Evaluation Schematic for Agricultural Literacy Programming

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Introduction and Need for the Idea

Enns, Martin, & Spielmaker (2016) report the need to develop a systematic approach to conducting agricultural literacy evaluation. While agricultural literacy programming is often extensive, the evaluation of such programs is limited; providing little evidence to the programmers for their justification. Due to the variability of programs a tool to determine the viable method of program evaluation is necessary. This need originates from various conditions typical of agricultural literacy programming, including the variability of program outcomes and program duration. The wide range of programmatic conditions can make identifying the appropriate evaluation tool a challenge. We developed this evaluation schematic for agricultural literacy students to help alleviate this challenge.

How It Works

Figure 1 depicts the evaluation schematic for agricultural literacy programming, which would be distributed along with examples of each tool and instructions on how to use each tool in agricultural literacy programming.

Engagement	Example(s)	Possible Outcome(s)	Evaluation Tool(s)
Day-long formal learning events (no more than 4–6 hours)	- Single-topic workshop - Certification program - One-time workshop	- Skill development - Affective domain - Knowledge domain	1. Participant post questionnaires 2. Instructor evaluation(s) 3. Participant evaluation(s) 4. Participant interview(s) 5. Instructor interview(s)
Guest speaker or panel of experts		- Knowledge domain - Agricultural awareness	1. Participant evaluation(s)
Booth at a community event	- County/state fair - Farmers' market	- Agricultural awareness	1. Passerby questionnaire(s)
Developing curriculum resources	- Lessons - Flier/reader - Expert bulletin	- Knowledge domain - Agricultural awareness	1. Participant pre/post questionnaire(s) 2. Curriculum facilitator evaluation(s) 3. Online Analytics (web-based resources)
Multi-day, formal learning events (over 6 hours)	- Service learning - After-school event - Complex topic workshop - Multi-day workshop	- Skill development - Affective domain - Knowledge domain - Agricultural awareness - Community development	1. Participant pre/post questionnaire(s) 2. Instructor evaluation(s) 3. Participant evaluation(s) 4. Participant interview(s) 5. Instructor interview(s) 6. Participant focus group

Figure 1. Evaluation Schematic for Agricultural Literacy Programming

We categorized each engagement primarily by duration, with some emphasis on intent. For example, there is a significant difference of time invested in each participant by an instructor positioned at a community booth versus at a multi-day, formal learning event. Furthermore, we wanted to distinguish the intent of engagement beyond formal instruction, including bringing in a guest speaker or forming a panel of experts as well as developing curriculum resources for another instructor's use. The five types of engagement events in this schematic offer varying opportunities for evaluation.

We further categorized engagement by possible intended outcomes, including skill development, knowledge domain, community development, agricultural awareness, and affective domain. We recognize that other categories of outcomes from agricultural literacy engagement are possible. We also recognize that one could anchor this schematic by intended outcome (rather than by type of engagement). We chose to focus on engagement type because our students generally approach agricultural literacy programming from this perspective.

Finally, we defined a questionnaire as an instrument that measures participants' knowledge, perceptions, and/or behaviors and could be administered either before or after an event. We defined an evaluation as a tool for examining program/instructional effectiveness that could be given to either the participants or instructors, typically after an event.

Results to Date

The undergraduate students in the Program Design and Evaluation class have responded positively to this schematic and subsequent instruction. Students have asked that more time be spent on evaluation in the course; instructional time on this unit has increased from 4 to 12 hours.

Future Plans and Advise

Moving forward, we plan to develop the schematic further by creating more examples, working with agricultural literacy practitioners to improve its viability, and continuing to share it with agricultural literacy students and practitioners.

Cost and Resources Needed

There are no costs to develop and share this evaluation schematic beyond a small commitment of time and instruction.

References

Enns, K., Martin M. J., & Spielmaker, D. (2016). Research priority 1: Public and policy maker understanding of agriculture and natural resources. In Roberts, T. G., Harder, A., & Brashears, M. T. (Eds.), *American Association for Agricultural Education National Research Agenda: 2016–2020*. Gainesville, FL: Department of Agricultural Education and Communication (pp. 13–18).