonstration.

Specify instructional objectives. The first
step in planning a demonstration is identifying
the instructional objectives to be accomplished.
Teachers should clearly and specifically state
what the students should know and/or be able
to do as a result of observing the demonstra-
tion. Clear, specific objectives are essential in
planning an effective demonstration.

Conduct a task analysis. A task analysis
involves dividing the skill or principle to be
demonstrated into logical, easily explained
steps. Those steps and the information relating
to each step should be written out during the
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the demonstration through from beginning to
end. Writing out each step and the related
information prevents the instructor from omit-
ting important procedures or information.

A thorough task analysis of the skill or prin-
ciple to be demonstrated is just as important
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strate many of the operational steps or proced-
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be difficult for students." Systematic task analysis
helps the teacher look at the skill or principle
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perspective.

Develop a written lesson plan. A written
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group (and certain small group) demonstration.
A file of well-written lesson plans, covering
demonstrations presented one or more times
each year or semester, is a valuable, time-sav-
ing asset for any busy agriculture teacher.

A suggested demonstration lesson plan for
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into "steps" and "key points" based on the pre-
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nstrations have been rendered ineffective be-
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the teacher realized that he or she did not have
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Advance planning and organization of
equipment and supplies can prevent this from
happening. Listing necessary equipment and
(Continued on Page 23)

ASSOCIATED TEACHING
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(Continued on Page 23)
The FFA in Middle School...
(Continued from Page 19)

The democratic process and parliamentary procedure. Delegating items of business, being involved in decision making processes, and electing officers and committee chairpersons combine to make an effective tool for teaching and learning cooperation.

The FFA members fortunate enough to be elected to chapter or sub-district office have the opportunity to participate in leadership workshops designed to provide information that the officers can share with their fellow members. The ability to communicate effectively through the aforementioned activities and public speaking contests is an integral part of an active FFA program and serves to acquaint and equip students with academic and vocational skills.

The motto of ag education is "learning by doing" and the FFA organization can provide motivation and opportunity for middle school students to aspire and achieve a quality educational experience through this program.

Toward A...
(Continued from Page 25)


References


About the Cover

The Program of Activities serves as the cornerstone for a successful FFA chapter. The advisor must perform many functions (inner ring) with FFA members in and through the many available opportunities (outer ring) to help the chapter realize its goals.

Planning Effective...
(Continued from Page 20)

Step
a. Must remove 6" of sheathing from cable.

b. The cable ripper is the correct tool to use for Type NM 12-2 wire cable because it will not damage the insulation on the individual wires under sheathing.

The supplies make preparation of subsequent demonstrations quicker and easier.

Practice the demonstration. The teacher should practice each demonstration before presenting it to the students. Practice enhances instructor confidence and ability. This allows instructors to focus more of their attention on the learners during the actual demonstration.

Practicing the demonstration also allows the instructor to identify any oversights which may have occurred during the planning and preparation. When discovered during practice, these oversights can be corrected before they ruin an otherwise excellent demonstration.

Summary

Method demonstrations are widely used in laboratory instruction in agricultural education. Like all components of laboratory instruction, a method demonstration must be well planned and organized if it is to be effective. This article has discussed key components of effective method planning. A future article will discuss how to present effective method demonstrations.


identifying the problem and defining criteria for evaluation

explore the problem

confront the problem

reexamine the conceptual tools

use evidence to develop solutions
designed solutions through application, and 6) evaluation of the solutions.

Branford and Stein illustrated a contemporary application of problem-solving called the "Ideal Problem-Solving Model." This model exemplifies the use of a systematic approach (breaking the whole problem into component parts) and utilizing different strategies that could possibly result in better solutions. Some of these strategies may include working on a problem backward instead of forward, clustering ideas first and evaluating later, using a scaled model or performing an experiment that simulates certain characteristics of a real-world environment, and using relevant conceptual tools which will simplify the problem-solving process. It is important to note that one may go through the ideal cycle several times before the problem is solved. Figure 1 identifies the steps in using this contemporary systems approach for problem-solving.

Generally there are sequential problem-solving steps in every method and certain skills that all problem solvers need to possess. Johnson and Johnson stated:

"Problem-solving adequacy should be high. Problems must be resolved with minimal energy and in a way that eliminates them permanently. Procedures should exist for sensing the existence of problems, inventing, and implementing solutions. When problems are dealt with adequately, the problem-solving ability of the group is increased, innovation and group effectiveness is improved (Johnson, 1987, p. 10).

In the opinion of these writers, the models advocated by Newcomb et al., and Branford and Stein are system models of problem-solving approach to teaching. Although many processes may differ in name and style, all are based upon Dewey's problem-solving approach.
STORIES IN PICTURES
(Photos courtesy of Glen Shinn, Clemson University)

Over 100 elementary teachers participated in South Carolina Agriculture in the classroom workshops held at the Research and Education Centers (Experiment Stations) across the state. The AITC program is a cooperative venture among Clemson University, SC Farm Bureau Federation, SC Department of Agriculture and SC Department of Education. Tammy Black, Clemson University, and Emory Bishop, SCFBF check last minute registration details.

Dr. Joe Harper demonstrates mathematics and science principles using agriculture as a basis for the experience. Mathematics teaching tips were provided for students in grades K-5 during a series of AITC workshops.

Philip Morris USA provided the latest personal computers for use in South Carolina Off-Campus Instruction. Courses have been offered at three centers throughout the state for agriculture teachers. Mr. Harry DuBose, agriculture teacher in Aynor, SC, works with a windows program.

Mr. Eddie Johnson, Past SCVATA President, shares his knowledge of hydraulics with fellow teachers. Mr. Johnson and Dr. Joe Harper organized a workshop during the summer teacher’s conference. At the conclusion of the workshop, each teacher took a set of teaching aides home for use in local programs.