Framework for the Development of an International Agricultural and Extension Education Graduate Course

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Abstract

The purpose of this poster is to present a framework for the development of an international agricultural and extension education graduate course. Globalizing agricultural and extension education curriculum is important for preparing future leaders in agriculture to have a global perspective of agricultural and extension education. Future leaders in agriculture will have to face global challenges such as feeding the growing world population while conserving natural resources and ecosystems. Development of an international agriculture and extension education course requires proper planning to meet the needs of future leaders in agriculture. Identification of students’ learning needs relating to international and agricultural extension education is the first step of course development. This is somewhat challenging, because students will not be able to tell what they need to learn. They will only be able to tell you their felt needs and these felt needs may not be the real needs in preparing them as future leaders. Therefore, it is important to expand the needs identification to a broader group of stakeholders in international agriculture such as students, international agricultural and extension education experts, agricultural business leaders, international agriculture organization representatives, development agency representatives and parents.

The development of course content for achieving learning objectives is the next step. After course content is developed, teaching strategies should be determined. Teaching strategies need to be developed for retaining students’ learning interests and their active engagement with the curriculum. Effective teaching and learning theories should be used for selecting appropriate teaching strategies. Hands-on activities are essential to provide experiential learning opportunities for student engagement with the curriculum. Use of information technology to provide a virtual learning environment is significant for retaining students’ interests and creating tech-savvy students’ learning atmosphere. For example, creating a virtual study abroad agricultural program will help student to get the flavor of international agriculture. Design of assignments and exams is the final step of course development. Course assignments need to be developed as learning opportunities for students to engage with the course content and apply their knowledge and skills. Students should be adequately challenged to reflect their level of learning. This implies the need for real-life practical projects to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
Development of a graduate course in international agricultural and extension education is a time consuming professional task. This poster presents a framework for the development of learning objectives, course content, teaching strategies and course assessment strategies. This poster is educationally significant because it provides practical information for the development of an international agricultural and extension education graduate course.

Keywords: International agricultural and Extension education graduate course development