

SARE Sustainable Agriculture Curriculum and Continuing Education Program for Cooperative Extension Faculty and other Ag Professionals

5th Conference Call: July 2, 2004

Next conference call (if needed): August 19th, 11:00 a.m. Pacific-Arizona, 1 p.m. Central, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

To do:

- Dave continue working on Competency 3 sub-topics and learning outcomes.
- Dave and Vern will work on draft learning outcomes for Competency 4 and 5 and try to have drafts completed by first week of August (?)
- Design team look for email from Dave regarding Sept 12-14 Omaha meeting. Each person must make their own travel arrangements. The Lied Lodge Conference Center provides a meeting package so all accommodations and meals will be covered on central billing.
- Review and edit of draft learning outcomes for Competencies 1 and 2 are due to Dave by July 20th. My emails have included a Word doc of each. See the project Web site to view on the Web.

Participants: David Chaney, Kim Kroll, Vern Grubinger, Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Deborah Young, Andy McGuire, Julie Sexton

Agenda

1. Omaha meeting details
2. Next conference call date/time
3. Learning outcomes update for Competency 1-3.
4. Competency 4 and 5 discussion.

Omaha Meeting

The curriculum design team will meet at the Lied Lodge Conference Center in Omaha Nebraska Sept. 12-14. Follow-up email will provide details for making travel arrangements. Plan to arrive on the afternoon/evening of the 12th, and leave after 4:00 p.m. on the 14th.

Learning Outcomes Update

Most design team members have turned in their review/edits for Competencies 1 and 2. If you haven't completed those, try and do so within the next two weeks, by July 20th.

Dave is working on the draft learning outcomes for Competency 3. Look for those in an email by July 24th.

Dave and Vern will work on draft learning outcomes for Competency 4 and 5 and try to have drafts completed by first week of August. (?)

Take particular note of the need for additional Level III outcomes: What ultimately do we want to see happen as a result of the training? What do we want participants to be doing as a result of the course?

Dave noted that both Level II and III are focused in that direction and that the distinction is more one of-- growth in the position of an extension professional and experience in the field to the point where the individual is taking on a leadership and mentoring role (Level III) vs. consistent, strong application of knowledge in the field and in work with clientele (Level II). Vern suggest thinking in terms of Level I-understand, Level II-do, and Level III-initiate.

The main objective for this meeting was to develop / refine the list of sub-topics that should be addressed under the 4th and 5th core competencies.

Competency 4

New Title: Participatory Research and Education Skills for Sustainable Agriculture

1. Introduction—Perspectives on the Role of Extension
2. Meeting Farmer/Rancher Information Needs through On-Farm and Systems Research and Demonstration
3. Collaborative Approaches to Learning, Innovation, and Change
4. Connecting Farmers with Consumers and Local Communities

Discussion

1. Introduction—Perspectives on the Role of Extension
[see Vern's topics in Comp 4 Summary] Provide BRIEF overview and background to extension's role and note new opportunities and perspectives that sustainable agriculture presents, or how S.A. provides impetus for returning to original mission and intent of extension.

2. Meeting Farmer/Rancher Information Needs through On-Farm and Systems Research and Demonstration

Based on key concepts/topics already submitted from design team (included in Comp 4 feedback summary)--

- Consistent agreement on topics listed in Comp 4 summary.
- Need to also incorporate interdisciplinary / systems research topics. See Andy's comments in Comp 4 summary.

3. Collaborative Approaches to Learning, Innovation, and Change

Based on key concepts/topics already submitted from design team (included in Comp 4 feedback summary)--

- Agreement on addressing adoption/diffusion/managing change as topic under this heading.
- Also agreed that farmer-to-farmer networking is also important.
- Concept and importance of co-learning in sustainable ag: Hierarchical models of learning don't work so well.

- Finding ways of communicating information and concepts to make palatable / understandable / acceptable to audience.
- Cover basics of adult learning very briefly under this heading to set stage for relevance to S.A.
- Understanding how adults learn is a core skill for extension—Use S.A. as model for conveying experiential learning approaches.
- Importance of **facilitation skills** in this type of educational process. Cover basics of facilitation very briefly and point to resources (e.g. Cornell “Discussion Groups” booklet + many others). Show how facilitation skills apply to this type of work. Address advocacy vs. education role.

4. Connecting Farmers with Consumers and Local Communities

Based on key concepts/topics already submitted from design team (included in Comp 4 feedback summary)--

- Value of ag and ag literacy are important components of sustaining agriculture, but as distinct topic should be covered only briefly in Competency 1: Concept Overview. Check competency 1 to make sure it has this.
- In order to be successful you have to be able to form partnerships. Particularly important in sustainable ag and developing new markets.
- Wouldn't focus on the marketing aspects here (that's covered in Competency 3), but would focus on the skills involved in developing and maintaining community partnerships. Marketing is primary example, but partnerships are key in other areas as well (e.g. resource conservation.)
- Importance of **facilitation skills** in making these connections and creating and maintaining partnerships. Cover basics of facilitation very briefly and point to resources (e.g. Cornell “Discussion Groups” booklet + many others). Show how facilitation skills apply to this type of work. Address advocacy vs. education role. (Same sub-topic as in #2 above Collaborative Approaches to Learning, Innovation, and Change).

Competency 5: Based on feedback and discussion during our conference call, I would like to suggest we split these out and create a new Core Competency. They both seem important, but they would be difficult to relate to each other under one Major Topic Area. Neither of them needs to be as long as previous Competencies and could be covered in brief course modules.

Competency 5

Professionalism and Program Development Skills

Based on key concepts/topics already submitted from design team (included in Comp 5 feedback summary)--

1. Implementing Sustainable Agriculture in Context of Institution, Department, and Job Description (Career Development)

- Part of context is society's movement in different direction than S.A.
- Responding to needs of constituents who may be more in a conventional ag mode.
- Incorporating S.A. in plans of work.
- Vern's list under Personal Development and Survival

- Having strong sustainable ag program and still be successful in your career.
- Vern's topics about interpersonal skills, but with particular focus on "professionalism" and working toward becoming a leader, innovator, mentor.
- Other issues: comfort level to take risks, personal sustainability, structural and relational issues.
- Don't get trapped in narrow vision
- Pressure for agents to be status quo
- Extension culture needs to change

2. Outcome Evaluation – Program Planning

Make use of/adapt Wisconsin training program in this topic area.

3. Fundraising / Grant Writing for Sustainable Agriculture

Focus specifically on Sustainable Ag Funding Sources.

Competency 6

Sustainable Ag Information Resources and Information Management

Based on key concepts/topics already submitted from design team (included in Comp 5 feedback summary)--

[Revise Dave's comments from feedback summary... even though there will be a resources component to each course module, it is important to have a larger "information resources" section as part of the curriculum, and to address briefly the role of extension as information managers and information providers]

1. Sustainable Ag Information Resources

Work with SAN, ATTRA, AFSIC to build on what they've developed

2. Managing Information

- Kinds of knowledge and information
- How do we interpret and utilize information from various sources
- Place of anecdotal information in LGU / extension model.
- Finding solutions and using information appropriately
- Decision-making: acting without having all the answers, being flexible, making adjustments (gets back to holistic mgmt. concepts—assumer you're wrong and monitor)
- S.A. as a model for getting back to CE roots and making stronger connections with campus-based researchers.

Summarized by David Chaney