

A Framework for Linking Extension Program Delivery Methods to Program Outcomes

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Introduction/Need for Innovation or Idea

To develop and deliver Extension programs most effectively, Extension professionals must understand the importance of Extension delivery methods and their linkage to program outcomes. Understanding the effectiveness of delivery methods in bringing desired outcomes is significant given that usefulness and effectiveness often shift with demographic and other contextual differences. Furthermore, several studies have shown that usefulness and effectiveness of delivery methods varies based on age, target audience, education level, subject matter content, program activities, characteristics of the delivery method, and other factors.

In this abstract, we present a three-prong framework that uses Extension program approach suggested by Franz and Townson (2008), classification of Extension program delivery methods by Richardson (2001), and outcome levels proposed in the logic model (University of Wisconsin, 2003). We believe that the proposed framework will serve as a roadmap and value to Extension professionals in understanding the importance of linking delivery methods and program outcomes for a variety of Extension programs.

How it Works/Methodology/Program Phases/Steps

First, we elaborate on Franz and Townson approaches to Extension programming. Franz and Townson's approach uses two dimensions—process and content (See Figure 1). Under each of these dimensions, four program design domains—service, facilitation, content transmission, and transformative education-- are identified. Second, we discuss the three program outcome levels of the logic model, short term (knowledge gain), medium term (application of learning, change in behavior) and long-term (change in SEEC). Third, we discuss Extension delivery methods and identify the best delivery method(s). Extension delivery methods are classified based on nature of contact (individual, group, mass), form of communication (written, spoken, and visual), function (information giving, skill acquiring, and knowledge applying), and a combination of delivery methods (experiential, reinforcement, and integrative).

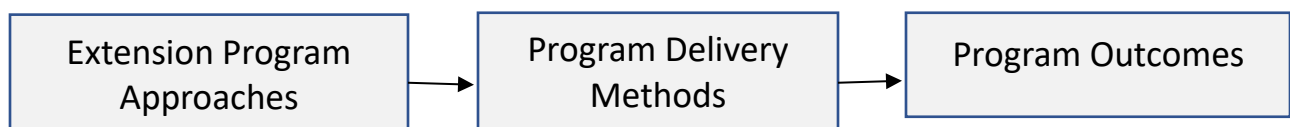


Figure 1: Framework for Linking Extension Program Approaches, Delivery Methods and Outcomes

Results to Date/Implications

Using the above description, we discuss the proposed framework in the form of a narrative. Select a “Program Design Domain” from Franz and Townson. Then decide on the desired outcomes (ST, MT and LT). Now select the delivery methods or combination of delivery methods that is most appropriate to achieve that outcome.

For example, let's assume the goal of a water conservation Extension program is transformative education with long-term outcomes. To achieve them, Extension professionals need to use a variety of delivery methods including demonstration on new water conservation technologies (e.g., rain

sensor), presentations on best water use practices, availability of different print and web resources, use of community pledges at community forums, etc. As a result of access to information and resources and use of appropriate delivery methods, target audiences would be convinced to change their water use behaviors that promote water conservation, resulting in positive outcomes.

Program Design Domain: Transformative Education

Outcome	ST	ST	MT	MT	LT
Extension Methods	Awareness Knowledge (AK)	Aspirations Intentions (A)	Skills (S)	Attitude (A)	Behavior Change B/C
Workshops	X	X		X	I
Field Visit	X	X		X	R
Method Demonstration	X	X	X E	X	

E= Experiential; I=Integrative; R=Reinforcement

Future Plans/Advice to Others

To have a better understanding of our proposed three-prong framework for Extension programming, we will share a variety of examples to contextualize the framework for different participants. Understanding each of these components in the framework will go a long way in systematically linking program delivery methods to program outcomes. In addition, participants will examine a typology of delivery methods linking program outcomes. The participants will benefit from this framework and get a sense of what it takes to design strategies that uses effective delivery methods to achieve desired program outcomes. Participants will be equipped to select a specific delivery method that could be most effective in dissemination of information and achieving desired outcomes of an Extension program with specific target audiences and existing contextual factors. We share program scenarios or case studies for Extension professionals to develop a strategy to link delivery methods with program outcomes. We will share example of hands-on activity that were used in class/programs using the proposed three-prong framework. Poster viewers will see the benefit of integrating these three concepts for better program outcomes.

This framework serves as a good learning opportunity for novice programmers, evaluators, professionals and graduate students. Through this framework, one can have a deeper understanding of how the three concepts (program design, program outcome, and program delivery) work in the context of Extension programming and how to use them in combination to produce desired outcomes in target populations. This understanding will go a long way in in systematically linking program delivery methods to program outcomes. Overall, this framework, if implemented properly, can help Extension professionals to develop robust Extension programs that produce desired outcomes in their target audiences.

Cost/Resource Needed

Costs required is very minimal. Perhaps the cost of electronic devices, time, and effort can be considered as costs.

References

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