

research in brief

4-H Leadership Training

A study was conducted comparing the self-perceived training needs of Tennessee county Extension agents with their training needs as perceived by their district supervisors. Factors considered were supervisory district, sex of worker, percentage of time devoted to 4-H work, and years of tenure with the Tennessee Extension Service.

Questionnaires were completed by 345 Tennessee county Extension agents and by 15 district supervisors on 11 adult and 6 junior leadership training needs. Agents were asked how well-trained they considered themselves in adult and junior leadership, and supervisors were asked how well-trained their agents were. Both groups were asked to indicate three priority training needs.

Results showed that:

1. District supervisors gave lower ratings to their agents on all terms than the agents gave themselves.
2. Comparison on district and sex-of-worker bases yielded only a slight degree of disagreement on self-perceived needs.
3. Male agents more frequently rated themselves "not very" well trained in junior leadership than did female agents.
4. Supervisors in general selected more priority needs in adult leadership training than did the agents.
5. Agents felt that the junior leadership priority needs were of greater importance than did the supervisors.
6. As the percentage of time devoted to 4-H work increased, so did the proportion of agents indicating adult leadership priority needs.

"Four-H Leadership Training Needs of Tennessee Agents, 1970." Marifloyd Hamil and others. Knoxville: Tennessee University, Agricultural Extension Service, January, 1973. [Order number: ED 074 316.]*

Curtis Trent

*For ordering information, send to: ERIC Document, Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210. To order, give this information: 1. Title, 2. ED order number, 3. Type of reproduction wanted—microfiche or hard copy, 4. Number of copies wanted.

Learning How To Change

Don't let the title of this thesis, "Major Personal Changes in a Group of Canadians Working in Nigeria," fool you—it really has much broader application than appears at first glance. Primarily, of course, it will appeal to Extension professionals and adult educators who are concerned with preparing themselves or others for work in another culture. But, over and above that, the findings of this study are relevant to anyone interested in the relationship between education and major personal changes facing adults. As a final bonus, the thesis is most enjoyable to read.

The study is based on interviews with 40 CUSO (Canadian University Service Overseas) volunteers, a program rather similar to the Peace Corps. All had been working in Nigeria for 16 months.

The interviews focused on two major questions: What changes occurred in this group of individuals? How did these changes occur? To answer the first question, Filson obtained information on the three major personal changes for each person. These 120 changes were categorized into 5 large clusters, each with several categories. The clusters, in order of frequency, were: (1) interpersonal and intercultural changes; (2) changes in personal awareness, feelings, or competence; (3) socio-political changes; (4) occupational changes; and (5) value changes. These changes aren't all positive in the usual sense: changes in the direction of increased anxiety, more marital conflict, less cross-cultural empathy, etc., were reported by a considerable number of people.

Filson's examination of the change process shows that these changes didn't come easily. Depression, anxiety, and hostility are common psychological manifestations of culture shock; physiological upheavals are also common. The analysis of how changes occur includes descriptions of triggering events prompting people to change, initial reactions, coping mechanisms used, active change-facilitating processes used, the help received or which should have been available, and the benefits of change.

This study clearly shows that adults need to learn how to change. The inevitable changes facing all of us can be facilitated in at least two ways: learning what specific personal changes we're likely to face in our present and future life "spaces" and learning more about how to cope with change, about successful strategies for dealing with the disequilibrium produced by change. The author presents a challenge to adult educators to help in this endeavor.

"Major Personal Changes in a Group of Canadians Working in Nigeria." Glen C. Filson, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1975.

Gwenna Moss

Functional Job Analysis

This monograph is the result of recent developmental work in functional job analysis, a technique useful in personal operations. It's designed to increase accuracy and preciseness in describing what workers do.

The report is particularly oriented toward the expressed needs of people who have been using functional job analysis during the past several years in both the public and the private sector. It deals with the technical and theoretical aspects of writing and analyzing task statements, and with the application of this information by organizations in developing and standardizing tasks.

The authors review some of the concepts and assumptions that are involved in the formulation of task statements and some of the inferences made from them. They outline a procedure for standardizing task statements and explain how to test the reliability and validity of those statements through the use of a checklist.

Sidney Fine's approach in standardizing task statements will help Extension administrators and supervisors who develop position and job descriptions.

Functional Job Analysis. Sidney A. Fine, Ann M. Holt, and Maret F. Hutchinson. Washington D.C.: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1974. [Available from: W. E. Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49007. Order number: Methods for Manpower Analysis No. 9. Price: HC: 75¢.]

Thomas Trail

Job-Seeking Problems

Poor transportation, not the so-called "culture of poverty" concept, stalls job-seeking efforts of the poor rural residents of primarily black Madison, Arkansas. Sixty-four percent of those in poverty reported they had no way to get to work, although major industries were located within 5 to 25 miles from their current place of residence.

Many Madison residents said lack of employment opportunities in their area may force them to move. Madison blacks were more willing to work, to move, or to commute to find employment—and held better images of work—than their white counterparts.

Economic Research Service undertook the study to help policy makers devise programs to help people adjust to industrialization and take advantage of new employment opportunities.

"Social and Labor Adjustment of Rural Americans in the Mississippi Delta: A Case Study of Madison, Arkansas. Bernal Green. Washington, D.C.: USDA, Economic Research Service, no date given. [Available from: AER-274, Publications Service, Division of Information, Economic Research Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.]

Del Dyer