Agricultural Education...

Your Ticket to the World!

- Debunking the Myths Regarding Internationalization
- Is It Marriage or Just a Big Date?
- What to Expect From an International Exchange
- Guidelines for Success in International Agriculture Assignments
Debunking the Myths Regarding Internationalization

Ten Myths of Internationalization

1. Internationalization of the curriculum is difficult.
2. It is too complicated and expensive to have students involved in a trip to another country or have visitors from other countries participate in agricultural education and FFA programs.
3. Teachers who haven't traveled to another country can't properly introduce international agriculture into the curriculum.
4. Students are not interested in international agriculture and cultures.
5. There is no space or time in my program's curriculum for international agriculture.
6. International agriculture is a fringe area, but not essential to an agricultural education program.
7. There is little support for international agriculture in the curriculum.
8. Agriculture in other countries has no effect on U.S. agriculture.
9. Very few career opportunities exist in international agriculture.
10. The effort it would take for internationalization of the agricultural education program is not worth the outcome.

By Robert A. Martin

Dr. Martin is a professor of agricultural education and studies at Iowa State University, Ames.

During a recent and continuing review of the national study of agricultural education (often referred to as the green book), it became clear that one of the areas the committee found lacking was that of adding a global perspective for international agriculture to the curriculum. Unfortunately, a review of the recent literature and the research conducted in this area confirms that internationalization of the curriculum in agricultural education is still more of a dream than a reality.

There are those who believe that much of the reluctance to get started with the business of adding a global perspective to the curriculum can be attributed to a need to first address the "bigger issues" of adding more science, life skills and career skills to the curriculum. However, there is evidence to suggest that the real culprits are the "Ten Myths of Internationalization." These myths represent real stumbling blocks to the profession's movement to a higher level of education for all students.

Spreading Success Stories in Pennsylvania

More than 60 percent of agriculture teachers surveyed at last year's national FFA convention said their main challenge was finding enough time to focus on their students, classes and community outreach—important elements to a successful agricultural education program.

How do we as teachers balance this need with all the other demands on our time? How do we touch every single student sitting in the classroom and help each build a successful, valued career and life?

Late last year, the National Council for Agricultural Education (The Council) and the U.S. Department of Education launched an initiative called Local Program Success to answer these questions and help teachers succeed. They assembled a group of agricultural education leaders to define what makes a local program successful and focused on six key factors:

- strong classroom and laboratory instruction;
- connections between the classroom and careers (supervised agricultural experience programs);
- leadership and personal development through FFA;
- community and school alliances;
- recruitment and program publicity; and
- professional and program development.

To determine what makes teachers successful in those areas, the task force assembled work groups of agriculture and education leaders, including 33 teachers and teacher educators from 18 states. Those groups collected lists of proven best practices used in the nation's most successful programs, and developed ideas for tools and resources to help teachers replicate success.

As a member of the work group that identified the best practices and tools needed for classroom and laboratory instruction, I know teachers across the country will appreciate Local Program Success. It lays out what is actually happening in successful schools today. The outcome of this initiative, which will be delivered to teachers in mid-1997, is comprehensive, well-rounded and covers all bases for teachers. It also offers teacher educators a powerful tool for preparing tomorrow's teachers.

Help for Daily Challenges

The Council and the U.S. Department of Education are assembling the work groups' ideas into a Local Program Success guide. It will be introduced to state representatives in February 1997, and delivered to all teachers later next year. Other tools and resources will follow as they are developed.

The guide provides ideas for agricultural teachers can use immediately to improve their local programs, create a climate for teaching and learning, save time and make better use of their resources. Teachers will:

- Find out how to get more done in less time.
- Plan and prioritize activities and involve others, so they can move toward their program and personal goals.

By Marcia Paterson

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- Leans easy strategies to help focus more on students and still accomplish all their required tasks.
- Build dynamic FFA chapters where all members share responsibilities.
- Create special experiences that teach students how to build a resume, career and life.
- Find compelling classroom instructional materials that grab and keep students' attention.
- Re-energize themselves about making a difference in their students' lives.

The best part about the resource guide, and all the tools that will follow, is that it will help us focus on what we do best—making connections for students. Each of our programs and communities has special challenges, and we know what works best locally. And we can decide which of the common sense strategies, ideas and resources will make our students and us even more successful.

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By James C. Patterson

Mr. Patterson is an agricultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico.

As an agricultural attaché for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), educating international clients about the U.S. agricultural marketing system is a major part of my job. There are many times when a foreign client or government official will express some embarrassment about a lack of understanding concerning the complexities of U.S. agriculture and my response almost always includes a recent example demonstrating that even U.S. consumers, at times, are misinformed about their own marketing system. Thus, lack of information, or incomplete information, is an obstacle to effective customer service, especially with international clients. Skills and disciplines developed throughout my agricultural education training have served me well in effectively representing U.S. agriculture abroad.

Why International Agriculture?

My agricultural teachers, 4-H coordinators and college professors helped stimulate my interest in international agriculture throughout my education. These agricultural education professionals helped me recognize the international implications of production and management decisions on my family’s fruit and vegetable farm in Alabama, which sparked my interest in international competition in fruit and vegetable markets. Other experiences which helped me pursue a career in international agriculture included participation in international activities in church, community high school and college. Collectively, these experiences helped me attain a global perspective of the U.S. role in international agriculture. As a result, I sought a career where I could help solve these problems.

Although I never considered the USDA as an employer, in 1976 I had the opportunity to meet former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz and, based on his comments about the benefits of international agricultural trade, I decided that I could make a difference at USDA. In earning my Master’s degree in agricultural economics, which included some agricultural education electives, my first USDA assignment was with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), an agency which administers standardization, grading, inspection, certification, market news, marketing orders, market research, promotion and regulatory programs.

My position was in market research and promotion, and I was the only person on my staff with a degree in agriculture as well as an agricultural background. Thus, I became sort of an “in-house” agricultural educator for my non-farm colleagues. Later, I developed a series of agricultural courses and seminars for USDA’s Graduate School, an adult education program administered by USDA with authorization from the U.S. Congress. Thus, I had solidly assumed the role of an agricultural educator for USDA.

Becoming an Agricultural Attaché

Written and oral examinations are a requirement for admission into USDA’s Foreign Service and, thanks to my years as an agricultural educator for USDA, I performed exceptionally well on these tests upon entering the Foreign Service. In fact, of all my professional experiences, my years as an agricultural educator were the best preparation I had for the Foreign Service. My experience as an educator has also helped other returns such as effective communication, and more detailed understanding of agricultural marketing and trade systems, economics, communications and, of course, the learning process.

My agricultural education training and skills are also important attributes to my current position as agricultural attaché, where my responsibilities include: reporting on crop production, trade policies, prospects for trade, administering USDA export programs, and educating U.S. agricultural exporters and Mexican importers of U.S. products about their different agricultural marketing systems. Koelsch and Uhl (1990) define agricultural marketing as “...the performance of all business activities involved in the flow of food products and services from the point of initial agricultural production until they are in the hands of the consumer.” With the increasing internationalization of U.S. agriculture and agricultural products, primarily due to increased global demand for high quality and economically priced U.S. agricultural products, opportunities for the agricultural educator/attaché are unlimited.

International Agricultural Education

The program accompanying this article depicts a program which I coordinated in cooperation with the U.S. Feed Grains Council and the North Dakota Barley Commission on U.S. barley marketing. Program participants were barley buyers and we focused on the efficiency of the U.S. marketing system and its reliability to supply them with high quality, economical-

ly priced barley. As a result of this trip, several of the members made substantial barley purchases for industry use in their respective countries.

As an agricultural attaché, I am also responsible for coordinating international meetings between U.S. agricultural producer associations and potential importers. For example, I worked with the U.S. Wheat Associates to coordinate a tour of the South American flour industry. This tour, which served to educate U.S. wheat farmers and South American flour millers, was important in increasing sales of U.S. wheat to several South American countries, including Brazil and Peru.

The important educational role of agricultural attachés is further demonstrated by the Attaché Educational Program (AEP), administered by USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service. AEP enables U.S. farmers and exporters to benefit from the specialized knowledge of attachés. Under the program, attaches are available to make educational presentations and provide export counseling to international trade development centers, state, regional and national farm organizations; state and regional trade associations; food industry associations; state departments of agriculture; and universities.

Complexity is part of the nature of the U.S. agricultural marketing system. It challenges market participants (buyers and sellers), consumers and educators to comprehend its scope and its national and international interrelationships with agricultural and non-agricultural factors. As such, it will only pose greater challenges for all involved as issues become more complex. For example, there are periodic reports in the Mexican press that U.S. yellow corn is animal feed and unfit for human consumption. A significant portion of Mexican production is white corn, preferred for production of tortillas, a popular food staple. In response to this corn complaint, as agricultural attaché and agricultural educator, I explain that yellow corn is just as nutritious as white corn and that yellow corn is preferred by U.S. consumers.

Other, more complex questions are certain to arise in the future due to technological advances in U.S. agriculture. For example, given the commercialization of bioengineered corn and other crops, in the future I will have to educate foreign clients about the benefits of these new crops and that alteration of their genetic structure does not affect the nutritional value of the commodity, nor does it pose any health risk to livestock or consumers.

Furthermore, the change in information delivery systems will also pose greater challenges and opportunities for agricultural attachés/educators. As U.S. government marketing strategies and global consumption information is exchanged over the Internet, we must ensure that information sources, often produced by non-agricultural program developers, ...continued on page 35
What to Expect From an International Exchange

By Kitty-Sue Schlink

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any diverse groups offer international exchange programs in the home country and in host countries. How does a prospective international exchange participant know what to expect, and what not to expect, from an international exchange? My experience, with the International 4-H Youth Exchange as a representative to Australia, provides one example. A careful review of the sponsoring organization as well as a careful look at reasons for choosing to participate in an international exchange is important.

International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE)

The USA IFYE Alumni Association coordinates 4-H International Programs with support from the Cooperative Extension System's 4-H program. The IFYE representative program provides youth an opportunity to learn about and participate in 4-H or similar youth programs abroad. This participation develops individual study and career training, increases an individual's knowledge and global awareness, and provides an opportunity to share and apply what is learned upon returning home (CD International Program Services, 1994).

The IFYE representative program is open to 4-H alumni 19 to 30 years old. Countries in all parts of the world are visited from four to six months (CD International Program Services, 1994). I began the application process in January 1994, was selected to attend in April 1994, and left for Australia in October 1994. I chose Australia because it is a modern country using advanced technology in agriculture with a growing concern toward understanding the relationships involved in maintaining a positive image. By living and working on farms and ranches throughout the country, I was seeking information about world agriculture, Australian programs and practices, and Australian perceptions of those practices. My host organizations were Young Farmers in Victoria, Australia, and Rural Youth in Western Australia.

Young Farmers

My host organization in Victoria was Victorian Young Farmers, Inc. This organization is affiliated with the National Rural Youth Organization and is for people 16 to 28 years old. The members' backgrounds and occupations are diverse and are not limited to persons in the farming community.

The Young Farmers organization provides a group with which to participate in local events and activities, and assists individuals in becoming involved in planning and running programs, supporting and helping others, and working together as a team. Young Farmers offers the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities as well as learn new skills. The program aims to provide a balance of cultural, agricultural and social activities for its members (Victorian Young Farmers Inc., 1994).

Apart from arranging their own activities, Young Farmers do a lot of community work. Many clubs donate activity profits to charities and provide human resources for volunteer projects (Victoriaan Young Farmers Inc., 1994).

Rural Youth

My host organization during the last half of my stay was the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth (WAFRY). WAFRY is a federated organization comprised of youth clubs from the rural and metropolitan areas of Western Australia. "The Federation's structure is based on clubs and these in turn are represented, along with the State committees and State Office Bearers, on the state management body called State Executive. The supreme policy body is State Conference which has representation from each club as well as the members of State Executive." (WAFRY Handbook, 1994). The Federation's management body represents the members and clubs and responds to their needs and wishes. Membership is open to anyone ages 16-30. If you are older (30-52) and can't seem to leave, there is an associate membership available and a lifetime membership can also be awarded.

WAFRY hosts a minimum of nine exchanges each year who come from other states in Australia and other countries. While I was in Western Australia, I met with exchanges from South Australia and Canada.

Meeting Expectations

When considering an organization to coordinate your trip, researching the association carefully is important. If possible, researching the host organization, or any organizations that your sponsor organization is affiliated with in the host country, is also important. As a brief organization description I was involved with indicate, age requirements, purpose or objectives of the organization, and individual responsibilities differ from organization to organization and, it should be assumed, from country to country.

Understanding completely the responsibilities of the exchanges is also critical. Many organizations will require periodic essays be sent home for publication or dispersal to sponsors. Speaking skills, a prepared presentation for diverse audiences, and other requirements may be essential for the exchange.

Therefore, if you want to do an international exchange, here is a checklist of things to consider when choosing a sponsor organization:

- duration of program
- personal expectations
- organization expectations
- degree of exchange environment "complexity"
- acceptance percentage
- cost of program, preparation and spending money allowance

Costs of an exchange can be deceiving. Although the initial cost to the sponsor organization could be one figure, oftentimes this amount does not include costs such as passport fees, long distance phone calls, physical examination and, in some cases, vaccinations. Funds can be generated for the exchange in many ways including scholarships, sponsor programs and grants, among others.

Characteristics of the organization and/or host country environment should also be sought. Some things to consider are:

- age
- education
- language
- gender
- compatibility regardless of cultural differences (this can be affected by personality)

Reflection

My host families were all wonderful! So many people went out of their way to make my exchange a memorable experience; driving me to the coast and mountains, joining me on tours and letting me join in the farm work. I have even been allowed to take part in the family's Christmas and New Year's celebrations. I learned about myself and the country and culture of Australia during my six months in-country could not have been learned in a lifetime at home.

References


Victorian Young Farmers Inc., Victorian Young Farmers Inc., (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 1994).

Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth, Inc., Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth, Inc. (Clarence, Western Australia, Australia, 1994), 1-2.

Kitty-Sue meets one of the natives—a wallaby. (Photo courtesy of Kitty-Sue Schlink.)
Participatory International Agricultural Education: Site-Based Learning

Creating International Relationships

At the end of World War II, America's land grant universities became major participants in international economic, social and political development in Western Europe. In collaboration with U.S. government programs and agencies, as well as with international agencies and individual countries, America's land grant universities have demonstrated a wide range of abilities and achievements in international affairs. American land grant university faculty, staff and students have been major resources for international development throughout the world. Today, we can create new educational partnerships in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union.

How can students, teachers and administrators participate in international programs? These opportunities exist throughout the world. It is important that U.S. agricultural educators develop joint ventures with educators in other countries to provide site-based learning opportunities to enhance our programs.

Getting Started

Limited information can lead to frustration in starting international exchanges. You can find plenty of international funding opportunities for exchanges listed in the Federal Register. You can access this information via the Internet. There are vast possibilities on the Internet, but a few key areas to search will provide focus to your "surfing." As you develop your international exchange program, involve your students with searching the databases on the Internet.

Using an Internet "browser" such as Netscape Navigator, click on "net search." You'll be prompted to type in your search information. Enter a key word (example: "Poland"). Short abstracts of several Internet sites that possibly match your request will appear. Scan through these abstracts and choose the most likely site(s). Click on the highlighted or underlined words, and travel to a new site! Use the "back" button to return if you need to do so. "Search Help" can be used. To minimize the time you spend on-line, download or print the relevant information your find. Here are some additional suggestions.

Key Phrase: USA

United States Information Agency funds exchange opportunities for teachers, cultural groups (dance, art, etc.) and students from high school to college levels. The information needed to apply for and coordinate a grant is easily understood. Programs include Fulbright Teacher Exchange, International Visitor Program, NIS (Newly Independent States) Secondary School Initiatives and Citizen Exchanges.

Key Phrase: History AND Country desired

Languages AND the European Union; Travel Advisories AND Country desired; or World Learning Inc. Are sites.

Key Phrase: Research the crops, industry, etc., of the country from which your ancestors came. The ideas are unlimited.

Using the "Open" button, type in an address such as: http://www.xxxxx.com. This is the Penn State "home page," and can lead you to other interesting sites. Exchange programs may be integrated with your own land grant university international program.

If you want to start traveling with an organized group, try the...
Guidelines for Success in International Agriculture Assignments

If it is true that the success of others leaves clues, what can we study in order to ensure our success as change agents, advisors, consultants, or technical assistance experts? Here are some clues for "Guidelines for Success in an International Development Assignment." While not a comprehensive guide, they are an initial starting point in the search for such knowledge and success. In addition, a recommended reading list of related literature is provided.

Preparing Mentally

"Many people who work overseas 'succeed' not because of their technical expertise, but because of their ability to cope with situations that are beyond the tolerance levels of most individuals" (Duffy, 1996). Take home message: do not enter into an overseas assignment lightly. Factor into account your mental, physical, and emotional preparedness prior to leaving.

Preparing Financially

Get your "financial house" in order prior to going overseas. Will you have any monthly payments to make while you are gone (i.e., mortgage, vehicle, student loans)? If so, have you found someone who will pay these bills in your absence? Have you granted Power of Attorney over your personal and financial affairs? Some experts suggest arranging it so that you will have no bills prior to your departure and if possible, selling off your material goods (Hamlett, 1996).

Warming Up

Don't go into the country of your new assignment "cold" (Bell, 1996). Do enough research so that you can fit in. Talk to the United States to research and study the country in which you will be working. You may also want to visit your country as a tourist. Be prepared for this type of occurrence (Bell, 1996). One strategy for optimizing problems like this is to have your counterparts meet your surviving flight and help you get through the customs process. They typically "know the ropes" and are able to help you expedite the red tape and clear many of the potential hurdles (Bell, 1996).

Visit with individuals who have recently returned from the country or region in which you will be working. What was their experience like? Ask them about the customs and taboos of that country's culture and society. In short, don't go in-country without having done your homework first. Contacts with professionals and counterparts overseas can be facilitated with the use of electronic mail, faxes and telephone calls. You can benefit greatly by making use of this technology before going overseas (Bell, 1996).

Packaging List

Try not to overlook the obvious. Did you remember to get all of your required immunizations? Have you packed the appropriate clothing for the corresponding climate/weather? Did you pack any required prescription medications? Medical supplies? Extra eyeglasses? Support hose? Toilet paper? Laptop computer and associated files? Writing materials? (Hamlett, 1996). Take home message: prior to leaving the country, make certain to pack everything you will need. You may not be able to take along items such as "creature comforts," but you should make sure you have everything you will need for the duration of your assignment.

Troubleshooting

Upon arrival in your host country, you can prepare for problems by anticipating them. If, for example, you take a computer, custom officers may seize it, lock it up and charge you a fee. After paying an "import tax" on it, you may be allowed to bring it back into the country. Be prepared for this type of occurrence (Bell, 1996). One strategy for optimizing problems like this is to have your counterparts meet your surviving flight and help you get through the customs process. They typically "know the ropes" and are able to help you expedite the red tape and clear many of the potential hurdles (Bell, 1996).

Remember Murphy's Law: Whatever can go wrong, will. There may be a few problems that surface after you arrive overseas that could not have been predicted prior to leaving the United States. "Since..." (Duffy, 1998).

Your First Six Weeks In-Country

You have safely arrived in your host country and have begun to settle into your new home. You have met several people, often including a professional counterpart, and are eager to start working on your new assignment. In addition, you wish to understand your new country and the culture in which you find yourself. Everything is so new and different to you. You find your world is changing. "What am I doing here? Will I be successful in making a positive contribution to this community?" Pragmatically, you should ask yourself, "Can I do the first six weeks to increase the chances that I will have a successful tour of duty?"

Look, Listen, Learn

One common activity among successful workers abroad can best be summarized as: "LISTEN, ask questions and go along." Wait until you understand the "lay of the land" before you talk too much" (Duffy, 1996). Other advice includes, "Keep your mouth shut and your ears open. Take in your new surroundings and listen as much as possible. Get accustomed to the sights and sounds around you so that it's not a stressful environment. Be sure to learn the cultural norms, too" (Hamlett, 1996).

In addition, "To increase the chances of having a successful tour of duty, you should immerse yourself in the culture. Doing so will help build language skills and allow you to become a part of the community. In the long run, this will foster a better working relationship, complete with increased cultural respect. Familiarize yourself with the customs and attitudes of your host country nationals," (Camacho, 1996).

Also, find out everything you can about the agency you're working for, your counterpart (preferably in a discrete manner) and the setting of your new assignment. Try to find out "who's who" as it relates to the hierarchical chain-of-command within the agency and community. Furthermore, "identify the major players and cover all your political bases. You can't afford to stay completely out of politics. However, don't be a trouble maker and avoid getting into arguments with unknown persons. You can compromise your position if you are not careful. Be friendly and diplomatic, but detach yourself from being unduly influenced" (Bell, 1996).

Then too, with respect to the local cultural or tribal setting, find out everything you can about it. Identify the target population(s) in your project(s). If farmers, do they own the land they work on or are they tenants? What developmental projects or programs have they been exposed to before they successfully or fail? Look the whole place over. Try to determine what types of "problems" you inherited and develop potential solutions for them (Bell, 1996). This will stimulate your mental thought process and begin to help you prepare for a successful tour of duty. Finally, realize that you will soon suffer culture shock and take steps to minimize it.

Whoo! What About Culture Shock?

What is culture shock? It is a "term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological or emotional response that people experience when they move for an..." (continued on page 14)
Guidelines for Success in International Agriculture, continued from page 13

extended period of time into a cul-
ture markedly different from their
own. It can cause intense discomfort,
often accompanied by hyper-irritabi-
ity, bitterness, resentment, homesick-
ness and other human qualities. Do not allow


do so. The condition exists when an
individual longs to be home rather
than where he or she is. While it varies from person to person,
misfortunes, friends and pets
as well as birthdays and holidays can
be very hard to deal with. It can be
extremely loneliness for a single person
and especially hard for a woman
(Hamlett, 1996). Homesickness can
be cured, in part, "by building a net-
work of host country nationals and
expatriate friends in the host country
environment upon which one can
depend for support" (Dally, 1996).

As one person said, "Separation
from your familiar surroundings, family
and friends may very well
result in sadness and loneliness.
Expect this! Expect to experience
homesickness to ease the intensity
and duration of it. Be aware
that homesickness can distort ones
reaction to bad news from home or
to the frustrations of living in an entire
new environment. Being isolated
and working with host country nationals
of different background can
be overwhelming. Family and
friends will continue to be very
important. Letter writing, reading
cassette tapes or planning a visit
from someone back home are all
helpful means of relieving homesick-
ness" (Camacho, 1996).

However, there are some pitfalls
to be avoided when coping with
homesickness as well. "Don't call
home! It can be very expensive, both
financially and emotionally. Besides
that, you don't need any additional
reminders of home. Avoid drinking
alcohol or sedatives to help
yourself alone. Keep your mind occupied
by working on your language and social
development skills" (Bell, 1996).

Establishing Rapport with
Counterparts and Colleagues

After having arrived in country
and working in your new assignment
for a period of time, you may not
be accepted by your counterparts or
the people there. In fact, you may
actually feel the opposite: resentment
and hostility from them. In addition,
you may be dealing with culture shock
and homesickness too. All of this can be
very discouraging to the new advisor working
overs for the first time. For some,
it is too much overcome to
accept. As a result, they return home unsuccessful
in their assignment. And yet
most people not only "survive," but
flourish overseas. Their success as
agricultural development advisors may be attributed to the types
or relationships they nurtured with the people with whom they worked
and lived. This does not happen
overnight, nor by chance. It requires
time and conscious effort to
establish and maintain good working
relationships and rapport between you,
your counterparts and your clients.

There is no one "best way" of
establishing a healthy rapport with
your counterparts and clientele.
However, one guideline is repeatedly
mentioned and can be summarized:
"Your ability to adapt to the
language and culture is important to
the success of your work. Also, a
good sense of humor is very
valuable" (Camacho, 1996).
Furthermore, it is critical that you
"Listen to the people. They are not
dummies". Expect to learn some-
thing yourself. You can learn more
from them than you can teach them
(Hamlett, 1996).

Developing strong working rela-
tionships with your counterparts
is crucial. Trust and respect is important. Initiate the process by
talking to your counterparts,
both professionally and personally. It is also important for them to get
you to know them. Do your best to not only be professional, but friendly
and approachable, too. You can
demonstrate this by being respectful,
compassionate and a gracious guest in their country. However, some people
won't like you because you are an American or because of your gender
or race. This may be difficult to
accept, but strive to maintain your
composure and rise above any and
all prejudice. Do your best to help
change their perceptions of you and
other Americans by placing yourself
in a more favorable light" (Camacho,
1996).

The relationships that develop
between you and your counterparts
is critically important to your suc-
cess. Therefore, always remember
that your counterparts are equal
partners and must be regarded col-
leagues. The reverse of this is also
true: as an advisor, you don't allow
yourself to be treated as an 'under-
ling' by your counterpart." (Hamlett,
1996). In addition, "Get to know who the people are and understand
relationships of their relationship to you.
Anticipate difficulties over salary and living standards and get ready to
deal with them. Get to know where
individuals stand in their organization, the problem they may have
with their superiors, and the likelihood of them remaining your counterparts through your tenure period. Subject to know how
you can be a more supportive of your counterparts if they are in dan-
ger of being arbitrarily replaced and you are committed should stay in
the position. You might also con-
sider the most diplomatic way to
unite the individual in case it be
she "irreplaceable unworkable" (Bell,
1996).
Is It Marriage or Just a Big Date?

By Robert A. Martin

Dr. Martin is a professor of agricultural education and studies at Iowa State University, Ames.

According to United Nations demographic data (Alpha Tau Talk, 1994), if we could by this moment shrink the earth’s population to a village of precisely 100 people but all existing human ratios remained the same, there would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 Western Hemisphere people (North & South America)
- 8 Africans

Seventy of the 100 people would be non-white; 30 would be white. Seventy of the 100 people would be non-Christian; 30 would be Christian. Fifty percent of the world’s wealth would be in the hands of only six people and all would be citizens of the United States. Seventy people would be unable to read; 50 would suffer from malnutrition; 80 would live in sub-standard housing and only one would have a university education (and would probably come from the USA).

When one considers our world from such an incredibly compressed perspective, the need for tolerance and understanding becomes glaringly apparent. If there ever was an opportunity for agricultural education, this data provides the basis for a whole host of activities that we, as agricultural educators, can use to assist students in developing an intercultural perspective to the curriculum.

Student Activity

“Survey of the World’s Cultures” (Belzer & Martin, 1993) is an activity designed to help students gain a better understanding of different cultures (see activity on the next page). The key to this activity is student involvement. The activity is actually a series of steps or sub-activities that students can complete to break down cultural stereotypes they may have developed. These activities are appropriate for exploratory agriculture program participants or introductory high school agriculture students.

Why not try implementing these activities or your version of them? They have been field-tested and have proved to be useful in helping students see a broader view of the world using agriculture as the context for the study of other cultures.

“We’re now married to the world. But we keep acting like we are on a big date.”

Summary

It has become clear that all school subject areas must incorporate global perspective elements into the curriculum if we are to have any chance of ‘broadening students’ perspectives. It is as the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich (1995), said when he recently reflected on U.S. foreign policy issues: “We’re now married to the world. But we keep acting like we are on a big date.”

One could ask, “Is there commitment, or are we just dating?” Are we serious about long-term relationships and building partnerships for growth and development? And where does this search for knowledge, understanding and commitment start? Is it at school, if not in agricultural education, where? If not in your agricultural education program, where will it happen? If you don’t do it, who will? Think about it. Agricultural education has a vested interest in agricultural development. Without agriculture, no nation survives. Is it marriage or just a big date?

References


B. Belzer and Robert Martin, A Survey of World Cultures, Student Activity in International Agriculture (Ames, IA: Iowa State University, 1993).


Survey of the World’s Cultures

This activity is designed to help students gain a better understanding of cultures that are different from their own. The key to this activity is student involvement and participation. The following is a list of activities students will complete to break down some cultural stereotypes they have developed. One week should be allocated for this project.

1. Students will begin this activity by making a poster depicting their perceptions of another culture (i.e., Japanese). Teams of students (3 or 4 per team) will each be assigned a different country and create a poster with various drawings representing their stereotypes of the respective culture, e.g., pictures of rice, cars and bicycles for Japan.

2. After the student teams complete their drawings, a representative from each group will present their group’s poster. The student will describe what each picture represents and why they included it on their poster.

3. Upon completion of all student presentations, the teams will go to the school library and research their assigned countries. Students will search for information in the following areas:
   a. Location of the country
   b. Population
   c. Major goods/items produced
   d. Government structure
   e. Educational system
   f. Average annual income
   g. Religion
   h. Agriculture
      • Land area
      • Major crops produced
   • Means of production (i.e., tractors, oxen, etc.)
   • Livestock type and numbers
   • Agricultural practices and traditions
   • Agricultural products sold to other countries
   • Agricultural products purchased from other countries

4. When the students finish their research, they should return to the classroom and develop a new poster using the information they found in the library.

5. After the students have completed their posters, they will again have a group representative present their poster to the class. The group will compare and contrast their original poster with the new poster they created.

6. Suggested countries from which to select include: China, Japan, Chad, India, Australia, Brazil and Russia. Emphasis should be placed on diversity.

7. Posters and presentations can be judged and scored by a panel of teachers and school administrators and later put up on display.

Teachers can use several variations on this overall activity to extend the learning process. One enrichment activity might include gathering information about foods used in these countries and preparing these different foods/dishes for class in cooperation with a language class and/or a family and consumer science class. This approach can add an integrated curriculum effort to the experience and further broaden student perspectives.

Ideal for Current and Future Teachers

As director of agricultural and environmental education at Milton Hershey School, Hershey, Pennsylvania, I value having resources at my fingertips. It’s essential with 14 agriculture facilitators to supervise and a program that covers kindergarten through high school.

As one of the educators who took part in this grantsmanship initiative, I’m excited about the educational potential for the Local Program Success effort. Undergraduate agricultural education students will have a virtual blueprint of success in their teaching arsenal as they set foot into their communities.

Each of the guide’s chapters will contain a section to help new and existing teachers identify and meet the needs of their students, programs, schools and communities. Each chapter will include a list of suggested quick reference resources that make achieving success in each of the six key areas easier. All agriculture teachers are looking for things that work, and Local Program Success is an initiative that promises to help us all, especially beginning teachers.
Communication linkages between you and your counterparts are clearly established and remain intact. Always keep them well-informed and avoid excluding them from making decisions or developing policy. In addition, it is crucial that these communication linkages are firmly developed between you and your clientele. When working with your client(s), “be truthful!” Do your best to maintain your integrity. Keep your word but don’t make promises. If you don’t know the answer, don’t make one up. Tell them, “I don’t know, but I’ll look into it.” Then get back to them with the answer you found” (Hanlett, 1988). Be willing to listen to your counterparts’ and clientele’s problems and be ready to help them do something constructive.

Recognizing that you have expectations of your counterparts is important. After all, you will work with these people for an extended period. However, it is also important to recognize that your counterparts have expectations of you, too. You must figure out what they do to meet their expectations and then behave in a manner that will benefit your working relationship.

Above all, be enthusiastic! In addition, be realistic, understanding, patient and a teacher. Don’t be afraid to admit mistakes. Be sincere and intellectually honest. Don’t belittle the country, the people, the culture or the project. Find out what problems your counterparts have and what their responsibilities and priorities are. Proceed slowly at first; don’t offer a loan to someone who is the best entreprenuer early on, but offer some (Christiansen, 1998).

The “ideal relationship” between advisor and counterpart must include a climate for mutual trust, acceptance and cooperation. This can be obtained by developing a spirit of openness between individuals and by sharing goals. The advisor can facilitate this process by being more of an observer, asking more questions and making fewer decisions.

Where Can I Get More Information?

There are many excellent books and resources that offer additional information on the subject of living and working overseas. Some are listed in the references at the end of this article. Consult your local library, bookstore or even the World Wide Web for other options. Also, “talk to people who have worked overseas; they are the most valuable resource” (Duffy, 1986). Watch for workshops and seminars that provide training programs for living and working overseas. One such example is the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont (Duffy, 1986). Examine the listings of publishers, such as the Intercultural Press of Yarmouth, Maine, that concentrate on the issues and challenges of living and working abroad.

Conclusion

Living and working overseas has many challenges and rewards. You must do your research prior to making a committed decision to voluntarily leave the United States and serve as an agricultural adviser in a developing nation. Once overseas, you must work hard to overcome obstacles that may include culture shock, homesickness, developing worthwhile relationships with counterparts or clientele, and inhospitable living conditions, to name a few. It is also important to remember that you are an invited guest in an entirely different country and a representative of the United States of America.

There are many pitfalls you must avoid while serving overseas. They include some of the following (Christiansen, 1996):

• Deciding what people should do (playing God).
• Being inflexible.
• Having too much pride.
• Showing how much you know.
• Telling people how to run their business.
• Being in a hurry and doing all the jobs yourself.
• Failing to find the real leadership among your clientele.
• Starting where you want to start, not where your people are.

In addition to the “pitfalls” listed above, you should never promise more than you can deliver (i.e., avoid over-committing yourself). Start “small” when attempting to introduce change. Make certain that your counterparts and clientele participate by involving them in the experimental designs, test plots or whatever you undertake. Do everything you can to minimize the risks of your potential adopters. Remember, you are doing more than securing technologically logical change; you are changing the attitudes of your clientele, too. Work with the people, not over or against them. In the end, you may be able to say that the Peace Corps was right all along. It might prove to be “the toughest job you’ll ever love.” You will never know unless you try!

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Larry Bell, Personal unclassified class resource materials, (College Station, Texas: Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, 1986).

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Lola Camacho, Personal interview, Peace Corps Volunteer, Mali, 3 years, (June 26, 1996).

James E. Christensen, Unpublished class resource materials, ACIR 944, The Agricultural Advising in Developing Nations (College Station, Texas: Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, 1996).


Peggy Hanlett, Personal interview, Peace Corps Volunteer, Morocco, 2 years, (June 20, 1990).

Suggested for Further Reading


Perspective International Agricultural Education: Skill-Based Learning continued from page 11

National FFA Organization. Exchanges like WEA (Work Experience Abroad), WASS (World Ag Science Exchange) and others may present new opportunities for teachers and students through the National FFA are available. Contact the FFA for more details at 703-360-3600.

Summary

This USA-funded project provided the initial support to start local school district, student, parent, teacher, administrator and teacher exchanges with Poland. The federal “start-up money” enabled the five participating schools to organize and develop a model for an international agricultural exchange. Today, this model is being supported with local school district and private sponsor funding. During the summer of 1996, several additional students and teachers traveled to Poland and several Polish agricultural educators traveled to Pennsylvania to continue pursuing the objectives which were established in 1994.

The are:

• Learners will:
  • observe and participate in international agricultural education programs
  • benefit from previous agricultural education efforts to build linkages between agricultural education programs
  • appreciate and understand the culture in another country and become better global citizens
  • share their knowledge with others when they return to their home countries
  • develop an awareness and understanding of agriculture nationally and internationally

The Polish Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Economy (MAFE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) co-spon-


If readers are to successfully participate in a global society, they need to understand the dynamics of the ever-changing facts in world agriculture. It is the world that becomes the best campus to teach international agriculture. Former President Dwight Eisenhower said, “I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than are governments.” International programs that support citizen exchanges will enable Eisenhower’s comment to become a reality.

References


Introduction to World Agriscience and Technology, 2nd Edition


The text introduces students to a broad range of agricultural industries, including those based on natural resource management, biotechnology, and applied agricultural physics (mechanics). It also supports the idea that American agriculture is competing in a global economy and has to continually re-evaluate the needs of the entire world, not just the population of the United States.

This edition stands far and away from the first in that many features have been implemented to make the text visually interesting. The authors have incorporated color extensively throughout the reference. This is exemplified by the use of current photographs and state-of-the-art computer graphics. This change breaks chapters into more interesting sub-sections, thus encouraging readers to continue in their quest for information.

On an educational level, the book includes clearly-stated objectives, relevant examples, and adequate question sections for each unit. Personally, I would have liked to see more questions addressing development of higher order thinking skills utilized throughout the book. The workbook that accompanies the text does this adequately, but more of this style of question should have been incorporated into the text itself.

It is obvious that Lee and Turner were careful to continually consider application of math and science principles throughout their presentation. The first chapters of the book do this so well that it somewhat detracts from the agricultural value of the book. Truthfully, Introduction to World Agriscience and Technology could easily be used as an applied science reference book for an entire high school, replacing life science manuals.

As agricultural educators continue struggling to maintain the agricultural identity of their programs, I believe that we must attempt to maintain the scientific validity of our programs as well. Introduction to World Agriscience and Technology addresses both of these needs by showcasing the math and science principles applied by the agricultural industry.

In my view, this approach to content organization provides a versatile teaching resource. A teacher should easily be able to “pick and choose” appropriate units for study in their curriculum. This text can actually serve as a valuable instructional resource to several courses in an agricultural science-based high school program (e.g., food science, environmental science, and plant and soil science).

In examining the major components of each chapter, I find that, in general, the presentation of the agricultural application (which sets the context for the scientific study in the chapter) is to be somewhat brief (usually one to three pages). The presentation of each experimental exercise is clearly and concisely written, followed by a presentation of text that explains the scientific concepts studied in the experiment exercises. A teacher would do well to have additional resources prepared to supplement this part of the text, as well as have other examples of the agricultural application prepared (perhaps through the use of extension bulletins or other literature).

Effectively using this text as a class resource will require the engaged involvement of the teacher. Many of the exercises assume a reasonable level of numerical literacy, and utilize many different formulas and calculations. The teacher will be challenged to ensure that students are adequately prepared to engage in these quantitative-based activities. Teachers who use this text (and these exercises) will need to be prepared to provide additional supplemental instruction in some of the basic quantitative competencies. In fact, Buriak and Osborne have created a two-part teacher’s guide that supplements the activities in the text with another 60 activities which can contribute to student understanding (ISBN # 0-8134-3037-2 and 0-8134-3038-0).

This text also demands high levels of technical competency on the part of students in terms of reading and interpreting diagrams. Teachers will have to follow the presentation of many tables and graphs with additional examples and student practice to reinforce the concepts presented to reinforce the text.

Physical Science Applications in Agriculture


Physical Science Applications in Agriculture is a textbook in the Interstate Agriscience and Technology Series. This book is designed around a principle of integrating agricultural applications of (science) with formalized study of scientific concepts which controls or explains that application (p. viii). This system approach to teaching physical science is followed throughout the text.

The content of the book is organized into seven major sections:

- Tools and Methods of Science;
- Natural Resource Systems;
- Production Systems;
- Structural Systems;
- Environmental Control Energy and Power Systems;
- Mechanics and Machine Systems; and
- Processing Systems.

Each of these major sections is divided into four chapters, and each chapter contains two to three experiments or exercises related to the chapter content. Each chapter has clearly identified objectives and key vocabulary identified for students. This book represents a comprehensive approach to teaching applied physical sciences in agriculture.

Summary

In my view, this approach to content organization provides a versatile teaching resource. A teacher should easily be able to "pick and choose" appropriate units for study in their curriculum. This text can actually serve as a valuable instructional resource to several courses in an agricultural science-based high school program (e.g., food science, environmental science, and plant and soil science).

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Agricultural Education in the Former Soviet Union

By James J. Connors & Jim Broussard

Dr. Connors is an assistant professor of agricultural education at the University of Idaho. Florence and Ph.D. Broussard is an agriculture instructor at Milton High School, Milton, PA

James J. Connors is a former President of the American Association for Agricultural Education. In 1986, he returned to the University of Idaho as an assistant professor of agriculture education. He is currently serving as the associate professor of agricultural education at the University of Idaho. His research interests include the integration of technology into the agricultural education curriculum, the use of simulation and game-based learning in agricultural education, and the development of new methods for teaching agricultural science.

Jim Broussard is a former President of the Idaho Agriculture Educators Association. He has been an agricultural education instructor at Milton High School, Milton, PA for the past 25 years. His research interests include the use of technology in the agricultural education classroom, the integration of agriculture into the general education curriculum, and the development of new methods for teaching agricultural science.

Lithuanian Agricultural Education

During the summer of 1996, a team of U.S. agricultural education professionals traveled to the Baltic country of Lithuania to work with secondary vocational agriculture teachers at a Lithuanian agricultural school. Having received a request by the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, the American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (APPLE) requested volunteers to spend two weeks in Lithuania working with Lithuanian agriculture teachers. Volunteers for the Agriculture Strand during the summer of 1996 included: Dr. O. Donald Mellers, Michigan State University, East Lansing; Jim Connors, University of Idaho, Moscow; Jim Broussard, Milton High School, Milton, Michigan; and Rebecca Connors, Washington State University, Pullman. After an initial orientation in the capital of Vilnius, the group traveled north through the rural countryside to the town of Nausiodis and the Alanta Agricultural School.

The opportunity to live and work in Lithuania, and to host Russian students in America, has been an invaluable experience for the agricultural education teachers, teacher educators and FFA members involved. For a minimum of 80 high school FFA members, the experience has traveled to Russia, learned about its culture and history, and worked in agricultural jobs. These FFA members will forever be affected by their experience in Russia. All FFA members should continue to have the chance to experience this unique country through Russian agricultural exchange programs.

The APPLE program at the Alanta Agriculture School contained specialized instructional units, called "strands," in elementary education, special education, substance abuse, English as a Second Language (ESL), school administration, and agriculture. The Agriculture Strand met approximately five hours a day. Topics covered included methods of teaching agriculture, youth leadership development through the FFA, Supervised Agricultural Experience programs, program planning and evaluation. Special lectures, open to all Lithuanian teachers attending the APPLE seminar, covered areas such as agricultural education in Taiwan, American farm families, American educational system, and veterinary medicine in the United States.

Participants in the Agriculture Strand include approximately 30 vocational and general education teachers from Lithuanian agricultural schools. Agriculture, cooking, sewing, literature and language teachers participated in the workshop. To encourage interaction between agriculture teachers and general education teachers, integrating agriculture and academic concepts was discussed.

As in Russia, Lithuania has a strong agricultural education tradition. Roughly 40 agriculture schools are located throughout this Baltic country to prepare agricultural specialists. Lithuanian agricultural schools cover almost 20 specialties including: farmer, plant grower, career advisor, gardener, agricultural mechanic, home economist, floriculturist and aquaculturist (Staikys & Dzuda, 1995).

However, even with the need for better agricultural production, there are problems in agricultural education throughout Russia. The new freedoms have caused drastic inflation resulting in skyrocketing prices. Agriculture teachers' salaries are roughly equal to $40 per month. With these problems there have come a decline in enrollment in agricultural technicians. Administrators and teachers are struggling to recruit more students into agricultural courses offered at the schools.

Yes, even with the problems, the people of Russia love their country and open their homes and hearts to visitors from the United States. The land is primarily used for producing vegetables and livestock feed. Large greenhouses produce tomatoes, cucumbers and cabbage to feed the people through the long, harsh winters experienced in northern Europe. Many urban residents have no room for gardens in the city so they have small country homes called "dachas." These dachas usually have large productive gardens and greenhouses built of scrap lumber and covered with plastic to keep the plants from freezing during the cold spring nights.

Environment protection is also a high priority for Russians. Very few pesticides are used on agricultural plants. While collective farms have large Belarus blue tractors to work the fields, maintenance is always a problem and human labor is relied upon to weed and harvest most crops.

Upon their return to the United States, agriculture teachers and their FFA members hosted exchange students from the Russian schools they visited. The Russian students lived with agricultural families, attended high school and participated in local FFA activities. This reciprocal exchange allowed Russian students to learn about our culture and see modern agricultural production practices.

The opportunity to live and work in Russia, and to host Russian students in America, has been an invaluable experience for the agricultural education teachers, teacher educators and FFA members involved. For a minimum of 80 high school FFA members, the experience has traveled to Russia, learned about its culture and history, and worked in agricultural jobs. These FFA members will forever be affected by their experience in Russia. All FFA members should continue to have the chance to experience this unique country through Russian agricultural exchange programs.

One of the most difficult concepts for Lithuanian agriculture teachers to comprehend was the supervised agricultural experience programs. Allowing students to own...
What Do You Know About the FFA Offices?

By Gary E. Moore

Dr. Moore is a professor of agricultural and extension education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, and is the Former for the American Association for Agricultural Education.

Over the years, there have been some interesting facts about the FFA offices. How much do you know about the FFA offices? The answers will be included in the next issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine. GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS if you know the answers.

1. During the FFA’s first decade, there were only five competitive offices listed in the Official FFA Manual for local chapters. Which office was missing?
   a. Advisor
   b. Sponsor
   c. Treasurer
   d. Sentinel

2. Between 1941 and 1945, the Official FFA Manual included a sixth officer at the local level. This office was:
   a. Watchdog
   b. Chairperson
   c. Farm Foreman
   d. Song Leader

Before the FFA Supply Service was started, chapters were basically on their own to secure proper paraphernalia for the officer stations. Match the following officer station items with those they were obtained (each answer can be used more than once).

3. Picture of George Washington
   a. Do not
   b. Ear of Corn
   c. Flow
   d. Owl

Future Directions

In reviewing the first year of the APPEL Agriculture Strand, it was decided that more intensive educational programs would benefit Lithuanian agriculture teachers. The Lithuanian teachers requested additional seminars on the topics of entrepreneurship, supervised agricultural experience programs, and family and consumer sciences. Currently, proposals are being drafted between the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, the Alatna Agriculture School, the APPEL organization, and the participating American institutions to continue the program next year. Two pilot schools will be selected to implement a program of entrepreneurship education in agriculture and encourage students attending the agriculture school to operate their own agricultural enterprises.

Major changes are foreseen for agricultural education in the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union. As these countries continue to move toward free market economies, agricultural teachers will have to be prepared to educate their students in management principles that they were never concerned with before.

References

International Agriculture: Perspectives of an Agricultural Attache, continued from page 7 accomplish the educational objectives necessary to stimulate market interest.

Summary

There are several specific skills and abilities, obtained through my agricultural education experience, that are important tools in my position as an agricultural attaché. These skills include analytical abilities, written and verbal communication skills, computer literacy, and a wide variety of systems and applications programs, proficiency in other languages, and a commitment to lifelong education. Given the importance of agricultural education in my duties, perhaps my title should be changed to agricultural education attaché. The change would certainly be warranted.

References


How Effective Are We Teaching at Razi University?

By Kiumars Zarafshan
& Abdolhamid Pajouh

Mr. Zarafshan is a lecturer of agricultural extension education and Mr. Pajouh is dean of the College of Agriculture, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

If we accept that competence in teaching methods is positively correlated with effective teaching, then what are some strategies, techniques, or methods agriculture teachers may use to become more effective? Newcomb, McCracken and Warnbrood (1989) stated, "If students are to achieve optimum levels of competence, it is essential that the teacher direct the teaching/learning process because directed learning is more effective than undirected learning." What teaching methods or techniques can teachers use to ensure the attention and interest of students throughout the class? According to Lutfi and Thompson (1995), using a variety of teaching procedures contributed to the effectiveness of teachers as perceived by students enrolled in the agricultural education program.

Teacher Competence with Teaching Techniques

Knowledge of teaching techniques is the teacher's responsibility. For teachers, this means that to become competent in the use of various teaching techniques, they must practice and use them until they feel comfortable and competent in using each teaching technique. One of the problems experienced teachers must avoid is using solely selected teaching techniques throughout the instructional year. So what is the best teaching technique? There is no definite answer to this question because it depends on your purpose. Robinson (1989) describes the worst teaching technique as the one that is used all the time, whatever it is, because it is the spice of the learning situation.

A Case Study

A study was conducted at Razi University, College of Agriculture, by the authors to determine which of the following teaching techniques used were most effective as perceived by students enrolled in the Agricultural Extension and Education program during Fall 1994. All 25 students were included in this study.

Teaching Techniques Used

Panel Discussion: A small group of students (usually four to five) discusses a given topic in the presence of all the students in the class. Students are given an opportunity to study in advance on a given topic. Often the entire class is permitted to enter the discussion once the panel has generated interest in the topic. The teacher directs student-to-panel interaction and will summarize the lesson at the end of the session.

Buzz Groups: Buzz groups are useful in allowing discussion in large groups. Students are divided into subgroups consisting of three to six students for a short period to discuss a topic or solve a problem. Each group needs a discussion leader and a definite assignment. The leader of each group reports the results of his or her group's discussion to the entire class. The instructor is free to float between groups to determine progress or assist as needed. The buzz group is most effective in situations which call for quick reaction to a simple assignment. This technique is much better for raising problems than for solving them.

Group Discussion: A technique to cooperatively collect knowledge, ideas, and opinions about a subject in order to learn new information or to solve a problem. For maximum participation, students are divided into groups of six. Similar to the buzz group, a leader is needed, and he or she reports back to the main group; more in-depth response is expected and a longer period of time is generally required.

Results

As shown in Table 1, buzz group and group discussion was selected by 18 out of 23 students as their first choice. Fourteen students selected the panel discussion technique as their first choice. This study confirms that a combination of teaching techniques can be effective combined in providing student-centered teaching. Therefore, instructors should use a variety of teaching techniques in their classroom. Teaching students using buzz and discussion group techniques develops problem-solving abilities and positive attitudes toward inquiry.

Our students at Razi University were enthusiastic about teaching techniques used in class because they showed interest in subject matter content and participated actively in the learning process. We recommend agriculture teachers use these techniques in their classes because they are sure to receive positive and immediate feedback.

If secondary and post-secondary agriculture teachers are concerned about what their students feel make them effective teachers, the results of this study should be considered. Students' three core competencies in teaching, and will continue to seek out teachers who they feel are effective.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
<th>Third Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzz Groups</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References


### Notes

John Dot, Agriculture Instructor at Wallace High School, Caldwell Idaho, is shown here instructing with the Idaho State FFA Career Development (CDE) Assisting, judging, and practicing at the state level CDE's allows instructors in preparing students for CDEs and preparing for classroom instruction. (Photo courtesy of John Dot.)

 Argos, Romania, comes to mind. The instructor faced many of the same challenges that one-person agriculture programs face here in the U.S. The ingenuity he showed in manipulating the resources necessary for the hands-on planting, harvesting and marketing experiences he offered his students was impressive. His entrepreneurial approach to teaching was state of the art even though his technology was a generation or two old.

International programs also increase opportunities for trade. The "business" of the SBBC is to assist business in creating and realizing opportunities. Our program chose to go international based on the premise that people buy from people they know. Our long-term goal is to increase trade opportunities for United States businesses and for those in countries in which we work. Similarly, international exchanges in agriculture will result in increased opportunities for our agriculturists whether in commodities, processed food, or farm equipment. Viewed from an educational or an economic perspective, international student programs are sound investments.
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Coming in the Next Issue:
Mentoring Beginning Teachers