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Guide for Extension Agent In Training (Home Economics)

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service

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GUIDE

for Extension Agent in Training

(Home Economics)

for learning About

the Extension Agent's

Job in Home Economics

This guide contains a working outline for extension agents in home economics as they train. It is hoped the use of it will help you deepen and enrich your understanding of the work of an educator as an initiator, a planner, an organizer, a teacher, and an evaluator.

Part II is supplementary to the working outline, for further study.
MEETINGS

A meeting is one of the channels used to get information to people. It may also create an opportunity for discussion in which people grow intellectually or change an attitude. In addition, a meeting allows you as an educator to arrange for training in leadership and the other skills of group participation.

Most of the things done to get ready for and hold a meeting offer opportunities for you to train a leader and to allow those who will attend to participate. This may take more time than if you performed these tasks yourself. If you see your job as one concerned with the teaching of people rather than dispensing information, you will attempt to take advantage of this strength a meeting offers over other ways of getting information to people.

Things to do for any meeting

In advance:

1. Define audience to be reached
2. Define purpose of meeting
3. Decide if meeting or some other means is best method to use.
4. Determine responsibilities in connection with meeting and give help or training needed to those assigned a responsibility. Decisions to be made are:
   a. Who will preside?
   b. Who will take care of necessary records as minutes, registration, luncheon tickets, etc.
   c. Who is to be on the program and what they will present.
5. Determine with leaders involved the agenda for the meeting and be sure that those involved are informed well in advance.
6. Arrange for place and set date and time, giving consideration to the audience and purpose of meeting.
7. Inform staff members not involved in the meeting as to purpose, time, place, etc.
8. Notify those expected to attend well enough in advance so they can plan to attend and to make any expected preparation.
9. Publicize meeting through mass media. Also arrange for pictures or publicity to be handled during or after meeting.

10. Arrange for supplies and equipment needed.

11. Double check all your arrangements to be sure that room will be ready, supplies delivered and people notified, etc.

12. Be sure it will be an enjoyable experience in as pleasant an atmosphere as possible.

At the meeting:

1. Arrive well in advance of meeting. If possible arrange with a hostess or two to greet people and assist with seating.

2. Be sure the meeting is started on time and ends on time.

3. State the purpose of the meeting, what will be done, and what is expected of the audience in such a way that the climate of the meeting will be appropriate to the audience and the purpose.

4. Be aware of comfort of audience and make necessary adjustments, such as letting them stand, adjusting temperature, ventilation and light.

5. Before the meeting closes be sure that those attending know the main points covered, how the material is to be used, and any plans for future work.

After the meeting:

1. Make any necessary records or reports.

2. Write down any ideas or suggestions for improvement of future meetings and file in appropriate folder.

3. Thank those who assisted with the meeting.

4. Communicate any ideas that might be used in program planning.

5. Plan any follow-up with those attending and/or for those who did not come.

6. Release publicity of meeting.
Planning Meetings for Activities

Although committees have often been ridiculed, the advantage of involving leaders in planning for an activity is easily identified. When leaders help in planning they are more interested and are better prepared to help carry out the activity. By working with a group, ideas from different areas of the county and different interests can be obtained. When you work with a group you can teach how to be an effective committee member. People are usually willing to help plan for an event if the activity is one they feel is worthwhile, if their ideas are accepted and if the planning meeting does not get involved in minute details.

Many of the same procedures and principles are involved in all planning meetings.

1. Clarifying purpose of the meeting.
2. Clarifying who has responsibility for decisions.
4. Determination of possible solutions.
5. Decision on action.

Suggestions for Planning Meetings

1. Don't ask a committee to plan an activity if all decisions on it have been made.
2. Be sure that each committee member understands what the committee's task is and where their job begins and ends.
3. Be aware of what individual members can learn about how to plan and how to be an effective committee member by helping with the planning.
4. Be sure the committee is aware of the alternatives and consequences before making decisions. (Pointing these out becomes the role of the educator.)
5. See that each person has a chance to contribute her ideas. Brainstorming may be a useful way of getting all ideas out.
6. Aim for integration of everyone's ideas rather than domination by the more forceful individuals or compromise between opposing viewpoints.
7. Strike a balance between dragging out the meeting and pushing the group for decisions without consideration.
8. End with clear-cut division of responsibility -- or assign a person or sub-group to delegate jobs.
9. Be sure the chairman understands reporting back to the main organization on progress made.
Leader Lesson Training

A leader lesson is the responsibility of the Home Economics Extension Agent and carries forward the educational program of the county.

In Advance

1. If specialist is to teach the lesson, make plans with specialist and record plans as far in advance as possible. This may be by conference or by correspondence.

2. Ask specialist about bulletins -- are you to order or will specialist bring?

3. If you do not hear again from specialist by 2 or 3 weeks before meeting, be sure you have sent all needed information to specialist.

4. Be sure the secretary sends a copy of letter, notifying leaders of meeting, to specialist at least a week before the meeting.

5. If you are doing the training, secure needed help from specialist and have her look over any material you are preparing for your use.

6. If you are using Purdue bulletins, the specialist needs to know of your intention to make sure that an adequate supply is available.

7. If a cooperating person (not in Extension) is doing the training, confer with the person early about the purpose of the lesson and the need for accurate facts to be presented as a local club lesson. Often it is helpful to assist the person in organizing and duplicating a fact sheet for the leaders.

8. See "Things To Do For Any Meeting."

At the Meeting

1. Be enthusiastic. Remember you influence the attitude of the group.

2. You will want to consider making it possible for people on program planning committee or steering committee to have responsibilities at the meeting.

3. The introduction should be long enough to convince leaders that the teacher was well chosen, and to remind leaders of their responsibility to take the lesson to their club.

4. Throughout the meeting be attentive to needs of teacher and leaders.

5. Take notes -- this is a learning experience for you, too. You need to understand so you can help women to pick out important points.

6. Observe teaching methods of specialist.

7. Observe participation of leaders such as: their attitude toward lesson, kinds of questions they ask and their understanding of material presented.

8. Leaders need to know what they are going to teach and how. Time should be provided to see that this is accomplished.
After the Meeting:

1. A follow-up letter to leaders is often advisable.

2. Be interested in how lessons are given in clubs and how received. Do leaders pass on material -- use with other groups?

3. Watch for additional interest leading to another lesson.

4. If a club is not represented at the leader training, arrange for the leader to receive the material. Encourage her to observe the lesson at another club before giving it.

5. File lesson leaflet, leader's outline, names of leaders present and your notes.

6. Watch for opportunities to implement ideas in the lesson at future meetings -- such as exhibits, skits, etc.

Special Interest Meeting

What is it?

1. A subject that appeals to individuals with special needs or interests may be offered as a special interest meeting. A subject that has repeatedly come up at program planning but which was not of interest to a majority is often one that lends itself to this method.

2. Sometimes these involve material best presented by specialists.

3. Many are handled by agents and local people.

4. Special interest meetings are an excellent way to reach people not in clubs.

5. Some special interest meetings require pre-registration and need to be limited in attendance. Other special interest meetings are unlimited in attendance and much pre-publicity is needed to get large attendance.

6. Staff cooperation is desirable for some special interest meetings so that both men and women will feel free to attend. (Examples: landscaping, house planning, flower and garden, and subjects of concern to parents.)
Club Lessons

In most counties the Home Economics Extension Agent plans to teach a lesson in each of the clubs over a period of time. This helps the women to look upon her as a teacher. It also gives her an opportunity to know the women better, see their homes and to find out how they feel about the club and the program. While you are waiting for the meeting to start or in visiting after the meeting you may wish to initiate conversation that will let the members tell you something about themselves personally and how they feel about leadership and the club program.

The topics for agent lessons are usually chosen in program planning. Frequently the Home Economics Extension Agent teaches something that would be difficult for a leader to present. Sometimes clubs are given a choice of topics and a choice of months when they would like the home economics extension agent to visit. In some cases the agent feels she can make more efficient use of her time by scheduling club lessons and by limiting topics she will teach to one or two at most. The beginning agent should not attempt to teach more lessons than can be well prepared and well presented.

Suggestions for Club Lessons

1. Choose topics that women have requested or those they can identify as being useful to them.

2. Let the clubs know well in advance what you are prepared to teach, the dates you prefer and the length of time you will need, and any special equipment such as a stove, table, etc.

3. Have a definite scheduled date with each club and try to keep this date.

4. Plan your lesson far enough ahead that you can prepare needed illustrative material, bulletins or other hand-outs and order needed supplies. The specialist may be able to help you in getting ready for the lesson if you let her know several months in advance. Often she can make suggestions as to content or loan you illustrative material.

5. Plan how you may involve the women in deciding what will be taught and in participating at the meeting. A demonstration may be easier, but they may learn more by doing.

6. Practice your presentation before going to the clubs.

7. Review the membership cards for each club before going to the meeting so that you can make needed changes or adaptations to fit the particular audience. For example: a club composed of young women with limited incomes will have different needs than a club composed predominately of middle aged or older women in comfortable circumstances.

8. Evaluate each meeting, write any observations you have, file in the individual club or lesson folder. These can help you the next year when you are planning your club lesson. Evaluation might include such items as:
   a. What was the objective of the lesson and was it reached?
   b. Was the topic suitable and worthwhile?
   c. Were there ways my presentation could have been improved?
   d. Were there any breakdowns in communication resulting in arrangements not being as expected?
Programs for Other Groups

Sometimes the Home Economics Extension Agent is asked to appear on programs for groups other than the regular Extension organizations. Examples would be sororities, PTA, Business Women or Rotary. Cooperation with such groups is desirable if it is planned cooperation. Planned cooperation implies that there are some mutual concerns and that you have been able to schedule these meetings without neglecting other responsibilities. Providing a program to fill up a blank spot or substituting for the scheduled program usually is not a good use of time.

In deciding whether to accept such engagements, you may wish to consider if this is an opportunity for good public relations, whether the group has a problem to which you can contribute information or if this is an opportunity for reaching a new audience.

When you appear at such groups, to the person in the audience you will represent the Cooperative Extension Service and Purdue University. Your appearance and presentation of the material should reflect creditably on them. If you are reporting accomplishments of the Cooperative Extension Service you should make it clear that much of the work is done through leaders and in cooperation with other organizations and individuals. This will aid in the understanding of the Cooperative Extension Service as well as giving credit to leadership where suitable. It is often wise to explain contests as learning experiences rather than ways to make awards. When you present a picture of Extension as an ongoing educational program, you have done a good job.

Schools and Workshops

These are a series of meetings conducted by the agent alone or with specialist help. Frequently enrollment is taken in advance and some sort of recognition is given for completion. Certificates suitable for those completing the course are available through the State Leader's office. Schools or workshops are ordinarily not attempted until the home economics extension agent has learned something about the people and the program. It is well to consult with the supervisor before scheduling such schools. Some guides have been developed that she can offer you for adapting to your situation.
ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A well coordinated extension program has many built-in experiences that aid in developing leadership. A very direct approach is used at times, too.

Training meeting held for: Home demonstration agent or 4-H club officers; training for committee chairmen; and leadership training for junior leaders, are examples of such training.

Officers' Training Meetings

For Home Demonstration Club Officers

1. People enjoy learning to carry out the duties as elected officers. Officers who understand their duties can help the group function more efficiently and harmoniously. The more effective officers conduct the business with dispatch to give adequate time for the lesson.

2. Officers' training sessions are usually held at the beginning of the club year.

3. These training sessions should be planned as carefully as a subject matter lesson.

4. The county Home Demonstration Executive Committee may be the planning group for this meeting.

5. Some information, useful to all officers, could be developed in the general sessions -- such as purpose of organization, organizational structure and some phase of communications.

6. Past county officers usually have learned methods they are glad to share. Often they appreciate working with the agent ahead of time to outline material to be presented. In some counties the group is divided for instructional periods for each office. Some counties have compiled handbooks that are handed down each year to new officers.

7. To help with these sessions there are available, a series of leaflets for various officers and a general leaflet on rules for conducting meetings. The following officers' training material is available: HE-337, HE-378, HE-379, HE-380, HE-381, and HE-417.

For 4-H Club Officers

1. Junior Leaders find this a very challenging kind of meeting to assist in placing and conducting (see Extension Circular 239).

4-H Training Meetings

Training meetings in connection with the 4-H program may be of two types:

1. Those for leaders and/or junior leaders.
2. Those for both leaders and members.

An example of the first type might be a meeting that would train leaders and junior leaders how to teach judging.

An example of the second type would be one in which members of the electric project are invited to attend a county-wide meeting to receive training on lighting, wiring, or use of electricity.

Subject matter training for 4-H leaders can frequently be done in connection with training for home demonstration clubs. For example, 4-H club leaders can be invited to attend a leader training meeting on flower arrangement, nutrition or food preparation. Many special interest meetings may be open to people in various programs, including 4-H families.

References:

Indiana 4-H Club Leader's Guide, Extension Circular 460
Indiana 4-H Club Officers' Guide, Extension Circular 239
4-H Junior Leadership, Extension Circular 145
Home Demonstration Clubs

Membership

There are no requirements established for membership in home demonstration clubs other than an interest in carrying out the educational program of the Cooperative Extension Service. Some individual clubs set limits on membership to conform to the available meeting place. Usually clubs meet in homes and this limits membership to 30 or less.

Clubs should be encouraged to invite newcomers to the community to visit their club and become acquainted with the program. If more members are interested in joining a club than can be accommodated, the existing club should assist with organization of a new one. This spirit is an indication of a lively and strong organization. It is recommended that an individual belong to not more than one local home demonstration club.

The Club Meeting

A typical home demonstration club meeting has four parts -- opening, lesson, business and visiting. As the clubs were organized to participate in the Extension educational program, the lesson period deserves its rightful share of the meeting.

As the leaders often spend a day at the leader training school, and many hours at home preparing the lesson, they deserve ample meeting time to teach the lesson. Many clubs follow the practice of having the lesson before the business part of the meeting -- to insure the leaders of adequate time.

There is not one order for a home demonstration club meeting. Presidents may keep more interest if they vary the order from month to month. A club meeting should include these things that make it a home demonstration club -- lesson, safety item of the month, song of the month and its history, home demonstration creed, home demonstration prayer, plus the necessary business, such as roll call, minutes, new and old business.

A well balanced home demonstration club meeting might be diagrammed like a teeter-totter to look like this:

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Opening + Lesson = Business + Social or Visiting
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The opening and the lesson balance the time given to the business and social side.
Organizing Home Demonstration Clubs

When to organize a HD club

1. Where there is no HD club in a community.
2. When a club gets too large for meeting place.
3. When a group of women request a club.

Before the first meeting

1. The extension agent and a member of the HD executive committee should visit the women who have inquired about a new club or membership. Club women can take responsibility here.
2. Find out -
   a. If there is enough general interest to organize now.
   b. Name of person in community most likely to get response in calling a meeting.
   c. List of names and addresses of homemakers in the community who may be interested.

Plan with the hostess for the meeting

1. Arrange place. (Decide if people will feel freer to come to a public place or to the hostess's own home)
2. Decide on a suitable date and time.
3. Make plans for the hostess to invite personally everyone on the list, explain that the meeting is to discuss a new club but does not obligate a person to join.

Other plans for the meeting

1. Decide on lesson for the organizational meeting. A leader from a neighboring club could be asked to present the lesson.
2. A letter to each woman from the Extension agent explaining the purpose of HD clubs is useful in clarifying purpose.
3. Plan with county officers or officers of a neighboring club to help sponsor the start of this new group.

At the first meeting

1. Go into action when the first woman arrives. Every effort should be made to meet each woman and to see that she meets all others.
2. The hostess or the county officers should tell why the meeting was called.

3. The meeting can be kept informal. A club lesson should be given as a means of emphasizing the purpose of the club. Plenty of time should be devoted to discussing the club program and deciding about a new club.

4. Or, a model club meeting can be conducted, with lesson and business meeting at which club organization is discussed.

5. Whatever your procedure -- be sure these points are made clear to the group:
   a. Purpose of club -- continued education of homemakers.
   b. Each club's relation to the county organization.
   c. Activities of the county Extension programs.
   d. The above points should be discussed in detail, with the meaning of Cooperative Extension being made clear.

6. Sometimes it is best not to organize the club until a second meeting. Being present does not obligate a woman to join the club. Enrollment cards may be used as an easy way for a woman to indicate her decision on membership.

7. There is nearly always better discussion over a cup of coffee.

8. Before leaving, the women should decide if they would like to meet again to complete the organization. If so, settle arrangements for next meeting.

9. Some Extension agents believe the election of officers is best delayed a meeting or two until the group becomes better acquainted. Temporary chairman and secretary can be selected by those organizing the club.

10. Lesson leaders can be assisted at first by capable leaders from another club.

Future meetings

1. Election of officers.

2. Selection of committees.

3. Writing constitution.

4. Club customs formulated.
The Home Demonstration Club and Its Relationship to
State and National Associations

The Indiana Home Demonstration Association was established as a statewide organization in 1913, at the request of the Home Economics club members. The organization has continued growth from its original 10 clubs with 64 members to more than 3,000 clubs with 60,000 members.

The objectives of the Indiana Home Demonstration Association are:

1. To promote a knowledge and practice of home economics, homemaking and citizenship through youth and adult groups.
2. To bring into affiliation the Home Demonstration organizations in the state.
3. To endorse the teaching of home economics in the public schools.
4. To encourage capable students to select home economics as a profession.
5. To create mutual understanding among homemakers by encouraging homemaking education throughout the world.

Four state officers and nine district executive members constitute the executive committee of the association. State officers, except the treasurer, are elected for one year. District members serve for two years. The executive committee meets twice a year, usually in October and January. District executive members try to visit counties in their districts during the year. District association meetings are held to assist county officers in understanding functions and purposes of the state organization.

Each member club has one vote at the Annual Association Meeting held during the Annual Homemaker's Conference at Purdue University. No individuals have voting privileges in the state association except as delegates of their clubs. (See Constitution, Indiana Home Demonstration Association.)

While Home Demonstration activities sponsored by the county are available to all clubs regardless of whether they are members of the Indiana Home Demonstration Association or not, membership in this state association carries with it affiliation with other organizations and participation in several worthwhile projects.

Everyone's goal

While groups on local, county and state levels have different activities, the purpose of all is the same -- to create a program for personal development and improvement of home, family life and community. It is important that everyone understand this mutual goal even though club groups may set about doing different things. Each organization is not an end in itself but a means of accomplishing the above purpose.

Affiliated organizations

1. The Indiana Roadside Council is a special interest group whose purposes the IHDA supports by payment of dues. Its purposes are improvement of Indiana roadsides and parks and safety on the highways.
2. National Home Demonstration Council is a federation of state organizations of Home Demonstration club women. It provides inspiration and an exchange of ideas and activities from one part of the country to another. It holds annual meetings.

3. The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) is an international organization of rural women. Its purpose is to join together in friendly and helpful relations the country women's organizations and country women from many lands. The ACWW meets every three years.

4. The Country Women's Council (or CWC) is composed of the organizations in the United States belonging to the Associated Country Women of the World. This organization meets once a year. It includes groups other than Home Demonstration.

In addition to being affiliated with the above mentioned organizations the Indiana Home Demonstration Association sponsors the following Projects:

Twin Pines Co-op House was sponsored by Home Demonstration clubs throughout Indiana for the purpose of remodeling and furnishing a residence for 27 girls attending Purdue University. Girls who live in the House are nominated by the Home Demonstration council in the county in which they reside. Girls having the opportunity to live in Twin Pines save the equivalent of $1,600 during their four years college course.

Lella R. Gaddis Scholarships. Each year an award of $300 is made to an outstanding girl for study of home economics at Purdue University. If the girl maintains a high scholarship, she receives a similar award for her second year at Purdue.

4-H Trip Awards. Since 1917 the Association has paid the expense of the two outstanding 4-H girls awarded a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the National 4-H Leadership Conference.

Brazilian Home Economics Scholarship. Each year the Association has donated $300 to the Home Economics School at Rural University in Vicosa, Minas Gerais, Brazil, for a working scholarship. They are now planning to offer an award for the best publication in home economics submitted there in Portuguese.

Homemaker Exchange. This program was established as part of the collection of pennies for the international fund each spring. In 1962 an Indiana homemaker was selected to live with families in Australia and return to tell Hoosiers about life in that country. The next step is to bring a foreign homemaker to live with some Indiana families.

"Fifty Years of Learning and Service" is a booklet of the history and heritage of the IHDA over the years. Published as part of the 50th anniversary of the state association, it is a means to acquaint the public and rededicate members to the purposes of home economics extension.
THE HOME DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN RELATION TO

THE OVER-ALL COUNTY PROGRAM

The Home Demonstration program in a county is part of the over-all Extension program. The County Extension Committee is the organization usually responsible for coordination of the various programs. In addition the County Extension Committee, or a special committee representing this committee, prepares the annual budget for the Extension Office and explains it to the county council. While all Extension personnel are appointed by the Board of Trustees of Purdue University, it is the policy of the Extension Service to act on matters of personnel in collaboration with the County Extension Committee.

In most counties representatives of the home demonstration council are members of the Extension Committee. These representatives have the responsibility of keeping the other members of the Extension Committee informed as to the home demonstration program. They also have the responsibility of giving to the Home Demonstration Council information on other Extension programs in the county.

Many counties under the direction of the County Extension Committee have undertaken an analysis of the situation and trends in order to establish a long range program for the Extension Service in the county. The Home Demonstration Council should take an active part in establishing this program. It should also take an active part in carrying out this program by making it the foundation of the Home Demonstration club program in the county.

Young Homemakers Program

The Young Homemakers Program in Indiana is designed to reach young women who need home economics information but who are not being reached through the regular Home Demonstration clubs. Many of these young women do not know of help available through the Extension Service. They express surprise when told they can call the Extension office and ask for bulletins or that there are Home Demonstration clubs.

Two programs are now being used to reach these young women. One is a series of newsletters about child training and development and the other a series of 5 or 6 meetings built around specific topics. These programs are designed so that the Home Demonstration clubs assist in planning the activity, doing interviews, getting enrollment, giving recognition to those who complete the series and evaluation.

There are some recommended procedures for initiating and continuing the young homemaker's program. You will want to ask your supervisor for help in getting started or in continuing the present program in the county.
PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPING A HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB PROGRAM

1. It is wise to involve a steering committee who are thoughtful leaders with a belief in continuing education and community betterment. This group can study the background situation, advise on techniques, and assist with training leaders or developing materials.

2. Agents should be alert to collect and interpret factual material as a basis for planning and to stimulate discussion of problems. (Such as population changes, income, age, education, etc.)

3. The method used should involve as many people as possible (1) to include their ideas, (2) to increase their insight into the situation and problems, and (3) to commit them to the program.

4. Although Extension works hard to develop programs "originating from the people," some leadership must be exerted to direct program into areas that face up to basic needs of homes and communities.

5. Planning is a continuing process. Each week agents and leaders are probably motivating interest about various problems.

6. Evaluation of current program during the year or at a particular time contributes to planning. Frequently a lesson itself raises questions and interest that can be answered in future program.

7. Planning is best done in light of the goals. It is an excellent time to review with leaders and members why we have clubs and what the lesson should do.

8. An agent has a role as advisor and consultant when the committee puts together the planning summaries from the clubs. She may suggest ways to build learning experiences around the various requests and help coordinate the main ideas into goals for the year ahead.

9. If the planning committee sees program only in terms of its own membership, a way must be devised for broad planning to include program for non-club people -- such as young homemakers, working women, families receiving surplus commodities, or others.