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...to provide practical and effective tools for local agricultural education professionals to develop specific skills in leadership, personal growth, and career success in students.

LifeKnowledge: Real Lessons for Real Life

A New Year: New Directions

By *Jamie Cano, Editor*

As we begin a new year, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* also starts with a new Editor. As your new Editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, I am thrilled to have been selected to continue the tradition of this excellent, dynamic, and practical magazine for the profession of Agricultural Education. The goal of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is to focus on ideas, strategies, and tools that work for the profession.

Before continuing with this editorial and with the introduction of the 2004 issues of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, it is only proper that tribute and thanks be given to the Past Editor, Dr. Robert Martin from Iowa State. Dr. Martin's contribution to the profession, especially as he served as Editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* from 2001 to 2003, cannot go unnoticed. On behalf of the profession of Agricultural Education, Dr. Martin, we all thank you for a commendable job as Editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*.

Another round of thanks also needs to be provided to Ms. Stacie Turnbull, a graduate student at Iowa State University who for the past three years has been in charge of design and layout of each issue of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Stacie, on behalf of the profession of Agricultural Education, we also would like to thank you for your contribution during the past three years. Best of luck to you as you continue your graduate studies.

As I was getting ready to assemble the themes for *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, my first task was to decide on a theme for every issue for the next twelve months. That task was more gruesome than I had expected. After assembling some colleagues who work with me on a daily basis, six themes were identified which were perceived to be "hot" topics for the current time in Agricultural Education.

Beginning with the current issue on LifeKnowledge, a VERY HOT topic in Agricultural Education today as the National FFA begins to unveil the project which has been under development for several years. The next issue will deal with the teaching aspect of

our profession, continuing on to something we all do every day, but don't really know we do it, called action research. The July - August issue will address the changing purposes of Agricultural Education, followed by a revision of program standards. Finally, the November - December issue will address the concept that we all wrestle with continuously, and that is, do I really make a difference by the work that I am doing?

Again, it my pleasure to serve as your new Editor, and I strongly encourage everyone in the profession to contribute to the development of OUR professional magazine.

Jamie Cano is an Associate Professor in the Department of Human and Community Resource Development at The Ohio State University and Editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine.

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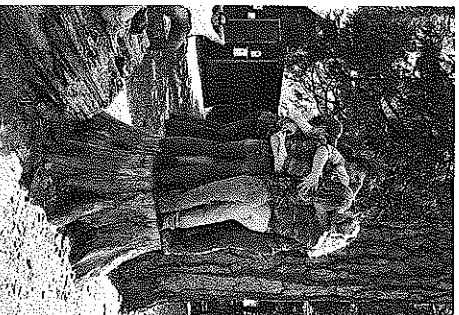
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LifeKnowledge: FFA's Knowledge for Life?

By *M. Susie Whittington and Jack Elliot*

Can an initiative be so good that it deserves the title of LifeKnowledge? For these two editors the answer is, yes. The National FFA Organization is proposing that the LifeKnowledge leadership lessons be infused into existing agricultural education curriculums, thereby enhancing our "Knowledge for Life".

FFA has long been associated with outstanding leadership programs. The LifeKnowledge initiative is developed around the components essential for taking FFA to an even higher level of leadership success. This issue of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is devoted to the LifeKnowledge initiative. Former National FFA President Seth Derner prepared the first article, an overview of the entire LifeKnowledge process. He clearly chronicles the birth of the project through its future potential.

In this issue, major players in the LifeKnowledge process are addressing four basic questions. The first question, "How was this leadership curriculum developed," is addressed by Dr. Barry Croom, an early member of the essential learnings team (foundation to the LifeKnowledge curriculum), and Dr. Cindy Akers. Dr. Akers served as a Quality Team Leader for the LifeKnowledge project. Co-authors with Dr. Akers included Lindsay Holder and Matt Kreifels, a project writer.

Dr. Croom highlights the early stages of development as he shows how

the three key elements (Premier Leadership, Personal Growth, and Career Success) from the FFA mission were the foundations for the task force that developed the 16 precepts. Akers, Holder, and Kreifels elaborate on the "rule of seven iterations," a developmental process used to create the LifeKnowledge lessons. The "rule" states that a product will be 1000 times better if it is reviewed, critiqued, and evaluated seven times during its development. The goal of LifeKnowledge was to create nearly 300 teacher-friendly lessons.

"What will this leadership curriculum do for my students?" is addressed by April White, a secondary teacher. Ms. White illustrates the utilization of "interactive" educational methodologies and an understanding of how students learn within the FFA LifeKnowledge lessons.

Dr. Brad Dodson tackles the question, "How is this leadership curriculum different from others?" Dr. Dodson encourages us to use LifeKnowledge throughout our agricultural education programs for all students. Current teachers who wrote the lessons incorporated best practices and learning and teaching research to create a student-focused and teacher-friendly product. Dr. Dodson served as a Quality Team Leader on the LifeKnowledge project.

Dr. Rick Rudd and Curt Friedel integrate the four previously addressed questions into a leadership program model, and then clearly connect the model to the LifeKnowledge curriculum. Dr. Rudd served as a Quality Team Leader on the LifeKnowledge project while Mr. Friedel served as a writer.

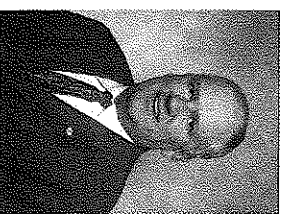
Finally, Scott Stump answers the question, "How will a leadership curriculum enhance our agricultural programs?" Scott shares one of his brilliant lessons following a brief testimonial of its potential value. The actual lesson, along with nearly 300 other leadership lessons, will be distributed on interactive CDs to all agriculture teachers, teacher educators, and camp directors who attend the national LifeKnowledge inservice programs.

The LifeKnowledge initiative has the potential to enhance our abilities to reach more students in more effective ways than ever before. Our educational leadership arsenal just got better exponentially. LifeKnowledge is ready for implementation in your classrooms TODAY!

M. Susie Whittington and Jack Elliot served as the Theme Editors for the January - February issue of the The Agricultural Education Magazine.



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Elliot is a Professor at the University of Arizona.

An Overview of LifeKnowledge

By Seth Derner

Defining and Measuring Success of a Mission

Since the inception of FFA in 1928, the opportunity and need for positive personal development in students has been recognized. The philosophy central to this effort has been expressed in the FFA Motto, the FFA Creed, and in numerous articles and publications throughout the history of the organization. The FFA Mission was adopted in 1993 and further clarified the core tenets of the role of FFA in youth development. These tenets – premier leadership, personal growth and career success – capture the essence of what FFA does to impact young people and have become the guide posts for the development of programming.

The action statement of the FFA Mission, “to make a positive difference” describes the outcome intended for every member. In the late 1990s, as discussions about educational accountability began to escalate around the country, the question began to emerge: How do you prove that FFA makes a difference? While countless anecdotal examples could be identified, it became clear that the mission of FFA needed further distinction. In 2000, the precepts, or major themes, for premier leadership, personal growth and career success were established. These sixteen themes represented the core traits needed to demonstrate each mission tenet. The next step in the process was to define what a student needed to learn about each in order to measure their level of mastery.

In 2001, groups of educators, business and government leaders, and agricultural education and FFA leaders

came together to define the measurable outcomes needed to master the precepts related to leadership and personal growth. In the fall of 2002, the same measures were defined for career success. The completed document includes hundreds of measurable and specific objectives and example success indicators related to the three tenets of FFA. Collectively, this body of knowledge is called Essential Learnings.

The Essential Learnings have become the blueprint for educational programming delivered at the national level. Conferences like Made For Excellence utilize learning objectives directly correlated to statements in Essential Learnings. Now student performance on those educational objectives is measured at each conference. The results begin to help show, in quantifiable terms, that FFA really does make a difference.

Emergence of an Opportunity and a Need

During the process of defining the measures that comprise Essential Learnings, a number of local teachers and state leaders of agricultural education recognized the value of this body of information and the potential to provide local teachers with more tools to assist their efforts in developing leadership, personal growth, and career success at the local level. At the same time, new research revealed that rural youth, the longtime core audience of FFA, were demonstrating higher levels of crime, unplanned pregnancy, and poverty than in the past. Coupled with rural communities that have experienced decades of depopulation and an unprecedented need for future leaders, the need to provide local teachers with the best resources available became a

very high priority.

Two partners emerged at nearly the same time to capitalize on the opportunity at hand. Deere and Company, a longtime supporter of FFA, responded to a major request to fund the development of materials about leadership, personal growth, and career success for teachers to use in local programs. A month later, USDA announced a nearly three million dollar grant to FFA for efforts to increase youth leadership development in rural areas. The two projects, through collaborative agreements, became a single initiative.

The resulting initiative, now named “LifeKnowledge. Real Lessons for Real Life,” strives to utilize the opportunity to extend the comprehensive efforts of Essential Learnings to the local level and to meet the challenge facing youth in all communities, and especially in rural communities facing unprecedented obstacles.

Purpose of FFA LifeKnowledge Initiative

The purpose of LifeKnowledge was clear from the beginning: to provide practical and effective tools for local agricultural education professionals to develop specific skills in leadership, personal growth, and career success in students. Further, the goal is to create these tools in a way that allows them to be used by teachers of any level of experience with these topics, to be easily implemented into any type of agricultural education program, and to provide sound and useful information using an effective and innovative methodology.

Recognizing that leadership development in youth is as specific to every

community as the type and kind of technical agricultural skills taught, LifeKnowledge is designed to be a starting place for teaching about leadership, personal growth and career success – not the complete means to the end. Many agricultural education professionals already utilize some type of resource for leadership development. The materials developed through LifeKnowledge are intended to expand the breadth and depth of content available while utilizing learning techniques that are proven and to compliment the hands-on, experiential nature of agricultural education.

As local agricultural education instructors embark on increased emphasis of leadership development, involving the community in a discussion about the need and efforts to prepare youth for future leadership opportunities will build on the tradition of community-based programming celebrated in agricultural education. Additionally, communities will recognize the opportunity for members and institutions to assist in the leadership development of youth. The by-product of these increased efforts should yield more youth that feel connected and vested in their local community, and thus more likely to take part in its future.

In short, the purpose of LifeKnowledge is to help local agricultural education programs become the launching pads for renewed efforts to transform communities and develop youth.

The Products of the LifeKnowledge Initiative

In the fall of 2002, the shape and nature of LifeKnowledge was established and the products of the initiative were envisioned. For LifeKnowledge to effectively accomplish its purpose the

products created, as a result, have to demonstrate effectiveness while meeting the practical needs of agricultural education teachers.

Leaders of agricultural education and FFA determined that direct instructional materials in the form of lesson plans would comprise the primary effort of LifeKnowledge. The instructional materials initially focus on three areas: middle school, high school, and advanced high school. The advanced high school materials target topics suitable for students prepared with a great amount of leadership instruction or experience. A set of collegiate materials will be developed later in the process.

In order to meet the practical needs of teachers, several issues were identified. Some of those include: ease of use, completeness of lesson and materials, quality and appropriateness of content, and effectiveness of teaching strategies built into the lessons. As a result, it was determined early-on to deliver all of the lesson plans in electronic format on a CD, with mechanisms built-in for

teachers to quickly and easily navigate the lessons and find all needed associated materials.

Unlike animal science or mechanics, with many complete technical resources, topics like goal-setting and team-building require understanding and access to other types of resources and research. In addition, the lessons had to be developed and tested by individuals who understand the classroom and agricultural education programs to insure that the activities and applications are appropriate and effective.

The result of all these considerations led to an intensive checklist of development standards required of each lesson. All LifeKnowledge lessons are designed with sound and current understandings of leadership, personal growth, and career success. The lessons are designed to appeal to many kinds of learners and to provide teachers with fully articulated instructions so easy that a teacher could read through the lesson in five minutes and have everything needed to complete the lesson successfully. All of the lessons

March – April 2004 Issue

Theme: Teaching

Teaching and learning are the very basic foundations of our profession. This issue will address the teaching aspect of agricultural education. What is the very essence of teaching? Is there really a psychological basis to teaching? Is there a philosophical basis to teaching? Is there a sociological basis to teaching?

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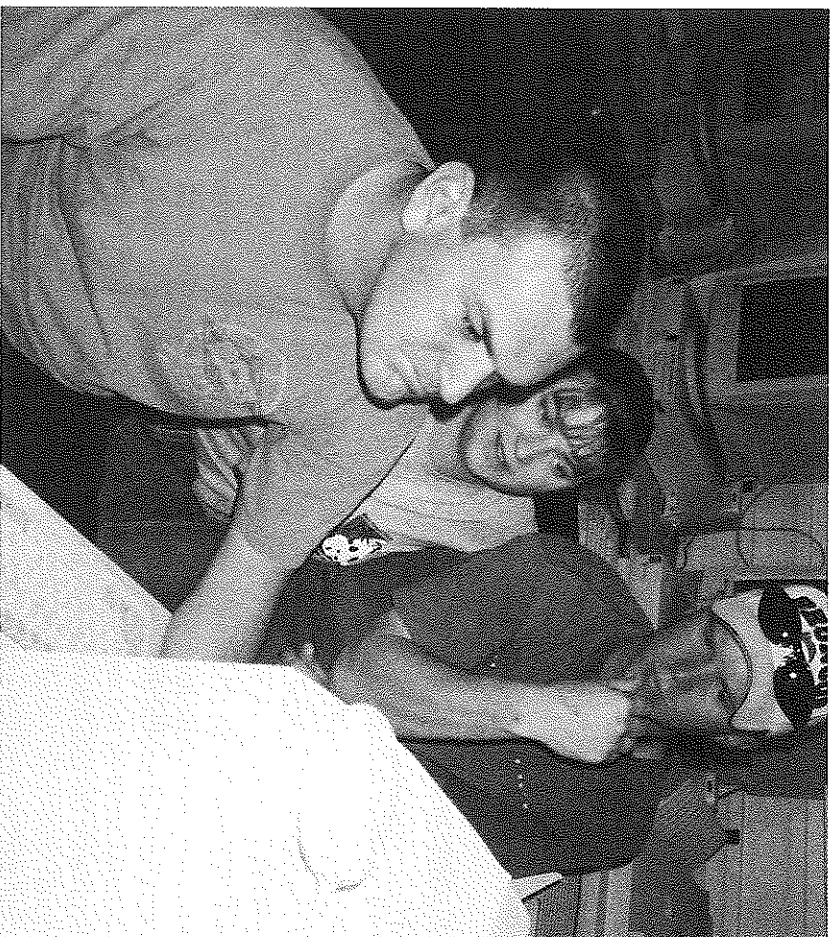
are complete with handouts, tests, engaging activities, contextual sets, processing questions, and applications to FFA/SAE. Finally, all lessons are cross-referenced to core national academic standards.

The CDs also include tools and resources to help teachers discover success quickly and readily. The lessons will be searchable by key word and concept. If a teacher is seeking lessons concentrating on developing character, those lessons can be quickly identified and found. This allows teachers to find and use the lessons that each teacher believes is needed most by a particular class. Another feature is the inclusion of examples of how to integrate LifeKnowledge lessons into agricultural education courses. Recognizing that few programs offer direct instruction in leadership development, the greatest use of these materials exists when teachers can integrate learning objectives about leadership into an already existing lesson or FFA activity.

In addition to the lessons, complementary materials and tools are being developed. The tools will be designed to provide even more resources to teachers as they strive to utilize LifeKnowledge materials in the agricultural education program.

Development of the LifeKnowledge Lessons

Four prevalent parameters guided the development of the nearly 300 LifeKnowledge lesson plans. First, the lesson plans needed to be designed in a sound and innovative educational model. The problem solving approach to lesson design was the starting place for each lesson. The lesson design also incorporated components of Hunter's elements of effective instruction and latest understanding of student learning and intelligence. There are elements and activities built into these lessons that may look and feel unconventional, but



Teachers review the new LifeKnowledge CDs at a statewide sponsored workshop.

are proven to be effective learning strategies that will engage a greater percentage of students with more frequency.

Second, the lessons had to be written by those who understand agricultural education and have experience in teaching personal development topics. Thirty-six teachers, university educators, state leaders of agricultural education, and leadership professionals in organizations were selected to write lessons. Teams of writers were assigned related subject matter within the scope of lessons. Each of the eight teams was guided by a Quality Team member. The Quality Team is comprised of seven university educators and education professionals. Their role was to insure consistency in design and effectiveness of instructional construction.

The third parameter in development focused on the principle of iteration. From the beginning, the design of the development process included mea-

sures for each lesson to be reviewed and revised seven time before final production. This process involved hundreds of agricultural education teachers and other teachers who test-piloted the lessons. It also included an extensive editing and revision process by professional editing teams and education professionals. Teachers from across the country in all types of schools and agricultural education programs used the lessons and provided feedback on their improvement.

Finally, it was widely recognized that agricultural education instructors may not have background, training, or experience in leadership development comparable to technical agricultural courses like animal science or horticulture. Because of this, the lessons were designed with much greater detail in activity and instruction than most standard lesson plans. The goal was to provide a lesson plan that any teacher could print, read, and teach to a class regard-

less of formal training in that topical area. Obviously, the more background the instructor has in the area, the greater the connections and the deeper the meaning he or she can add to the conversation. Each lesson serves, then, as a starting point for teachers to create the kinds of learning environments where real-life application becomes attainable and more easily facilitated.

Rollout of the LifeKnowledge Materials

Starting in January 2004, LifeKnowledge materials will be delivered free to every teacher who attends a LifeKnowledge training seminar hosted by their state leadership. These seminars will be held through 2005 and initially serve as the only distribution source for the LifeKnowledge instructional materials. Local Program Success staff at FFA is working with state leaders of agricultural education to coordinate the seminar dates in each state. The seminars will provide an understanding of the materials, their use, and the strategies used to develop the lessons.

At each training seminar, teachers will experience the lessons, the components of the lesson, how to navigate the CD, and utilize the supplementary tools included on the CD. The lessons will be delivered in a format similar to that of other electronic instructional agricultural education materials.

The next discussion will focus on how to use these lessons to benefit students in an agricultural education classroom. While the lessons are presented sequentially and in a developmental order, the assumption is that few programs will use the LifeKnowledge materials for direct instruction of an entire course. Rather, the lessons will likely find greatest use and value when integrated into already-existing courses. For example, during a discussion of

livestock evaluation, the LifeKnowledge lesson on critical thinking would add great value to the activity and to the learning benefit of the student. Additionally, the lessons will allow for meaningful learning opportunities when infused into local FFA activities. Using the lesson about goal-setting or group decision making prior to a chapter program of activities committee meeting should yield greater results and reinforce the belief that FFA is a tremendous laboratory for students to learn leadership, personal growth, and career success skills.

An optional component to the training seminar includes experience with the learning strategies and innovative techniques used in the design of the lesson plans. These strategies and techniques are not unique to conversations about leadership, and are becoming quickly recognized as important strategies to help more students master standards. The training will explore brain development, intelligence, learning modalities, and engagement strategies. In a field like agricultural education noted for hands-on learning, these strategies are key to the teaching and learning of many of the inherently conceptual topics included in LifeKnowledge.

At the completion of a training seminar, teachers will receive a free set of the LifeKnowledge materials. The supplementary materials will also be available for review and order at that time. Over the next two years, 4,500 free sets of materials will be delivered via these training seminars.

Future Efforts as Part of the LifeKnowledge Initiative

From the establishment of the Essential Learnings to the development of the LifeKnowledge materials, a number of new ideas have been generated and new avenues explored. There is

more to come: a collegiate set of LifeKnowledge materials will be initiated in the next two years, a distance learning component to the training will be added, and evaluation projects funded through the LifeKnowledge initiative will lead to additional understanding of the activities and strategies implemented to impact personal student development. Over time additional needed efforts will be identified and added to the initiative.

LifeKnowledge has involved hundreds of professionals committed to agricultural education and the positive development of youth. The initiative will require hundreds of thousands of dollars to reach successful implementation. The resources and trainings established have been designed to best facilitate the achievement of the original goal - to positively impact the youth of America at the community level in a meaningful and applicable manner, in a way that truly makes a difference. When this happens, agricultural education classrooms in communities across America will build-on their reputations as the premier training ground for young leaders.

Seth Derner, National FFA Specialist, Indianapolis, IN



FFA Members, Why Are We Here?: Standards-Based Accountability in the FFA

By Barry Croom

Agriculture teachers are some of the busiest teachers in a school. Their days are filled with lessons, laboratory activities, parent meetings, and FFA career development event practice. It was during a lull in the daily battle to stamp out ignorance that I would occasionally look up from my work as an agriculture teacher, look around at the students working, and wonder, "Am I being effective?" A teacher can deal with short budgets and short tempers, long meetings and loads of paperwork as they strive to position students in the teachable moment. All of the negative things about teaching are bearable provided that the students are learning something worthwhile.

The one thing that no good teacher can abide is being ineffective. But how do we know we are being effective? What about all those FFA activities? Are they effectively helping teachers prepare students about the food and fiber industry? Do FFA programs actually make a profound difference in the lives of students? For many years, it has been assumed that the answer to these questions is "yes." But where is the evidence that the FFA is actually serving a useful purpose? The critical element in determining the effectiveness of the FFA is the FFA Mission.

"FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education." (National FFA Organization, 2002, p. 4)

The FFA Mission statement is the benchmark by which all FFA program-
ming is measured. If a specific FFA program adequately meets the criteria for premier leadership, personal growth or career success, then it is deemed to be a worthy endeavor. However, there are many differing opinions as to what constitutes premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Until the FFA has defined in measurable terms the mission of the FFA, then all of our attempts to determine our success in accomplishing that mission are likely to resemble chasing kites.

The FFA began to evaluate its mission in 1999. The National FFA Board of Directors authorized the creation of the FFA Evaluation Task Force to define more clearly the boundaries of the FFA mission. This group of agricultural education professionals, agricultural industry representatives, and FFA per-

sonnel met to begin the process of evaluating the FFA's ability to achieve its mission.

The first step was to actually define what the FFA mission means. The working group disassembled the FFA mission statement and developed working descriptions for each of the three major components: premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.

Premier Leadership

The FFA defines leadership as "influence," a definition first proposed by John Maxwell (1998). A leader in the FFA learns skills that influence others to accept or reject a vision of the direction in which the organization should go.

The six elements surrounding leadership in Figure 1 are the essential pre-

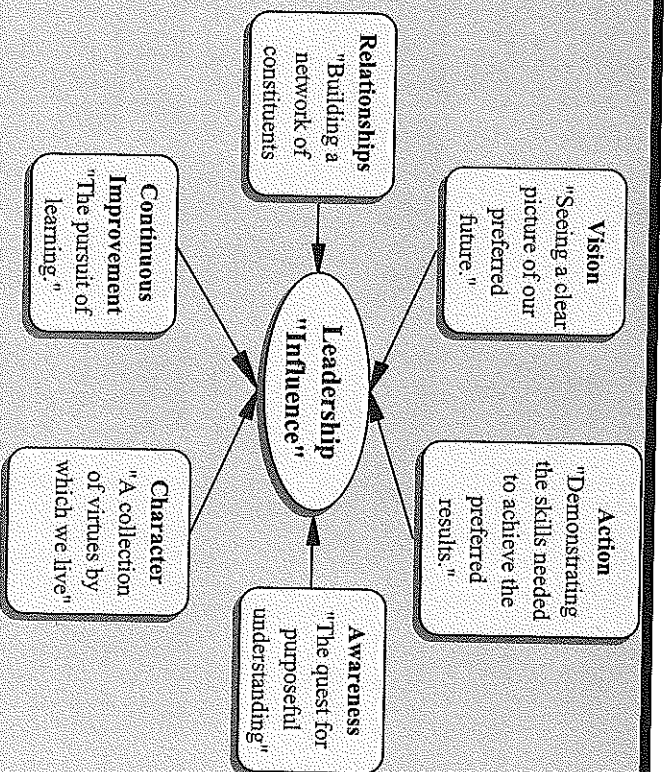


Figure 1: Leadership Model for National FFA Organization

cepts that describe it. Premier leadership through FFA should equip students with the capability to envision their preferred future and take action to bring their vision to fruition. FFA members learn the importance of continuous personal improvement and awareness of social and environmental issues through leadership development activities.

The development of positive relationships with others is another essential ingredient that allows the FFA leader to get things accomplished. Without a network of supportive individuals, leaders often find leading a very difficult task. Finally, leaders possess positive character traits that encourage others to seek their leadership and be comfortable with it.

Personal Growth

Personal growth sounds like a nice

endeavor, yet is sufficiently vague to mean almost anything. The FFA defines it as "the positive evolution of the whole person" (Doerfert, 1999). The task force identified six essential precepts that define personal growth and made it a measurable process. These six precepts are identified in Figure 2.

Personal growth is contingent upon experiences that develop critical thinking skills useful in preparing students for a career in agriculture. However, the National FFA Organization goes beyond this basic assumption by including emotional, spiritual, and physical growth. The National FFA Organization has assumed the task of helping young people to critically evaluate their personal belief system, and make good decisions based upon those beliefs. The FFA also clearly emphasizes the value of making good choices that encourage a healthy body

and lifestyle.

Career Success

If you still subscribe to the concept formulated by the writers of the Vocational Education Act of 1917 (Smith-Hughes), then all roads eventually lead to a useful and productive career in agriculture. The career success component of the FFA mission establishes a commitment to provide the means for encouraging students to seek productive and satisfying careers in agriculture.

Figure 3 describes the meaning of career success to the FFA Organization. Becoming established in an agricultural career requires students to be proficient in communications. Without the necessary skills related to others in a chosen occupation, students face an uphill battle. The career success component exhibits a dynamic quality not readily seen in the other components of the FFA mission. The FFA has recognized the need for students to adapt to rapid advances in industrial technology, and therefore encourages students to adapt their career goals to match trends in technology. This concept is akin to wave surfing. Surfers are able to gauge the coming waves, and develop a plan for riding them as far as possible while making changes in direction and speed to gain the most from the experience.

A personal example of this involves a former student of mine whose SAE involved the contract harvesting of cotton. For many years, cotton production in North Carolina was minimal. In the early 1990s cotton began to make a strong comeback as a viable alternative to traditionally grown crops. Most cotton growers could afford to plant and cultivate the crop, but did not wish to add the expense of purchasing a cotton picker to harvest the crop. If cotton failed in North Carolina, most growers did not want the burden of an expensive piece of machinery to con-

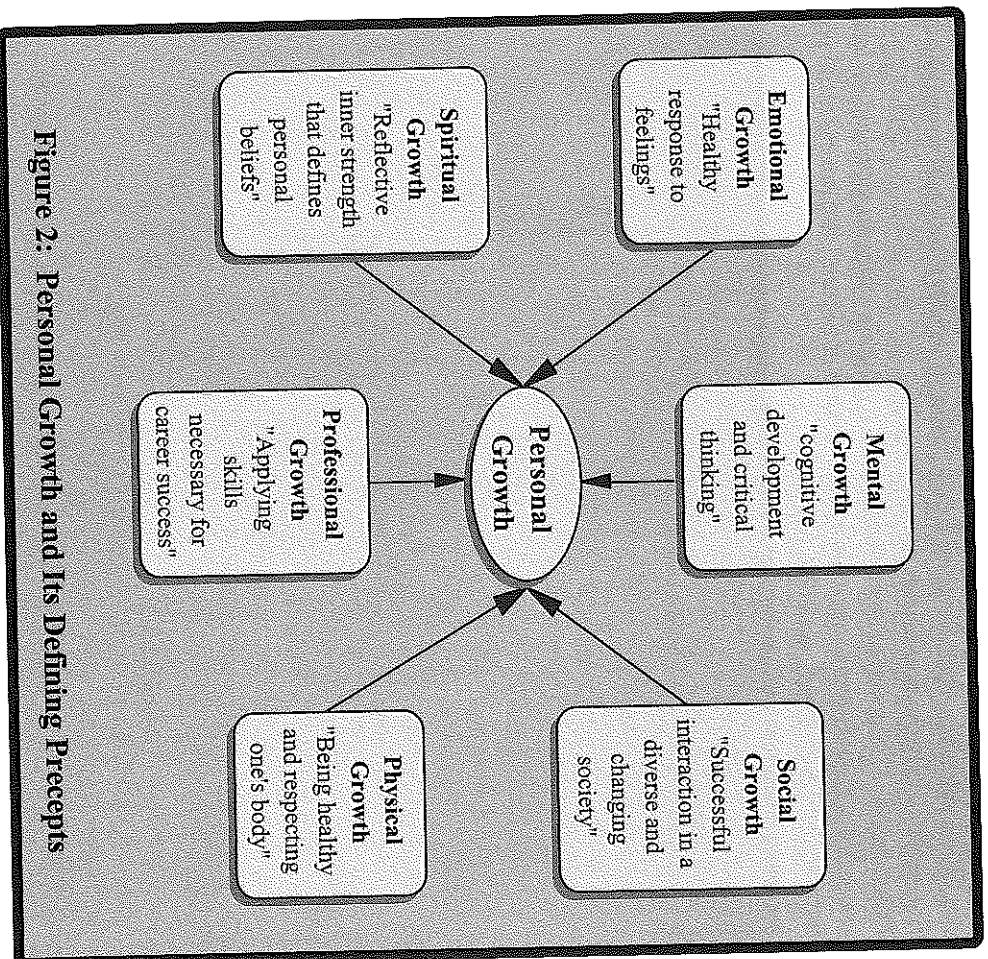


Figure 2. Personal Growth and Its Defining Precepts

tend with. My student purchased an old two-row cotton picker, and began contract harvesting for local growers.

After a few years, he determined that the success of cotton in our community was leading many growers to purchase their own pickers. As most cotton growers know, it takes a significant amount of effort to keep cotton pickers in good operating condition. My student also knew this, so he moved the focus of his business away from contract harvesting and into picker maintenance and repair. Today, he is a successful businessman as a result of his ability to adapt his goals to meet the changing agricultural environment in our community.

This is the age of accountability in education. The FFA as a bona fide educational institution has weighed in on the accountability issue by seeking a way to measure the effectiveness of programs and services in meeting the mission of the FFA. The first step was defining the mission in measurable terms. That was done in 1999. The next step is to incorporate this expanded concept of the FFA mission into FFA programming at the local, state, and national levels.

The FFA has already begun the process by developing a competency-based approach to leadership programming. These essential learnings are industry-validated competencies and objectives that are the benchmarks for determining the effectiveness of the FFA's leadership programs. There is also an on-going effort to evaluate whether or not the career success component of the FFA mission is being accomplished. As the FFA gets closer to answering the question of its effectiveness in serving agriculture students, the essential question becomes, "Are we willing to change what we are doing in order to be more effective?"

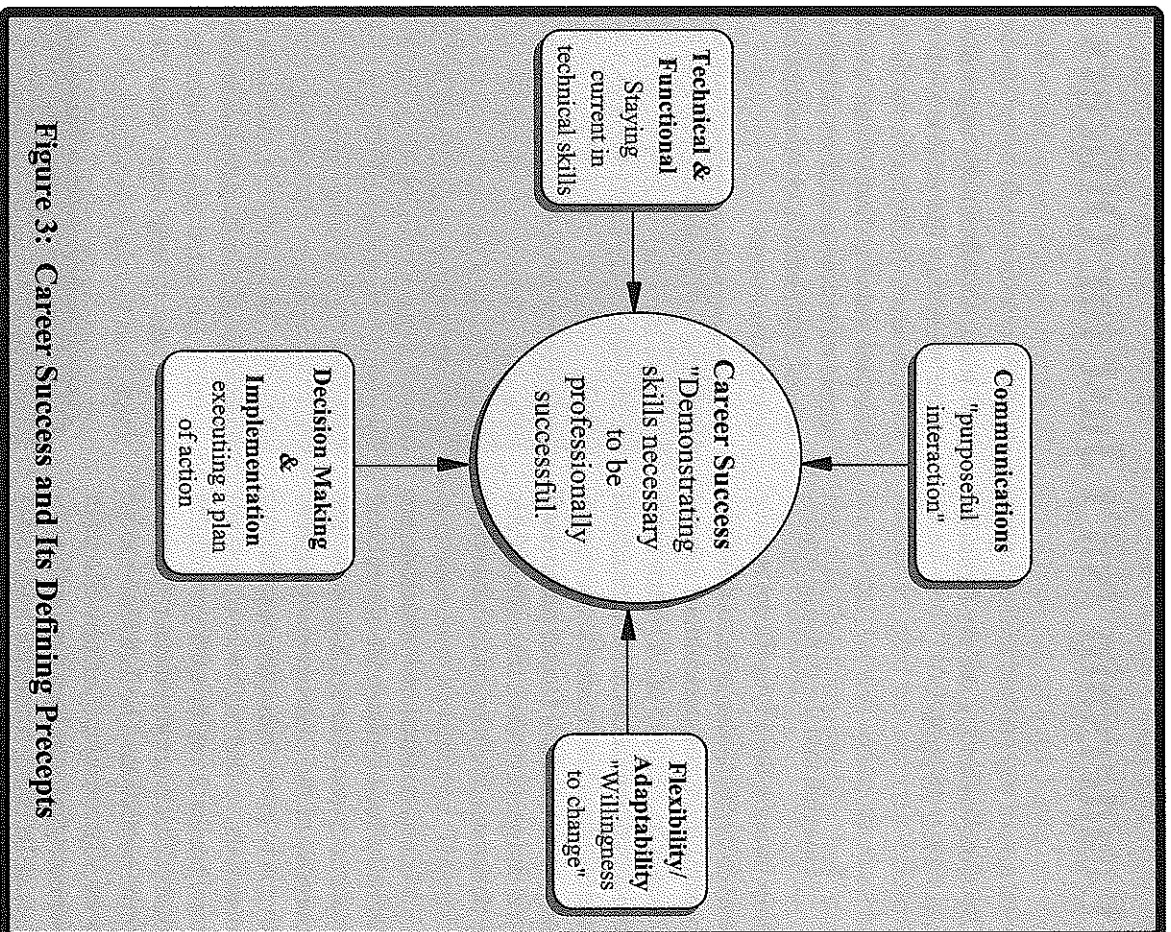


Figure 3: Career Success and Its Defining Precepts

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Leadership Isn't Just for Officers

By *Cindy Akers, Lindsay Holder,*
and *Matt Kriefels*

Imagine that the dynamic leadership training the FFA officers receive was brought to the grassroots of the organization, the agricultural science classroom. A group of 36 writers, nine university educators, 212 high school and middle school teachers, and numerous National FFA Organization staff are doing just that through FFA's LifeKnowledge instructional materials.

These instructional materials are actually lesson plans for agricultural teachers to use in their classrooms. The purpose of the LifeKnowledge initiative is to provide quality instructional materials, so that high school agricultural teachers can infuse the principles of the FFA into every facet of agricultural education. The LifeKnowledge was also designed to provide high school agricultural teachers with additional learning strategies and corresponding instructional materials to empower students to live the mission of the FFA every day.

Matt Kriefels, a lesson writer, said, "The LifeKnowledge lessons were designed to give students an opportunity to learn, practice and live the three principles of the FFA Mission: premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. While I wasn't part of this leg of the process, leaders from government agencies and industry were involved in a task force to decide the lesson themes that would eventually build those principles into the student experience."

The lesson writers are agriculture teachers. Kriefels said the writers had to apply for the position by creating les-

son plans to submit for application. After receiving the position, all the writers went to Indianapolis for the lesson plan training. Each writer was assigned six lessons geared toward middle school, high school, or advanced high school classrooms.

"The writing process was difficult, because it forced each of us to be the best teachers we could be. It required all the writers to think of, not the best or worst, but of all students who populate our classrooms," Kriefels said. "The activities that comprise the lessons are made to stimulate all the students' senses while giving them an opportunity to have fun living the FFA mission. The writing process lasted from November 2002 through April 2003." Cindy Akers, a quality team leader, said, "I helped review and edit content, and acted as a cheerleader to the writers to help meet strict deadlines."

"The LifeKnowledge lessons were designed to give students an opportunity to learn, practice and live the three principles of the FFA Mission: premier leadership, personal growth, and career success."

The writing process followed "The Rule of Seven Iterations" which states that any product will be 1,000 times better after seven iterations. In the first step, the writer developed the first draft

of the lesson plan. The lesson was then submitted to a quality team leader. The quality team leader reviewed the first draft and made suggestions.

Next, the writer taught the lesson in his/her own classroom and conferred with the quality team leader. Adjustments were made as needed. In the third step of the process, the writer asked another teacher, other than an agriculture teacher, to teach the lesson in his/her classroom.

The non-agriculture teacher then conferred with the writer and quality team leader and any necessary changes were made. At this point in the process, an English teacher checked the lesson plan for spelling, grammar, and format. The draft was then sent to the quality team leader for approval, and then on to the National FFA staff.

In the fourth and fifth iterations, the National FFA staff forwarded the lesson plans to three pilot teachers from all across the United States. Each lesson was taught by an agriculture teacher with one to five years of experience, an agriculture teacher who had taught a specific leadership class in the past, and an agriculture teacher with more than five years of teaching in a comprehensive program and who had been recognized for accomplishments in the classroom, FFA, and SAE.

After teaching the lesson, each pilot teacher evaluated the lesson plan. Next, the quality team leaders discussed the lessons with the writers over the phone. The writers then made adjustments to their lesson plans and the draft was sent back to the National FFA staff. In the final iteration, the National FFA staff reviewed all lesson plans to ensure consistency and flow through-

out the curriculum. Once again, any necessary adjustments were made and final drafts were submitted to the entire quality team and the navigational team for final review.

Kriefels said the LifeKnowledge writing team was very firm about making sure the lessons could be used by any teacher, whether or not he or she was versed in the lesson topic. All of the required class materials are listed at the beginning of each lesson. All lessons had to include in-class activities, transparencies, worksheets, evaluations, vocabulary lists, role modeling and scenarios, and extended activities.

“As an option, parts of each lesson are scripted for the teacher, so that he or she can fully understand the intent of the lesson,” Kriefels said. “This can also help teachers become better at giving directions to students by setting-up the context and state of mind for each activity, and therefore, help stimulate appropriate results from their students.” Kriefels added that substitute teachers will be able to teach the lessons because of the simplicity and thoroughness of each lesson.

National FFA also recognized the need to format the lessons to make sure they reached all learning styles. Therefore, under the direction of Mark Reardon, a nationally known author and presenter on stimulation of the student brain, and Seth Derner, the LifeKnowledge coordinator, writers were retaught how students receive and process information. Derner also directed the writers on the proper formatting and context requirements to make the lesson plans interactive and student-friendly.

“There is a belief for some teachers that what works for one student will work for all students,” Kriefels said. “Educational psychology tells us, however, this is not true. For each lesson the writers had to use a checklist of five

key ingredients to make it successful.”

“Through this model, the LifeKnowledge lessons can impact all students within the classroom. Without these components, the lessons would not be lessons, but only content information,” Kriefels said. “The great thing about it is that teachers will be using the latest practices in educational psychology and not even know it.”

“As an option, parts of each lesson are scripted for the teacher, so that he or she can fully understand the intent of the lesson.”

Akers said that part of her role as a quality team leader was to ensure that the lesson plans had contextual sets, both macro and micro. This is important, because it makes sure the mind is engaged first, and then the body follows. Akers said an example of this would be, “In the next two minutes I want you to think of a time... Now I want you to get into groups of three and...” If a student is told to get into groups of three and then do the task, the students are thinking about who is going to be in their group, not about what the activity is trying to teach them.

Akers said research and experience tell us that all students learn differently. Learner-centered instruction focuses on the learning characteristics of the individual student and is the educational model used in LifeKnowledge.

“All teachers want their students to be lifelong learners. Sometimes students may not realize how smart they are. The ability of a teacher to use the correct tool or method can have a lasting effect on the individual student,” Akers said. “Written lessons with examples scripted that meet the different learning styles will add another tool in the wealth of knowledge that the teacher possesses.”

“Personally, my students liked the lessons,” Kriefels said. “I taught them during my junior and senior Human Relations class at the high school level. The lessons I wrote, however, were for the middle school level. Even so, the students learned about making and creating key messages and answering questions from an audience. They engaged themselves in the content through the provided activities. The feedback they provided me was positive; however, many noted that it seemed suited for younger students.”

Through the Rule of Seven Iterations, writers, teachers, quality team leaders, and the National FFA staff developed lesson plans that can be used by agriculture teachers and students from coast to coast. Students do not have to be officers, attend seminars, or go to camps to develop leadership skills anymore. Now, they can learn these lifelong skills in their own classrooms. These lesson plans will enforce the principles of the FFA Mission and aid in the process of what the FFA organization does best – produce high quality leaders.

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Professor at Texas Tech University

Ms. Lindsay Holder is a former student

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Mr. Matt Kriefels is a LifeKnowledge

Project Writer from Blair, NE.

Impact of Student Motivation on Teaching and Learning

By April White

LifeKnowledge planning and delivery techniques that will greatly increase student motivation and thus impact teaching and learning. All LifeKnowledge techniques require prior planning on the teacher's part and participation on the student's part. In my opinion, students will not recognize exactly how the teaching is different, but they will know that it is different and improved. These LifeKnowledge techniques include using students' experiences, an infusion of new interactive teaching methodologies, acknowledging and embracing multiple intelligences, context/state/result lesson plan formatting, and modalities (learning styles). Timing the use of these techniques is key to your success. Some LifeKnowledge techniques must be used when planning the lesson, others should be used early in the lesson and

some are best when used throughout the lesson.

A big picture approach to creating a lesson is called Context, State, Result (CSR). The teacher must thoroughly plan the lesson using this approach. Often teachers know what we want the result of our lesson to be, but we are apt to miss the mark if we don't consider Context and State. In this CSR approach, teachers must be sure their intended result is clear, just like that of a bulls-eye on a target. Ask yourself what you want your students to KNOW and/or DO at the end of the lesson. Consider three aspects: cognitive, affective, and behavioral when planning your lessons. Cognitive, what do you want them to know; Affective, what do you want them to say; Behavioral, how do you want them to act?

You may think of working backwards in this approach to set up the context and state once you know what

you want your students to accomplish. Context avoids assumptions and hal-lucinations that your students are all ready to learn. Setting the context explains to your students how you want them to think, act, and behave during your lesson. If the teacher does not establish the context, the students will. For example, asking students to keep an open mind and to be curious learners during your lesson will establish the context that you want them to function in during your lesson.

State refers to the state of mind you'd like your learners to be in. Learning depends on state of mind. Are your students tired, worried about family, laying with their heads down or busy finishing the note to their friend? If you change one of the three parts of state of mind; thoughts, feelings or activity/position; then you will change them all. Use of Total Physical Response, TPR, by engaging their brain first with the question and their body second with the

CSR (LESSON PLAN FORMAT FOR ASEXUAL PLANT PROPOGATION)

STEPS

1. Result (start with the end in mind)
To properly propagate plants from cuttings with 80% success rate.
2. Context (address your students)
"Today I would like you to act and think as a nursery manager whose interest is getting as many plants started, in the shortest amount of time, using the materials as efficiently as possible."
3. State (state of mind)
"Turn to your neighbor and give them a high five and tell them "We can do it!""

appropriate position will also ensure the response you wanted. Something as simple as asking all of your students to stand up and give those around them a high five will change their state of mind, thus clearing their minds to be ready for learning (see CSR example).

To live every teacher's dream, that is, to have students who are all on the same page and ready to learn, the teacher must envision and create that environment. You may also know this technique as an anticipatory set or interest approach. Either way, the bottom line is you must create this environment by calling on a student's prior experience or by creating that experience for them. Some experiences that can be referred to are those that most people have encountered such as being a child, driving down the road, interacting with friends, or living with family. Showing a picture of a nine year old child and asking students to guess who the child grew up to be; what talents the child may possess, and where the child may have gained his/her skills will call on your students' experiences as children.

You can create the experience by referring to what the students learned in class yesterday. Relating today's lesson to their future will also create interest. You should encourage students to consider how the lesson's content affects them, how it affects the people they work with, how they can lead a group through application of your lesson's content and then how they can

use the knowledge to serve those around them. This concept is referred to as Me, We, Do, Serve. Service being the highest level of understanding, just as we learn best by teaching others.

Have you ever given students directions, such as get into a group, discuss the lesson, and be ready to report back to the class, only to have chaos and individual students coming up to you and asking the same questions as the student before? A seemingly simple task, huh? Guess again, although it may make you feel like you've had to slow down, giving directions one step at a time will actually save time and frustration.

This later scenario also depicts proper phrasing of a question/direction, "When I call on your group be prepared to share your group's discussion" versus "Who can tell me..." or "Do you know?" Phrasing can eliminate chaos and yes/no answers.

Multiple Intelligences, a theory of human intelligence developed by Howard Gardner, suggests there are at least seven ways that people have of perceiving and understanding the world. The most recognized intelligences are:

Verbal-linguistic – The ability to use words and language.

Logical-mathematical – capacity for inductive and deductive thinking and reasoning, as well as the use of

numbers and recognition of abstract patterns.

Visual-spatial – the ability to visualize objects and spatial dimensions and create internal images and pictures.

Body-kinesthetic – the wisdom of body and the ability to control physical motion. Musical-rhythmic – the ability to recognize tonal patterns and sounds as well as sensitivity to rhythms and beats.

Interpersonal – the capacity for person-to-person communications and relationships. Intrapersonal - the spiritual, inner states of being, self-reflection, and awareness.

Natural – sense the order of things, systems approach, good at answering how we fit in to the bigger picture.

We all have a preferred intelligence that enhances our comprehension. However good teaching attempts to address all intelligences, which will help reach all learners. One of the biggest traps is teaching in a style that is compatible to only our preferred intelligence style. Understanding and incorporating multiple intelligences in planning instruction as well as assessment can improve learning. Throughout a lesson teachers can utilize a variety of intelligences to deliver content. Asking students to answer a question for the rest of the class by making a 30-second commercial, will utilize the body-kinesthetic intelligence. Making

ME - How it affects the student.

WE - How it affects others.

DO - How to utilize the information.

SERVE - How to use the knowledge to serve others.

THE SIMPLE TASK OF.....

Giving Directions

1. Get into a group.
2. Discuss the lesson.
3. Be ready to report back to class.

Now Try This:

"Please get into groups of four." Wait until you can see them in groups. "Please sit together." Wait.

"Discuss...." Wait. "Please turn and share you an swer with your group." Wait.

"Please face me while still in your groups." Wait.

"When I call on your group, be prepared to share your group's discussion."

toon to help them remember and engages the visual modality. Check for understanding by asking for a thumbs up or down to engage the kinesthetic modality.

80% of what we experience personally

95% of what we teach someone else.

William Glasser

an acronym or poem to remember the steps of a process utilizes the verbal-linguistic intelligence. More about Multiple Intelligences can be found in reading *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner.

One other technique to consider in good teaching is the use of modalities. The three primary modalities are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Most people filter their learning, processing and communication based on their preferred modality. People also have preferred combinations of these modalities. Visual modality accesses visual images, created or remembered such as colors, spatial relationships, mental snapshots and pictures. Auditory modality accesses all kinds of sounds and words created or remembered such as music, tone, rhythm, rhyme, internal dialogue and voice.

Kinesthetic accesses created or remembered motions and emotions such as movement, coordination, rhythm emotional response and physical comfort. Rather than just asking the students to copy notes you could ask them to translate the information into a car-

Student motivation as described in this paper, represents a somewhat subconscious influence that improves learning because of a very conscious effort on the part of the teacher. Students may not realize they are motivated to learn by the varied use of multiple intelligences, modalities, the structure of directions and utilization of Context, State, Result, but they will be more successful and, in turn, be motivated to learn. Most of what motivates students is the result of proper planning and the message of the following reading.

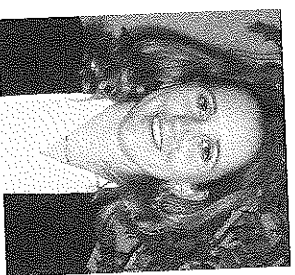
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CSR (Lesson plan format for asexual plant propagation)

We learn...

10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we both see and hear
70% of what is discussed with others



April White is an Agriculture Teacher at Paradise Valley, AZ

Leadership Development for All!

By Brad Dodson

I love Agricultural Education!

There is not a semester that passes when I do not count my blessings to be a member of the “family.” About the time I’ve finished counting my blessings, I marvel at the wisdom of our foremothers and fathers who created the three-ring model of Agricultural Education.

The three intertwining rings of instruction, FFA, and SAE are still a

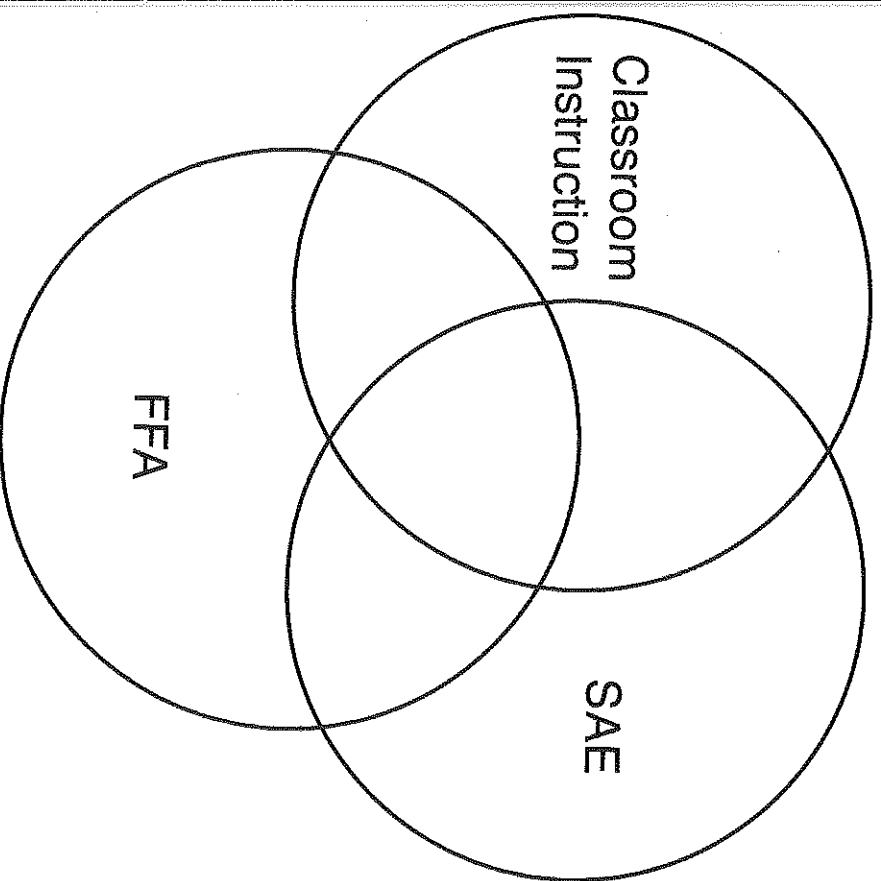
contemporary educational delivery system, one that is being emulated by many public school systems throughout the country. Low and behold, we’ve been doing that for years — experiential learning, authentic assessment, collaborative learning, character education, relevant instruction, the list goes on and we all know the story.

Yet, we must admit to ourselves as a profession that the model has been difficult to implement as our students, communities, and world have changed. We find ourselves falling short of real-

izing the full intentions of our program of preparing our students for industry careers, assuring that each student establishes and maintains a viable career-related supervised agricultural experience program, and providing each student in our classes with leadership development. We know that not all students take advantage of the FFA program as reflected by the discrepancy in our FFA membership and agricultural education enrollment numbers. We also know that it is difficult to fully integrate leadership education into our technical courses when we are expected to address the technical content identified in state standards.

But we must not lose sight of the ideal. It was a breath of fresh air to be a part of a team of individuals who held onto the dream and got up one morning and said, “Let’s make it happen.” And good news is here! Perhaps the boldest initiative to be introduced in agricultural education in many years will soon be available to every middle and high school teacher across the nation. The project was initiated to help all of us move closer to our goals.

The National FFA organization has orchestrated the development of a curriculum designed to integrate leadership education into ALL agricultural programs for ALL students at the secondary and eventually the community college level. The project, entitled, LifeKnowledge, consists of curriculum for three semester-long courses, two high school courses and one middle school course. The curriculum was created with three critical objectives in mind — the lessons must be available to all students enrolled in any and all agricultural courses, student-centered,



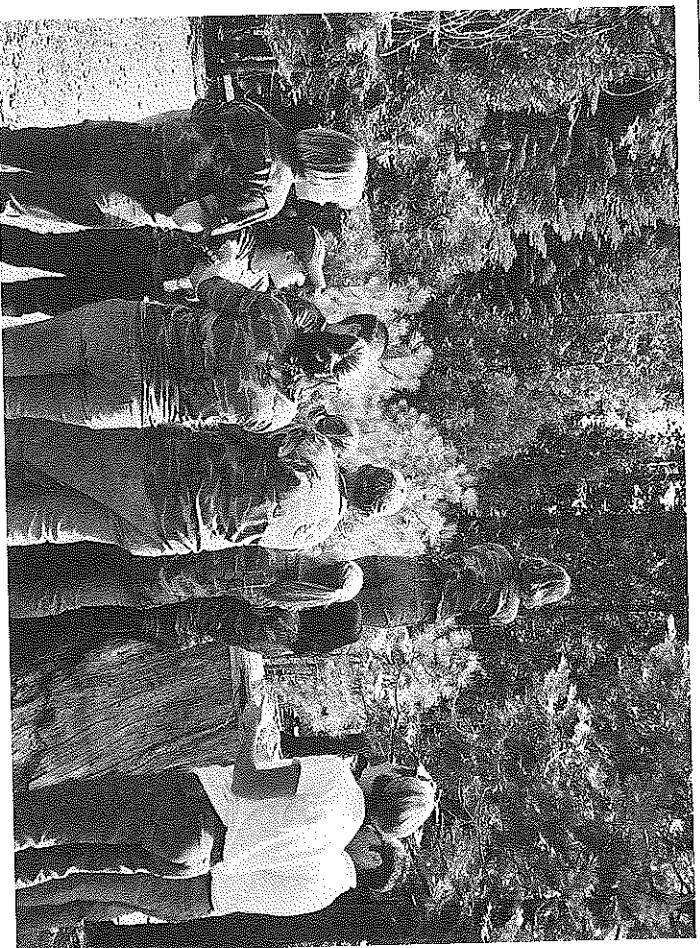
and teacher-friendly.

While the curricula was created as courses, the lessons were all developed as stand-alone lessons that can be taught individually, as units of instruction, and/or incorporated into technical agricultural courses such as animal science, agricultural mechanics, or agribusiness. Furthermore, the lessons can be utilized in out-of-class settings such as a leadership workshop at a training conference or chapter officer retreat. The intent of this project is simple and straightforward – to create a teaching tool that all teachers in every program in the nation can implement to develop the leader in all of their students.

A note of caution regarding the curriculum: If we opt to use the new curriculum to teach an agricultural leadership course, which many of our programs currently offer, we may be no closer to our original goal than we were before the LifeKnowledge curriculum was available – i.e. The “leadership” students may be the only students taking the course and reaping the benefits of more training. Or we as instructors will advise only the perceived potential leaders in our programs to enroll in these courses at the exclusion of others.

But please note, this is not the intent of the project. These lessons can be taught in technical agricultural courses. Furthermore, more help is on the way for teachers who teach courses so packed with technical content, there is not room for stand-alone leadership lessons or who have not had a great deal of success integrating leadership education into their courses. In the next phase of the project, a resource will be developed to help teachers teach leadership knowledge and skills as part of lessons in technical agriculture. The resource will include practical strategies, ideas, and sample lessons in the various technical areas.

So, our strategy is obvious! If we



Students working on a leadership team building activity

infuse leadership education in all agriculture courses, we are assured that all students receive the kind of training that our industry demands in potential employees and leaders. You will see when you preview the lesson topics, we are not just talking about public speaking, parliamentary procedure, and FFA knowledge. The topics were identified by industry representatives including critical thinking, working with others, problem solving, and planning.

Let's look at the original objective of developing the leader in ALL students from a different perspective. All students, that is a noble objective indeed. To do that, we are faced with yet another challenge. We are all aware, at least those of us who have been in a classroom lately, that while we are truly blessed to have a diverse population of students in our classrooms, it is a challenge indeed to find ways to reach them all. Sitting side-by-side in our classes are second language learners, special needs students, high academic achievers, hands-on learners, freshmen and seniors, and young

people of cultural diversity. And in the past few years, we have learned that our students have different learning modalities and combinations of different intelligences. How can we best design lessons that facilitate learning for all students?

Not to be deterred by that daunting task, the creators of the curriculum embarked on an effort to do just that, reach ALL “kids.” Lesson design guidelines were established based on the latest trends in learning and teaching research and proven best practices from the field. The writers received training on how to create lessons that were student-centered with instructional strategies that meet the needs of our students.

And the process worked. The lessons incorporated techniques that appealed to all learning modalities and multiple intelligences, included high levels of student engagement, provided clear and thorough instructions, and reinforced the learning by the use of anchors and frequent review activities.

According to an article entitled, "Student-Centered Learning + Technology + Rethinking Teachers' Education," the author described a student-centered classroom where multisensory stimulation, collaborative work, active/exploratory/inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and proactive and planned action occurred. The results of a study conducted by Johnson and Johnson (1989) indicated that student-centered groups scored high academically and learned social skills at the same time.

The LifeKnowledge lessons are full of this kind of teaching. Students are engaged in cooperative experiences from which they draw meaning and application and they are working independently and with their peers. Research supports what we know from experience that students learn better through active involvement, small groups, and cooperative learning (Hendrix, 1999). The students participate in creative learning activities that challenge them to think critically and reflect on what they have learned. These lessons are truly state

of the art in terms of teaching and learning theory. Another word of caution – they may look very different than any curriculum that you have ever seen. Do not fear, the students will learn from them AND they might just cause us all to rethink our teaching and revitalize our commitment to the profession.

Traveling around our state, I observe many teachers who are very effective. These teachers know what it takes to reach their students and they model the way. They use a variety of teaching techniques, engage their students in the process, provide hands-on experiences, and challenge students to think independently. Other teachers opt to grab their notes, a piece of chalk (or power point) and start talking, day after day, after day. Brad Hayes, in an article entitled, "An Experiment Using Teacher-Centered Instruction versus Student-Centered Instruction as a means of Teaching American Government to High School Seniors", indicated that, "Unfortunately, although

we are well into the 21st century and the rest of the world has changed, the present-day classroom has remained remarkably similar to that of 1900. Students no longer write on slates, and they often sit in moveable desks, yet many teacher still use the, "I lecture, you listen and write," method of teaching"

Unfortunately, I have found this to be the case in many agriculture classes that I have observed even though we know that this is the most ineffective method of teaching. Research validates that we retain very little from teacher talk yet we resort to it. In defense of our hard working teachers, a reason that we do so is a result of the demands that are placed on our teachers. They are asked to wear many hats and work under high expectations from the students, campus administrators, and community. More often than not, classroom preparation takes a back seat to travel requests, practices, supply requisitions, meetings, and project visits. Good, effective teachers, who are committed to the total program, are busy.

So as we created these lessons, we knew that it was essential that they be ready to use and "teacher friendly." They must be complete with everything that a teacher needs – powerful connections, instructions and descriptions of activities and techniques, processing questions, assessments, hand outs, visuals and even FFA and SAE applications. The lessons must be scripted so that a teacher can pick them up and follow them. Now, that is not to say that the plans cannot be individualized or modified to suit your teaching style, BUT we wanted to provide a model from which you can teach on the spot.

Students in Mr. Kreifel's class working on a leadership team building activity



were made based on their feedback.

So get ready, because the most revolutionary curriculum perhaps ever created is about to be made available to you; hundreds of lessons that are targeted to each student in an agriculture program anywhere in the nation, student-centered, and teacher friendly. Our challenge to you is simple – use them.

“...student-centered groups scored high academically and learned social skills at the same time.”

Use them as a course, as integrated

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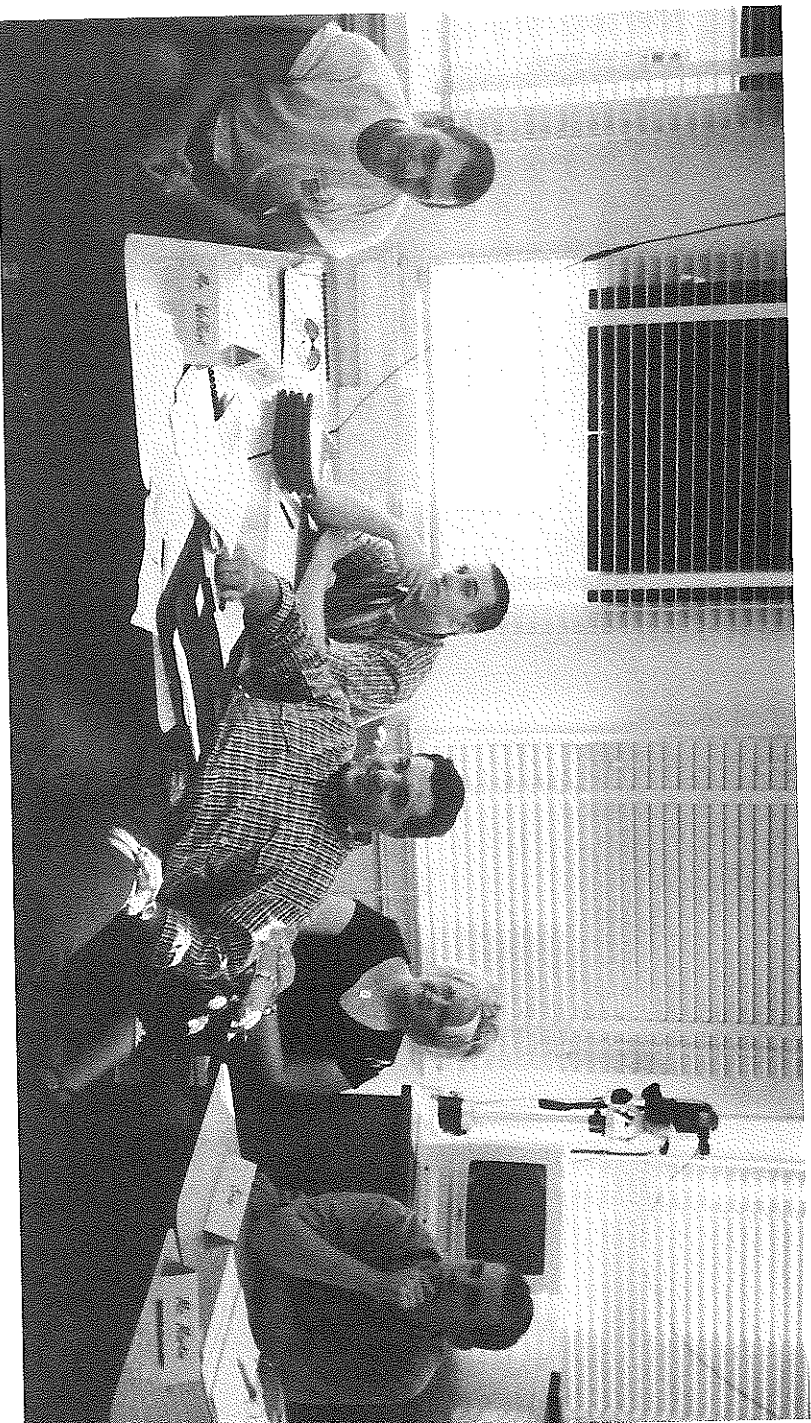
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A group of student teachers are being inserviced on the LifeKnowledge initiative

Leadership for Every Agriculture Student: Six Key Components of a Complete Leadership Education Program

By Curt Friedel and Rick Rudd

Picture this... It is a bright and sunny summer morning. School is out for summer break, the warmth of the sun makes the local swimming hole an inviting option for youth enjoying their vacation from reading, writing, and arithmetic. In fact, the long summer days offer many activities to entertain youth. They could choose to head to the movie theater, strap on some skates and explore, hike at the local park, or spend time with friends over a pizza.

On this day however, you observe a group of young people filing into a big yellow school bus. Curious, a gentleman approaches a young lady carrying a blue jacket in her arms and asks, "Where are you headed?" She enthusiastically responds, "To FFA leadership camp!"

Similar scenarios are played out across the country for FFA activities throughout the summer, in the evenings, and on weekends during the school year. FFA members choose to build their leadership capacity through participation in an intra-curricular leadership laboratory.

Leadership has long been a hallmark of agricultural education and the FFA. In fact, if your program is anything like the programs where we taught, parents, alumni, teachers, and students sing the praises of agricultural education's ability to develop leadership in students.

Our leadership laboratory, FFA, provides students with a wide variety of opportunities to exercise their leadership "muscle" as they strengthen leadership competence. Although FFA activities offer opportunities for leadership growth, where do students learn the basics? The leadership laboratory (FFA) is critical to development, but if the leadership knowledge, desire, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, oral and written communication skills, and thinking skills are to be attained, they must first be explicitly taught to the students in the classroom.

Some agricultural education students are taught leadership explicitly through FFA leadership development programs offered at the state and national level. Programs like Made for Excellence and Washington Leadership Conference are available for any FFA member. Though in reality, only a small percentage can take advantage of this programming.

If a student is fortunate enough to be a convention delegate, a state officer, or a national officer, more advanced leadership training is provided to further develop their leadership skills. Unfortunately, limitations do exist for most members and relatively few members can take advantage of leadership training offered above the chapter level. Given all that FFA has to offer in the area of leadership development, this has been an undesirable reality.

At the National FFA convention in 2001, a small group of FFA leaders, teachers, state staff, and teacher educators were discussing this very di-

lemma. The question of the day was, "How can we teach leadership to every student in agricultural education?" This small group developed a plan and the plan was embraced by the national leadership in FFA. The result of that effort is the LifeKnowledge curriculum. A collection of materials, lessons, activities, and resources that will bring leadership to every student enrolled in an agricultural education program. The total project includes curriculum in premier leadership, personal growth and career success. We would like to highlight the six components of leadership in this article.

Premier Leadership

The National FFA uses the words, "Premier Leadership" in its mission. Although these can be powerful words in their own right, premier leadership has been further defined and refined into a curriculum that all agriculture teachers can utilize to teach leadership in their classroom.

The curriculum is built around six precepts; action, relationships, vision, character, awareness, and continuous improvement. These precepts were identified through empirical research and validated through a panel of experts in agriculture, business, and education.

Within the ACTION precept we can teach students to embrace empowerment, risk, and communication. Students learn to focus on results and build decision making and problem solving abilities. Students learn the importance of investing in people and utilizing re-

sources. The concepts learned will help students understand how their decisions affect the opinions of others, in addition to decision making in groups and evaluating success of the team.

Teaching students about the power of **RELATIONSHIPS** includes an appreciation of compassion, enhancement of listening skills and becoming a mentor. Students can learn to develop others, develop teams, and appreciate the diversity people bring to groups. Specific lessons in this area include cooperative and collaborative relationships, as well as meeting new people, and earning trust.

Learning to **VISION** is a critical skill of a leader. This precept includes instruction on how to use creativity, enthusiasm, and conviction to develop personal and team visions. Students can also learn to develop principle-based personal and group missions using courage, focus, and an appreciation of change. Experience in strategic thinking and planning, as well as leading others to create a vision will contribute to the student's success in leading a team or organization.

CHARACTER is a collection of virtues by which we live our lives. Teaching students to embrace integrity, courage, values, and ethics is critical to developing good character. In addition, students must learn humility, self-discipline, perseverance, and responsibility to lead. Students will develop character as they identify lifetime opportunities to serve others, understand the role of a responsible citizen and learn how to mentor others.

Teaching students to seek purposeful understanding is the goal of the **AWARENESS** precept. This includes understanding yourself, your community, as well as cause and effect relationships within the local, state, national, and international environments. Building skills in awareness

consists of lessons in becoming an advocate for agriculture and natural resources, embracing emerging technology in the workplace along with incorporating issues into daily decisions.

The final precept, **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** teaches students to embrace innovation, intuition, adaptation, and coach-ability. Students who strive to become lifelong learners will continue to experience professional and personal growth. Skills developed in this precept include managing change in a career, identifying resources for

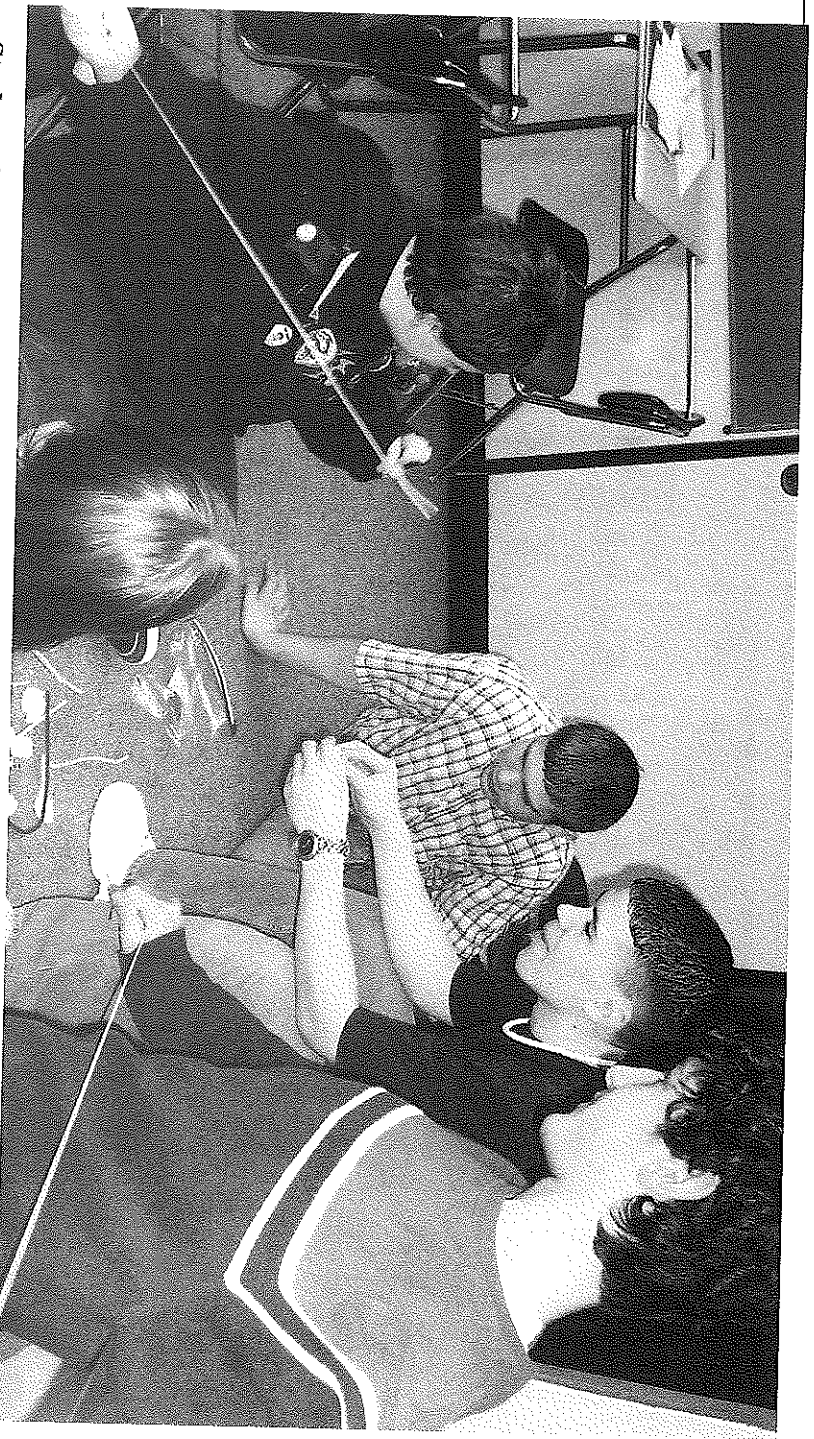
continual growth, as well as developing a personal growth plan.

Curriculum Design

The precepts are organized into a four-stage model of personal growth labeled **ME**, **WE**, **DO**, and **SERVE**. In the **Me** stage, students discover their strengths, skills, talents, and passions in life. As the student moves into the **We** stage, the individual starts to build skills and strategies to form purposeful relationships with others. In the **Do** stage, the student develops skills for solving problems and engaging the

Six Key Components of a Complete Leadership Education Program

1. Action: Embrace empowerment, risk, and communication
2. Relationships: Appreciation of compassion, enhancement of listening skills, and becoming a mentor
3. Vision: how to use creativity, enthusiasm, and conviction to develop personal and team visions
4. Character: collecting of virtues by which we live our lives
5. Awareness: understanding self, community, and cause - effect relationship within local, state, national, and international environments
6. Continuous Improvement: embrace innovation, intuition, adaptation, and coach-ability



Students in Mr. Kreifel's Human Relation's class participate in a classroom activity designed to foster team work and communication between group members

team vision into action. Finally, the student teaches the Serve stage through involvement in the community and developing the leadership skills of those around them.

The curriculum is designed to provide teachers with a high-quality, and easy to use product with an active and experience-based foundation. You will find the lesson plans to be user-friendly and easily adaptable to your needs. Training workshops will also be made available for your benefit to learn how to effectively use the curriculum in your classroom and create the greatest impact on your students.

"Experience first" was an overarching motto for the curriculum design. The curriculum was built with the idea that students tap into their own knowledge and experience as they add new knowledge to their world. The curriculum writers were careful to make the curriculum speak to students through their experiences.

The writing team also ensured that the lessons were prepared with learning context in mind. You will be able to set up the appropriate context for student learning as each lesson is taught. Activities are built into each lesson objective to check for understanding, engage student learning and allow the learner to make a personal connection with the content.

The lessons utilize multiple intelligences to help students with varying learning capabilities integrate their newly acquired knowledge. Utilizing spatial, linguistic, interpersonal, musical, naturalist, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and logical intelligences within this curriculum make it a strong teaching tool.

This project was undertaken to provide an avenue in which all students in agricultural education programs across the country can learn leadership knowledge, skills, desires, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, oral communica-

tion skills, written communication skills, and thinking skills. This curriculum provides teachers with tools, resources, and application to make that vision a reality!

The LifeKnowledge curriculum will be an asset to your agricultural education program as your students receive leadership lessons in the classroom and then apply them to their personal lives. Every student in agricultural education will personally grow from a firm foundation in leadership practice by means of developed passion, purposeful relationships, problem solving skills, and involvement in the community.

Rick Ruda is an Associate Professor at the University of Florida

Mr. Curt Friedel is a graduate student at the University of Florida

How Will a Leadership Curriculum Enhance Our Agricultural Education Programs?

By *Scott Stump*

You know the feeling. The chapter officer retreat is only two days away and in the melee of your summer schedule it never became a priority to find that new material that would take your officers to a higher level! Or maybe you've

wanted to offer a Leadership Course but knew that the development time didn't exist in your schedule to make it happen.

I have fought the same battle on a daily basis! There are many personal and professional leadership concepts that I would love for my students to learn, but to do it right requires the investment of

time in research, study, and development. Time that never seems to come! Until now!

That is the true value of the LifeKnowledge resource. The past few years, a group of agricultural educators sat down and took the time to research, study, and develop engaging lesson plans that span every topic imaginable from traditional leadership development to innovative approaches for enhancing personal growth and career success.

When distributed, the LifeKnowledge set will provide nearly 300 ready-to-teach lessons that will enhance any leadership or personal development program. Every agricultural education teacher will have access to, and receive training on how to teach, high quality instructional materials on leadership.

The sample lesson that follows is one of the nontraditional topics that we normally would not have had time to think through. The entire lesson is not printed here, however it is my attempt to provide you a glimpse of a lesson. It pushes upper classmen to consider the affect they can have on the success of the younger members in the chapter. It is all about how they can find opportunities for others to grow and succeed.

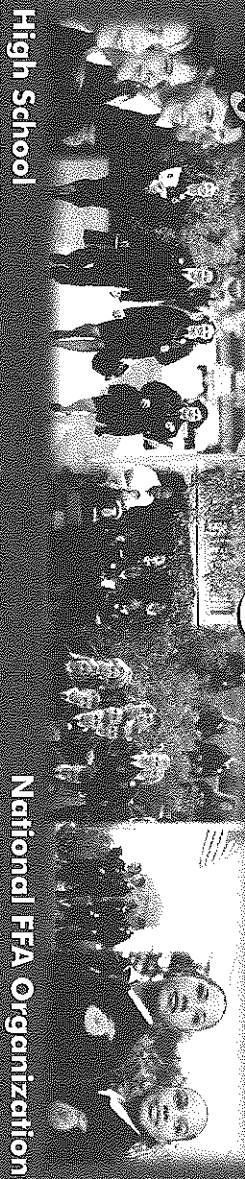


Secondary teachers conducted pilot-testing of all the LifeKnowledge lessons. A critical review of the content assured that the lessons were teacher friendly.

*Scott Stump is State FFA Executive Secretary,
Stoneham, CO*

LifeKnowledge

Real Lessons for Real Life



High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.116

HOW AND WHY DO YOU GET INVOLVED IN ORGANIZATIONS?

Unit. FFA: An Integral Component of Agricultural Education

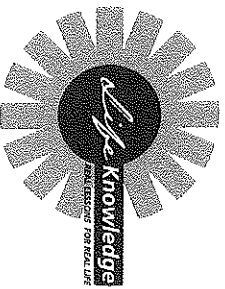
Problem Area. Opportunities in the FFA

Precepts.

National Standards. NSS-C-9-12.5 — Roles of the Citizen — What is citizenship?

Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 List and define four reasons people get involved in organizations.
- 2 Create a matrix showing the relationship between FFA activities and accomplishment, influence, relationship, and discovery.



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Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

National FFA Organization. *FFA Student Handbook*. Indianapolis, Indiana.
National FFA Organization, 2003.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Post-It notes
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Large paper
- ✓ Four pieces of poster board
- ✓ Web access or FFA Student Handbooks
- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ HS.116.AS.A—one per student
- ✓ HS.116.TM.A
- ✓ HS.116.TM.B
- ✓ HS.116.Assess—one per student

Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- Accomplishment
- Influence
- Relationship
- Discovery



Interest Approach

Provide students with markers and a large sheet of paper. Divide students into groups of three to four and ask them to write down their responses to the following questions:



What is the club or activity in which you are most involved or might want to get involved?

Have students place the clubs or activities at the top of the surface.





What are the reasons why you are most involved or would like to be involved in these clubs or activities?

Have students rank their top four reasons in order of importance on a second sheet of paper.

Distribute four Post-It notes to each group.




 Please put each of your top four reasons on a separate Post-It note. When you are finished, put them aside. We will come back to this activity later.

 I want each of you to look for a relationship between what you wrote on the Post-It notes and the content that will be presented in class today.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1.


List and define four reasons people get involved in organizations.

 The four reasons I am about to give you are what the most current research tells us are the reasons people become involved. The four reasons people get involved are accomplishment, influence, relationship, and discovery. I am not going to define these terms yet. I want you to come up with a description for each of the reasons for involvement.


It is important that the accompanying definitions are not given at this time. The terms will mean more to students if they develop their own definitions. Show HS.116.TM.A.

1. The reasons people get involved in organizations are as follows:

- A. **Accomplishment** is the need to do all you can do to achieve a goal or dream.
- B. **Influence** is a need people have to be in charge of or have an effect on individuals or a group of individuals.
- C. **Relationship** is a need people have to be around others and to have positive experiences with those other people.
- D. **Discovery** is a need people have to learn about new experiences, places, people, etc.

 You should still be sitting with the group with which you started. Think about the activity we did at the beginning of class. Using the ideas from the interest approach, develop a definition for accomplishment, influence, relationships, and discovery in regards to why people get involved. Discuss your group's ideas and decide on a definition of accomplishment, influence, relationships, and discovery. Write your definitions on the Post-It notes, then get up and bring your definitions to the front of the room and stick them on the appropriate poster.

Lead a discussion which synthesizes all of the groups' definitions to come up with a consensus definition for each of the reasons people get involved.

 How are the definitions similar? How are the definitions different? Does everyone agree with the definitions? Which definitions should be changed? Now, let's put them all together.

Lead a discussion to synthesize the definition of each reason for involvement.



Review/Summary

Using a Choral Response Moment, have students repeat the “class-developed” definitions of accomplishment, influence, relationships, and discovery as they relate to why people get involved in FFA.

Application

▶ Extended Classroom Activity:

Have students develop a personal plan to get involved in activities in the school or community that include each of the categories.

▶ FFA Activity:

Have students develop a chapter plan of activities that include each of the categories for involvement. They should also develop a recruitment plan based around the benefits of reasons to present prospective members.

▶ SAE Activity:

Have students create a video on why people get involved in an SAE.

✓ Evaluation

A written test, HS.116.Assess, Why Do I Get Involved?, is included to measure objectives 1 and 2.

Answers to Assessment:

Part One: Matching

1. d.
2. a.
3. c.
4. b.

Part Two: Short Answer

1. influence
2. relationship
3. discovery
4. accomplishment

