

Research in Brief

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FACTORS AFFECTING AGENT PROGRAMMING

THE CRITICAL INCIDENT method was used as a basis for a semi-structured interview of 73 Kentucky agents. Each respondent described and gave reasons to support the action that he felt appropriate for each of ten prepared programming incidents. In addition, each agent described a satisfying and a dissatisfying programming incident from his personal experiences.

District supervisors used the paired comparison method of personnel appraisal to rate the agents' programming effectiveness. Among the findings were the following:

1. A majority of the agents associated personal satisfaction with the local society and personal dissatisfaction with the organization.
2. Some agents were oriented toward the organization, some toward the local society, and others attempted to satisfy demands of both.
3. Agents of large or small staffs appear to be organization oriented. Those on medium-sized staffs were oriented to local society.
4. Division of work among the county staff members appeared to be based on the agents' source of personal satisfaction, orientation, and interpretation of Extension's objectives.
5. The most pronounced motivational factors relative to programming were those associated with self-actualization and affiliation with local people.
6. Agents, in general, associated satisfying situations with opportunity to achieve, desirable relations with clientele, personal confidence and security, and the nature of the work. Dissatisfying situations were associated with poor policies or administration, the nature of the work, job performance, and personal confidence and security.

Agents rated most successful tended to be organization oriented: to feel that people, organizations, and other selected groups should comprise Extension's clientele and to feel that program content should include areas in addition to agriculture. Agents rated as less successful tended to be local-society oriented and to limit the program content to agriculture.

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Alan P. Utz, Jr., "An analysis of Selected Factors Relative to Programming Efforts of Kentucky County Extension Agents." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., 1965.

AGENT ROLES IN STATEWIDE PLANNING

A QUESTIONNAIRE was used in group interviews with 139 county Extension agents in Kansas (97 per cent of all agents with five or more years of experience). The questionnaire dealt with: (1) personal characteristics of the respondents; (2) suggested program planning tasks; (3) assistance received and obstacles encountered in formulating and agreeing upon a statewide framework for Extension program planning.

County Extension agents saw their role in statewide program planning as including: (1) understanding the relationships of the various parts of the county Extension program; (2) keeping themselves and others informed about the problems of the county, the effectiveness of the program, and the need for adjustments; (3) assisting state staff members to formulate objectives, policies, and procedures for program planning and to define the program planning roles of supervisors and specialists; and (4) helping supervisors plan and conduct training programs for county Extension staff members.

In general, county Extension agents saw their performance for each task as lower than the degree of importance assessed to it. Major obstacles encountered by agents were lack of time, limited contact with administrative and supervisory staffs, lack of training, and limited opportunities to influence the state program planning framework.

Christophoros Polycarpou, "Role of County Extension Agents in Formulating a Statewide Framework for Program Planning in Kansas." Unpublished M.S. thesis, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kans., 1965.

TEACHING EFFECTIVE USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

THE PURPOSE of this project was to determine (1) if well illustrated, simple audio-visual materials related to the past experience of culturally deprived Puerto Rican women in New York City can be used effectively to teach improved buying practices and (2) which of two types of audio-visual materials is more effective for the purpose.

Participants in this study were drawn from women born in Puerto Rico and living in the Chelsea district of Manhattan. Therefore, "shopping in a supermarket," "using credit wisely," "buying a cotton blouse," and "selecting a moderate cost cut of beef" were decided upon as topics that would be useful to the women.

The same content programs were prepared in two methods: (1) for use on a language master machine which has a card with its own sound tape; and (2) as slides with a script. The script was narrated by a Puerto Rican professional woman worker who cooperated with this project.

Three groups totaling approximately 75 women were used. One group used the language master program, another the slides. A control group

received a different educational program with filmstrips. A pre-test and post-test were administered to all groups. Results were as follows:

1. Slightly higher average scores resulted from the slide treatment, with the people with the longest residence in the city and the highest level of education scoring highest on the post-test. However, the group with the least education and shortest residence in the city made the greatest change following the educational program.
2. With the language master treatment, the highest average post-test score was made by the people above the median for educational achievement but below the median for length of residence in New York City.
3. In the control group, three-fourths of the sub-groups had a negative net change. People who had the right answer on the pre-test changed it to the wrong one on the post-test.
4. If the results for both the slide and language treatments are combined the greatest net change took place in the group with the lowest level of education and the shortest residence.

This study suggests, the author feels, that large numbers of people can be reached through prepared teaching materials that can be administered by a person indigenous to the community. There might be two advantages in this procedure: (1) It would enable the nation to reach more people earlier than would be possible if we had to wait for highly skilled professionals to be trained; and (2) it might furnish members of the community with people from their own background whom they can look to as examples. The fact that women would leave their children in the care of people who are unfamiliar to them, and of a different ethnic group, suggests the possibility of an educational program that tries to reach both parents and children at the same time.

Irene Oppenheim, "Teaching Adult Women from Puerto Rican Families in New York City How to Use Their Financial Resources More Effectively." Report (mimeo) of U. S. Office of Education Project S-033, School of Education, New York University, New York, N.Y., 1965.

EVALUATION OF A TELEVISION PROGRAM

THIS STUDY EVALUATED the effect of a four-program series on "simplified homemaking" offered from a Johnstown, Pennsylvania station. The series consisted of four thirteen-minute programs supplemented by a workbook. About 1400 homemakers from 25 counties pre-registered for the course.

Two telephone surveys reached (1) a random sample of 156 homes in the Johnstown urban area during the last two broadcasts and (2) a random sample of 130 homemakers who had pre-registered. About 500 homemakers in the Johnstown area viewed the program, considerably more than had registered.

The registrants were heterogeneous in age, socio-economic status, ex-

posure to mass media, and Extension participation. They tended to be better educated than the average homemaker and to be over-representative of white collar families. A large majority expressed an interest in additional television programs.

Of the homemakers who received the workbook, slightly over half saw one or more of the four programs. Only 7 per cent saw all four. There was a sharp drop in viewers after the second program. While some felt the television programs were beneficial, others had a negative reaction, primarily because the content was not new to them or they did not perceive a close relationship between their home situation and what was taught. The workbook was rated more helpful than the television programs, perhaps because more homemakers read it than viewed television. Most homemakers only scanned the workbook. Few did any of the homework suggested. Many made minor changes in how they performed specific tasks around the home, but there was little evidence of an overall job analysis as a basis for simplifying household tasks or eliminating parts of the job.

Emory J. Brown, Helen E. Bell, Eunice N. Tibbott, and Eleanor J. Pearl, *Evaluation of a Time Management Television Program*, Extension Study No. 27, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa., December, 1964.

COUNSELLING AND CAREER CHOICE

IN THIS STUDY of the stability of career choices, 321 boys from Wisconsin high schools were followed from 1948, when they were sophomores, until 1961, ten years after graduation, to determine how stable their career choices were over that period. Half the group were subjected to intensive counselling in high school, while the other half received normal counselling. Subjects were interviewed during high school and followed up at 6 months, 2½ years, 5 years, and 10 years after graduation. Each time, they were asked to indicate their current occupation (preference for students) and to project five and ten years into the future.

There was no over-all significant difference between the experimental group and the group receiving normal counselling. Greater consistency was found in the agricultural and professional categories than in skill, semi-skilled, and managerial categories. Slightly more than one-third of the boys who named agriculture as their chosen occupation at graduation were actually working in that field ten years later.

The results suggest that counselling and the analysis which goes with it are a minor factor in influencing occupational choice. The implications for career exploration programs in 4-H Club work are obvious.

Vernon A. Kohout and John W. Rothney, "A Longitudinal Study of Consistency of Vocational Preferences." *American Educational Research Journal*, I (January, 1964), 10-21.