




**AGRICULTURE
WORKFORCE
TRAINING**
FOR COLLABORATIVE
LEADERSHIP

Virginia Community College System

Professional Development Program
June 15, 2021

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Tentative Agenda



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- Welcome to the Project
- Inspiring a Shared Vision
- Setting the Stage for Collaborative Work
- Break (~10:30am)
- Focusing Our Efforts
- Charting a Path Forward
- Wrap-up Day #1


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Welcome to the Project

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Why Are We Doing This Work?

- As America's workforce changes, so does the nature of work and the skills necessary for success (Flores, Matkin, Burbach, Quinn, & Harding, 2012).
- Today's workplace is characterized with increased ambiguity, and employees "face more situations, projects, tasks or objectives that are new, different, unclear or inexact" (O'Connor & Becker, 2019).
- To meet this challenge, agricultural employers increasingly need a workforce that effectively engages in collaborative leadership (Alston, Anderson, English, & Wakefield, 2018; Clayton, 2016).



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Our Funded Project Purpose

This project embraces the challenge at hand by refreshing existing workforce development curriculum to meet the needs of 21st century agricultural industry. More specifically, the project will design, develop, and evaluate leadership curricula for technical and community colleges to use to prepare the agriculture workforce for effective leadership in an increasingly diverse environment.

Objectives:

1. Enhance the Agricultural Technology program's core curriculum with practical skill development in collaborative leadership appropriate for workplace success.
2. Adapt and extend collaborative leadership curricula for use with the Virginia Community College System's agriculture workforce training programs.
3. Create reusable learning objects that allow application of the collaborative leadership curricula in food and agricultural sciences programs at other community, junior, and technical colleges/institutes.

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Project Justification


"We know that some skills are more lasting. Skills like leadership, collaboration and communication are usually described as soft skills, but they should be referred to as durable skills. These are the skills that, once you have them, you will use for the rest of your life, in your work and in your personal life, day in and day out." (Auger, 2019, para 4)

Of critical importance to agriculture's workforce, "employees who have the underlying durable skills can be taught and retaught job skills more easily as needs, jobs, and careers change over time" (D2L, 2019, p. 4). However, research suggests durable skills are "more difficult to train for and are not easily assessed" (D2L, 2019, p. 4).

In spite of these challenges, Mars (2015) found "potential benefits associated with the development of interdisciplinary agricultural leadership curricula that supports the training and development of entrepreneurial leaders who can effectively forge and advance agricultural innovation" (p. 178). Furthermore, DiBenedetto and Myers (2016) report that "improved resources and support for educators, those ultimately responsible and held accountable for student achievement, will assist in creating solutions to better prepare students to be career ready in the 21st century" (p. 28).

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Recognizing the Challenge



"For durable skills in particular, mastery requires ongoing coaching, mentoring, and feedback rather than simply standardized curriculum, assessment, and certification" (Courmoyer, 2019). Furthermore, Katsinas (1996) noted, "a major gap in our understanding of community colleges is the need to recognize the diversity of institutional settings" (p. 15). However, research by Everett and Raven (2016) reveals successful engagement with agricultural leadership coursework depends heavily upon prior experience and understanding of leadership.

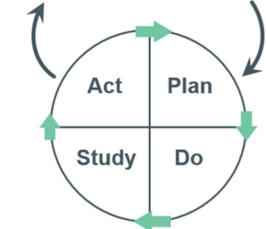
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Model for Improvement (PDSA)

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



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PDSA Model for Improvement

Hunches, Theories, and Ideas

DATA

Changes That Result in Improvement

APSD, S/D, D/S, P/A

the IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

EDITED BY LARRY W. HANCOCK & JOHN W. HANCOCK

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Our Project Team

AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE TRAINING FOR COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Project Director (PD): Kaufman

Graduate Assistant: Nelson

Evaluation Consultant: Carmichael

VCCS Context Consultant: White

Co-PD for leadership skill alignment: Friedel

Co-PD for workforce alignment: Seibel

Co-PD for curriculum development: Westfall-Rudd

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VCCS Faculty - Interview to Introduce

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"So, tell me about a time you fetched."

Get to know each other - start with these questions

- What do you teach
- Where do you teach
- What is one impactful pedagogical practice you use
- What are your favorite hobbies
- What is your primary goal for this training

Back to the large group

- Introduce someone else from your group
- Make sure everyone is introduced
- Share a goal that your group decided was most important for this training

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Inspiring a Shared Vision

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Lets review existing programs


- What is happening at
 - Virginia Western
 - Dabney S. Lancaster
 - Southwest Virginia
 - Southside Virginia
 - Virginia Highlands
 - Wytheville
 - Reynolds
 - Tidewater
 - Lord Fairfax
 - Blue Ridge




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Pre-Survey Findings

What excites you most about teaching agriculture-related coursework within a community college program?



What professional experiences did you have prior to (or concurrent with) employment with VCCS?



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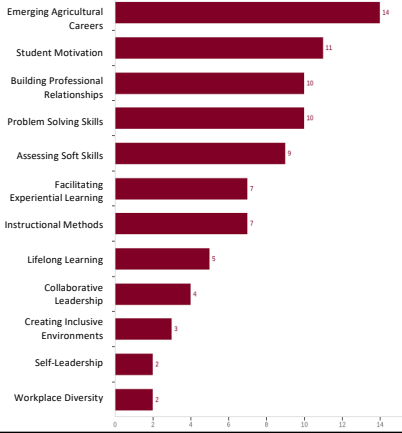
How interested are you in investing time to learn more about each of the following curricular materials?

Curricular Material	None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
<u>Contextually Based Agricultural Leadership</u>	0%	14%	36%	50%	0%
<u>Case Studies in Agricultural Disasters</u>	0%	0%	43%	29%	14%
<u>Leadership in Agriculture: Case Studies for a New Generation</u>	0%	0%	21%	64%	14%
<u>Strengthening Students' Communication Skills</u>	0%	21%	21%	57%	0%
<u>Integrating Employability Skills</u>	0%	0%	21%	71%	0%

Legend: None at all (yellow), A little (light green), A moderate amount (medium green), A lot (dark green), A great deal (darkest green)

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Professional Learning Topics of Most Interest



Topic	Count
Emerging Agricultural Careers	14
Student Motivation	11
Building Professional Relationships	10
Problem Solving Skills	10
Assessing Soft Skills	9
Facilitating Experiential Learning	7
Instructional Methods	7
Lifelong Learning	5
Collaborative Leadership	4
Creating Inclusive Environments	3
Self-Leadership	2
Workplace Diversity	2

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Big Picture Observations from Interviews

- Everyone interested in an Ag cohort with concise, branded communication
- Diverse CC population - ex veterans experiencing increased anxiety
- Students with clear goals were better self advocates
- Students lack problem solving skills
 - Concerns
 - How the workforce shortage is impacting Ag
 - Aging farmers could lead to decreased food supply
 - Community colleges are seeing less prepared students
 - Online environment - difficult to incorporate and assess soft skills
 - Opportunities
 - How to increase enrollment
 - Make students into better citizens
 - Does this tie onto College assessment requirements

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Interview Insights on Necessary Skills

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Soft Skills, professionalism, life skills....

- Instructors see the need for these, but students do not
- Students need the confidence to self advocate
- Treat the classroom as a workplace
- If soft skills are formally assessed, rubrics and syllabi must be clear
- Many faculty mentioned the building up of this skill set throughout the class

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Necessary Skills....

- Questions to consider as you watch two brief videos
 - What term does your College use for "soft skills"? Is that the best term?
 - How do you teach leadership?
 - How should you?
 - How do you teach followership?
 - How should you?
 - How does your College engage with your industry partners?

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Perspectives on the Essential Skills

Softs Skills Are Human Skills

Social Skills Are Durable Skills

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Perspectives on the Essential Skills

Lets discuss...

"Soft Skills"?

Leadership?

Followship?

Engagement with industry partners?




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Ideas for Enrichment Surfaced from Interviews - in the classroom

- Tell students WHY they are learning these skills
- A group "read"?
- SDV - how could this be used?
- Capstone projects
- Field trips and guest speakers
- Student journals
- peer-to-peer sharing
- presentations - communication skills
- building in scenarios (for dialogue and discussion; peer to peer sharing; informal evaluation)
- industry guests
- skill-a-thon style stations where students have a chance to teach back to peers in small groups




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Ideas for Enrichment Surfaced from Interviews - online

- breakout rooms
- collaborative documents - google docs
- online discussions (requiring response and discussion)
- Assignment prompts that require students to reach out to those in the industry or alumni and then reflecting/sharing back




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Ideas for Enrichment Surfaced from Interviews - out of classroom

- Internships
 - Required? Funded? Managed?
- Nonformal clubs (Ag or Hort Club)
 - service
 - peer-to-peer learning
 - hosting events such as FFA competitions



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Break

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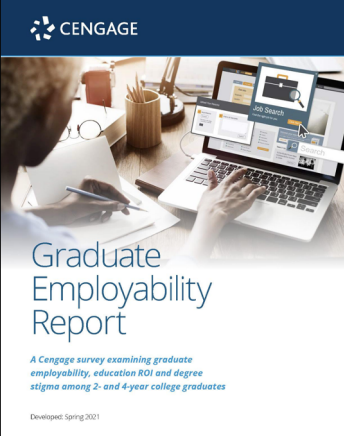
Setting the Stage for Collaborative Work

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Insights from Graduate Employability Report

Did your college education provide you with skills needed to perform your first job?

	All	2-Year	4-Year
Yes	69%	67%	71%
No	21%	21%	20%
I don't know	10%	12%	9%




Graduate Employability Report

A Cengage survey examining graduate employability, education ROI and degree stigma among 2- and 4-year college graduates

Developed Spring 2021

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Strada Public Viewpoint Findings

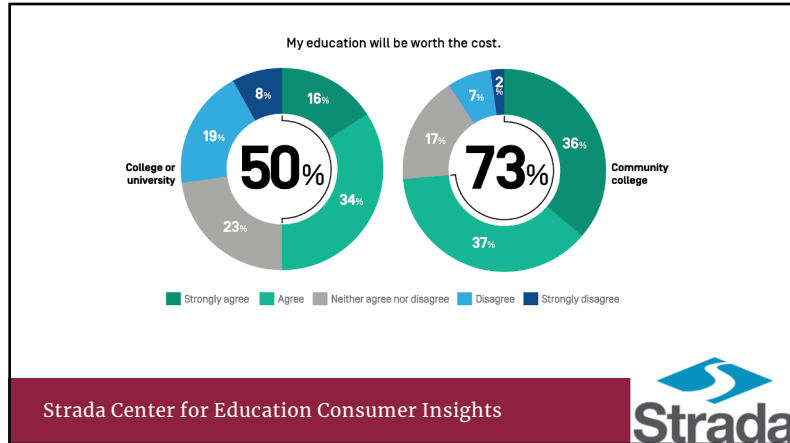


Disrupted learners are more likely to enroll in work-based and nontraditional options

Share of disrupted learners who intend to enroll in an education/training program in the next six months

Employer	26%
Online noncollege training	25%
Online-only college	19%
Apprenticeship/internship	18%
Trade school/program	17%
Community college	17%
Four-year college/university	16%

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Focusing Our Efforts

Guided Group Conversation:

1. We noticed a trend in the alignment of benefits found in case studies, job shadowing, and hands-on educational experiences. How can we better work to implement these facets of learning into the summer program?
1. With rise in agriculture demand and fall in workplace retention, how can we bridge this gap through curriculum development and our time during this summer program?

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Charting a Path Forward

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Pre-Reading for Day 2

Please review Chapters 1 & 2
Introduction to Rubrics

1. What is a Rubric?
2. Why Use Rubrics?

We will refer to this book during our workshop session, please have it available to use.

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End-of-Day Evaluation



How did we do?

We'd like to know...

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