

# thinking globally, acting locally

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Are you a futurist? A coevolutionist? Take this quick matching test to see.

## FUTURISTIC WORDS

Place the letter by the corresponding number.

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|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Biosphere              | A. A blended family  |
| 2. Prosumer               | B. A religion that believes humankind must save itself   |
| 3. Blip culture           | C. The end of the world  |
| 4. Demi nuclear           | D. Intellectual differences  |
| 5. Cybernetics            | E. Where prosumers will operate  |
| 6. Cottage industry       | F. A person who consumes what he/she produces  |
| 7. Lateral thinking       | G. The pulsing place on which we live  |
| 8. Humanism               | H. Folks who have been subject to this have short images of a vast amount of information             |
| 9. Armageddon             | I. Study and utilization; the comparative study of electronic computers and the human nervous system |
| 10. Right side; left side | J. Creative consideration of many alternatives   |

Answers: 1. G, 2. F, 3. H, 4. A, 5. I, 6. E, 7. J, 8. B, 9. C, 10. D

If you matched up the numbers and letters correctly, chances are you're a futurist and a coevolutionist already. If you missed as many as three matches, this article will help you become either or both. Home economists in Extension will play an important part in whether our biosphere "makes it" successfully into the 2000s. In this article, you'll find trends most futurists predict for the world, suggested goals for Extension home economics in light of these trends, and recommended specific learning methods to best help our clientele achieve these goals.

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## **Trends Relevant to Extension**

Here are some predicted trends Extension should keep in mind for future programming:

- The 80s are bringing a sharp return to conservatism. People are electing to step down from a high socio-economic status to a lower status.
- Only 9% of the working force, 20 million people, in the U.S. today are in manufacturing. The remaining 65 million workers provide services or manipulate data.
- More and more people will be over 65, and the ratio of children to adults will probably go down.
- In medicine, a "holistic health" movement has sprung up based on the notion that the well-being of the individual depends on integrating the physical, spiritual, and mental aspects.
- Future growth and development depends on how well people cooperate at the grass-roots level. We must work with people, not at them, to help them initiate and achieve changes in attitude and action.
- Stresses of the 80s are necessary for growth; we must consider them as motivational.

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**Future growth and development of our local communities, as well as the world community, depends on the ability of people to cooperate at the grass-roots level. We in Extension already have such a network that we must strengthen and further use to continue to offer viable educational programs. As community educators, we must work with people, not at them, to achieve change. For greatest positive results, learning must be anticipatory and participatory.**

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- We must become oriented toward a "conserver" society—one that minimizes waste, supports an ecological balance, and prolongs the life of our natural resources.
- The home is again becoming the pivot for the "new civilization." As the electronic cottage, it will house the information, economic, medical, and social units. The rise of the prosumer will be evident—as we begin to make more of what we consume. Already, we're caring for family members at home instead of in institutions.
- Youth of tomorrow will grow up sooner, show responsibility earlier, and adapt more readily to change. They'll likely question authority. They'll be willing to work, but will resist working for money alone.

**Biosphere  
Safety  
Trends**

Granted our view of the future depends on whether we're a citizen in a highly developed country or a lesser developed one—captain on an old ship or an occupant on a crowded lifeboat. However, most future-thinking people probably agree that:

- Population control is the worst problem we face and it affects us all. Today, there are 4.5 billion people in the world. Between now and the end of the century, there'll likely be two billion more. We can't even take care of the world's population today. One quarter now lives below the poverty line. When people's basic needs aren't being met, social tension increases along with more civil and military violence, more unemployment, less food, and less shelter.
- The economy will take slight up-and-down curves, but the overall projection in the next decade shows a downward trend. The world economy will be under greater stress as prices continue to increase and economic enterprise will become harder.
- Larger arsenals will build up; they'll be more powerful, and there'll be more occasions to use them. It's estimated that each person in the world is sitting on the nuclear equivalent of 10 tons of explosives. And every day around the globe, a total of \$1.5 billion is being spent on the military.
- Forty percent of the world's scientists are working on military preparations rather than technology for bettering the world.
- Four ecological areas necessary to sustain life—ocean fisheries, forests, pastures, croplands—are under great stress today because of waste, overuse, and poor management. For example, in 40 years almost all the forests will be used up, yet it takes years for a forest to grow back. And in 40 years, when population has doubled, each citizen will have only one-tenth of the natural goods he/she has today.
- People in other countries feel that we as a first world country should change our attitude of looking out for ourselves toward one of total sharing to equalize the quality of life worldwide.
- One-fourth of the planet is really not in a position to contribute to society.

**Goals**

These trends pointedly show that educational goals for Extension should be to:

1. Learn personal survival skills for any future. (For example: problem solving, creativity, adaptability, sensitivity skills, resource use, and networking.)
2. Develop attitudes of self-help.
3. Develop and encourage "holistic health."
4. Develop global concern by looking at global problems and becoming involved in decision making by local groups and agencies that affect the whole biosphere.

If you approve of these goals, we encourage you to join a "future" organization and read Alvin Toffler's book, *The Third Wave*.

### **Our Challenge**

As Extension educators of the future, we must look realistically at our current Extension teaching-learning methods. We must anticipate what is over the horizon if we're to be successful. Through environmental scanning of events, people, and issues, we can better prepare ourselves to aid people when needs arise. Such forward thinking provides the opportunity to use lateral thinking in searching for different approaches to impart knowledge and skills to those with needs.

Future growth and development of our local communities, as well as the world community, depends on the ability of people to cooperate at the grass-roots level. We in Extension already have such a network that we must strengthen and further use to continue to offer viable educational programs. As community educators, we must work with people, not at them, to achieve change. For greatest positive results, learning must be anticipatory and participatory.

With increases in our older population, Extension must provide instruction to appeal to a variety of adults. As educators, we must realize that "classroom" type learning activities aren't always effective with today's adult learner. Since futurists predict that our youth will have adult characteristics sooner, these principles of learning apply to them also.

Learners need help as they develop strategies to live in an ever-changing environment. If we as educators don't provide needed knowledge and skills, other groups, such as business, labor unions, special interest organizations, and television will provide the channels of education. Effective educators of tomorrow will need to retrain themselves and become involved with the *total* community for maximum educational impact. We as educators must be visionary to survive and offer a relevant program to today's learners.

Extension educators can move individuals, families, and communities forward. To do so, we must be willing to:

- Become more creative.
- Take more risks.
- Look beyond traditional limits.
- Explore the unknown.
- Develop new options and strategies.
- Make the negative positive.
- Establish workable goals.
- Direct self toward these goals.
- Evaluate program impact on the biosphere.

Extension educators have the basis for a sound educational program for the decade of the 80s and beyond. We must accept the challenge to offer our clientele viable programs that anticipate the future.