

AN OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS COMPARING 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENTS SERVING TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL CLIENTELE

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Abstract

In this descriptive study, the occupational duties and tasks of 4-H Youth Development agents were examined using the DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) methodology. 4-H agents were selected by Ohio State University Extension System 's (OSUE) administration, representing agents who work with traditional and non-traditional clientele. Each group of agents identified the duties and tasks related to the 4-H programs they conduct. The results indicated that 4-H agents performed similar duties and tasks, regardless of their different foci. Agents who worked with non-traditional clientele spent more time assessing individual members. Moreover, agents who worked with traditional clientele often have a stronger focus on program management. The future of 4-H Youth Development will be dependent on its ability to meet the needs of diverse clientele in the next century. The results of this study have implication both for hiring and for training of 4-H Youth Development agents presently and in the future.

Introduction

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) is a non-formal educational system for adults and youth. Extension has been described as ". . . a unique national educational system that draws on the expertise of the federal, state, and local partners to provide practical, unbiased information produced by research centers and universities to the people" (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997, p. 3). Most state CES organizations are divided into four program areas: (a) Agriculture and Natural Resources, (b) Family and Consumer Sciences, (c) 4-H Youth Development, and (d) Community Development. In each of these four areas, local extension agents work directly with adults and/or youth in delivering research-based information and providing experiential learning experiences.

Given the challenges that the CES will face in the next century it is essential that the competencies needed by agents in various communities be identified. Stone and Bieber (1997) stated competencies "are the application of

knowledge, technical skills and personal characteristics leading to outstanding performance" (p. 1). Moreover, Rousan and Henderson (1996) suggested that there are several determinants that influence agent turnover. One of these determinants is the organizational factors, which include such components as job content and work environment. Miller (1997) further suggested ". . . a person's job satisfaction is based on or directly influenced by the job's characteristics" (p. 2).

In prior models the duties and tasks for 4-H agents have not been identified based on the clientele the agent serves. For example, the 4-H Professional Research and Knowledge (PRK) Taxonomy clearly identified both duties and tasks in five primary areas: (a) communication, (b) educational design, (c) youth development, (d) youth program management, and (e) volunteerism. However, this model does not address how tasks and duties might vary depending on the clientele being served. Additionally, the 1995 Framing the Future: Strategic Framework for a System of Partnership an ECOP and CSREES Report

identified the need to increase and sustain the diversity of Extension's work force and volunteers to serve both traditional and non-traditional clientele. Furthermore, neither the PRK or the ECOP clarifies the competencies agents need in working with traditional or non-traditional clientele. In order for the CES to remain a viable organization it must continue to evaluate the duties and tasks associated with an agent's particular position. This evaluation will assist CES in determining the critical skills an agent needs in working with a particular clientele, thus providing critical information when recruiting and hiring agents.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the key competencies needed by 4-H Youth Development agents through the use of the DACUM process. The following objectives were developed to guide the study: (1) Describe the duties and tasks essential to the success of all 4-H agents; and, (2) Describe the difference between the duties and tasks needed by 4-H agents working with different clientele.

Methods

Sample

Five Ohio District Directors and District 4-H Specialists who evaluated the performance of OSUE's 110 4-H Youth Development agents were asked to nominate three to four successful 4-H agents from their district to participate in an occupational analysis. Agents working with traditional clientele generally came from counties with smaller populations where programs were centered around community club programs often with an agricultural focus. Agents working with non-traditional clientele generally were in counties where there were large urban populations and programs were centered around short term club programs (e.g., violence prevention, teen leadership). Agents from both rural and urban

counties were submitted by the District Directors and District 4-H Specialists and the OSUE administrators selected 4-H Youth Development agents. Criteria for determining successful agents entailed: (a) the highest ranked agents for performance and appraisal, (b) employed for at least two years, and (c) recognized by their peers as a successful 4-H Agent. This study consisted of six successful agents who worked with traditional clientele and six successful agents who worked with non-traditional clientele.

Measure

An occupational analysis was conducted using the DACUM process that provided a committee of experts with the tools necessary to clearly define the tasks and duties they perform. This qualitative data methodology allowed the researcher to capture the experiences of the agents in their own words. Moreover, the "qualitative data offer detailed, rich descriptions, capturing variations between cases" (Patton, 1997, p. 273). The DACUM process has been used by numerous organizations to conduct an organizational analysis, for example, Ohio Department of Education, U. S. Navy, and General Motors (Lamoureux & Leeper, 1996; Norton, 1997). Norton (1985) suggested that DACUM methodology is an alternative to traditional occupational analysis, that are more expensive and take a longer period of time, and is a valid methodology. He further stated "the end product of a DACUM analysis, a complete competency profile of an occupation, can be favorably compared in validity with any other method" (p. 3). O'Brien (1989) tested this methodology and found that the:

DACUM methodology yielded a highly reliable tasks listing. A high degree of consensus was exhibited by respondents in their perceptions of both the importance of these tasks and the frequency with which they were performed" (p. 34).

Through the use of modified brainstorming and group consensus building, a graphical illustration of the occupation is laid out before the members of the DACUM team. Lamoureux and Leeper (1996) suggested that DACUM is based upon three premises: (a) successful workers are better able to fully describe their occupational area; (b) a worker can specifically describe any occupational area based on a number of distinct tasks they would normally perform for each major duty; and (c) success in performing tasks within an occupational area requires worker-based acquisition of definable knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The process is conducted under the leadership of a qualified DACUM facilitator. A core of experts, those individuals who are considered outstanding in their particular job, are assembled to form the occupational analysis committee. This committee of experts and the facilitator then begin the process of analyzing their particular positions. Norton (1990) identified eight steps of the DACUM process: Step 1 - Orientation of committee - the facilitator provides an overview of the process to the committee, including the rationale for utilizing this technique; Step 2 - Review of occupation - arrive at a mutually acceptable working definition of the occupation; Step 3 - Identify general areas of responsibility - use a working definition of the occupation to determine the general areas of responsibility or duties of the occupation; Step 4 - Identify specific tasks performed - specify six or more tasks that are performed by workers within each duty area; Step 5 - Review and refine tasks and duty statements - each task and duty statement is individually reviewed and refined; Step 6 - Sequence task and duty statements - tasks are arranged into some logical sequence; Step 7 - Identify entry-level tasks - specify which tasks on the chart are considered entry-level skills versus those that are considered advanced skills; and, Step 8 - Other options, as desired - refine the working definition, rate the importance of each task, and/or rate how frequently each task is

performed.

Procedures

Data Collection. Two workshops, each lasting three days, were held in accordance to the DACUM training procedures. The first workshop was composed of six agents who worked with non-traditional clientele and the second consisted of six agents who worked with traditional clientele. Agents participating in the workshop received two hours of in-service training before participating in the workshop that acquainted team members with definitions (e.g., duties, tasks), how to write task statements, and the rules for modified brainstorming and group consensus building. Agents were asked to reflect on the clientele that they currently worked with in their county. However, agents were not asked to define their clientele as traditional or non-traditional. Agents had to agree: (a) that the stated duty and task was an essential and meaningful part of their job; and (b) that the task statements clearly described the action that was to be carried out on the job.

The two teams completed the eight step process as outlined by Norton (1990). Teams identified duties, the order of tasks to be carried out, and identified specific tasks for each of the duties. Their final charge was to identify basic skills, intermediate, and advanced skills that an agent should possess. Basic skills were defined as the skills an agent should possess at the time of hire or be able to perform after the first six months on the job. Intermediate skills were defined as the skills an agent should possess after three to five years of experience. Advanced skills were the skills that a tenured agent should be able to perform.

Data Analysis

The data were summarized from each team and the information received was placed on DACUM charts listing duties and tasks. Team members reviewed their respective charts. They

were asked to carefully review the listed duties and tasks, making sure that the wording and sequencing were correct, and to add any missing information. The charts were returned and corrections made. To further ensure validity and reliability of the data, the two charts were sent to a random sample of 15 agents who worked with traditional clientele and 15 agents that worked with non-traditional clientele. Each agent received a copy of the DACUM chart and was asked to verify duties and tasks that were currently a part of their job. Agents responded on a 5 point Likert-type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree that the duties and tasks were a part of their daily jobs. All duties and tasks were identified as a part of the agent's job. Additionally, agents were asked how often they did a particular task. This information indicated that there were tasks that agents knew were a part of their job; however, they were currently not doing these tasks. For example, evaluation was identified as part of the agents job. However, when asked if they were currently involved in evaluating programs, agents generally identified evaluation as one task they were not currently doing. Furthermore, the two charts were compared for similarities and differences in duties and tasks. The charts were then analyzed independently by the reviewers who identified similar themes and/or patterns. The reviewers then met and compared results and disagreements were identified and resolved.

Results

Each team of agents identified different duties and tasks. The agents who worked with traditional clientele identified five key duties: (a) communication skills, (b) personal skills, (c) program development, (4) program management, and (5) human resource management. Each of these duties was followed by a specific list of tasks (see Table 1). The agents that worked with non-traditional clientele identified seven key duties: (a) organizational development, (b) program planning and educational design, (c) volunteer management, (d) resource development, (e) communications, (f)

administrative responsibilities, and (g) personal and professional development. Each of these duties was followed by a specific list of tasks (see Table 2).

Although the two teams of agents defined their jobs differently, there were many similarities in the tasks they described. For example, both groups identified similar tasks pertaining to communication, volunteer management, and general information management.

Differences between the agents that served traditional and non-tradition clientele were clearly evident. Both groups identified tasks relating to volunteer management, however agents that worked with non-traditional clientele identified several additional tasks: (a) respond to the needs of the volunteers; (b) determine the organizational needs for the volunteers; (c) identify teen volunteers; (d) determine the needs and interests of volunteers; (e) redirect. Communication was identified as a duty by both teams, however agents differed in the manner in which they communicated information to their clientele. Agents that worked with traditional clientele identified face to face communication; whereas, agents that worked with non-traditional clientele gave a higher priority to spending more time talking on the telephone with their clients. Moreover, agents that worked with non-traditional clientele utilized the telephone to promote involvement in their programs and to respond to requests.

The approach to program development, another duty area, also varied depending on the clientele. Agents that worked with traditional clientele were involved in: (a) organizing 4-H clubs, (b) organizing school enrichment clubs, and (c) organizing special interest clubs. These agents received more requests due to the formalized community-based club structure or location (e.g., small town/community), to deliver extemporaneous presentations, present prepared speeches, and give demonstrations to promote 4-H community-based clubs.

Table 1. An Occupational Analysis of 4-H Agents-Working with Traditional Clientele

| Communication Skills | Personal Skills | Program Development | Program Management | Human Resource Management |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Use Interpersonal Skills | <u>Work with People</u> | Use Knowledge of Ages and Stages of Youth Development | Follow Organizational Policies & Procedures | Work with Other Agents |
| Write Correspondence | <u>Manage Personal and Professional Life</u> | <u>Use Knowledge of Adult Learning Styles</u> | <u>Manage Multiple Tasks</u> | Work with Co-Workers |
| Write Newsletters | Model Leadership Skills | Utilize Organizational Vision, Mission, and Policies in Program Development | Utilize Program Management Strategies | Work with Committees |
| <u>Deliver Extemporaneous Presentations</u> | <u>Teach Using a Variety of Methods</u> | Involve Committees in Program Planning | <u>Work with Committees</u> | Build Relationships with Clientele |
| <u>Present Prepared Speeches</u> | <u>Adapt to Different Situations</u> | <u>Conduct Informal Needs Assessment</u> | <u>Establish Standards</u> | Supervise 4-H Support Staff |
| Prepare News Releases | Assess Community Norms | Develop Yearly Work Plan-I | Communicate Organizational Policies & Procedures | Supervise Volunteers |
| <u>Give Demonstrations</u> | Assess Organizational Norms | Establish Program Goals | <u>Use Problem Solving Techniques</u> | Train Volunteers-I |
| Write Reports | <u>Adjust to Community Norms</u> | Prioritize Program Goals | <u>Organize 4-H Clubs</u> | Write Job Descriptions-I |
| Prepare TV Programs | <u>Adjust to Organizational Norms</u> | Develop Educational Programs | <u>Develop Educational Programs</u> | Use Interview Skills |
| Prepare Radio Programs-I | Work as a Team Player | Involve Committee in Program Implementation | <u>Organize Special Interest Clubs</u> | Identify Potential Volunteers-I |

| Communication Skills | Personal Skills | Program Development | Program Management | Human Resource Management |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Use Communications Technology | <u>Manage Time</u> | Utilize Research | <u>Organize Activities & Events</u> | Recruit Volunteers-I |
| | <u>Manage Conflict</u> | Collaborate with Extension Personnel | <u>Work with Diverse Clientele-I</u> | Screen Volunteers |
| | <u>Utilize a Variety of Delivery Methods</u> | Write Lesson Plan | Manage Equipment & Facilities | Select Volunteers-I |
| | Recruit and Orient Instructors | Use Creative Program Techniques | <u>Manage Fund Raising</u> | Place Volunteers-I |
| | | Conduct Programs | <u>Manage Calendars</u> | Orient Volunteers |
| | | Evaluate Programs | Manage Information & Files | <u>Communicate Human Resource Structures</u> |
| | | Conduct Community Needs Assessment | Manage Funds & Accounts | Delegate Duties to Volunteers |
| | | <u>Develop Long Range Plans</u> | Manage Data & Records | <u>Facilitate Team Building-I</u> |
| | | Write Grant Proposals-I | Complete Necessary Reports | Empower People-I |
| | | Conduct Research | Document Program Impacts | Recognize Volunteer and Youth -1 |
| | | <u>Develop Curriculum-I</u> | <u>Maintain Strong Public Relations</u> | Evaluate Volunteers-I |
| | | | Discontinue Low Priority Programs | Dismiss Volunteers-I |
| | | | Involve New Audiences | Utilize Mentoring Skills-A |
| | | | Utilize Latest Technology-I | |

| <u>Communication Skills</u> | <u>Personal Skills</u> | <u>Program Development</u> | <u>Program Management</u> | <u>Human Resource Management</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | Market 4-H Programs-A | |

Note. Underlined tasks indicate differences in duties and tasks for agents working with traditional/ non-traditional clientele. No Letter = 0-2 years of experience, I= 2-5 years of experience, A= 5+ years of experience.

Agents that worked with traditional clientele also identified a need to establish standards, communicate organizational policies and procedures, and use *problem solving techniques* for both youth and adult volunteers. These tasks are considered essential to agents that are involved with member-directed projects that have competitive evaluations. For example, community-based clubs are often involved in the raising and selling of livestock (e.g., steers, hogs, sheep), and the showing of animals such as dogs and horses. County and state fairs have standards and policies to guide the showing and selling of animals that agents must clearly communicate. Youth who are unaware of these standards and policies will have, at minimum, their animal disqualified and the possibility of legal ramifications.

The agents who work with non-traditional clientele must continually develop new programs that meet the needs of their diverse clientele. Agents identify these tasks under the duty of program planning and educational design. Tasks include: (a) determining topics, (b) determining characteristics of the clientele, (c) assessing special needs of the clientele, (d) assessing cultural diversity factors, (e) assessing literacy level of the clientele, (f) determining learning styles of the clientele, (g) assisting clientele in meeting basic human needs (e.g., such food, clothing), (h) providing incentives (e.g., food, prizes) to members for program participation, and (i) evaluating programs. Moreover, agents working with non-traditional clientele must find appropriate meeting facilities: (a) a safe location, (b) walking

distance and/or on a route for public transportation, and (c) low cost.

Agents who worked with non-traditional clientele identified the need to build partnerships with several groups: (a) youth, (b) adult clientele, (c) other professionals, (d) established collaborative networks, and (e) the media, unlike the agent who works with traditional audiences and builds few partnerships.

Moreover, personal and professional development was a duty identified only by the agents that worked with non-traditional clientele. Working with non-traditional clientele often required agents to participate in a greater number of professional skill building opportunities. The need for continual retooling requires a consistent focus on professional development, unlike agents who work with traditional clientele for whom retooling was not as necessary to meet the needs of their clientele. This continued focus on professional development and program development was often time consuming for the agents. Agents who worked with non-traditional clientele often faced the difficult task of balancing their personal and professional lives.

Finally, agents identified tasks by degree of expertise, identifying entry level tasks, intermediate and advanced tasks. Agents that worked with non-traditional clientele not only identified a greater number of tasks, they also identified a greater number of tasks that were either intermediate or advanced level skills.

Table 2. An Occupational Analysis of 4-H Agents-Working with Non-Traditional Clientele

| Organizational Development | Program Planning & Educational Design | Volunteer Develop/ Management | Resource Management | Communication | Administrative Responsibilities | Personal & Professional Development |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Build networks with co-workers | Build Partnerships with Youth | <u>Respond to Needs/ Interests of Diverse Volunteers</u> | Identify Resource Needs-I | Communicate with Co-workers | Prepare Administrative Reports | Balance Person/ Professional Life |
| Facilitate Advisory Committee(s)-I | Build Partnerships with Adult Clientele | <u>Determine Organizational Needs of Volunteers</u> | Identify Potential Sources to Fulfill Needs-I | Communicate with Clientele | Manage Member Records | <u>A Plan for Perso./ Professional Growth</u> |
| <u>Facilitate Strategic Planning-A</u> | Build Partnerships with Professionals | <u>Identify Volunteer Trends-I</u> | Generate Resource Develop. Plan-A | Communicate with Committees | Manage Databases-I | <u>Engage in Self-Study-I</u> |
| Develop Organization Mission, Vision, and Values-A | Conduct Needs Assessment-I | Develop Vohmteer Job Descriptions-I | Nurture Relation. W/ Prospective Supporters-I | <u>Build Collaborative Networks-A</u> | Manage Files | <u>Develop an Area of Specialization</u> |
| Set Organizational Structure | Prioritize Program Needs | Identify Potential Volunteers | Solicit Contributions | <u>Develop Publicity and Promotional P-I</u> | Manage Vohmteer Records | <u>Secure Resources for Perso/ Profes. Growth-I</u> |
| Develop an Organizational Structure | Determine Topics and Audiences | Recruit Potential Volunteers | Submit Grant Proposals-I | <u>Adapt/Create Information for Diverse Audiences</u> | <u>Manage Supplies</u> | <u>Participate in In-Service Education</u> |
| Provide Leadership to Committees | <u>Determine Characteristics of Target Audiences</u> | <u>Determine Needs & Interests of Volunteers</u> | Recognize Supporters | <u>Build Relationship(s) with Media-I</u> | Manage Equipment | <u>Utilize Current Research-I</u> |
| Establish Policies & Procedures-I | <u>Assess Special Needs of Target Audiences</u> | Screen & Select Volunteers | Evaluate Resource Develop Process-A | <u>Utilize Appropriate Mass Media for Target Audience-I</u> | Manage Funds | <u>Conduct Applied Research-A</u> |
| Evaluate Organizational Achievements-I | Assess Cultural Diversity Factors | Orient Volunteers | | Compose Media Releases | Manage Budgets | <u>Share Knowledge with Other Youth Develop Professional-I</u> |
| | <u>Assess Literacy Level of Audiences-I</u> | Educate Volunteers-I | | Provide TV Interviews & Presentations-A | Supervise Support Staff-I | <u>Write Article for Professional Publ.-A</u> |
| | <u>Determine Learning Styles</u> | <u>Provide Volunteer Development Opportunities</u> | | Provide Radio Interviews & Presentations-I | <u>Involve Support Staff as Partners in Program Efforts-I</u> | <u>Presentations at Devel. Profess. Meetings</u> |
| | Research Topics | Utilize Volunteers | | <u>Develop Promotional Literature</u> | Recognize <u>Support Staff</u> | <u>Inform Support Team of Professional Development</u> |
| | Determine Program Goals | Evaluate Vohmteers-I | | <u>Conduct 4-H/Extension Awareness Talks</u> | | <u>Provide Service to Youth Development Profession-I</u> |
| | Utilize a Variety of Delivery Methods | Supervise Volunteers | | Write Newsletters | | <u>Provide Service to University-I</u> |

| Organizational Development | Program Planning & Educational Design | Volunteer Develop/ Management | Resource Management | Communication | Administrative Responsibilities | Personal & Professional Development |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Design Developmentally Appropriate Curricula-I | Nurture Relationship(s) with Prospective Supporters | | Write Letters to Inform | | <u>Provide Service to Community</u> |
| | Recruit Instructors-I | Terminate Service of Volunteers if Needed-I | | <u>Write Letters to Thank & Recognize</u> | | |
| | Orient Instructors-I | Recognize & Reward Volunteers | | <u>Utilize Telephone to Promote Involvement in Programs</u> | | |
| | Develop Lesson Plans Specific to Target Audience(s) | <u>Redirect Volunteers-I</u> | | <u>Utilize Telephone to Respond to Request</u> | | |
| | <u>Design Evaluation</u> | | | <u>Inform Influential Leaders of Program Impacts-I</u> | | |
| | Develop Educational Materials-I | | | <u>Management of Mailing List-I</u> | | |
| | Arrange Appropriate Facilities | | | Utilize List Server to Facilitate Discussions-A | | |
| | <u>Ensure Basic Human Needs are Met</u> | | | Utilize E-mail | | |
| | <u>Provide Incentives for Program Participants</u> | | | | | |
| | <u>Plan for Equipment</u> | | | | | |
| | Facilitate the | | | | | |
| | Teach Programs | | | | | |
| | Provide Recognition for | | | | | |
| | Evaluate Programs | | | | | |

Note. Highlighted areas indicate differences in duties and tasks for agents working with traditional/ non-traditional clientele, No Letter = 0-2 years of experience, I= 2-5 years of experience, A= 5+ years of experience of the volunteers; and (e) redirect volunteers.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide evidence that the duties and tasks performed by 4-H agents in Ohio are dependent on the clientele the agent serves. The assessment of duties and tasks provides an understanding of the competencies needed by agents working with both traditional and non-traditional clientele. Stone and Bieber (1997) suggested that competencies “are the application of knowledge, technical skills and personal characteristics leading to outstanding performance” (p. 1). Moreover, this study identifies tasks that are entry level and tasks that are performed by agents who are more advanced in their careers. Identifying the duties, tasks and the level of expertise needed in a particular setting provides critical information to OSUE and other CES organizations. Agents can only be successful if they possess the necessary knowledge, technical skills, and personal characteristics needed by a particular clientele. Determining the strengths and personal work preferences of potential agents and matching these to particular clientele will better ensure an agent’s success.

The findings from this study suggest that there are similar competencies needed by all agents. All agents must: (a) provide a quality educational program, (b) recruit volunteers, and (c) manage multiple programs. However, there are clearly different competencies needed by agents depending on their particular clientele.

Agents working with traditional clientele maintain and manage ongoing community-based clubs, these agents must: (a) maintain and support long term clubs, (b) provide and educate clientele on the policies and standards for competing in local event, (c) work closely with fair boards, and (d) work with multiple advisory and planning committees. Moreover, agents with non-traditional clientele face different challenges due to the setting and their clientele. For example, these agents must: (a) manage short term programs, (b) recruit new clients and volunteers to participate in

programs, (c) find locations for meetings, and (c) meet basic human needs prior to providing educational opportunities.

This study also provides new information, the DACUM occupational analysis chart, that identifies duties and tasks performed by agents working with a particular clientele. Current models do not provide duty and task differentiation based on clientele served. For example, when comparing the results of this study with the current 4-H PRK model, it is evident that the PRK model focuses on the traditional clientele model. For example, ensuring that participants’ basic needs are met and providing for their personal safety.

Using the framework identified by the agents in this study will allow the state extension human resource team to match the competencies needed for working with a particular clientele based on an individual’s knowledge, technical skills, and personal characteristics. Agents who are well matched with their positions are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Miller (1997) suggested “...a person’s job satisfaction is based on or directly influenced by the job’s characteristics” (p. 2). Thus, retaining successful agents in their positions may be directly related to the match between the agent’s knowledge, technical skills, and personality characteristics, and the knowledge, technical skills and personality characteristics needed in a particular position.

Moreover, human resource teams can use the DACUM charts from this study to determine the in-service needs of 4-H Youth Development agents. In-service training can be based on several factors including years of employment and the duties and tasks that agents at this tenure need to perform. Identifying in-service needs based on an agent’s tenure allows the in-service to focus on the specific skills needed by a particular group. The charts provide information concerning the skills needed by agents working with a particular clientele. In-service training can be designed to

focus on a particular clientele and the agents that work with this group. For example, agents that worked with non-traditional clientele identified several tasks related to volunteer recruitment that were significantly different from the agents that worked with traditional clientele. Providing in-service training that supports agents is essential to an agent's success and the ultimate success of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Recommendations

This study focused on agents that worked with traditional and non-traditional clientele. The information gained from this study will need to be further verified by other agents who work with traditional and non-traditional clientele. Additionally, future studies should be conducted that evaluate agents who were seen as less successful with traditional and/or non-traditional clientele comparing the identified duties and tasks with the list created by successful 4-H agents. These studies would identify the duties and tasks that these agents perform compared to the 4-H agents seen as successful. Information gained from this type of study would provide a comparison of identified duties and tasks in several areas: (a) an agent's perception of duties and tasks needed to work with a particular clientele, (b) a match between the agent's skills and the needs of the clientele, and (c) identification of training needed by particular agents.

The DACUM occupational analysis provides critical information that can be used by human resource departments of extension. It offers a breakdown of the duties, tasks and the level of expertise needed by 4-H agents working with two different clienteles. Identifying competencies provides OUSE and other CES organizations with valuable information that can be used by state level human resource teams in several ways: (a) pre-employment preparation, (b) interviewing and selection, (c) orientation and training, (d) career development, (e) performance appraisal, and (f) successful planning (Stone, 1997). Additionally,

the possibility of identifying and matching of an agent's competencies may reduce the number of agents leaving the system (both self-selected and organization-selected). Designing a new model that identifies variations in the duties and skills needed by a 4-H agent for different kinds of clientele would assist both the agent and the supervisor in determining those that are most relevant to a particular clientele and those that are core or universal regardless of clientele.

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