

CDE Workshops as an Innovative Collaboration with Pre-service Teachers

Ryan P. Clarke, Oklahoma State University
Hanna H. Aviles, Oklahoma State University
Marshall A. Baker, Oklahoma State University

456 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-3686
bakerma@okstate.edu

CDE Workshops as an Innovative Collaboration with Pre-service Teachers

Introduction/Need for Innovation or Idea

Early field experience has been recognized as a critical component of school-based, agricultural education, (SBAE) teacher preparation programs (Retallick & Miller, 2007; Swortzel, 1999). Retallick and Miller (2010) established a model for early field experience in teacher education. When examining the teacher development stage of the model, the transition from peer to student interaction among pre-service teachers appears to be gradual. However, this transition is often abrupt, as logistics frequently prevent pre-service teachers from experiencing any sort of genuine, student interaction until they reach their student teaching centers. As such, there is a need for teacher education programs to facilitate more opportunities for pre-service teachers to authentically interact with students before they begin their student teaching experiences.

At Oklahoma State University, this need is being addressed through an innovative approach that connects pre-service teachers to students in authentic settings, builds awareness and participation in low-interest career development events (CDE), and models the teaching of agricultural content embedded within CDEs. This year, the first CDE Workshop is being offered to over 120 students interested in various CDE content areas. This “win-win” project aims to serve pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and school-based agricultural education (SBAE) students in a unique way by building pre-service teacher confidence, lessening in-service teaching loads, and increasing student skill sets.

How it Works/Methodology/Program Phases/Steps

The CDE Workshop was designed around the Oklahoma State University Agricultural Education Teaching Methods course. This semester long course aims to equip pre-service teachers with a broad spectrum of teaching methods, as well as opportunities to prepare and teach lessons in the classroom setting. For the CDE Workshop, pre-service teachers were instructed to prepare a series of lessons pertaining to their assigned CDE. This concept allows pre-service teachers to develop lessons based on subject material that is applicable to quality contest preparation. Each lesson was designed to focus on a particular teaching method while also allowing the pre-service teachers to gain experience in an authentic setting. Throughout the semester, once-on-one coaching sessions were held to provide quality feedback in preparation for the workshop.

The workshop planning began with the identification of the six CDEs in Oklahoma with the lowest level of participation. This strategy was employed to stimulate the future growth of these CDEs, while also giving workshop participants the opportunity to be successful at the state level. The CDEs selected for the workshop included Milk Quality and Products, Floriculture, Environmental and Natural Resources, Food Science and Technology, Forestry, and Poultry Evaluation. The 20 pre-service teachers within the Teaching Methods course were split into six groups. Each student developed four 20-minute lessons for coaching throughout the semester, and a final 50-minute lesson pertaining to their assigned CDE to be taught at the workshop.

Oklahoma SBAE teachers were contacted and invited to register their students for the workshop via *SignUpGenius*. Each of the six CDE areas was limited to 20 participants, allowing for a total

of 120 participants. The workshop was offered free of charge and lunch was provided for both SBAE teachers and students. The workshop was broken into three 50-55 minute sessions with a one-hour lunch break. For the duration of the workshop, participants remained in the same CDE area workshop they were registered for, while the pre-service teachers presented their lessons throughout the sessions. At the conclusion of the workshop, evaluative questionnaires were distributed to all participating parties.

Results to Date/Implications

Throughout the semester, constant growth was observed in the quality of the pre-service teachers' lesson plans and teaching ability. Overall, it was observed that the majority of the pre-service teachers had increased in his or her confidence level, and with the help of the coaches, were able to produce high quality lessons. The feedback from the participating students was primarily positive, with many students indicating an interest in furthering their knowledge and participation within the CDE area they were exposed to. The feedback provided by the SBAE teachers in attendance was also quite positive, as several participated alongside their students in order to increase their own understanding of a particular contest. Pre-service teachers reported feeling both satisfied and relieved, and several indicated that they felt much more comfortable going into student teaching after receiving authentic exposure to SBAE students.

Future Plans/Advice to Others

Oklahoma State University aims to establish the CDE Workshop as a biannual tradition within the Agricultural Education program. By affording pre-service teachers an authentic teaching platform and providing Oklahoma SBAE teachers and students exposure to unfamiliar CDE content areas, this workshop serves as a mutually beneficial venture. As such, to incentivize continued participation, this workshop must provide SBAE teachers and students the highest quality information and training possible. Moreover, given the overall scope of the workshop, it is recommended that a minimum of two to three months be allocated for lesson preparation and the making of logistical arrangements.

Costs/Resources Needed

The costs associated with facilitating a workshop of this kind depend greatly on the CDEs covered and number of participants. As part of each pre-service teacher's lesson plan, a list of necessary materials must be furnished. For this particular workshop, some items included dairy products, poultry carcasses and by-products, water sampling kits, timber cruising equipment, floral supplies, and GPS units. As such, Oklahoma State University spent approximately \$1,200.00 on workshop supplies. Another \$1,500.00 was spent on the participants' lunch and hospitality for SBAE teachers.

It is important to ensure pre-service teachers access state and national CDE training materials to answer event-specific questions regarding to contest content, rules, and structure. In order to provide the best instruction to the workshop participants, course instructors must ensure that the pre-service teachers become "experts" in their CDE content areas. Any additional content and contest material should be identified during the lesson planning stages.

References

- Retallick, M. S., & Miller, G. (2007). Early field experience in agricultural education: A national descriptive study. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 48(1), 127–138.
doi:10.5032/jae.2007.01127
- Retallick, M. S., & Miller, G. (2010). Teacher preparation in career and technical education: A model for developing and researching early field experiences. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 25(1), 62–75. doi:10.21061/jcte.v25i1.469
- Swortzel, K. A. (1999). Current status of preservice teacher education programs in agriculture. *NACTA Journal*, 43(1), 37–43.