

Developing Multicultural Leadership Competencies in Extension Educators

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Description: Developing multicultural competencies begins with identifying the deficiencies and barriers before designing modules to develop desired competencies. This workshop will be an interactive sharing of the grants, workshops, and research leading to eight web-based modules designed for national use in improving the leadership of multicultural programming for extension educators.

Learner Objectives of the Presentation

Participants will:

1. increase their understanding of how to plan and conduct a series of multicultural workshops to raise awareness and gather input;
2. gain ideas about methods to assess current involvement in international activities and training needs of extension field educators relative to international/multicultural programming; and
3. learn about the design process of a series of eight web-based modules to be used nationally for extension staff development.

Professional Biographical Profile

Kelli Cameron-Selby is a graduate student at Purdue University, majoring in Agriculture and Extension Education. Her assistantship represents a joint effort between the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service and International Programs in Agriculture. Cameron-Selby has participated in study abroad programs in Spain, Costa Rica, and Scotland. She received her B.S. in Agriculture Education from Iowa State University. At ISU, Cameron-Selby participated in the University Honors Program, Presidential Leadership Class, and Sigma Alpha Professional Sorority.

Pamela Morris is an Associate Professor in Youth Development and Agricultural Education at Purdue University. Dr. Morris received her BS and MA in Elementary Education at Ball State University and her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instructional Design from Purdue University. Her primary focus has been in cross-cultural education, service-learning, and the changing faces of a global society. In 2002, Dr. Morris received the National Award for Diversity from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the significant impact her programming has made on Indiana communities in the areas of multicultural education, and international programs.

Mark Russell – Professor of Animal Sciences & Veterinary Clinical Sciences received a BS in Animal Sciences at Cornell University and his MS and PhD at the University of Illinois. Dr. Russell spent 1995-96 as a visiting professor at the University of New England in Australia studying international extension delivery methods, employer satisfaction of university graduates and curriculum development. He designed and taught “Agricultural Extension and Communication Skills” and has now worked with extension educators in new democracies of Romania and Moldavia. He teaches multicultural communication and extension delivery skills in classes at Purdue and is a leader of the internationalization of our undergraduate and extension staff development curriculum in Indiana.

Floyd Branson, Jr. serves as the Assistant Director for Personnel and Staff Development at Purdue University. Since that time, his job has expanded to encompass field operations and supervision of administrative staff. In 1994 he was a National Diversity Award Winner CSREES and received an Epsilon Sigma Phi Special Recognition Award. He earned a B.S. degree from Indiana State University, M.S. from Purdue University, and his Ph.D. from Ball State University.

David Sammons is Associate Dean of the School of Agriculture and Director of the Office of International Programs in Agriculture at Purdue University. His office provides administrative support and leadership for international activities in the teaching, research, and outreach mission areas of the School of Agriculture. Previously Dr. Sammons was employed for 15 years (1978 to 1993) at the University of Maryland as Professor of Agronomy with responsibilities in small grain (wheat, barley) breeding. He has a wide range of international experiences, first as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines (1968-70), and in recent years in short term consultant positions with AID in West Africa (Gambia, Senegal) in the area of crop loss assessment, in Egypt and Sudan in agricultural curriculum development, and as a Fulbright Senior Fellow at Egerton University in Kenya. He has also acquired professional experience internationally in the Caribbean, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam), Japan, China, Russia, Ireland, France, West Africa (Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, Jordan, Poland and Hungary. He is the author of over 170 scientific articles and seven books and/or book chapters.

Developing Multicultural Leadership Competencies in Extension Educators

Abstract

Developing multicultural leadership competencies begins with raising awareness and identifying the strengths, deficiencies, and barriers before designing modules to develop desired competencies. This workshop will take the participants through the grants, workshops, research, and activities leading to eight web-based modules designed for national use in improving the confidence and competencies in multicultural extension programming.

Introduction

Extension programs throughout the United States are being challenged to adapt to the needs of clientele in a rapidly changing society. Barriers exist as the Cooperative Extension Service attempts to quickly adapt in response to demographic and technological changes. These include a decrease in human and financial capital (CSREES, 2002) and a need for building Extension educators' skills to respond to these changing needs. The National Subcommittee on Extension Diversity (2002) concluded that Extension leadership professionals must develop an understanding of their own cultural approach when working with others, an appreciation of how culture affects various groups in learning and working experiences, and be able to utilize skills that facilitate the design and delivery of programs which are consistent with the culture of their audiences. The purpose of this paper is to help those involved in administering professional development programs for Extension educators will: 1) increase their understanding of how to plan and conduct a series of multicultural workshops to raise awareness and gather input; 2) gain ideas about methods to assess current involvement in international activities and training needs of extension field educators relative to international/multicultural programming; and 3) learn about the design process of a series of eight web-based modules to be used nationally for extension staff development.

Background

Research in Indiana (Selby et al, 2003) sponsored by Purdue Cooperative Extension Service and Purdue International Programs in Agriculture, has shown that "communicating across cultures" and "demographic changes in Indiana and U.S." are the highest two needs for international training. In the fall of 2003, Purdue Extension conducted three one-day workshops in different geographies of the state. The goals of the workshops were to raise awareness of multicultural leadership issues as it relates to extension programming and to share existing multicultural extension programs in Indiana. All workshops included topics on demographic changes, getting comfortable with diversity, panel sharing multicultural programs and community needs, working table discussion topics, and a keynote industry communications specialist. Working group discussion topics included 1) the current barriers we face in creating a pluralistic Extension system, 2) how might we confront and overcome these barriers, 3) how do we create a warmer, more welcoming environments and to what actions must we commit, 4) how will we hold ourselves accountable for our work/success, 5) how will we know when we are successful, 6) to whom should we report our successes and failures, 7) how can professional associations support intercultural competencies, and 8) what partnerships provide opportunities to enhance intercultural competence. As a follow-up to these workshops, Purdue lead a multi-state grant proposal entitled "A Curriculum to Strengthen Capacity for International Extension Programming" to USDA-CSREES Internationalizing Extension Unit. The purpose of the proposal was to write a curriculum that can be used to build the skills needed by Extension personnel to successfully engage in the international arena in the context of their professional assignments. The curriculum modules include Building Cultural Competencies, Assessing Strengths and Opportunities of a Cultural Community, Workforce Development, Building Community Leadership, Legal Issues Relevant to a New Population, Family Life Issues, Global Trade Issues, and Framing Your

International Experiences. These modules as a group will form a curriculum to strengthen the ability of Extension educators to program activities relevant to the changing global realities in their locations. In addition to Purdue University, lead universities include Iowa State University, Ohio State University, and Florida A&M University.

How it works

Funding for the workshops was provided by a Mini Grant for Professional Development from Epsilon Sigma Phi which was matched by support from Forestry & Natural Resources, International Programs in Agriculture, and the Director of Purdue Extension. Local extension specialists and panels of local educators and community leaders provided most of the content with an industry professional with multicultural responsibilities serving as the keynote speaker. We will share what we believe is the most important aspect of the workshops – the responses of participants and their assessment of needs. In regard to the web-based modules, each participating state team provides the lead for the development of two modules. Each module is being content reviewed and pilot tested in two states in February through April. In April 2004, the partners convened a workshop at Ohio State University to do additional rewriting of the modules based on evaluations from the pilot testing. The final curriculum will be mounted on a web site during the summer of 2004. The web site will be advertised and maintained by Purdue University. Access to this curriculum will be provided freely to all interested parties.

Results to date

A total of 44% (115) of all educators in Indiana self-selected participation in one of the three multicultural workshops. The predominant population of participants was from 4-H & Youth Development and Consumer & Family Science program areas. This series of workshops appeared successful in raising the awareness of multicultural opportunities and programs and we will share the results of the six-month later follow-up assessment. Input from the working groups were used to direct professional development follow-up programs and material development. Educators in four states are reviewing the modules for content clarity and relevance and pilot testing them on extension staff. Later in the summer, these modules will be made available nationwide via a website to be managed at Purdue University, to state Extension systems interested in conducting staff development training in international/multicultural skill enhancement. Because of the variety of professional development training methods available, the modules will have a flexible design in order to fit the needs of each state. There is no doubt that extension administrators and educators can improve efficiencies across states and access these resources to help respond to the changes in their communities.