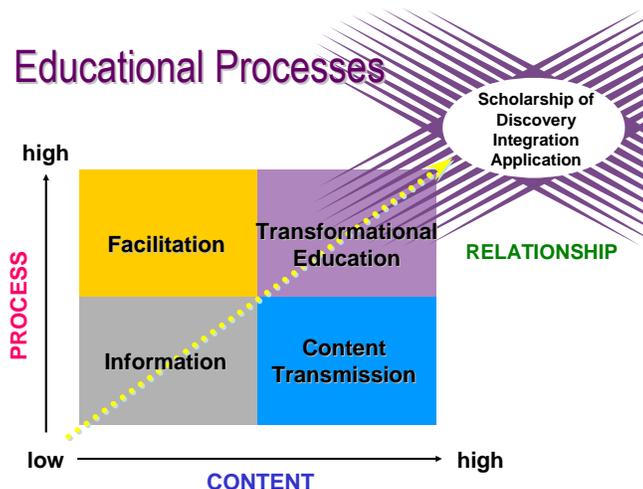


“From Making a Living to Making a Difference” Transformational Education and Leadership in the Cooperative Extension Service

In the 21st century, Extension staff must make a conscious and continued effort to provide information in a way that will serve as a catalyst for individual and community change. In order to do so, staff must understand the importance and implications of transformational education and be prepared to be effective transformational educators.

“Transformational learning can be described as a continuous process of knowledge discovery, integration, application and reflection. The goal is not to accumulate more knowledge but to expand the capacity to produce the desired results by applying the knowledge” (Bethel, 2004).

The graphic produced below provides a visual perspective of educational processes often used in Extension including transformational education. Merrill Ewert (1999) developed this simple 2 x 2 matrix that describes various approaches to Extension’s educational processes and outreach activities.



Low process/low content – this cell would identify “service” or “information” provided by Extension personnel and represents straightforward items such as insect identification or soil testing.

High process/low content – this cell represents the facilitation function which could include a non-partisan meeting facilitator or one that organizes an event or meeting.

Low process/high content – This cell is the area that provides *answers* to people’s problems. This could be a one-on-one answer or within a group setting.

High Process/high content – this cell is seen as the most powerful approach to assist people as they solve problems. It is the ultimate in the level of engagement and the one to be addressed further as NDSU Extension identifies the systems changes needed to support work at the transformational level.

Questions to ask about Extension programming – is it transformational?

- Is this information helping people solve problems?
- Is this information a catalyst for individual/community change?

Are you a transformational educator? Are you...

- A teacher who facilitates the learning of others to implement a larger transformation and shared vision?
- Able to create a critical mass of leadership around a vision by skillfully nurturing the growth and development of others?
- Learning about yourself and new content as you carry out this work?
- Someone that has the stamina and endurance to realize that this journey never ends?

“Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry”

Bill Drayton, CEO and Founder
Ashoka Foundation

References

Bethel, Margaret A., (2004). *Transformational Education: Advancing the UW Extension Mission*. Retrieved August 3, 2004, from <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/depthhead/conference/documents/dhBethel.pdf>.

NDSU Transformational Education
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