an invitation for a visit, was poor. It was not until a student, who had graduated from the high school in question, asked the principal or Vo-Ag teacher for a chance to present the program that our visitation list began to grow. During the 1969-70 school year, invitations are being sought entirely through the students initiating the first contact between the high school and the University.

The alumnus must be carefully chosen. He should be someone who has been successful; he must be known and well-thought-of in the high school area. Not all alumni contacted were willing to be on the program and not all who promised to participate showed up. Let the program be flexible enough to compensate for such happenings. Yet these alumni can be a most effective part of the program.

Be prepared to talk to any group. If one is prepared for juniors and seniors in Vo-Ag only, it will be a shock to have the entire senior class appear or the freshmen or sophomores only. The relaxed informal atmosphere of the high school can produce any grouping on a given day.

The program itself must be lively and fast moving for high school students get bored easily. The use of the prepared script offers continuity, conciseness, and a solid basis so that any faculty or student could travel to the various schools with little advance preparation. Obviously, the colored slides add tremendous visual support to the over-all event, but they must be sharp and relatively bright to stand out under varying daytime classroom conditions. Take along projection equipment; a rostrum would be helpful at times.

Do not plan on being received with fanfare or open arms; you may be only another recruiter to the assembled group. Plan your own introduction in case you do not get an official one. Be ready to accept congratulations after presenting the program; also be prepared to talk in depth to the one or two students who want further information but be ready for the sheer silence on the part of the majority in response to the question time.

In order to minimize expense and efforts two visits in one day were arranged. Since programs starting after 1:30 P.M. were undesirable, the first visit was scheduled from 8:00 to 9:00 A.M. and the second after lunch. Mondays and Fridays were not good days to visit in the high schools. Twenty to twenty-five visits per quarter seems to be a realistic number to strive for. All arrangements for visits must be handled by only one coordinator.

From the response of the high school students and their Vo-Ag teachers contacted through this program and from the opinions of the agricultural faculty at Tech, this recruitment project has been worthwhile. The involvement of a student at Tech and an alumnus from the respective areas helps to bridge the gap of communication between our faculty and the prospective students, and affords a person with which such students can identify.

The actual effectiveness of such a recruiting venture would be hard to measure in the short run, but we feel our challenge is to inform the high school students of the opportunities in agriculture. The agricultural faculty at Tech plans to continue this program in the future by up-dating the slides and visiting new schools each year, and by possible complete revision of the slides and format every two years.

Creative Approaches to Teaching Ornamental Horticulture Short Course

Benton K. Bristol

A highly successful short course was taught for four consecutive years at the Annual Conference for Illinois Vocational Agriculture Teachers. The course began in 1966, and was based on the theoretical framework suggested by the following statements:

Creative ideas from any discipline have universal applications to all lines of work

No single discipline has a monopoly on the creative ideas necessary for success in that discipline

No single individual, educational institution, community, state or nation has a monopoly on the theoretical knowledge, understanding of practical applications, and desire necessary for implementing ideas

There is a reason for everything that happens in the world:

- Many of the reasons have been recorded in one or more publications
- Other reasons may be obtained from unpublished sources
- Additional reasons may be discovered through unusual circumstances

Knowing there is not (at present) a satisfactory answer to a particular problem is valuable information, and may be a stimulant to creative thought

Academic aptitude (especially when accompanied by intellectual snobbery, self-satisfaction, and similar traits) can inhibit creativity

Everyone has ideas, but many of them are lost

Teaching people what they want to learn is easier than teaching them what they ought to learn

Basic principles have more meaning if they are used to support exciting ideas

It is not always necessary, or even desirable, to start at the beginning

Many have made important contributions outside their chosen field

The power of observation often is little used or is misused

The lack of time, funds and facilities can be stimulants to creativity

A natural optimistic, enthusiastic and cheerful outlook makes it possible for good ideas to be formed, developed and implemented

Ideas should be judged according to their worth and not on the basis of who presents them

The education and experience background of the teachers attending the short course each of the four years is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Education and Experience Background of Teachers Attending the Short Course

	1st Yr.	2nd Yr.	3rd Yr.	4th Yr.
Number attending the short course	23	20	22	31
Several courses in ornamental horticulture at the university level	2	5	6	9

	1st Yr.	2nd Yr.	3rd Yr.	4th Yr.
A few courses in ornamental horticulture at the university level	6	2	2	4
One course in ornamental horticulture at the university level	2	4	6	11
No courses in ornamental horticulture at the university level	13	9	8	7
Considerable practical experience in ornamental horticulture	3	3	2	4
Some practical experience in ornamental horticulture	5	2	11	15
Little or no practical experience in ornamental horticulture	15	15	9	12

At the beginning of each session, participants were asked why they had decided to attend the course. The reasons most frequently given by the teachers were related to the following: increased demand for this type of training by high school students and adults, desire to teach one or more courses in ornamental horticulture or to improve courses which were being taught (included work with adults as well as with high school students), intention to include elements of ornamental horticulture as part of present courses in agriculture, attending previous short course and finding it helpful and/or enjoyable, having heard that the previous year's short course was worthwhile, the expressive title of this particular short course, need to improve professional competency, desire to encourage instructor to offer this short course on a continuing basis, and hobby interest.

At the beginning of each short course session, the teachers also were asked what questions they would like to have answered, or what topics they would like to have discussed. The questions asked and/or topics suggested were primarily related to the following main areas: green house construction and management, what others are doing in ornamental horticulture, various details of starting and/or teaching of high school and adult classes, source material and teaching aids, opportunities for improving teachers' professional competence, developing creative approaches, facilities and materials needed for teaching ornamental horticulture, latest information about many of the subject matter segments of ornamental horticulture, opportunities in ornamental horticulture for young men interested in the field, appropriate laboratory exercises, and things which could be taught without too great an investment in equipment and materials.

A short time after the short course was taught, each participant was sent an evaluation form. Percentage of response ranged from a low of 65 percent the second year to 80 percent the fourth year. Percentages of return for the first and third years were 70 and 77 respectively.

The responses to questions included on the evaluation form each of the four years are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Creative Approaches To Teaching Ornamental Horticulture Short Course Evaluation

Questions	Percentage of Respondents Checking 1st Yr.	2nd Yr.	3rd Yr.	4th Yr.
1. How applicable was the material to your present teaching situation?				
Generally useful	56	69	76	88
Some useful information	19	23	24	12
Not applicable	25	8		
2. How applicable was the material to your future teaching situation?				
Generally useful	69	100	90	88
Some useful information	19		10	12
Not Applicable	12			
3. Was the short course length				
About right?	19	92	76	96
Too short?	69	8	24	4
Too long?	12			

Note: The length of the short course was one and one-half hours the first year and over two and one-half hours each succeeding year.

4. Do you have plans for applying course information to your teaching?				
Yes	76	92	96	96
No	24		4	
Not yet		8		
Perhaps				4
5. Do you believe the short course topic, "Creative Approaches To Teaching Ornamental Horticulture," should be offered next year?				
Yes	88	100	100	100
No	12			
6. Would you be willing to assist as a member of an advisory committee in planning next year's course?				
Yes	57	92		
No	25			
Possibly	6			
Not responding	12	8		

Note: Question number six was eliminated from the course evaluation forms for the third and fourth years since more than

enough volunteers had been obtained the first two years. Written responses from teachers who had taken the short course were especially helpful in course planning.

Respondents were asked to provide information such as the following: items not included in the short course which should be included the following year, other comments or suggestions for improvement they might have, and anything else which they might care to mention. Most of the teachers took advantage of the opportunity to offer suggestions and make comments concerning the short course. As might be expected, comments about the first year's effort were somewhat less favorable than for each of the succeeding years. Even the first year, however, a number of the teachers thought the program was well organized and conducted for the length of time available.

The short course was highly successful largely because of the outstanding cooperation of the teachers attending, their searching questions, and specific suggestions for improvement.

A "TEXTBOOK GAP" IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Dr. N. Omri Rawlins
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics
Department of Agriculture
Middle Tennessee State University

Much has been written and said about gaps which we find in our society. Some which come to mind are the "generation gap" and the "credibility gap" which are still with us but not discussed very often these days. I would like to point out that a "textbook gap" exists, even though the number of books per capita is probably higher today than any time since the invention of the printing press.

At a time when most academic disciplines are literally flooded with textbooks and instructors have a real challenge to select the texts best suited to their course orientation, it seems paradoxical that certain disciplines are extremely limited in textbook alternatives. I am referring to agricultural economics, generally, and agricultural price analysis, specifically.

Some instructors contend that the few textbooks available in agricultural economics are excellent and therefore we have no need for additional texts from which to choose. I do not question the quality of available texts, but I do contend that one good text will not fulfill the needs of a given course in all departments. The type of course and text needed depends to a large extent on the background of the students and their future plans relative to additional courses in the field and occupational goals. These factors vary considerably between a highly developed department of agricultural economics and a general agricultural department striving to develop the agribusiness phase of its curricula.

Although the variety is limited, I am relatively satisfied with the textbooks available in most areas of agricultural economics, with the exception of agricultural price analysis. A survey of current publication summaries[1] indicated that only two textbooks are available in this field of study. These texts are AGRICULTURAL PRICES by Thomsen and Foote and AGRICULTURAL PRICE ANALYSIS by Shepherd. Neither of these texts meets the needs of our students, and I suspect this is true for many other departments around the country.

The Thomsen and Foote text is extremely outdated. The latest edition was published in 1952 and the latest statistics quoted are 1950. In a field of study as dynamic as agricultural price analysis, a text this old is extremely limited in its usefulness. This means that the text by Shepherd is the only up-to-date text available for undergraduate and graduate courses taught in agricultural price analysis throughout the United States.

Again, I am not questioning the content or the quality of Professor Shepherd's book. However, I am questioning its adaptability to the needs of all students, undergraduate and graduate, in agricultural price courses. I am especially questioning the suitability of this text for undergraduate students needing a general knowledge about agricultural price analysis beyond what they learn in an introductory agricultural economics course but who are not planning to specialize in this area.

The text by Shepherd is oriented more toward graduate level study and students who have a strong background in mathematics, statistics and economics, especially intermediate price theory. The emphasis of the whole book is very well expressed in the following quote from Chapter 15: "It is assumed here that the reader has an introductory knowledge of speculation and hedging on the commodity exchanges. The purpose of this chapter is to explore further some of the more advanced and technical problems in these operations."[2]

In what course are students expected to get an "introductory knowledge" of the commodity exchange? It is not normally taught in an introductory course in agricultural economics nor the principles courses in economics and statistics. Neither are many other important concepts which Professor Shepherd assumes that the students already know.

I submit that the basic assumptions of Professor Shepherd's text are unrealistic for the majority of students taking agricultural price analysis for undergraduate credit, especially for developing departments of Agriculture. I further submit that Professor Shepherd has a "monopoly" on textbooks in this area of study.

I, therefore, challenge agricultural economists, especially agricultural price specialists, to shift your writing efforts from experiment station publications to textbooks in order to reduce, if not eliminate, the "textbook gap" in agricultural economics. Students, teachers and the discipline in general will benefit from your efforts.

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[1]Books in Print, 1969 and Subject Guide to Books in Print, 1969, (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1970).

[2]Geoffrey S. Shepherd, Agriculture Price Analysis, (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1968). p. 226.

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