

plicable at the university level. Teaching methods should be chosen because they can best be used to accomplish specific educational objectives, not because they are easy, or familiar, or even because they are traditional. Many methods, including the lecture, are appropriate in a university setting, but any of them can be misused.

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TEACHING METHOD REPORT

Making Introduction to Technical Reporting Related to the Agricultural World of Work

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Introduction

The Related Education Division of the University of Minnesota Technical College, Waseca provides agriculturally-oriented students with approximately one-third of the course work required towards their Associate in Applied Science degrees. One of these required courses is Communications 1203, Introduction to Technical Reporting.

Two major areas are covered in this course: correspondence and reports. In the correspondence section, letter types include memorandums, inquiries, requests, orders, responses, complaints, adjustments, collections and thank you letters. The correspondence section also includes a unit on the "Job Package" where students write letters of application, resumes, requests for recommendations, interview follow-ups, job acknowledgements, status inquiries, job refusals, and job acceptances.

The report section covers the broad areas of research, documentation, graphics, and organization. A specific large concentration focuses on a feasibility study with shorter projects worked in, such as a process description, instructions, minutes, as well as periodic and accident reports.

Oral presentations are worked in both areas. The "Job Package" gives the student an opportunity to interview and the written feasibility report is given orally to disseminate to classmates knowledge learned in their field of interest and expertise.

Methods

To make communicating more interesting and applicable to the student as well as to stress the absolute necessity of the need for it, the following methods are an example of what might be done.

In the correspondence unit after general background material is taught, including the process of

transactional writing, persuasion and scientific argument, style and tone, and basic principles, the interaction begins. All students write inquiry, request, order, complaint and collection letters. Before they are corrected they are exchanged between students for response letters, adjustment letters and thank-you letters. Students find it easy to respond to letters that are well written. However, they find it more difficult to respond to those that are lacking in sufficient information. When questions arise, students become aware that the only form of communication they may use is in writing, therefore, more letters are written until the complete cycle is finished with the original request completed.

The object of this procedure is to have students send and receive letters that are actual examples of types they will be dealing with in the work world. Clarity and conciseness are achieved through this process as well as the ability to write the original letter well so as not to have to rewrite assignments until they are correct. Hopefully, students are also learning efficiency for the world of work.

The feasibility report unit is taught covering research, basic principles of organization, documentation and bibliography. Where the teaching method in this area may differ, selection of a topic is made by the student with the instructor's consent after the student has found available material for the report. Students garner ideas through laboratory classes in their specific fields of interest as well as on the home farm or their POP (Pre-Occupational Preparation) experience. Because of the type of technical education experience our students receive, much of their information comes from lectures, laboratories and interviews with instructors who are highly trained in the areas of research. The reports the students complete will be useful now and in their future work as well.

When the students later give their reports orally, visual aids are highly stressed. Because of the diversification of student areas of expertise, this oral report unit is especially interesting for all of the students.

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Many questions are asked and an excellent experience of oral communication takes place.

The last and probably one of the units the students enjoy most is the "Job Package." Because they are aware of the difficulty of getting a good job, students take this unit very seriously. They are asked to select an actual job listing from the placement center board. They then write an application letter and resume. These are sent to the student who will be interviewing them. Questions for the interview are then formulated from the letter and resume. An interview is set up. Interviews are done between the students themselves. They prepare to be interviewed as well as to conduct an interview. Ten minute time slots are scheduled in a location that would be similar to that of an actual job interview. These interviews are videotaped and put on reserve in the library for the student to view and

critique. The student and instructor then review their performance for improvements. Upon completion an interview follow-up letter is written.

A variation of the interview process is also used where instructors in the field of the students' programmatic area do the actual interviewing. This is done when instructors are available and willing to give of their time.

Conclusion

Although the various methods previously described are only one instructor's way of organizing, presenting, and interrelating technical communication correspondence and reports, it is hoped that even a portion might inspire a colleague to try a new or different approach in teaching Introduction to Technical Reporting.

High-Ability Urban High School Seniors' Perceptions of Agricultural Study and Selected Recruitment Strategies

Sue I. Betts and L.H. Newcomb

Introduction

United States agriculture leads the world in meeting the needs of a growing population with a reduced supply of resources. It is an industry which has become increasingly complex and technologically advanced, thus requiring a stable supply of well-trained and highly-educated professionals to ensure its future success.

The primary source of such professionals has traditionally been colleges of agriculture which provide slightly more than 65% of the individuals needed (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges). During the late 1960's and early 1970's, agricultural college enrollments increased tremendously. However, since 1978, enrollment in the land grant colleges of agriculture has declined nearly 25% (Reisch, 1984), yet the USDA projects the overall demand for food and agricultural science graduates will exceed the supply by 13% during the mid 1980's (1980). Because of the national and international importance of agriculture, this deficit of qualified professionals threatens not only the agricultural industry, but also the entire United States economy and the global community.

One of the major solutions proposed to remedy this human resource dilemma is recruitment of high-ability urban students by colleges of agriculture. The nature and aspirations of these students along with declines in the number of college age students and smaller rural populations provide a logical basis for this initiative. Hence, there is a need to understand how

these students perceive agriculture, studying in a college of agriculture and agricultural careers.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine how high-ability urban students perceived agriculture, agricultural areas of study and careers; and what recruitment strategies would be most effective in attracting such students to attend an agricultural college.

The objectives of the study were addressed via the following research questions:

1. How accurate are the current perceptions of high-ability high school seniors regarding agriculture, agricultural areas of study, curricula and careers?
2. How do high-ability urban high-school seniors rate the effectiveness of selected recruitment strategies and which of these strategies have they experienced?

Procedures

Population and Sample

A list of high school seniors from the Ohio cities of Columbus, Toledo and Dayton who had achieved a composite score of 26 or above on the ACT or 1150 or above on the SAT and who had been admitted to The Ohio State University was obtained from The Ohio State University Admissions Office. A random sample of 186 students was chosen from the population of 359 to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected via a six-part, researcher developed, mailed questionnaire. The instrument was tested for content validity, reliability and suitability.

Face validity was established via a panel of expert faculty and graduate students at Ohio State. The instrument was pilot tested at Findlay High School with 22 students of high academic ability. Reliability was

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