

Effects of strengthening adult education in agricultural development

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Abstract: adult education in the local agricultural education program is an essential component of the "total" program. Offering adult education programs helps to keep farmers and agribusiness employees better informed of current trends and provides them with opportunities to learn new skills and improve existing ones. Teaching adults can be very challenging, but also very rewarding. Most teachers would agree that the benefits derived from a successful adult education program in agriculture far outweigh the costs. In addition to the direct benefits to adult participants, the teacher, the school, the community, and the secondary program also benefit from a quality adult education program in agriculture. Adults in agriculture use a number of sources to gain new information that can be used to help them solve problems. Persons employed in agriculture utilize newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio, television, government publications, internet, and meetings to gather information which can be directly utilized in their business activities. In many communities, the agriculture teacher is the primary source of agricultural information.

[Ali Badragheh, Mohammad Abedi. **Effects of strengthening adult education in agricultural development.** Journal of American Science 2011;7(5):417-422]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.americanscience.org>.

Keywords: adult education, agricultural development

Introduction:

Adult illiteracy is like a disease that infects virtually every dimension of Kentucky life. Adult illiteracy saps the energy and capability of Kentucky's people and its economy. Adult illiteracy feeds the state's unemployment, its welfare rolls, and the correctional institutions. Adult illiteracy severely hinders the life chances of young children, undermines school reform, and limits the opportunities for postsecondary education. Kentucky's capacity to raise the state's per capita income, improve the quality of life of its population, and develop a competitive economy, depends fundamentally on the state's ability to increase the population's educational level. Progress is needed across all of Kentucky, not just some of Kentucky. The social, economic, and political costs of growing disparities between the haves and have-nots are unacceptable. To maintain its current standing relative to competitor states, Kentucky must make progress. Extraordinary progress will be necessary for Kentucky to improve its competitive position relative to neighboring states and the most progressive states in the nation. To be successful, the Commonwealth's strategies must energize and gain the commitment of all the state's political, education, business, and civic leaders. No strategy will succeed unless it engages leaders in each community and county to identify needs and develop programs and services appropriate to the community's unique

circumstances. The most serious challenge will be to motivate low-skilled, under-educated adults within the working age population to seek further education. Simply expanding the number of providers and programs will not necessarily increase demand from the populations and communities where the needs are greatest. Deepseated social, economic and cultural barriers—many dating back generations—lead people to undervalue education. In addition, in many counties it is difficult for people to see a direct relationship between better education and better-paying jobs. Either there are no jobs available or many existing employers do little to emphasize the connection between better education and the possibilities for getting a job, keeping a job, or earning a higher wage. For many, getting more education and earning a high school diploma or a college degree has little positive meaning. Only the negative consequences are obvious: getting more education often means leaving one's family and community for jobs and opportunities for advancement somewhere else. The future of Kentucky depends on uplifting the quality of life and economy of all of Kentucky. The social and economic costs of neglect of large parts of the state will drag down the rest of the state and seriously hinder its capacity to compete in the global economy. Much like strategies to curb epidemic, strategies to reduce illiteracy and raise the educational attainment of Kentucky's population must include both short-

term efforts to face the immediate crises as well as long-term strategies to get at the underlying causes. Short-term crises include the imperative to keep helping welfare clients make the transition from welfare to work within the constraints of federal and state mandates and the need to train workers for immediate employer demands. Long-term prevention must address the underlying, persistent problems of the state's economic structure as well as the low awareness--if not appreciation--among segments of the population of the vital connection among education, employment, and improved standards of living.

Adult characteristics:

to understand the characteristics of adult learners, their mental and physical condition should be considered in the following referred to some of them.

Operating speed:

slow reaction in adults is natural that necessarily means reducing the logic and practice skills, not due to weakness and increased awareness of natural forces and their skills.

Consciousness:

no stimulus and incentives encouraging, despite inhibiting stimuli, slow transfer rate, mental, and weak inhibitors of natural forces (mostly visual and auditory) are factors that slow reaction affect individual mental and cognitive activities, but never able to understand, understanding and learning ability (which varies with the speed of learning) is not relevant.

Health:

what is most age, longer duration is necessary to be heard by listening issue. Why is that when elderly people and old could not hear well, their confidence and vulnerable to the possibility that negative beliefs about their find, they are great. Visual abilities can be like other people, usually decreases with age.

Background of knowledge - skills and beliefs of adults:

adults, social experiences, many have already learned different values and beliefs in their pronouns have stabilized, so changes in the new act very cautiously. The idea of such a manner that skill and applying them older and longer life is, Similar resistance to accept new ideas will be more and more severe. Thus, the adult criteria for the built and paid for their ideas and beliefs that are forming. Because of these criteria and the beliefs that they are afraid of failure, Therefore, to prevent it, sometimes against the resistance of new phenomena are only the material taught and its face that make reinforced concrete and tangible interference situation is.

Ways to Strengthen Adult Education

1- Create a culture that supports adult study

1. Communicate that learning is intrinsic to faith development. Lift up ongoing study, including adult education, as an essential function of any Christian community.
2. Reinforce the expectation of study participation from the pulpit and with new members.
3. Make Bible study a part of other church activities such as committee meetings and mission activities.
4. Use scripture meaningfully in worship. Don't assume your worshippers know the context of the passages read. Use sermons as an opportunity to teach the Bible.

2- Offer a variety of formats, schedules, and approaches

5. Experiment with a variety of times -- Sunday morning classes, weeknight groups, retreats, oneday events, and breakfast-hour or noon-time classes -- depending on lifestyles in your congregation.
6. Consider scheduling some classes or small groups in homes or other community locations. Christian education doesn't happen only in church buildings.
7. Start new studies and groups often. Despite their best intentions, ongoing groups have a tendency to become cliquish. Newcomers are far more likely to feel comfortable joining something new.
8. Have as your goal a Bible study program that exposes church members to the entire biblical witness over time.
9. Recognize different learning styles among individuals and age groups. Older folks tend to be most comfortable with traditional classroom structures. Boomers are inclined to question authority and enjoy discussion. Younger persons are more accustomed to media and technology and prefer a fast-paced, informal style.
10. Make use of a variety of different approaches, including lectionary-based studies, topical studies, character studies, etc.
11. Incorporate different learning strategies, such as role playing, dramatization, guided meditation, even memorization.
12. Churches too small for a large number of groups can vary their approach by rotating different studies and curricula with groups.
13. Don't teach "about" the Bible in a way that doesn't allow people to encounter the texts for themselves. Encourage individual reading or make it part of the group's time together.
14. Encourage active, discussion-based learning. Break into small conversation groups frequently.
15. Allow for diversity in perspectives.

16. Encourage the use of a variety of different biblical translations. Those less experienced in Bible study may find it helpful to read from a paraphrase.

3- Meet people where they are

17. Acknowledge biblical illiteracy among many adult church-goers – even the well-educated – and strive for methods that straddle this paradox.

18. Recognize that some beginners will be turned off by “homework.” Use videos, in-class readings, dramatizations, or audio tapes as alternative ways of getting everyone “on the same page” and ready for discussion, all the while encouraging the habit of daily scripture reading.

19. Provide short-term classes for those who won’t commit to a long-term study or ongoing class, but make these short-term learning experiences “stepping stones” toward greater involvement.

20. Conduct “taster” classes for those who want to try out the experience before they commit to it. Select topics that will appeal to those new to Bible study.

21. Break an ongoing class into shorter, defined segments, each with a clearly identified focus. With each new segment, take the opportunity to publicize the topic and invite newcomers.

22. Teach stewardship of time to counteract “busyness.” Just as with financial stewardship, persons need to be encouraged to make Christian education a priority. Encourage “first fruits” commitments of time.

23. Be clear about expectations with regard to attendance, participation, and preparation.

4- Promote participation effectively

24. Link group study topics to sermon series and encourage participation from the pulpit.

25. Emphasize study during Lent. Select a topic or curriculum for church-wide study during this period and encourage all to take part. Tie the topic into preaching and worship.

26. Lift up study leaders and participants. Celebrate every time a new group starts or completes a study program. Use the newsletter, a photo board, or a dedication service in worship.

27. Ask class members to write a newsletter article or testify about the significance of their learning experiences.

28. Remember that personal invitations are usually the most effective way of getting someone involved in any activity.

29. Capitalize on the current popularity of book clubs and films by creating opportunities for those who enjoy these activities. Check out “Reel Time” from Cokesbury.

5- Foster strong leadership

30. Recruit leaders as the first step toward forming groups. Groups will often form around a gifted leader.

31. Stress the group leader’s role as facilitator, rather than teacher. Setting up one person as “the expert” creates a poor group dynamic and discourages new people from stepping into leadership. Thinking of group leaders as facilitators allows Scripture and the Holy Spirit to do the teaching.

32. Expect your pastor to model the importance of ongoing adult education by leading and participating in study, but don’t reinforce the notion that only the ordained can lead study groups.

33. Take advantage of the leader training opportunities provided in conjunction with many popular study curricula.

34. Provide orientation and ongoing support for group leaders.

35. Train leaders in group process so they can keep their groups on track, being sensitive to the need to keep more outspoken participants in check and draw out the more reserved using phrases like, “Let’s hear from some of the others,” or “You look like you have something to say.”

36. Emphasize the importance of leader preparation, especially mapping out discussion questions in advance.

37. Encourage team leadership. Experienced leaders should invite a newer person to pair with them in leading groups to develop the less experienced leader.

38. Rotate the leadership responsibility within a group so that all participants get experience leading sessions.

39. Know that Sunday School classes and small groups are one of the best places to develop lay leaders and lay relationships that strengthen the church.

6- Use resources effectively

40. Stay abreast of new resources, including those available from other denominations or traditions and the secular press.

41. Don’t be afraid to introduce ideas and resources from a variety of theological perspectives. Trust the discernment abilities of individuals and the group.

42. Use workbook-style studies creatively. Nothing is more boring than a lesson read straight out of a leader’s manual. Find ways to make pre-packaged lesson plans come alive.

43. Use videos to bring expert perspectives to bear and to get everyone “on the same page” for discussion. But avoid class sessions that are no more than viewing a video, or participants will soon

wonder why they shouldn't stay home and watch their own TV.

44. Create a resource center with reference materials, maps, and other items to support your leaders and participants.

45. Don't allow your church library to become a museum. Update the collection. Offer books and resources linked to sermon topics and congregational study themes.

46. Consider a book sales kiosk and stock it with things you'd like your congregants to be reading. Many busy people would rather buy a book than worry about due dates and library fines.

7- Stress spiritual formation

47. Remember, the goal is formation, not information. Every class should be deliberate in helping members accept God's grace, grow in faith, deepen their relationship to the Christian community, and answer Christ's call to discipleship.

48. Include prayer as part of every study session and encourage group members to pray for one another daily.

49. Encourage a covenantal relationship within study groups.

50. Nurture a sense of Christian community and connectedness within groups. A Sunday School class or small group can be a "home" for individuals within a larger church.

Conclusion:

Adult education in the local agricultural education program is an essential component of the "total" program. Offering adult education programs helps to keep farmers and agribusiness employees better informed of current trends and provides them with opportunities to learn new skills and improve existing ones.

Teaching adults can be very challenging, but also very rewarding. Most teachers would agree that the benefits derived from a successful adult education program in agriculture far outweigh the costs. In addition to the direct benefits to adult participants, the teacher, the school, the community, and the secondary program also benefit from a quality adult education program in agriculture.

Adults in agriculture use a number of sources to gain new information that can be used to help them solve problems. Persons employed in agriculture utilize newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio, television, government publications, internet, and meetings to gather information which can be directly utilized in their business activities. In many communities, the agriculture teacher is the primary source of agricultural information.

Successful adult education programs develop and utilize an Agricultural Education Program Advisory Committee to assess the informational needs of adults in the community. Agriculture teachers should utilize the expertise and communications link, which an effective advisory committee provides. Specifically, the advisory committee should be asked to provide advice regarding planning, conducting, and evaluating the adult education program in agriculture. Adult education programs in agriculture should emphasize practical application of the information presented. Topics and information included in adult programs should be provided which fulfill needs of the local community. Providing information which cannot be applied to solve a local problem or address a local issue will generally be viewed as frivolous and over time will result in decreased interest (i.e. participation) in the adult education program.

The role of the agriculture teacher should be as a facilitator of the learning process. Most adults reject the traditional teacher-student relationship, which is necessary to maintain in secondary programs. Teachers should be encouraged to view themselves as partners with adult participants in the learning process. The democratic philosophy of shared responsibility for planning, conducting, and evaluating adult education programs distinguishes adult education from secondary education.

A local plan for adult education in agriculture should consist of two major components. Namely, a broad statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives of the local adult education program, and an annual calendar of program activities.

Adult education in agriculture is important for continued community prosperity, growth, and improvement.

The local Agricultural Education program has a responsibility to provide up-to-date information, training, and retraining for all adults interested in agriculture.

The goals of the Adult Education Program are:

1. To assist adults in establishing personal and business goals.
2. To enhance the self-confidence and decision making skills of adults in agriculture.
3. To develop agricultural leaders.
4. To maintain the local agricultural knowledge and technology base.
5. To improve the home, living, and business conditions of persons employed in agriculture.
6. To encourage adults to participate in cooperative efforts.

The objectives for the local Adult Education program are:

1. To increase the net farm income of local agricultural producers.

2. To improve the safety practices of adults employed in agriculture in the local community.
3. To educate the public about the significant role in agriculture in the local economy.
4. To encourage the use of practices that protect and conserve natural resources to maintain a good environment for everyone.
5. To assist local producers in the development of marketing plans that are tailored to their individual needs.
6. To assist local producers in developing strategies to make optimum use of agricultural support agencies (e.g. FSA, MO Department of Agriculture).

A comprehensive program of adult education in agriculture includes three major components: (a) organized instructional classes for adults, (b) a Young Farmers/Young Farm Wives Chapter, and (c) Farm Business Management Analysis (FBMA). State Agricultural Education Program standards implemented in 1992 indicate that a minimum of 20 clock hours of organized adult education classes be provided. Many local agriculture programs will far exceed this minimum standard. Salary reimbursement Procedures for "Full Time" and Short Term adult programs are.

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4/19/2011