

research in brief

Training Rural Citizens

This study reports the evaluation results of four different training programs designed for leadership development of rural citizens in Montana. The four programs range in intensity from a one-week workshop to a study-travel program of about four weeks each year for three years. Each training group has about 30 participants who were recruited from throughout the state. The evaluation research began in 1973, 2 years following the initiation of the training program.

The findings of this study indicate that all four program groups had positive changes in the perception of their leadership ability. Participants in all groups also felt they'd gained confidence in their public speaking abilities, reduced their feeling of self-consciousness, and the training had a positive impact on their interest in public affairs, their feeling of self-worth and confidence, their advancement in public affairs activities, and their knowledge and skills.

Participants in the more intensive training programs reported: greater positive changes on these variables, more active involvement as leaders in local community affairs, and stronger linkages to extra-local leaders.

Implications

Leadership training is most effective when both classroom study and on-site visits can be incorporated into a leadership training program. A single-week training program appears to be inferior to the more intensive study-travel programs. Program content should expose participants to the knowledge and skills necessary for exercising leadership in local organizations and institutions that have an influence on local community development efforts.

"Training Rural Citizens: An Evaluation of a Leadership Training Program." Anne Williams. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, XII (No. 1, 1981), 63-82.

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