



## Research in Brief

### **Study of Communication Problems**

The primary topic of this research was the question of an abstract service for community development. Several problems surround it: stability of the field, possibility of establishing a professional association, felt need by the practitioners for such a service, and current means of obtaining printed information.

It was discovered that an informal communication network operates in peer groups and that advancement can be had by encouraging the growth and development of the informal communication network.

Abstract services were reviewed as one means of enhancing the growth and development of a field by providing a means of organizing the literature, retrieving it when needed, and slashing the amount of personal time and effort required to merely keep up to date.

A questionnaire was mailed to 199 University Extension employees in community development. Results of experienced individuals were tabulated for general data concerning information use in community development and two hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis I states: there's a positive correlation between the difficulty in locating information and the felt need for an information awareness service. It was supported by two correlations and was therefore considered a tenable hypothesis.

Hypothesis II states: there's a positive correlation between the length of time in the field of resource and community development and the felt difficulty in locating information and the felt need for a current awareness service. This hypothesis wasn't supported. The data were equally divided on all sides of the issue.

Considering the total research effort and the data presented, it appears that an abstract service

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wouldn't be a viable activity at this time. Community development as a field doesn't evidence sufficient stability to allow for the development of information categories that would function for an appropriate period of time. The items most eagerly sought were newsletters, reports of success stories, in-house organs, and other such information sources that can be considered a printed extension of the informal communication network. In effect, such a newsletter is a form of abstract service or can at least function as one. Items of note are stripped to their bare frame and presented as part of an information exchange and as a means of drawing attention to the primary sources of the information.

This research effort didn't adequately investigate the effect of local literature due to its concentration on the national level of printed information. As a result, the informal communication network described in this report wasn't really engaged as the most influential source of information outside of one's self.

As recommended in other studies, the enhancement of this informal network may reap larger benefits than can be had from similar efforts in other areas. Frequent staff meetings, attendance at professional meetings, and other opportunities for peer interaction should be encouraged as a matter of policy.

*Editor's Note:* It appears from this research effort that field practitioners don't rely on professional literature for keeping current. Therefore, it might be of benefit for those

people concerned with effective communication with field workers to consider face-to-face conferences and well-done newsletters rather than professional papers, journals, etc.

*Developing Community Development: A Study of Information Problems.* Robert J. Doyle. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, Department of Regional and Community Affairs, 1972.

D. Littrell

### **Role of the Paraprofessional**

The role of the paraprofessional in human services institutions has been the focus of much debate and considerable research during the past few years. In spite of these efforts, much controversy still exists as to what the role actually should be.

In an effort to clarify the role of the paraprofessional in the Agricultural Extension Service in North Carolina, Gerald Olson asked paraprofessionals and professionals how they viewed the job and then compared the responses.

Olson's study was based on an intensive review of literature and numerous consulting sessions with Extension staff members. A role model consisting of 82 suggested tasks was developed for the study of the role of the paraprofessional. The tasks included in the model were incorporated into a mail questionnaire used to collect data from selected North Carolina Extension staff members. Ninety percent of the 276 staff members sampled responded to the questionnaire.

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The questionnaire for this study was designed so the responses could be measured, permitting greater use of statistical techniques in the interpretation of the data. Frequency distributions, percentage distributions, variances, mean weighted scores, and chi-square were the major statistical measures used in analyzing the data. The chi-square test of significance was used to compute the degree of association between dependent and independent variables.

Olson concluded that the role of the paraprofessional can be studied and analyzed in terms of role tasks, and there was consensus among positional groups for the role model. Individual differences exhibited were primarily in terms of intensity of expectation to do or not to do a given task, rather than directional. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that the paraprofessional is to perform an educational role, and that role is realistically depicted by the expectations of North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service staff members.

Also noteworthy were findings showing that the amount of contact with Extension before employment as a paraprofessional staff member appeared to have little relationship to their expectations of obligation to do or not to do tasks encompassed in the role model.

The role expectations for paraprofessionals agreed on by respondents were summarized in 7 phases that encompassed 62 tasks.

"The Role of the Paraprofessional in the Cooperative Extension Service."

Gerald Ray Olson. Ed.D. dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1970.

C. Trent

**Continuing Education of Women, CIS-32.** Washington, D.C.: Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1970. [Order number: ED 042 122. Price: MF 50¢, HC \$3.90.]\*

This annotated bibliography of about 150 items on women's continuing education begins with descriptions of a newsletter and three bibliographies, followed by documents on sex differences in ability, achievement, and role perception.

Four other sections cover employment-related interests and needs, women's participation in programs by universities and voluntary organizations, guidance and counseling, low-income and otherwise disadvantaged women, and homemaking education activities and needs.

Finally, the state of women's education in France, India, Thailand, Tunisia, Australia, the Soviet Union, Chile, Peru, East Africa, and other nations and regions is reviewed and evaluated.

V. McGaugh

**"Relationships Among Teacher's Knowledge and Application of Principles of Adult Teaching and Student Satisfaction."** Clay N. Berg, Jr. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago, Department of Education, 1969. [Order number: ED 052 454. Price: not given.]\*

The nature of the relationship between a teacher's knowledge of certain principles of adult teaching, his application of those principles in classroom practice, and the resultant level of satisfaction reported by his adult students were studied. A group of 1,596 adults in 100 university classes were the subjects. A theoretical framework adapted from Getzels and Houle was employed.

A student opinionnaire and a faculty questionnaire, based on Getzel and Houle's modified list of principles, were used. Data were analyzed by analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis.

Conclusions were: (1) the level of a teacher's knowledge of principles of adult education isn't significantly correlated with the level of student satisfaction in his class and (2) the extent to which students perceive their teacher's behavior as conforming to actions consistent with certain principles of adult education is significantly correlated with satisfaction with their classes. Satisfaction with classes is determined significantly by the teacher's application of principles related to student motivation.

C. Trent

**"Some Factors Influencing the Length of Tenure of County Extension Agents, 4-H in Ohio."**

Rodney A. Petteys. Master's thesis, Ohio State University, Department of Agricultural Education, Columbus, 1970. [Order number: ED 052 459. Price: MF 65¢.]\*

The perceptions of county 4-H Extension agents, relative to selected factors influencing length of tenure in the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service were studied. A questionnaire was sent to 128 present and former agents. Of these, 118 usable ones were returned.

Conclusions were: (1) the attitudes of agents toward salary and in-service training were associated with length of tenure and (2) no significant differences existed in ranking of factors, by agent groups, in the position features of job requirements and analysis, policy, working relations, family and personal features, and pre-service training.

C. Trent



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