Authentic International Learning: Case Studies in Russian Agricultural Education

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Abstract  
Land-grant universities have the capacity to internationalize the experience of students in order to prepare them to live in a global society (NASULGC, 2004). The case method has a strong history as an experiential teaching tool providing students with authentic opportunities for analyzing, discussing, and identifying possible solutions for real-world issues (Naumes & Naumes, 2006). Use of the case method in Colleges of Agriculture could provide students with interactive exposure to issues pertinent in international agriculture today. The purpose of this poster was to share an inventive use of the case teaching method to provide graduates and undergraduates with an international learning experience. Suggestions were made for possible ways to utilize this method to enhance courses related to international agricultural and extension education.

During the spring semester of 2007, five agricultural education graduate students participated in a course requiring them to develop case studies about Russian agricultural education. During the semester graduates studied the development of Russian agriculture, chose individual topics of interest, and collected preliminary information for creating their case studies. In late April the graduate students traveled to Moscow to collect data and supporting materials to finalize case development. After completion, the cases will be used as interactive learning tools within existing undergraduate courses on international agriculture.

Using a similar format for employing graduate students to develop cases on international agriculture can provide them with experience in research and case-writing, and serve to further enhance their international knowledge and communication skills. Utilizing these prepared case studies in teaching undergraduate courses could provide enrolled students with authentic, relevant learning about international agriculture.

Keywords: Case method, Internationalization, Learning, Graduate, Undergraduate