

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

EXTENSION TRAINING

(To supplement Administrative Annual Report)

- 1960 -

Submitted by Maynard C. Heckel, Extension Training Specialist

~~PERSONNEL TRAINING~~

Situations

~~INTRODUCTION:~~ Personnel training, at all levels, has continued to be placed in high priority during 1960. The Extension Training Specialist was on educational leave from January 1, 1960, to October 1, 1960, to pursue further graduate study at Cornell University. During his absence, various members of the state extension staff were assigned responsibility for specific phases of the overall training program so that the major training activities were carried on. Many aspects of personnel training, however, were left undone during the nine-month period.

Before taking educational leave, the Extension Training Specialist, in cooperation with the chairmen of the various extension training committees, developed a complete calendar of events, programs, and activities. These phases of the training program will be discussed in more detail further in this report. Excellent cooperation was noted from all of those asked to assist and it is felt that many training activities and experiences were carried successfully to completion.

The Overall Extension Training Committee has continued to guide the training program in the state. This committee is made up of ten members and includes two district agents, two county extension agents, five extension specialists, with the State 4-H Club Agent serving as chairman. A rotation system, adopted in 1959, provides opportunity for change of membership.

Sub-committees of the Overall Extension Training Committee continue to help plan specific phases of the training program. During 1960, the following sub-committees were functioning: New Workers Training Committee, In-Service Training Committee, Annual Extension Conference Committee, and a new committee appointed by the Extension Director that will serve as an exploratory committee in determining the basic need for, and the possible approaches to, a graduate program for extension workers to be established at Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Returns taken:

(1) PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Undergraduate Courses

Two courses were offered to undergraduate students during the winter quarter of 1960. ~~During the absence of the Extension Training Specialist, the two courses were taught by Mr. J. A. Reynolds, Associate State 4-H Club Agent,~~ One course was concerned with Extension History, Philosophy, and Methods and was offered primarily to juniors in the various departments within the School of Agriculture. Fifteen men and five women enrolled in this course. A senior course, Extension Program Development, was offered primarily to those students who had a definite interest in an extension career. Eleven men and five women enrolled in this course.

Undergraduate Field Training

A six-credit field experience course was offered to students between their junior and senior years. This field experience course was offered to both men and women students, and, for the first time, one man student participated in this field training experience along with three women students.

The work of these trainees was supervised primarily by the trainer agents in the counties in which they worked. The district agents and ~~Mr. J. A. Reynolds~~ ^{Training Specialist} also assisted.

(4) NEW WORKERS' TRAINING

New Workers' Training Conference

Two training conferences were held in 1960 for those new extension workers with three to six months service. The conferences were held in March, with an attendance of 20, and in September, with an attendance of 16. In the absence of the Extension Training Specialist, Mr. J. M. Tyree, Associate State 4-H Club Agent and member of the sub-committee responsible for the New Workers' Training Conference, accepted responsibility for these conferences.

For the last three years, the same general pattern has been followed in this conference giving major emphasis to program development and 4-H Club work. It seems as though some possible revisions in content are in order in view of the evaluations conducted during 1960.

(3) IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In-service training encompasses a large variety of training experiences and includes many aspects of professional improvement. All extension staff members, both state and county, participated in some type of in-service training activity during 1960. The major activities and experiences will be reviewed as follows:

Regional Extension Summer Schools

Thirty-two extension agents and specialists attended Regional Extension Summer Schools this past year. Following is a breakdown by number of staff members and schools attended:

7 agents - University of Arkansas
11 agents - Cornell University
4 specialists - Cornell University
1 specialist - University of Wisconsin
1 district agent - University of Wisconsin
8 agents - Prairie View

Human Development Workshop

Three extension agents attended the Human Development Workshop at the National 4-H Club Center.

Scholarship and Fellowship Aid

Scholarship and fellowship aid for staff members attending summer school was received from Horace A. Moses Foundation, National 4-H Club Foundation, Sears Roebuck Foundation, and the Farm Foundation. This aid is helpful in providing opportunity for several staff members to attend summer school in various sections of the country.

Annual Extension Conference

The 1960 Annual Extension Conference was planned by the Annual Conference Committee under the chairmanship of G. C. Herring, Assistant Director. All extension staff members were given an opportunity to select, from a list of thirty-seven topics concerned with subject matter and general interest, four topics of their particular interest. Four half-days of the conference were devoted to small group work with instruction provided by members of the extension specialist staff.

The entire group met together for two half-day sessions featuring talks by Dr. Walter Newman, President of V.P.I.; Mr. Clyde Hendrix, Chairman of the National Advisory Council on Rural Civil Defense Mobilization; Grant Shrum, Executive Director of the National 4-H Club Foundation; and Dr. B. G. Gross, Industrial Relations Director, Metropolitan Y.M.C.A., Chicago, Illinois.

The special interest group approach was used for the third consecutive year in 1960. It may be that the planning committee for 1961 will want to take a little different approach in developing plans for next year's Annual Conference. Extension staff members have favorably responded to the approach that has been taken, but some revisions may be in order.

Communications Training

A third phase of the National Project in Agricultural Communications Training Program was presented to all extension staff members during

1960. This training was carried out in twelve sub-district meetings following sessions with the extension specialist staff and "train-the-trainer" sessions that were held in the fall of 1959 on campus at V.P.I.

Twenty extension subject-matter specialists and the twelve district agents assisted in carrying out this phase of communications training.

In the absence of the Extension Training Specialist, Dr. George T. Blume, Assistant Extension Sociologist, assumed the major responsibility for the organization and conduct of training in written communications. He was assisted by the staff members that attended the NPAC Regional Workshop that was held in December 1958. Training of all staff members in communication requires a great deal of time and organizational effort and Dr. Blume should be commended for his assumption of this responsibility.

This is the third year that training in communication has been presented through the kind of organizational set-up described above; that is, the involvement of many staff members in actually assisting with the training. It may be that, in the future, a corps or team highly trained in the material to be presented, should be responsible for conducting the training sessions throughout the state.

District Meetings

District extension meetings, held twice during the year, continued to serve as an important part of the in-service training program. Many

items were included in the district meeting agendas. Programs varied between districts depending on the specific needs and interests of the staff members.

AGENTS ASSOCIATIONS - PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT SURVEY

The Professional Improvement Committees of both the Agricultural Agents Association and the Home Demonstration Agents Association conducted a survey, during 1960, aimed at determining the desires of county extension staff members relative to professional improvement both in the area of in-service training and graduate study. The Extension Training Specialist cooperated with both of these associations in working up the survey questionnaire before going on educational leave. The associations then took the initiative of administering the questionnaire to all of the county personnel. The associations should be commended for their interest and effort in this survey.

Both of the associations received over a 90 percent response to their inquiry and came up with information that will be most valuable in making further plans for a graduate study program and also in highlighting areas of in-service training needs of the future.

In brief, the survey pointed out the following:

Home Demonstration Agents Preferences in In-Service and College Course Work

General Areas: Developing leaders, evaluation, managing time, teaching and demonstrations.

Subject Matter: Home furnishings, clothing and textiles, ornamental horticulture, consumer education, 4-H Club work.

Interest in Additional Graduate Study:

Additional college courses - 39

Work toward obtaining a M. S. Degree - 30

Interested in field courses offered at various locations around the state - 38

Interested in special three-week credit courses offered on campus at V.P.I. - 33.

County Agricultural Agents Preferences in In-Service and College Course Work

General Areas: Developing leaders, teaching and demonstrations, understanding and working with people (individually and in groups).

Subject Matter: Crops - soils, marketing, farm management, livestock.

Interest in Additional Graduate Study:

Additional college courses - 25

Obtaining a M. S. Degree - 81

Obtaining a Doctor's Degree - 7

Interested in field courses offered at various locations around the state - 105

Interested in special three-week credit courses offered on campus at V.P.I. - 66.

The results of this survey have been used with the graduate study exploratory committee and will be used in 1961 by the Overall State Extension Training Committee and the sub-committee responsible for in-service training.

(d) GRADUATE STUDY

Preliminary plans have moved along during 1960 regarding the establishment of a graduate study program at V.P.I. designed primarily for county extension agents. Graduate study programs at various institutions now offering a master's degree have been reviewed and discussed by the graduate study exploratory committee.

This committee has outlined the following steps to be taken:

1. Gather complete details concerning the present structure of graduate work here at V.P.I.
2. Develop a complete list of core courses that relate directly to work in Extension Education.
3. Develop a statement regarding need for graduate program, using as a basis the perceived role of the extension agent of the future.
4. Determine, upon complete review of courses offered at V.P.I., what needs of extension workers cannot be presently satisfied here at V.P.I.
5. Completely review the course offerings at other institutions around the state to determine the courses that might fit into a graduate program in Extension Education.
6. Plan some future, informal conferences with key individuals on the faculty at V.P.I. to get their reactions and suggestions.

7. Prepare the final document that will be presented to the Graduate Council.

Staff Participation in Graduate Study

During 1960, seven members of the state staff and three members of the county staff were on educational leave pursuing graduate study. Two members of the state staff received an M.S. Degree during this year.

In addition to the above group, 25 staff members took regular college credit courses while on the job.

OUTLOOK

One area of major concern in the future will be that of continuing to move toward the development of a coordinated extension training program that will provide overall direction to all training efforts. This overall training program has been given consideration during the past three or four years and some progress may be noted, but there is a great deal more to be done.

When the final goal is reached in the development of a coordinated program, every staff member should know at the beginning of any given year the major areas of emphasis in all aspects of personnel training and the amount of time he or she can expect to devote to these training activities. Part of this coordinated program will be training experiences planned for all staff members. Other phases will include training

experiences designed to fit individual needs, such as attendance at Regional Summer Schools, graduate course work on the job, varying periods of educational leave to pursue additional graduate study, etc. The important thing will be that the training program will provide general direction and will not leave, until the last minute, decisions regarding certain training activities.

Coupled with emphasis on a long-time coordinated training program will be the development of a graduate study program here at V.P.I. designed primarily for county extension workers. Once this program is established and approved, agents will be in a much better position to make their individual professional improvement plans for the future and incorporate their plans into the graduate program.