

PLAN OF WORK

EXTENSION TRAINING

(To supplement Administrative Annual Report)

- 1961 -

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SITUATION

During nine months of 1960, the Extension Training Specialist was on educational leave pursuing additional graduate work at Cornell University. During his absence, the major training activities were carried out by various staff members, but due to the absence of the Training Specialist, many items related to personnel training will be carried over from 1960 to 1961.

As the role of Extension continues to take on additional breadth and depth, personnel development in line with this changing role continues to be of major importance. As the role of Extension moves through a period of transition, the shifting role of individual extension staff members must also keep pace with this change. Educational programs, aimed at the professional improvement of extension personnel, can do much in making this adjustment.

Even though progress has been made, there is still a lack of a coordinated training program which can provide overall direction to all phases of personnel development. There still remains a great deal of last-minute planning of certain training experiences which result in a type of shotgun approach. This situation focuses upon a definite need for coordination.

The Extension Training Specialist will continue to work closely with the Overall Extension Training Committee, its sub-committees, members of the administration and supervisory staffs developing and carrying out training programs and experiences designed to meet the needs of more than 450 professional extension staff members.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of Extension Training do not vary greatly from year to year but do, however, provide overall direction to the training program and may be stated as follows:

1. To provide opportunity for pre-service training of prospective extension workers through offering undergraduate courses and guidance at V.P.I.
2. To provide a well-designed and adequate training program for new extension workers that will help to acclimate new workers to the Extension Service as soon as possible and help new employees increase their productive capacity rapidly.
3. To provide, through in-service training, opportunities for all staff members to continue to improve themselves professionally.
4. To encourage staff members, where feasible and justifiable, to pursue additional formal training leading to advanced degrees.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Situation:

There is a need for thirty-to-fifty new Extension staff members annually. Many college graduates that enter Extension do not decide on Extension until the middle or end of their senior year. As a result of the timing of this decision, many new staff members enter Extension with little or no training in methods, history, or philosophy of Extension work.

Major Problem:

Lack of reserve of well-qualified candidates for Extension positions.

Methods of Approach:

1. Appoint, officially, some member of the Extension staff as an advisor to all students interested in extension work.
This person might follow prospective candidates through their college career and keep in close touch with them from the time they enter as a freshman until graduation.
2. Offer two undergraduate courses during the winter quarter to juniors and seniors enrolled in the Schools of Agriculture and Home Economics at V.P.I.
 - a. Extension Education and Methods--a course designed to be of help and assistance to any undergraduates (juniors or

- seniors) interested in working with people in an "out-of-school" setting. This course is oriented toward Extension. It considers many principles applicable to the broad field of adult education.
- b. Extension Program Planning and Development--this course designed primarily for seniors and graduate students and primarily for those students interested in working for the Extension Service. Consideration given to the principles and procedures in county program development.
3. Complete a booklet entitled, "Your Future with the Virginia Agricultural Extension Service," to be used in contact with prospective extension workers and with new employees.
- a. Tentative copy to be ready in January 1961 and reviewed by various staff members and students in extension courses.
- b. Final publication date, April 1961.
4. Offer undergraduate field training to men and women students interested in extension work. The training period to be for eight weeks in selected counties under the direct supervision of qualified county extension agents.

NEW WORKERS TRAINING

Situation:

Thirty-to-fifty new staff members are employed annually. A large

majority of these staff members join the Extension Service without previous experience in extension work and with little or no training in extension organization, philosophy, or methods.

Major Problem:

Orienting and retaining new staff members in the most effective and efficient manner.

Methods of Approach:

1. Two training conferences for new employees (agents and specialists) to be held in 1961. These conferences to be planned by the New Workers Training Committee and are to include those employees with three-to-six months service. First conference to be held March 27 - 31, and the second conference, September 12 - 16 (tentative dates).
2. Consider the possibility of establishing a three-week course, to be given on campus at V.P.I. during the summer. All new employees would be required to take this course if they came to Extension with no previous extension experience or special undergraduate preparation.
3. Encourage district agents to spend more time with new agents during the first six months of employment.
 - a. Plan visits every two months to review the worker's progress, appraise his performance, and suggest improvements needed.

4. Continue to encourage the establishment of trainer counties for new workers where the new workers will remain for at least three months before receiving a regular assignment. Establish three such counties in 1961 for men agents. Trainer counties are already in existence for home demonstration agents.
5. Recommend that two one-week communications schools be conducted in November 1961 for all new agents that did not receive training in basic communications given in 1958.
6. Develop a study plan for all new workers to be followed during the first three months of service.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Situation:

There is a recognized need for in-service training at all levels within the Extension organization. In-service training is that phase of organized learning experience which is provided employees by the agency throughout the employment period.

Time is of major consideration in planning and carrying out an on-going in-service training program. Time is a limiting factor and staff members are called away from their jobs for considerable periods of time to participate in all types of in-service training.

Many phases of in-service training are planned at the "last minute" with little thought given to specific teaching objectives that reflect the desired changes that should result from the training.

Major Problem:

Allocation of time to various in-service training programs that will result in the most effective training for the majority of staff members.

Methods of Approach:

1. Continue to stress the need for development of a coordinated training program that will provide direction to all training efforts.
2. Hold a winter meeting (preferably two days) of the Overall Extension Training Committee to review previous training efforts and recommend plans for the future.
 - a. Invite E. L. Kirby, Assistant Director in Ohio and Chairman of the National Task Force on Cooperative Extension In-Service Training, to meet with this committee.
3. Encourage district agents to do more advanced planning of district meetings so that the spring and fall two-day sessions include items that will provide direction in line with other training experiences.

4. Develop a written training policy that will be of considerable aid in carrying out a coordinated training program.
5. Make use of the results of the professional improvement survey conducted by the agents associations in working with various committees responsible for in-service training.
6. Encourage at least twenty-five extension workers to attend a regional summer or winter school.
7. Place training in program development in high priority in 1961. Conduct training in this area through:
 - a. Two-day session with administrative and supervisory staffs.
 - b. Meetings with all project leaders.
 - c. Meetings with each department.
 - d. District and sub-district meetings with extension agents.
8. Annual Extension Conference to be held August 21 - 25, 1961.

GRADUATE STUDY

Situation:

Nationally, more and more emphasis is being placed on the need for formal, advanced training for all extension workers. It is recognized that four years of undergraduate preparation are not adequate to conduct an extension program that is to keep pace with the major changes that are developing in regard to the role of Extension and to the role of extension

staff members. Graduate study provides learning experiences that are impossible to duplicate through in-service training programs.

The survey conducted by the Professional Improvement Committees of the two agents' associations expressed a definite felt need for many staff members in pursuing additional graduate study. A total of 119 men and women agents indicated a desire to obtain a master's degree. In addition, 64 indicated an interest in taking additional courses not necessarily leading to an advanced degree.

Major Problem:

Availability of funds, disruption to county programs, limited finances on the part of individuals, make it impractical for any appreciable number of staff members to pursue work leading to a master's degree at institutions outside the state of Virginia.

Methods of Approach:

1. Develop a proposal for a graduate program at V.P.I. designed primarily for extension workers and have such a proposal ready to present to the Graduate Council by June 1961.
2. Continue to work with staff members interested in pursuing graduate study in other institutions. This would be accomplished through consultation with staff members in regard to programs of study and by bringing to the attention of staff members scholarship and fellowship aid.

3. Encourage one man district agent to take educational leave to pursue graduate study in 1961.