



Design for learning

— a self-paced guide



By Joan Cybela and Edrie Greer



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■ **Joan Cybela**, distance education specialist—
Training & Development, Program Support

■ **Edrie Greer**, program specialist—
Telecommunications and Professional Development

With contributions from:

Karen Dickrell, *Extension family living agent, Outagamie County*

Donna Doll-Yogerst, *Extension family living agent, Oconto County*

Jim Fanta, *crops and soils agent, Dodge County*

Terry Gibson, *director, Cooperative Extension Program Support*

Dorothy Heintz, *4-H youth agent, Oneida County*

Peter Manley, *community resource development agent, Wood County*

Cathy Nelson, *Extension family living agent, Milwaukee County*

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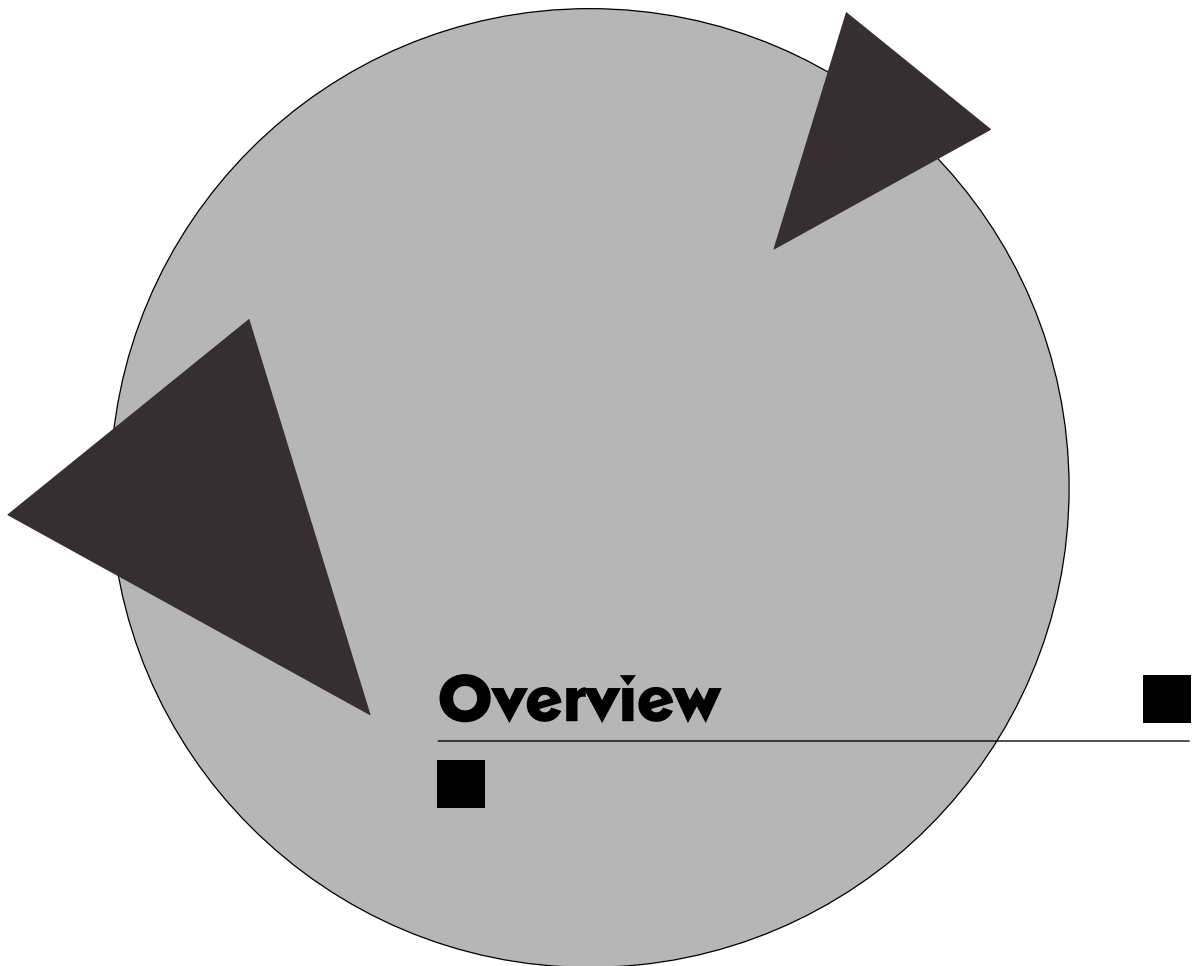
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Welcome

Welcome to the exciting world of creative and effective **educational design**. That's what this module is all about—and to a great extent, that's what our work with UW–Extension is all about, too. Whether our educational setting is a group gathering, a telephone conversation, a consultation at someone's home or business, or whether we are communicating our message via mass media—our energies are directed toward making a difference through education.

In the pages that follow you'll be introduced to five concepts that are critical to designing effective educational experiences. They are:

- ▼ Understanding learners and their needs
- ▼ Examining and organizing content
- ▼ Selecting appropriate teaching tools
- ▼ Creating effective learning environments
- ▼ Assessing learning outcomes

What do we hope you'll learn?

By the time you've completed the readings, activities and audio segments that are a part of this guide, you'll be able to:

1. describe the five concepts that are inherent in good educational design; and
2. apply these concepts to an issue or situation in extension.

We know that's an ambitious agenda. We also know you're up to the challenge or you wouldn't be here! But we've provided you with lots of support, too.

We wish you our best and encourage your creativity to flow freely. Always listen to the designer who is alive and well within you.

Sincerely,

*Educational Design Core Competency Module
Design Team*

Joan Cybela, design team chair
Donna Doll-Yogerst
Jim Fanta
Terry Gibson
Edrie Greer
Dorothy Heintz
Peter Manley

MEET THE AUTHORS

Joan Cybela

Joan Cybela has been teaching adults and designing educational programs for more than 16 years through various professional roles with University of Wisconsin–Extension. Her “classrooms” have included the kitchens of 4-H leaders, the barns at county fairs, the parks and town halls of rural Wisconsin, the board rooms of chambers of commerce, the television studios of a CBS broadcast affiliate where she designed and hosted a weekly half-hour program for five years, the distance education sites found throughout Wisconsin, and the meeting rooms of national conferences. She is committed to improving the impact of adult education efforts, particularly when communication technologies are involved, and she teaches UWEX CE faculty and staff statewide to that end. The Educational Design Core Competency Module is one of several for which she is providing leadership and instruction. As a distance education specialist with Cooperative Extension she is spearheading instructional design efforts to enhance the educational impact of satellite videoconferences at county downlink sites. She has helped develop and implement satellite downlink installation and training efforts in 72 counties and continues to play a role in distance education policymaking. She works with the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education and the Department of Agricultural Journalism at UW–Madison to coordinate educational opportunities for UWEX CE faculty and staff.

Joan is an associate professor in the UWEX Department of Community Resource Development. She holds a bachelor’s degree in home economics from UW–Stevens Point, and a master’s degree from the UW–Madison Department of Continuing and Vocational Education.

She lives in Wausau, Wisconsin with her husband, Douglas, and their son, Nicholas. Favorite leisure activities include enjoying family life, traveling to remote places, photographing nature, biking country roads, curling up with a good book, painting with watercolors and growing whatever her gardens will let her grow!



MEET THE AUTHORS

Edrie Greer

Edrie Greer, now professional development and telecommunications administrator at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, provided leadership in the instructional design, production and marketing of distance learning programs for the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension. She produced more than 100 instructional videotapes and live satellite programs, as well as accompanying print materials, for statewide and national distribution. As an adult educator, she coordinated and taught distance education workshops and orientations for UWEX faculty and staff. She assisted in developing policies for effective distance education, and is a past member of the AG*SAT (Agricultural Satellite Corporation) Production Council. In 1989, she co-coordinated the pilot installation of UWEX CE satellite downlinks. Her research interests include the impact of television visual special effects on adult learning and instructional design considerations for video producers.

Prior to joining Cooperative Extension, she was a producer for Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio. She holds a bachelor's degree in Natural Science from the UW-Madison Department of Agricultural Journalism, and a master's degree from the UW-Madison Department of Continuing and Vocational Education.

Edrie lives with her surrogate child, a German Shepherd named "Bertie." She likes to tour the countryside by bicycle, backpack in remote locations, read and play with her home computer.



What are you getting yourself into?

In a nutshell, you'll be fine-tuning your skills as an educational designer.

What's **educational design**, you ask? A definition is in order:

Educational design is the process of creating effective learning experiences that reflect an understanding of the learners, the content, and ways to facilitate and evaluate learning.

How will all this happen? By using different media and completing various exercises, you'll be learning about and applying concepts that are critically important to well designed educational experiences. You'll become more effective at doing what you probably love doing best in extension—helping people to learn whatever it is that makes their lives and this world a little better.

More specifically, you will:

- ✓ Participate in six **audio teleconferences**: one at the beginning of this experience to become acquainted with the other participants, resource persons and general module procedures; and then one every 2 to 3 weeks at the completion of each unit.
- ✓ Read, listen to audio cassette tapes and complete the activities in this learner's guide, using a variety of learning resources.
- ✓ Get acquainted with Dr. Jerry Apps and his book, *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991). We use it as a companion reference throughout this guide. It's very relevant to educational design, extremely readable, and downright practical. Dr. Apps also shares insights with you via audio cassette tape in an interview entitled "Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You."
- ✓ Be invited to share the results of your work from Units 1–5 with your fellow learners at the completion of the learning experience.

You can anticipate spending about 16 to 18 hours on this module. Each of the five units may require about 1 to 2 hours of your time, plus an additional 6 to 8 hours taking part in six audio teleconferences and listening to audio cassette tapes. But it is indeed *your* time—and you are in charge of determining the "whens" and the "wheres" of it all.

Please note a word of caution! Although self-paced independent learning is an exhilarating experience, it also comes with risks and pitfalls. It is amazingly easy to put off today what we think we can do tomorrow. Recognize the importance of good self-discipline, setting up weekly "design for learning" study dates and honoring them. Meeting via audio teleconference after each of the five units will help you to track your progress, address questions, and avoid the tendency to procrastinate.

Nonetheless, we hope that you enjoy yourself along the way, that you find the material relevant and pleasant, and that you feel challenged and energized by the experience. In the end, we believe that these educational design concepts will become ever-ready "hip-pocket tools" that travel with you wherever you go to make a difference through education.

A closer look at this guide

As you page through this guide, you'll note there are five units of information and exercises—one unit for each of the five educational design concepts. You'll also see ten **issue/situation statements** in the Appendix, lettered A through J, representing various educational challenges faced by extension faculty. Let's look at components of each of these, and how you'll be using them.

Educational design concepts: Units 1 through 5

Each unit is intended to guide you in understanding the educational design concept and *how* to apply it. The format consists of—

- ▼ **An introduction:** To familiarize you with the contents of the unit.
- ▼ **Learning objectives:** To alert you to what you'll be able to do after reading and completing the suggested activities.
- ▼ **Self-assessment:** To help you determine what you already know, or don't know, about the content to be covered and if you need (or choose) to continue through that unit.
- ▼ **Key concepts:** To provide you with the main ideas about the content, the research which supports it, and examples of UWEX CE situations where the concepts are applied.
- ▼ **Summary:** To reflect back on the main ideas presented.
- ▼ **Applying the concepts: Homeless issue example**—To help you observe how each educational design concept can be applied to an example issue.
- ▼ **Applying the concepts: Your issue statement**—To provide opportunity for you to apply each of the design concepts to the one issue/situation statement which you select from the ten (A–J) in the Appendix.
- ▼ **Looking back: A checklist**—To equip you with a tool for doublechecking your issue statement design efforts.

Issue situation statements: A through J

The true value of this educational design material will be judged by how effectively you can apply it to your job. Our intent is to give you a safe place to “practice” what’s being preached. That’s where the issue/situation statements come in. County-based faculty from each of the four program areas have written ten issue/situation statements (labeled A through J) that reflect the kinds of challenges you face every day in your jobs. You will be asked to select *one* of those statements, and apply what you’ve learned in each unit to that issue/situation.

Some of you may prefer to apply the educational design materials to an issue/situation that you are currently dealing with in your extension work, versus using those statements (A–J) in the guide. You’re welcome and encouraged to do so. The criteria you may use for writing your own issue/situation statement can be found on page 71 in the Appendix. It’s the same criteria that was used to develop statements A–J.

Some of the statements may appear very burdensome at first glance. Similar to those you’re facing in “real life,” right? Our intent is not to overwhelm you, but to present you with realistic situations that *you* will determine how to address. What is reasonable for you to take on? And at what point will you let go? The learning objectives that you develop in Unit 2 will help define those parameters.



Each issue/situation statement also has a profile of one or more learners. These **learner profiles** are intended to help sensitize you to the unique needs that one or many learners bring to any learning situation. Although you may never know many of these details about your learners, you can become more conscious of the different dimensions of their lives and how it colors their choices, attitudes and experiences about learning. Equally important, it will influence how you design your educational experiences for them.

Additional resources in this guide

In the back of this guide you'll also find some additional resources. They include:

- ▼ a **Glossary** to clarify select terms used throughout this guide (words in **bold** print appear in the Glossary)
- ▼ an **Appendix** containing examples of items referred to in the five learning units
- ▼ **Resources** containing a bibliography of readings/books and other mediated materials, names of persons who can help, etc.

Supplementary materials provided

- ▼ A book: *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991) by Dr. Jerold Apps 
- ▼ Three audio cassette tapes: *Creating Dynamic Adult Learning Experiences* (1987) featuring Stephen Brookfield's interviews with Malcolm Knowles, Alan Knox, Raymond Wlodkowski and Leonard Nadler (2 tapes). 
Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You (1993) featuring Joan Cybela's interview with Jerry Apps.

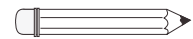
There are many ways to learn

Knowing that each of you has a preferred way of learning, we've tried to provide you with an assortment of resources.

- ▼ Periodically we'll meet as a group by audio teleconference to track progress, share opinions, thoughts and frustrations. Some of you may choose to meet face-to-face with each other to brainstorm or pool ideas and strategies.
- ▼ This guide provides individual direction and time for quiet reflection and synthesizing. Incorporated into it are opportunities to listen to audio cassette tapes, delve further into research, and apply your knowledge to your chosen issue/situation statement. The "Homeless Issue" example is provided as a "Here's one way to apply these concepts" viewpoint.
- ▼ Do you need to talk to somebody? Check out the **Resources** section in the back of this guide for names of people who can help.
- ▼ Would you like to pose a question, share an observation, make a comment or call HELP to the whole group? You can do that also, via **e-mail**. Directions for that are in the **Resources** section too.

You are in charge of your own learning. When, where and what you learn is up to you. It can and will be what you choose to make of it.

Are you ready to move on?



Meet Jerry Apps

As a professor of adult education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Jerry has many years of experience teaching credit courses and conducting workshops about teaching adults. In addition to his work in Wisconsin, he has taught and consulted at universities across Canada and throughout the United States.

Jerry was Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Alberta in 1988 and a Landsdowne Scholar at the University of Victoria in 1991. He gave the McDowell Lecture at Pennsylvania State University in 1991.

He began his career as an Extension 4-H and youth agent in Green Lake County, Wisconsin, and youth and livestock agent in Brown County. His five years of county extension experience, where he says he learned most about teaching adults, was followed by a few years on the state 4-H staff as a communications specialist, and about ten years as a staff development specialist for extension.

From 1990 through 1993, Jerry was national coordinator of the National Extension Leadership Development Program (NELD), a W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded project designed to prepare new Extension deans and directors, provide leadership development workshops for current administrators, and organize national conferences for land grant university presidents and other top level managers.

Jerry is the author of 20 books, ranging from *Mastering the Teaching of Adults*, *Study Skills for Adults Returning to School*, and *Higher Education in a Learning Society*, to *Barns of Wisconsin*, *The Land Still Lives*, and *Breweries of Wisconsin*.

He received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Jerry is married and has three grown children. His interests include reading, farming, wilderness camping and canoeing, and cross-country skiing. He has a lifelong interest in upper Midwestern rural history, which is the topic of several of his books.



Discovering and developing the teacher within you

The University of Wisconsin System is richly endowed with talented human resources. Dr. Jerry Apps ranks high among those resources, and we're fortunate to share in the insights and wisdom he brings to all facets of adult education.

You've probably noted by now that Jerry's book, *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991), is a companion text for this educational design core competency module. We think you'll enjoy and appreciate its direct delivery and practical application.

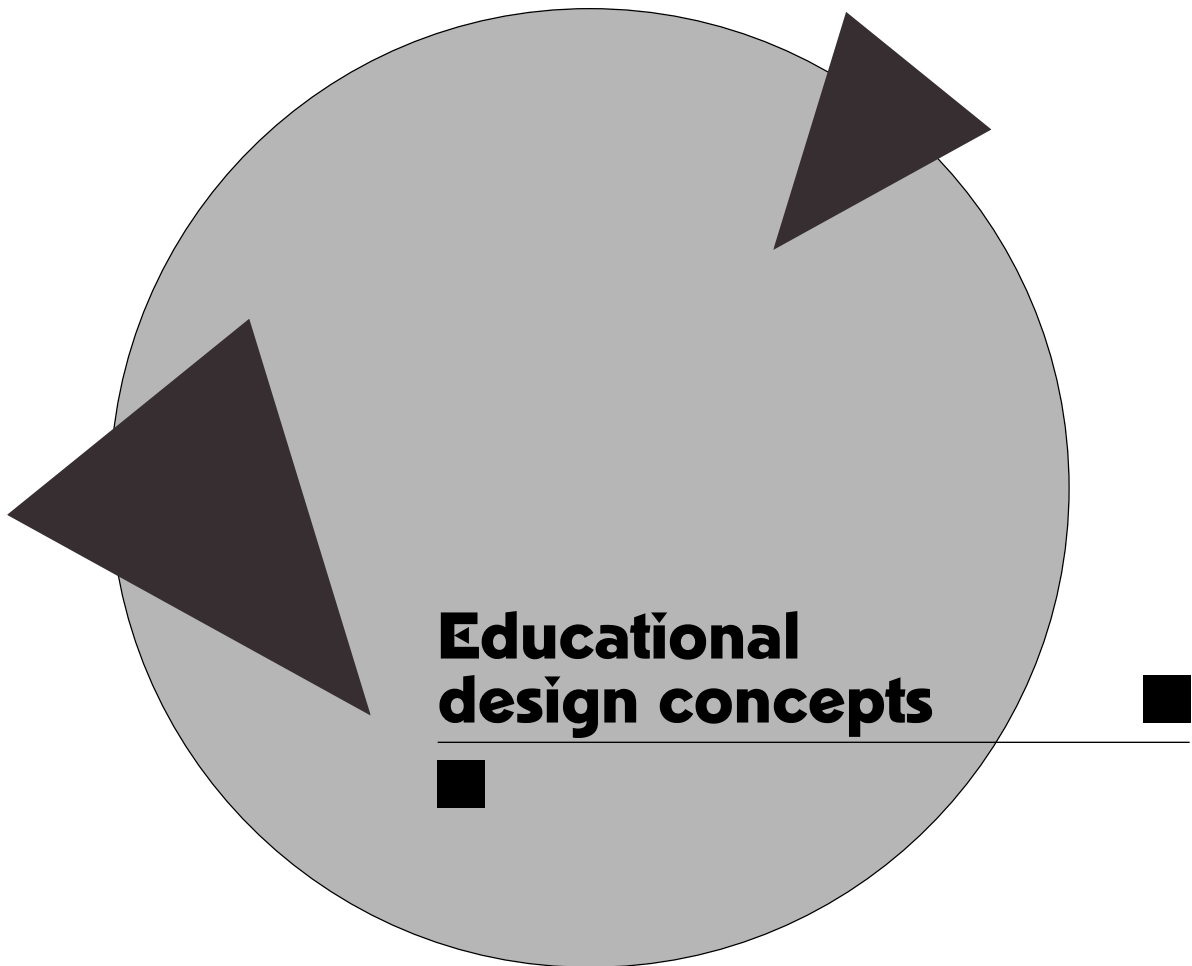
But we offer you an additional opportunity to get better acquainted with Jerry on the enclosed audio cassette tape *Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You*. The 30-minute tape, featuring Joan Cybela's interview with Jerry Apps, explores how we can discover and nurture our abilities as teachers. In doing so we can more effectively design adult education learning experiences.

Activity: Before proceeding to Unit 1, set aside thirty minutes to listen to this taped interview with Jerry Apps,



entitled *Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You*. If you

have a tape deck in your car, consider listening during drive time. We hope that the interview will help you to get better acquainted with the "teacher" that lives within you. We also hope that through developing your teaching skills you'll become a more effective designer of adult education learning experiences. Enjoy this listening journey!



Educational design concepts

Unit 1 *Understanding learners and their needs*

The more we understand adults as learners, the more effectively we can design educational experiences for them. This unit will summarize some of the key characteristics that we know about adult learners. It will also briefly discuss the implications for program design. For those of you who have participated in the TEACHING AND LEARNING core competency module, this will be a review. That's great. For those of you who would like to learn more about this topic, consider participating in the TEACHING AND LEARNING core competency module, offered for UWEX CE faculty and staff through the UWEX CE Professional Development Office.

After reading and completing the learning objective activities in this unit, you will be able to:

- ▼ identify five characteristics of adult learners;
- ▼ explain the implications that these characteristics have on how we design educational experiences; and
- ▼ describe how you can apply this information to respond to the needs and characteristics of the learner(s) in your selected issue/situation statement.

Self assessment

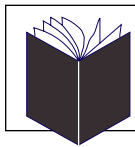
Please read the statements which follow regarding **Understanding learners and their needs**. Circle one number after each statement to indicate your present knowledge level about this educational design concept. ("1" represents no knowledge of this concept; "5" represents full knowledge.)

	No knowledge		Full knowledge		
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can identify five characteristics of adult learners.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can explain how these characteristics influence how I'll approach designing educational experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can describe how this information can be applied to the issue/situation statement I've selected.	1	2	3	4	5

If you didn't answer all statements with a "4" or a "5," please read on to learn more about **Understanding learners and their needs**. If you feel confident in your understanding and application of these concepts, you are welcome to move to Unit 2.

Key concepts

An abundance of research exists on adult learners. Many excellent books are available to help you understand the characteristics and needs of this important audience. One book, of course, you have in hand as a part of this module. *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991) by Jerold Apps nicely summarizes much of the research about adult learners.



Take a minute right now to read through pages 37-43.

Apps acknowledges the importance of recognizing the learner’s history, preferred style of learning, social setting, motivation for learning, psychological dimensions and preference for the “practical.” Let’s look briefly at each of these and think about what the implications are for how we design educational experiences.

Characteristics of adult learners

A. An adult’s **PERSONAL HISTORY** can greatly affect what and how that individual learns.

Implications for educational design

— Recognize that each learner brings a different set of experiences and perceptions to the learning experience. Some of those will be helpful to continuing learning. Some will get in the way. We need to design learning experiences that encourage learners to express their viewpoints, and that provide opportunities for them to sort out what fits and what doesn’t; to unlearn and relearn if necessary.

B. Adults have many different **PREFERRED STYLES OF LEARNING**.

Implications for educational design

— Because adults have many different preferred ways of learning, we need to provide a variety of teaching / learning approaches in our educational designs. Apps (1991) refers to such examples as “hands-on learning, listening, problem solving, use of visual materials, reading, starting with the ‘big picture’, starting with pieces of the big picture, learning by one’s self, learning with others, learning in a step-by-step fashion, and learning intuitively” (p.40). The more diverse we can be in our approaches, the more effective the learning experience will be. The **TEACHING AND LEARNING** core competency module takes a closer look at the different ways that people prefer to learn, including examining assessment tools (learning style inventories) that clarify how people prefer to process information.

C. Adults’ **FAMILY, WORK AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES** affect the choices they make about learning.

Implications for educational design

— Adults juggle many responsibilities. When “learning” becomes one of those responsibilities it will be selected on the basis of several criteria. Three of them include the place, pace and time for learning. We need to design learning experiences that are tuned in to our learners’ needs. Where can they meet most conveniently? At what pace would they like to learn? Is one time of day better than another?

The more diverse we can be in our approaches, the more effective the learning experience will be.

D. Adults are MOTIVATED TO LEARN for a variety of reasons.

Implications for educational design

—Malcolm Knowles points out in his book *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1984) that adults are motivated to learn when they experience needs and interests that learning can help satisfy (3rd ed., p. 31). Learners need to see practical applications for what they learn, and they need to be able to use their new ideas and practices immediately in their work, their private lives and in their community. What needs and interests motivate your learners to participate in learning experiences? How are you helping them to help themselves satisfy those needs? A critical part of educational design is making sure that *what* we are teaching is relevant. Spend time up front knowing who your learners are—the needs, interests and practical concerns which motivate them enough to add yet another complication to their busy lives: participating in a learning experience! Then be accountable—see that your learning experiences do in fact address those targeted concerns.

E. PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS affect how adults learn.

Implications for educational design

—Adult learners sometimes lack confidence in their ability to learn. This creates even greater anxiety about learning. Their feelings may be related to age, past learning experiences, the content itself, or something else. As we design educational experiences, we need to provide opportunities for learner anxieties to be expressed, privately or in small groups. Smith (1982) suggests that adult educators need to create “climates” that minimize anxiety, where learners are accepted and free to disagree and take risks.

Unit 4, Creating an effective learning environment, talks more about this issue.

What does all this mean in light of the hundreds of learners you work with each year? Is it realistic to even partially understand all of these characteristics for every learner? Of course not. But what *is* important to glean from all of this is that these characteristics are inherent in the adult learners that you work with each day—coloring how learners make decisions, why they think and act as they do, what receives priority and what does not. As you design educational experiences, be sensitive to these factors. For example, although you won’t ever know the personal histories of all learners, you know their experience base is rich and that an important part of their learning needs to include opportunities to talk about their views and concerns and sort out new information. Similarly, you will never be able to identify the preferred learning styles for all your learners. But you do know that if you teach using a variety of strategies and methods, learners’ needs can be responded to in different ways.

Summary

When we have a good understanding about adult learners and their needs we can design educational experiences for them that are effective and meaningful. The five characteristics addressed in this unit have important implications for how we design those learning experiences. As you design the range of educational experiences that are an exciting part of your extension career, walk through these five characteristics and ask, “What do I need to include in my design efforts to make sure that these characteristics are being acknowledged?”

This is a good time to listen to the audio cassette tape, *Creating Dynamic Adult*



Learning Experiences (1987), Volume 1, where Stephen Brookfield interviews

Raymond Wlodkowski about recognizing learners’ needs and motivations.

Applying the concepts: “Homeless in This County”

Let’s roll up our sleeves and figure out how to apply some of these ideas to an issue/situation in extension. That’s the purpose of this section. In units 1 through 5 we’ll be using the issue/situation *example* entitled “Homeless in This County” to illustrate how the concepts from each unit might be applied.

You’ve noticed the emphasis on the word *example*? This issue/situation statement is just that—an *example*. It is *not* one for you to select when asked to choose your own issue/situation statement. Ten additional issue/situation statements, labeled A - J, are also found in the Appendix for that purpose.

Take a minute right now to get acquainted with the EXAMPLE issue/situation: “Homeless in This County.” You’ll find it on page 58 in the Appendix of this learner’s guide.

Let’s visit with Jonette, the Extension family living agent in This County, to find out how she is able to apply the concepts presented in this unit.

Hi! I’m Jonette, the Extension family living agent in This County. Through my involvement on the advisory council for Safe Haven, a shelter for abused family members, I became more aware of the growing need to examine housing shortages for low-income families and individuals. Several factors convinced me to take on a leadership role in organizing a housing coalition to better understand and counteract the factors contributing to homelessness in This County. I’ve talked to several people from This County to solicit their involvement on a housing coalition. The following people agreed to participate: the Housing Authority director, two pastors, two bankers, one county board member, the Community Action Program director, the mayor of our community, the director of the Commission on Aging, the director of County Nursing Services, the county zoning commis-

sioner, a local realtor, the director of Safe Haven Shelter, the director of Social Services, the manager of Wisconsin Public Service and a member of the Landlord’s Association.

In talking individually with them it became apparent that each had his or her own motives for participating. Their perspectives about, understanding of and attitudes toward the issues varied greatly. (Wayne Zinkerman, the Housing Authority Director, for example, is convinced that most people wind up homeless because they can’t hold a steady job. They get themselves fired at work and with little or no income, can’t pay their rent or mortgage anymore.) Some coalition members were a bit apprehensive about how to begin to comprehend the broad scope of the issue. Some felt threatened by discussing it. Each of them had overburdened schedules. But their commitment appears genuine, and reflects their organization’s interest in examining the issues.

Wayne Zinkerman will be a challenge! We’ve met through other community activities but haven’t worked together before. It was really helpful to visit with him and get to understand him better as a learner, and it will definitely influence how I design our learning experiences! He and several others have a critical need to examine facts vs. myths. I know I can’t customize this experience for Wayne alone. But if I recognize the range of needs that he and all adult learners have I’ll be prompted to design our learning experiences so everyone can benefit in his or her own way.

What’s important for me to keep in mind as I plan for this diverse group of people? I’ll use what I know about adult learners:

▼ Adults bring a wide assortment of personal histories, viewpoints and attitudes to the learning experience.

So I need to remember to give these folks a chance to express their views and concerns with each other. They need to hear and be heard by others. Some people, like Wayne, need to “unlearn” some of their beliefs about homeless people and housing problems. They’ll need time to reflect and sort out what fits from what doesn’t. We also need to develop a “coalition

spirit,” a sense of ourselves as a team. Small- and large-group sharing will be essential, but it needs to be guided, so all people have an equal chance to share their views and concerns in a non-judgmental way.

- ▼ Adults have many preferred ways of learning—

So I’ll try to provide learners with an assortment of ways to understand and process the information. We’ll talk about it, we’ll read about it, we’ll look at charts and graphs that interpret data about it, we’ll view video tapes that clarify the who, what and where about it. And we’ll have quiet, reflecting time to think about it and to start focusing on what we need to do about it.

- ▼ Adults have many responsibilities that influence the choices they make about learning—

So I’ll do my best to hold our coalition meetings at a location and time that works best for the majority. Perhaps location and time will shift periodically to meet the needs of the whole. As we deal with information, I’ll try to take a “pulse” on how we’re doing; whether we need to slow down and clarify, or simply move on.

- ▼ Adults are motivated to learn for a variety of reasons—

So it’s important for me to tune in to what brought them to participate in the first place. They had many agendas, to be sure. Some of those agendas will probably be modified as we grow through this whole process. But I need to remember to revisit them. We can have a group agenda without sacrificing individual agendas that are important to their respective institutions and agencies.

- ▼ Adult learning is affected by psychological dimensions—

So I need to actively listen for people that seem unsure of themselves, insecure in expressing their ideas or easily threatened by others’ opinions. (Wayne could be pretty intimidating without much effort!) With this group of professionals that’s less likely to be a significant issue, but I shouldn’t discount it prematurely.

(Note: **Unit 4: Creating An Effective Learning Environment**, will address this issue in greater depth.)

Applying the concepts— your issue statement

Your chance has finally come to make some sense out of these ideas! Select one of the issue/situation statements, A through J in the Appendix, pages 58–71, or use the one you’ve written. *You’ll be using the same issue/situation for all five units in this guide so select one that attracts your interest and imagination.*

Take a look at it from the perspective of the learner profile that is provided for you. Select only one learner profile when multiple profiles are offered. In some issue/situation statements the learner profile may be a committee or a large clientele group. The learner profile represents one or several of the learners with whom you will deal. They’re intended to help you become more aware of all of the dimensions of a learner’s life and to alert you to what needs to be considered when designing educational experiences.

What have you learned about the characteristics of adult learners and the implications for how we design educational experiences? Review your selected issue/situation statement and describe the characteristics of your learners and how they’ll affect your approach to designing a learning experience for them. Have fun with it. Mistakes are our best teachers. There is no one right answer. Give it your best effort in the workspace on the following page.



Educational design concepts

Unit 2 *Examining and organizing content*

Now that you've assessed the learners you'll be working with, you need to take a look at the content you'll be addressing. One thing to keep in mind is that the content and the learner are intertwined: when thinking about one, also consider the other. For an obvious example, if you are considering teaching a workshop on techniques for *beginning* greenhouse gardeners, it's best to stay away from breeding orchids, because this is a content area for *advanced* gardeners. Therefore, as you read through this section, you may wish to refer back to **Unit 1: Understanding learners and their needs** to integrate the information.

Learning objectives

After reading and completing the exercises in this unit, you will be able to:

- ▼ List several general principles in determining content for a given teaching/learning situation
- ▼ Develop learning objectives for a given teaching/learning situation
- ▼ List the three major types of learning
- ▼ State general principles for organizing content for a specific teaching/learning situation
- ▼ Organize content for your issue/situation statement
- ▼ Write **learning objectives** for your issue/situation statement

Self assessment

Please read the statements which follow regarding **Examining and organizing content**. Circle one number after each statement to indicate your present knowledge level about this educational design concept. ("1" represents no knowledge of this concept; "5" represents full knowledge.)

	No knowledge		Full knowledge		
1. I know how to select and organize content for most teaching situations, at any level of expertise or learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I know how to develop well-written and concise learning objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can describe the three major types of learning and apply them to specific situations.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can describe how this information can be applied to the issue or situation statement I've selected.	1	2	3	4	5

If you didn't answer all statements with a "4" or "5," please read on to learn more about **Examining and organizing content**. If you feel confident in your understanding and application of these concepts, please move to the next unit.

Key concepts

When you embark on a teaching/learning experience, what actually happens? Have you thought about what we do when we teach? For those who believe that teaching is strictly an art, this may not be a comfortable concept. However, not surprisingly, many educational theorists have thought quite a bit about it!

One of the most famous instructional designers is Robert M. Gagné. His *Events of Instruction* (1968, 1985) outlines the following process in teaching, which we've modified slightly for our purposes.

- ▼ Gain the learners' attention.
- ▼ Inform learners of intended objectives.
- ▼ Stimulate recall of prior learning.
- ▼ Present the material.
- ▼ Provide learning guidelines.
- ▼ Let the learner practice the new skill, or incorporate the new ideas.
- ▼ Provide feedback.
- ▼ Enhance retention and transfer of learning.

Gagné makes it clear that these events do not have to occur in this exact order. His list is designed strictly as a guideline. But it does give us an idea of what probably happens during most teaching/learning situations.

Determining content

To properly organize content, you'll need to:

- ▼ Assess what and how much you already know
- ▼ Know how much to include and what to eliminate
- ▼ Develop a "feel" for your audience
- ▼ Allow time for interaction
- ▼ Use potential or similar audience members as sounding boards

Many factors come into play when you are teaching, as Gagné describes. One of the first things to consider is working with content. Initially, you will need to deal with how much *you* actually know about the subject matter at hand. You may know a great deal about the subject you're going to teach, you may not know it at all, or fall somewhere in between.

It's not unusual for Extension faculty to be asked by a client or forced by circumstances to prepare a workshop on a topic completely foreign to them. For example, in the 1980s, how many family living agents felt comfortable teaching about biotechnology? But Alar scares and the bovine somatotropin (BST) issue caused many to learn more about areas once thought beyond their field of expertise.

As fields of knowledge expand and cross disciplines, every faculty member will be touched by the content in other program areas. So you may need to have quick access to vital sources of information—"learn as you go"—as you prepare your content for a hastily-called town meeting on the crisis-of-the-month.

If you *are* well-versed in the content to be taught, you face another problem: How do you edit what you know? How can you possibly cover what needs to be said (you think) in the amount of time allotted for your presentation? One of the most challenging aspects of being an extension educator is knowing what to leave out. As mentioned in the TEACHING AND LEARNING core competency module, "Too often so much information was provided that the person simply could not decide what was important and what was not...in our haste to 'cover the material,' insufficient attention is given to exploring meaning." (Boyce, 1992, p. 9) If you only add to the information overload of the average adult, without helping make sense of it, you aren't doing everything you can as a teacher.

One of the most challenging aspects of being an extension educator is knowing what to leave out.

To illustrate this concept, here's a useful analogy: When you desktop publish a document, you want to arrange text and graphics in a clear and aesthetically pleasing way. But you would never try to fill a page completely with text, at least not according to good graphic design principles. You'd incorporate what graphic designers call "white space." This sets off the text, makes it easier to read, and emphasizes important points.

Good educational design works in a similar manner. It is helpful to think of your information or content as the "text." Like the printed page, your information needs "white space" to be effective. In other words, you need to build in times for learners to contemplate and process information, either through breaks, discussions or other participant-driven activities.

Consider your audience—their needs and existing knowledge of the subject matter. One thing to keep in mind at all times as you work through your content: You can't please everyone, but you can try to touch on ideas which will interest most of your audience. If the teaching situation calls for it, don't hesitate to spend time interacting with your learners, giving them time to assimilate, analyze and synthesize information. Remember that spontaneity allows for those unexpected **teachable moments**. Give your learners enough time to interact with each other. That may be more important than delivering loads of information that mean little to your learners.

The content you pick could vary widely based on the particular learners with whom you are working. For example, you might be asked to lead a workshop on groundwater contamination. Local government officials and business owners may have a different perspective on this issue than homeowners. It's highly likely you may have both groups in your audience and you will need to find content that all concerned can use.

If you find content selection to be particularly challenging, and you have time, you can select one or two members of the learning audience (or a similar audience) to use as a sounding board. Although not an official focus group, they can usually point you in the right direction.

When working with an individual, it is easier to customize content according to his or her needs. As questions arise, you can answer them immediately, or look up additional information. With groups or individuals, pre-conference surveys can be good indicators of what to cover.

Developing learning objectives

To develop effective learning objectives, you'll need to consider:

- ▼ How you want your learners to change as a result of your teaching
- ▼ How narrowly you need to write your objectives
- ▼ How to write a good objective using action verbs and simple sentences
- ▼ The importance of limiting the number of objectives you write

Are formal learning objectives really that important? While not realistic in every learning situation, such as a short answer to an impromptu telephone call, most teaching situations can benefit from careful pre-planning. Developing a well-written set of learning objectives *is* important in most cases because, like anything else you think hard about and write down, it allows you to focus on what you need to do. Learning objectives give you a way to assess how well your teaching methods are working.

Objectives are also valuable in writing evaluations because, in general, the success of your program depends on whether you met your learning objectives. So you might say that writing a good learning objective could have a lot to do with being a successful faculty member!

Learning objectives are simply statements that identify what the learner will be able to a) do, b) think, or c) feel after completing the educational experience. They will guide all subsequent teaching activities, including choosing what is to be learned (content), how it can best be learned (teaching strategies and tools), and whether or not it was learned (learner outcomes).

To write effective learning objectives, it's important to understand the three major types of learning. In their *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Bloom and Krathwohl (1956, 1964) define these as:

- ▼ **cognitive learning:** Deals with recall or recognition of knowledge, understanding and the development of intellectual abilities and skills
- ▼ **affective learning:** Focuses on changes in feelings and emotions; such as interest, attitudes and values
- ▼ **psychomotor learning:** Emphasizes motor or muscular skills and/or manipulation of objects

Objectives focus on *changes* in the learner. How will learners change in their knowledge base after participating in your program? How will they change in behavior, or attitudes, or skills? For the most part, objectives can be measured. They assume some motivation to learn on the part of your audience.

Once you know the general content you must cover and have a clear understanding of your audience, you can begin to write an objective. One of the hardest aspects of this task is that objectives can be very broad, or very narrow. For example, an objective such as "Participants will learn ways to improve the quality of life in rural areas" is quite different from "All blue-eyed participants will

learn three methods to harness a brown, three-legged donkey on Tuesdays."

A number of educators, particularly those who teach traditional courses, get very specific about objectives. In their objectives, they may list a required level of performance, such as "Students will score an average minimum of 90% on 4 out of 5 exams." Most Extension faculty, however, can't assess learning via exams. So it may not make sense to be this specific.

Extension is accountable on a county, state and federal level. As Extension educators, it's important we know what needs to be learned and *if* learning occurred. We need to measure what's measurable. *But*, we need to acknowledge that significant learning also occurs that may not be measurable or even predictable.

In general, broad objectives can be easier to complete successfully, but narrow ones are easier to measure. Sometimes educators refer to broad-based objectives as goals or program objectives, and narrower ones as client-based or instructional objectives, or even "learner outcomes." Although the terminology can be confusing, only you can determine the scale you wish to cover with your objectives. In most cases, you may wish to seek a level that falls in the middle of the continuum.

Objectives can also be short-term or long-term. But they should relate in some way to your plan of work.

When writing objectives, it's important to focus on the following:

- ▼ Who are the intended learners?
- ▼ What content must be communicated to the learners?
- ▼ How will the learners change as a result of the teaching/learning process? Use a specific action verb here; do *not* use the verb "learn," as it is too general.

We need to measure what's measurable. But, we need to acknowledge that significant learning also occurs that may not be measurable or even predictable.

Objectives should focus on what the *learner* (not the teacher) needs to do. For example, a well-written objective might state:

After completing this lesson, learners should be able to—

1. Correct mistakes in their credit card billing.

An objective such as “To demonstrate to learners how to correct mistakes in their credit card billing” does not fit our criteria. Using that example, a teacher fulfills the objective by simply completing the demonstration—whether or not the students actually learned anything!

Another thing to keep in mind when writing objectives is to avoid compound sentences for each objective. For example, “Learners will be able to identify European corn borers and describe their control” covers too much territory for one objective. Properly written, this objective could be broken down into something like “After viewing the videotape, learners will be able to:

1. identify the European Corn Borer on plants in the field;
2. describe the various methods of controlling corn borers in the field.”

As mentioned before, verb choice is important when delineating objectives.

Specific action verbs work best and you should relate them to Bloom’s and Krathwohl’s **learning taxonomy**. Robert Mager (1984), one of the leading experts on objective-writing, provides the following suggestions of verbs to avoid and verbs to use when writing objectives:

Avoid verbs open to many interpretations:

- to know
- to understand
- to appreciate
- to grasp the significance of
- to enjoy
- to believe
- to have faith in

Use verbs open to fewer interpretations:

- to write
- to list
- to describe
- to recite
- to identify
- to sort
- to solve
- to construct
- to build
- to compare
- to contrast

Another important point to keep in mind when writing objectives is not to list too many. This relates to the previous discussion on limiting content for the learner. You can’t possibly cover five objectives in a one-hour presentation that includes a question and answer period. Be careful about how much you try to accomplish with one session.

Finally, when possible, write your learning objectives well in advance of promoting your program. One of the greatest sources of learner dissatisfaction arises from expectations that differ from what you actually deliver. The more specific you can be in your promotional materials about what your program will accomplish, and for whom it is targeted, the greater the chance that you’ll meet the needs of program participants.

Organizing and sequencing content

To properly organize and **sequence** content, you'll need to consider:

- ▼ which concepts build on others and should be presented first;
- ▼ starting with simple concepts and moving toward more complex ones;
- ▼ how to use “**freewheeling**,” or **mind-mapping**

Sometimes content is best learned in a certain order, especially when you are teaching in a face-to-face teaching and learning situation. Sequencing becomes important when students need to learn certain concepts before others. It also helps you select proper teaching tools, which we'll discuss in Unit 3.

Extension faculty often don't have the luxury of weeks or months to develop and present information in courses or curricula as do their campus-based peers. So organizing content for maximum learning effectiveness is crucial.

Reigeluth and Stein (1983) suggest the following principles in sequencing content:

- ▼ Start with simple concepts and move toward more complex ones.
- ▼ Build on prerequisite knowledge.

It's important to be flexible in how you organize content because you may discover that your learners want to emphasize certain concepts over others. This is particularly true for learners with prior knowledge about the topic or strong interest in the content. You may also spend more time on certain subjects because they are harder to master.

If you are teaching groups with a mix of prior knowledge, it is probably best to include basic concepts so everyone can start at the same place. You can mention to the more advanced members that the first part of your session will be a review, and you appreciate their patience while the others learn. This is particularly important when you are teaching skills.

In his book, *Mastering the Teaching of Adults*, Apps (1991) describes the concept of **freewheeling**, also known as **mind mapping**, to organize content. (It is, in fact, a method we used to organize the content for this learner's guide.) Freewheeling is a non-linear approach to thinking about ideas, and you may wish to try it the next time you need to design instruction or even solve a problem. (See pages 109-111 in Apps' book for more about this concept.)

No matter how you organize and sequence content, you should consider preparing your learners for what they are about to learn. This could be as simple as using an **advance organizer**. An advance organizer is a short statement or summary of what learners can expect from their educational experience; a simple example is an agenda for a workshop or seminar. Advance organizers give learners a “head start” in the process of organizing information and concepts so that they make sense.

At the end of your educational experience, consider summarizing what you hoped your participants learned. Ask them how they might apply new information and ideas to their own lives. This reinforces concepts and makes them more relevant to the learner.

Summary

We hope you've had a chance to begin assessing how you might select, organize and sequence content for your teaching/learning experiences. Thoroughly important, too, is the ability to conceptualize and write good learning objectives. Such skills will provide you with a good base from which to actually begin what we commonly think of as "teaching." (But we now know that so much more needs to happen before we even begin speaking!)



Listen now to the audio cassette tape, *Creating Dynamic Adult Learning Experiences*, Vol. 2, where Stephen Brookfield interviews Alan Knox about planning content, learning objectives and delivery.

Applying the concepts: "Homeless Issue" statement

Remember Jonette, the extension family living agent in This County, who is trying to organize a housing coalition to better understand and counteract the factors contributing to homelessness in her county? Let's listen to Jonette as she considers her content and learning objectives for an educational program on homelessness.

What do I know about this subject matter? I've attended a few meetings of the advisory council for the shelter for abused family members, and read the limited amount of material covered in the press. I should investigate this more, however, especially as this is a rural county. I can call our Extension housing specialists in Madison to see what they know about homelessness in rural counties. But I also realize I can't know everything about this issue, and will be a co-learner in some respects for whatever I put together.

What type of material should I cover?

There's a real range of knowledge levels and attitudes in this group. Since my overall goal is to increase understanding of the homeless issue in our county, and help find ways to deal with it, I'll have to focus on cognitive and affective changes for participants.

Let me try some learning objectives for this workshop.

After participating in this workshop, learners will be able to:

1. define homelessness;
2. identify the number of homeless people in This County in the past year;
3. list two reasons why homelessness is increasing in This County; and
4. describe several ways in which communities can begin to address the homeless problem in This County.

Knowing this vocal group (especially Wayne Zinkerman), I need to allow plenty of time to discuss these issues! And since I'm not an expert in this area, I'll try to get the Community Action Program Director to co-facilitate or teach the program with me.

Now, given these objectives, how should I arrange my content? I'll start with the definition of homelessness, even though some of the group members already have a good idea of what it is. But I know Wayne doesn't. I can just tell the others that this will be a brief review.

I can ask everyone to bring some data from their own situations which we can use to piece together the big picture of homelessness in the county. We can talk about people we know personally who have battled this problem—and we can ask someone who was homeless to talk to us, and find out how s/he got into that situation. A person who does not fit the stereotype of the homeless person might really generate an affective response in people like Wayne. Then we can shift into a discussion of what each group member is doing to fight this issue, and how we can do more.

That's a good start for Jonette! Now, can you do this for your own situation?

Looking back—a checklist ✓

Congratulations—you have finished this unit! As you organized content and developed learning objectives for your issue statement, did you:

- **1.** limit content to a reasonable amount?
- **2.** allow time for interaction between you and your learners? Between learners and each other?
- **3.** address specific areas of learning when developing your learning objectives, such as cognitive, affective, psychomotor?
- **4.** use specific action verbs when writing your learning objectives?
- **5.** use simple sentences when writing your learning objectives?
- **6.** limit learning objectives to a reasonable number, given the time allowed for teaching?
- **7.** build on simple concepts, and proceed to more complex ones?
- **8.** try freewheeling or mind mapping as a way to organize content?

Now, let's go on to the next unit,
Selecting appropriate teaching tools.

Educational design concepts

Unit 3 *Selecting appropriate teaching tools*

We hope your participation in the two previous units, **Understanding learners and their needs** and **Examining and organizing content**, has prepared the way for what you're about to explore next. With a full appreciation for *who* your learners are and *what* they will be learning, we can talk about *how* they can best participate in that learning. **Selecting appropriate teaching tools** addresses exactly that.

Practically any task can be accomplished most efficiently and often most effectively when the appropriate tools are used.

Selecting appropriate tools for teaching and learning experiences is equally important, for they can provide the successful link between learner and content. **Teaching tools** include the vast array of techniques and strategies used by instructors to help the learner interpret and understand the content at hand. The techniques that you choose to use in your instruction will be

Self assessment

Please read the statements which follow on **Selecting appropriate teaching tools**. Circle one number after each statement to indicate your present knowledge-level about this educational design concept. ("1" represents no knowledge of this concept; "5" represents full knowledge.)

	No knowledge		Full knowledge		
1. I can describe at least five criteria that are important to consider when selecting teaching tools.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I know how to select teaching strategies and techniques that work most effectively for various instructional goals and objectives (those intended to provide information, develop skills, nurture in-depth understanding, change attitudes, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can explain the differences between instructional tools (techniques and strategies used in teaching) and instructional aids (audiovisual equipment) and give examples of when each might be used.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can confidently describe which teaching tools are most appropriate for the issue-situation statement I've selected.	1	2	3	4	5

If you did not answer all statements with at least a "4" or "5," please read on to learn more about **Selecting appropriate teaching tools**. If you feel confident in your understanding and application of these concepts you're welcome to move on to the next unit.

guided by your instructional philosophy, your prior teaching and learning experiences and your goals and objectives. There are no magical formulas, but guidelines exist to help clarify this important topic. We'll be looking at several.

Learning objectives

After reading and completing the activities in this unit, you will be able to:

- ▼ List at least five criteria that are important to consider when selecting appropriate teaching tools
- ▼ Describe types of teaching strategies and techniques (“tools”) that work most effectively for various instructional goals and objectives
- ▼ Distinguish the difference between **instructional tools** and **instructional aids**
- ▼ Select appropriate teaching tools for your issue/situation statement

Key concepts

The choices are many when trying to determine which teaching strategies or techniques to use in a given instructional situation. Jerry Apps provides us with some guidelines in his book *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991) by suggesting that we consider:

1. Learning objectives
2. Characteristics of the learners
3. Subject matter
4. Characteristics of the teaching tools:
What a particular tool will and will not do, and under what conditions it will work best
5. Learning situation: The type of meeting room and any potential distractions
6. Teaching tools you prefer



To further explore these concepts, read Apps (1991), pages 87–94. Then examine the wide selection of teaching tools described on pages 45–75 and pages 95–106, and note the types of learning they facilitate most effectively. This may seem like a lot of reading, but take a quick peek and you'll soon discover the reading is fast and loaded with useful ideas.

After reading Apps' material, you can clearly see the interplay that occurs between these criteria, and how you must consider each when you select teaching strategies and techniques that fit the overall situation best. One criterion has a direct impact on another.

That's especially true within Cooperative Extension where our learners, learning needs and teaching/learning situations are very diverse. Let's look at a couple of situations.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) seminars, which teach Wisconsin farmers how to keep chemical pesticide use to a minimum, address several kinds of learning objectives (informational, skill and attitudinal), and several types of learners. Teaching tools such as lectures, print materials and slides are effective for communicating information. But these learners bring a variety of educational and experience levels with them, and a range of attitudes about pest management and agricultural profitability. Teaching tools, such as questioning, consciousness-raising and group discussion, are vital for examining all sides of the issues. These learners need to hear and share multiple perspectives. And they need quiet time to reflect. They also need to be taught *how* to implement IPM practices. What skills are involved? Use of video can help to address

As learning needs change, teaching tool choices should shift to accommodate the “new mix” in the learning situation.

that need, with follow-up dialogue between the instructor and participants. The teaching tool choices are varied so as to respond to varied learning needs. But modifications are needed. For example, when the locations of the seminars move to areas where ground-water contamination is a hot issue and consciousness levels are high, teaching tool choices should shift to accommodate the “new mix” in the learning situation.

But what about those hundreds of opportunities to teach one-on-one? As a 4-H youth agent, maybe you’ve received phone calls from teenagers seeking help with budgeting income from their jobs. Whether you’re conscious of it or not, learning objec-

tives are forming in your mind.

One might be: By the end of these phone calls, the learners will be able to identify the next step in managing their money. Careful use of questioning and dialogue are certainly teaching tools for better understanding the learners and their needs,

and for helping them to determine what they need to do next. Such techniques also help to establish the extent and nature of the contributing problems, and what indeed should be done next. This information can also guide you in selecting other teaching tools, such as print materials, or follow-up face-to-face appointments to review key financial management principles and hands-on opportunities to apply them. Many of Apps’ criteria come into play here, as they should in all teaching situations. But what’s so delightful about working with most one-on-one teaching is that it’s ripe with teachable moments. Learners have come to us with a specific learning need. Their motivation to learn is at an all-time high!

Reference to **educational technologies** such as video and slides in the examples above, opens up another point for discussion. Educational technologies (video and audio tapes, teleconferencing technologies,

computers, overhead projectors, slides, etc.) are often referred to as teaching tools as well. We should think of them instead as “instructional aids” which extend or increase the effectiveness of strategies and techniques. They do not teach by themselves, though this distinction is becoming more blurred by the sophistication of existing and emerging instructional technologies.

Hiemstra and Sisco (1990) classify these instructional aids according to the function they perform in the instructional setting. That is, they can have an illustrative function (overhead transparency), an environmental function (seating arrangements), a manipulative function (tools or equipment), and so on. Reynolds and Anderson (1992) go several steps further by providing criteria for selecting (and developing) media for instruction. Numerous instructional media are analyzed from the perspective of how they can be applied to the three major types of learning: cognitive (dealing with recall or recognition of knowledge), affective (focusing on change in feelings and emotions) and psychomotor (emphasizing motor or muscular skills and/or manipulation of objects). For example, overhead transparencies are useful for teaching cognitive objectives (including numerous examples), limited in their application to psychomotor objectives and generally not applicable to affective objectives. Many advantages and disadvantages are listed relevant to use of this technology, as well as pointers for selecting and developing transparencies for instruction. The EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES core competency module will explore these concepts in greater depth. For now, be aware of this excellent resource—*Selecting and Developing Media for Instruction* by Reynolds and Anderson, (1992) and feel free to tap into it on your own. It’s “user-friendly” and very practical.

What’s so delightful about working with most one-on-one teaching is that it’s ripe with teachable moments.

Summary

Understanding who your learners are and what they will be learning provides a necessary base for selecting the teaching techniques and strategies that can best help with the important job of learning. More specifically, your teaching tools should be compatible with the learning objectives, the characteristics of the learners, the subject matter, the characteristics of the tools themselves (conditions under which they work best), the learning situation and the instructor's preference. You must determine the mix. Draw upon the many helpful examples in *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* (1991). And perhaps most important, learn to trust your intellect and your instinct.

Applying the concepts: “Homeless issue” example

Jonette, the extension family living agent in This County, has done a nice job of getting a handle on her learners and their needs. She has figured out what her content should include, and which learning objectives to tackle. She has a good base for selecting appropriate teaching tools—that is, strategies and techniques that can help her and the housing coalition move ahead with their challenges. Let's listen in again to see how she handles decisions about which teaching tools (strategies and techniques) will work best in this situation.

Our first meeting will last for a couple of hours, and the most convenient time for everyone is from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 22. You can tell they juggle full calendars.

*I know that this diverse group of learners will need opportunities to share their thoughts and concerns with each other. We might do that via a “structured” mixer—like a get-better-acquainted activity that also has us focusing on why we're here. Eitington's (1989) *The Winning Trainer* has a lot of good ideas along that line. I'll check it out.*

Fifteen minutes of that is all we can afford. But I think by then we'll be mentally and physically better prepared to settle in and tackle our learning objectives. We have a lot of information to share and learn from each other and outside sources. We need to build some truly in-depth understanding about homelessness, and we need to challenge our attitudes and perceptions. That's a lot to accomplish!

The homelessness definition that I received from our state housing specialist will provide a great focal point for starters. With a group of 17 people, a flip chart will work just fine to display the definition. (Our overhead projector works better in dimmer lighting, and I hate to dim any lights at 7:30 a.m.) I'll include the definition in some print materials I've prepared for them too, so they can reference it later. That definition should stimulate (and challenge, in Wayne's case) some broader perceptions, and I think we should spend 15 minutes or so talking about them.

The Community Action Program Director is bringing two guests—former clients who were homeless—to share their personal experiences. That will help to build the in-depth understanding we need about homelessness, and dispel many of the stereotypical feelings and images we can have. I'm hoping this will jar some of Wayne's thoughts and attitudes.

Each coalition member agreed to bring some data about homelessness-related issues from their respective situations, so we can begin to draw a clearer picture of what's happening in This County. Some have stories to share, some have data, some have photographs. I'm trying to gather some information from a state perspective too, to help broaden our awareness. That mix of teaching tools will work nicely with the varied learning styles in our group, too.

What will keep this group motivated? Action! Once we understand homelessness better—especially the homeless situation in This County and what contributes to it—we need to talk “response.” That's what brought them to this meeting in the first place. That's no small agenda item either! I think I'll lay the groundwork for some strategies we can use the next time we meet, for building consensus on what

Educational design concepts

Unit 4 *Creating an effective learning environment*

You focused on **Selecting appropriate teaching tools** in the last unit. In a sense, the unit you're beginning is a first cousin to it. **Creating an effective learning environment** discusses how you can help to create the kind of environment that enhances and encourages learning. Sounds like something we might have said about teaching tools, doesn't it? That's because many of the concepts you're about to explore are, in a way, tools to further help the learning process.

Creating an effective learning environment involves examining physical, psychological, social and cultural factors—all of which help to mold the learning experience. Let's get started.

Learning objectives

After reading and carrying out the activities in this unit, you will be able to:

- ▼ List four dimensions that are important to consider when creating effective learning environments
- ▼ Identify several ways in which you can achieve each of those four dimensions for creating effective learning environments
- ▼ Describe how you can apply these ideas to create an effective learning environment for your selected issue/situation statement

Self assessment

Please read the statements which follow regarding **Creating an effective learning environment**. Circle one number after each statement to indicate your present knowledge of this educational design concept. ("1" represents no knowledge of this concept; "5" represents full knowledge.)

	No knowledge		Full knowledge		
1. I can list four dimensions that are important to consider when creating learning environments.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can identify several ways in which each of these dimensions can be achieved to create effective learning environments.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can describe how to create an effective learning environment for the issue situation statement I've selected.	1	2	3	4	5

If you didn't answer all statements with at least a "4" or "5," please read on to learn more about **Creating an effective learning environment**. If you feel confident in your understanding and application of these concepts you're welcome to move along to the next and final unit.

Key concepts

Creating environments that help people learn is far more important than you might think. White (1972) notes that “General estimates indicate that while about 75 percent of learning is accounted for by motivation, meaningfulness, and memory, the remaining 25 percent...is dependent upon the effects of the physical environment. In general, therefore, the success of adult education is dependent to a considerable extent upon the facilities and environment provided for the learner.” (p.1).

Did that grab your attention? Even if the impact is less than 25 percent, it’s still worth understanding the learning environment and how to affect it in positive ways. That’s our intent with the information that follows.

You will be exploring four dimensions of an effective learning environment. They include:

- 1. Physical**—recognizing the importance that physical comfort plays in the learning experience—the size, structure, lighting, noise level, ventilation and location of the places where we teach and learn.
- 2. Psychological**—helping learners to feel psychologically comfortable and at ease.
- 3. Social**—arranging for learners to get acquainted with each other and with you, the instructor, and providing adequate opportunities for interaction.
- 4. Cultural**—being respectful of and sensitive to the cultural/ethnic diversity of learners, and the values and experiences they bring to the learning situation.

How effectively you apply each of these dimensions in your extension education experiences depends upon knowing your learners, understanding your content and selecting your teaching tools.

Let’s take a closer look.

Physical environment

First of all, we know that physical factors have a great influence upon how people learn. That’s a fact. Rooms that are too big, too small, too cold, too dark, too stuffy, too noisy, too congested, or too difficult to find provide barriers to learning. Yet, ironically, we as adult educators have a fairly passive attitude about selecting or modifying the physical environments we teach in. Too often, we also believe that we have no control over the physical surroundings. This is not completely true.

Although our “classrooms” can range from a sophisticated conference room to a farmer’s field, we can have some control over the physical environment. If we’ve done our homework and know who our learners are, what we’re teaching and how we’re going to teach it, then we can make some good choices about an effective learning environment.

Heimstra and Sisco (1990) provide us with a list of things to consider when selecting physical environments. The following list is an adaptation of it.

Analyzing the physical environment

Sensory concerns ✓

- Adequate lighting
- Absence of glare
- Lighting adequate for audiovisual devices
- Attractive & pleasant space
- Adequate acoustics
- Adequate sound amplification
- No distracting sounds or noises
- Temperature appropriate for season
- Adequate ventilation or air conditioning

Rooms that are too big, too small, too cold, too dark, too stuffy, too noisy, too congested, or too difficult to find provide barriers to learning.

Furnishings ✓

- __ Adequate table or writing space
- __ Furnishings can be rearranged for small-group work or so that all learners can see each other
- __ Table space available for refreshments and resources
- __ Tables high enough for learners to cross their legs if they sit at tables
- __ If learners sit at tables, the tables can be arranged in a square, circle or U-shape
- __ No ragged or sharp edges
- __ Sturdy chairs, tables, other furnishings
- __ Furnishings arranged so that learners can see each other when seated.

Seating ✓

- __ Different types of adjustable seats
- __ Adequate cushioning if session will be lengthy
- __ Space for people to cross their legs comfortably
- __ Straight-backed and flat bottom chairs for people with back problems.
- __ Adequate sturdiness/size
- __ Easily moveable
- __ Adequate seat height from floor
- __ Left-handed learner provided for

General concerns ✓

- __ Convenient access to and from the learning site
- __ Adequate signage to direct learners to appropriate sites
- __ Lavatory / cafeteria / refreshments nearby
- __ Adequate parking nearby
- __ Adequate lighting in parking area and building hallways
- __ Appropriate shape and size of learning site
- __ Breakout rooms / areas available if needed
- __ Space for learners to move around if necessary

As overwhelming as that list may seem, you're probably accommodating several of those considerations already. But you might also be too willing to compromise on some

physical environmental needs, believing that they're insignificant. After all, you've been using that conference room for years now, and it seems to serve the purpose just fine! Take a second look through the pair of lenses that Heimstra and Sisco suggest. Chances are some changes need to be made— perhaps with lighting, sound and furniture, too. We know that vision and hearing in particular deteriorate with age, which has direct impact on the visuals, lighting and audio systems that we use. But did you realize that such decline begins fairly early in life? Heimstra and Sisco (1990) point out that

- ▼ Depth perception begins to drop in the late 30s.
- ▼ Focusing on near objects becomes more difficult in the early 40s.
- ▼ Ability to distinguish strength or sharpness of color declines beginning at 45.
- ▼ Yellowing of our eye lenses, which causes light to appear scattered, can begin in the early 50s.
- ▼ Visual acuity, or ability to distinguish detail, drops in the 50s.
- ▼ Hearing difficulties for both volume and pitch become noticeable in the 40–55 age range.

Do you feel like you're falling apart? And if not now, like you will soon? Indeed, many of our learners are experiencing these problems. As extension educators, we need to provide excellent illumination without glare, with good acoustics and sound systems. We also need to be sure that learners with special visual and hearing difficulties have their choice of seats.

Our awareness and response are mandated to go beyond that, however. UWEX Cooperative Extension is required by federal law to accommodate individuals with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which went into effect on January 26, 1992, states: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participa-

tion in or denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”

The ADA affects UWEX CE in our ability to make educational materials and programs available and accessible to our clients. For example, *upon request from the learner*, you may need to provide a qualified interpreter for hearing impaired persons. You may get a request for print materials in Braille for visually impaired persons. When you’re faced with situations like these, the UWEX Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action can help you. You’ll find more information in the **Resources** section of this guide.

Let’s look at some additional perspectives about learning environments. Huchingson (1981) tells us that four other major environmental factors affect personal comfort, which ultimately affects learning. They include:

- ▼ temperature,
- ▼ humidity,
- ▼ ventilation, and
- ▼ radiation from the sun or other sources.

Learning environments that accommodate these factors should also be at the top of your list. Choose rooms with good temperature control, air conditioning for hot summer days, adequate air circulation and protection from direct sun.

Ergonomics, which refers to the comfort of those who occupy a space or use a particular piece of equipment, is a critical concern too. The tables and chairs used by our learners fit into this category. We need to be sure that they are not just physically comfortable, but also flexible in their use. Can different seating and room arrangements be provided? Can furniture be moved easily?

By now you might be thinking “Get real! There isn’t a county on this planet that meets *all* those requirements. The local town hall is lucky to have heat, much less controlled heat! You expect decent lighting

too?” We hear you. But before we relax our stance on this preferred learning environment, let us say a word about advocacy. As adult educators it’s up to us to represent the best possible conditions for learning. If appropriate learning spaces aren’t readily available, then let’s go to bat to get some. There’s a pool of research documenting the validity of quality learning environments. We’re not talking about luxury. We’re talking about learning. Pure functional learning. Most administrators (and many instructors) often aren’t aware that there are problems with the physical environment. And if they are, they don’t feel it’s their responsibility to ensure that learning environments are prepared adequately. Budgets for adult learning activities seldom include improvements for the physical environment. We can do a lot to change that awareness and build a better reality. Your learners will thank you. Go for it!

Psychological, social and cultural environments

It should come as no surprise that our ability to learn is affected by how comfortable we feel in our environment, and how at ease we are with the people around us. When we are relaxed, our minds are open to new thoughts, ideas and possibilities. When we feel more confident, we can take greater responsibility for our own learning. When we become better acquainted with the people around us, we can reveal and discover more about ourselves and be enriched by their lives, too. Tuning in to the psychological, social and cultural dimensions of learning environments brings wonderful rewards, to you and your learners. Let’s look at ways to do that.

Create an atmosphere for learning

- ▲ Consider how sound, sight, smell, taste and other sensory experiences can be used to create an atmosphere that welcomes and helps people feel comfortable.

As adult educators it’s up to us to represent the best possible conditions for learning.

- Music can be a very effective way to put people at ease. It can enhance their creative thinking skills and at the same time reduce their stress—a nice combination! Clarke-Epstein (1991) suggests using some of the selections noted below while learners are just arriving or during a creative work session. The right music has a slow, restful tempo of about 60 beats per minute most often in 4/4 or 3/4 time. Many Baroque classics fit these requirements.

—*Optimalearning: Baroque Music Number One*

—*Optimalearning: Baroque Music Number Two*

—*Music for Imaging*

The **Resources** section of this guide can give you details about where to find these tapes, and other similar learning resources.

- Use visual images (objects, posters, photographs) throughout the learning environment that relate to the content. Learner interest will increase, and the added colors and textures will welcome your learners. This can be especially effective when dealing with multicultural groups. You can integrate objects and images to which they relate, and help them feel like welcome participants.
- The most obvious ways to stimulate learner taste and smell is with food. But this doesn't have to be any more complicated than the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and herbal tea. Both say, "Come join us. I'm glad you're here." When your learners are multicultural, capitalize on the opportunity to include a refreshment that is special to them.
- **B.** Post a large, easy-to-read "welcome" sign that states "Cooperative Extension" and the name of the program at the entrance to your meeting room. It confirms for learners that they *are* in the correct place.

- **C.** Welcome your learners at the door and introduce yourself when necessary. Let them know you're glad they came.
- **D.** Provide name tags and program materials for your learners as they enter the room. When appropriate, don't be afraid to use color. It says, "Exciting things are about to happen." (Black on yellow is easy to read. Black on fuchsia is deadly!)
- **E.** Take time to get acquainted with each other. A variety of techniques can be used, depending on how much time you have and how many times the group will meet. If your group is multicultural, consider what might be important for learners to share about themselves to encourage a deeper appreciation for other values, concerns about the topic, etc.



Apps (1991) suggests some approaches for getting acquainted on pages 79–80 in his book. Take a minute to browse through them.

There are times when it's helpful for learners to be able to get in touch with each other in-between or after the group learning experience(s). If they agree, provide a roster of names, addresses and phone numbers of those who wish to be included.

- **F.** Help learners feel confident about themselves and their learning ability. This is especially important if your content is intended to help learners develop or improve specific skills such as parenting, financial management, etc.



Turn to pages 85–86 in Apps' (1991) book for ideas about a "tool" that can help to build self-confidence in learners.

Michael Krawetz (1990) has also developed an interesting exercise to help people boost their self-esteem. It's designed to be used individually, but could easily be shared as a group exercise—perhaps as a get-acquainted activity. It's entitled "An Exercise in Acknowledging Your Wonderful Self." You'll find it on page 72 in the Appendix.

- G.** Use good interpersonal skills such as direct eye contact, attentive listening, smiling and humor. Each of these helps to build good rapport between you and your learners and contributes to a comfortable learning environment.



Take a look at what Apps (1991) has to say about humor on pages 77–78.

- H.** Include in your introductory comments a few words about Cooperative Extension and why it is committed to the subject at hand. Provide learners with an overview of what's planned, and invite them to share their ideas and concerns. Their input may modify your proposed agenda. And it may not. But if not, let them know why, and how their concerns might be handled in another way. Inviting their input is another way of saying "I care about you and your reasons for being here."



Apps (1991) shares some thoughts about developing "group agendas" on pages 80–82.

Having said that, let's get down to the nitty-gritty of some of these ideas.

We're going to look in on a CRD agent in rural Wisconsin who will be meeting in several weeks with members of the local business association to discuss downtown revitalization. She has researched her audience well, and is aware that her anticipated group of 24 people ranges in age from about 28 to 61. One gentleman is in a wheelchair. She suspects that a few require hearing aids.

About half have owned their own businesses for 12 or more years. Two are three-generation owners. One individual is Laotian, and has owned his Asian Food Store for one year.

She knows that her content requires the use of slides, an overhead projector, and print materials. Opportunity for group discussion, sharing concerns and viewpoints, and good eye contact between people is critical. Some members oppose any change and find the whole topic threatening.

She knows there are several criteria to meet in choosing a good physical learning environment. Her room must be large enough to accommodate a U-shaped seating arrangement. These people know each other to varying degrees, but eye contact and open sharing is imperative. Her "get-better acquainted" activity will require moving some chairs. The room should have good lighting control, so it can be bright for part of her presentation, group discussion and reference to print materials, but subdued for viewing slides and using the overhead projector. It also must be accessible to people with disabilities. Ventilation is especially critical, since discussion might get heated and meetings in June can be warm. She'd like her learners to do some brainstorming in small groups to help ease the differences of opinion, and to begin building a team environment. That will require a room large enough to accommodate four groups of six people that are out of each other's hearing range, or ideally, separate break-out rooms.

The UW–Madison Department of Landscape Architecture has several excellent drawings of downtown areas being considered for revitalization that she can borrow. Her CRD colleague has some great before-after photos as well. She'll mount those around the room to stimulate interest and discussion. Coffee will be provided, and a sampling of Oriental teas from the Asian Food Store. Signs, name tags, participant materials and teaching resources are pretty much in place.

She'll talk with the Town Hall chairperson about their meeting room facilities and check to see if they've completed installation of their new phone system so distracting noises won't be an issue.

That's a pretty typical learning situation for extension, isn't it? But our "classrooms" can also be found in a farmer's dairy barn when the topic is something on the order of using shredded newspapers for animal bedding. What learning environment needs come into play in that situation? The agriculture agent knows that his farm client is in his early fifties and is anxious about the health and safety of his dairy herd. He's also concerned about cutting operating costs. He's lost two cows in the last year to an infectious disease and wants to reduce the odds of that happening again.

The ag agent wants to share some facts and figures pertaining to animal health, toxicity, foreign matter, cost savings, effectiveness, etc. He just prepared a fact sheet that communicates that very well. He has some photographs taken from other farms in the county where shredded newspaper bedding is being used quite successfully and a video tape with testimonials from farmers. Bright lighting and a table and chairs will be needed to look at materials and discuss the issues comfortably. The ag agent is aware of the poor lighting situation, and so will rely on verbal sharing at first while they walk the property. That will provide an excellent opportunity for the two to get better acquainted, and for the farmer to comfortably express his concerns, anxieties and questions.

He'll ask the farmer if they can meet afterward around the kitchen table in the house to look at print materials and photographs, and work on estimates of shredded bedding needed for his situation. He'll leave the video tape for the farmer to view later when his wife gets home from work.

These are just two situations common to the extension "beat." Both require a keen awareness of learner, content, teaching tools and an assessment of the kind of learning environment that enhances all of the above. Soon you'll have a chance to try your hand at creating an effective learning environment.

Summary

An important goal that we share as educators is to help make our learning experiences as meaningful and effective as possible for our learners. Creating effective learning environments will help us accomplish that goal. We need to think about ways to accommodate the physical, psychological, social and cultural dimensions of those experiences. And we need to be advocates for new and improved physical learning environments.

Before moving on, listen to the audio cassette tape, *Creating Dynamic Adult*



Learning Experiences, Vol. 1, where Stephen Brookfield interviews Malcolm

Knowles about creating positive learning environments.

Applying the concepts: "Homeless issue" example

Jonette goes the next mile now in her efforts to create an effective learning environment. Let's see what she has in mind.

Another winter morning meeting—how can I help make it pleasant and productive? People will be concerned about parking and access to the building in snowy conditions (one woman has a broken leg from skiing). They'll be cold and maybe not quite awake yet. Some are anxious about the topic, others wonder who else will be there, and most will not have had breakfast!

Food, safe access and warmth are essential on January 22. But I'd like the atmosphere to enhance our sensitivity to the topic, too. The Safe Haven Shelter has a meeting room that comfortably handles 20 people, and as a recipient of federal funds, you can be sure it's physically accessible to anyone! The home-like atmosphere provides painful contrast to our "homelessness" topic, though that contrast quickly diminishes when you realize it is now the only, albeit temporary, home to too many adults and children in This County. Meeting there may help touch the affective sides of our learners, and begin to uproot perceptions that need to be weeded out. Besides, some of these folks have never set foot in the shelter before. In a way, the shelter becomes a powerful "teaching tool" as well.

The meeting room has some physical limitations. I'll need to rearrange the tables and chairs a bit to accommodate a "U-shape" to maximize eye contact between coalition members, and provide good visibility to the flip chart. We'll need room to circulate during the structured mixer part of our agenda. I'll set up a table for refreshments.

I'll make sure everyone is clear on directions to get there. I'll put our UWEX program sign by the meeting room entrance, have name tags and materials ready for them when they come in, and greet them. I think I'll bring my "boom box" to play some instrumental music-to-mix-by!

I'll arrange to have freshly brewed coffee, herbal teas and juice on hand, along with fresh fruit and muffins. People can enjoy those as they circulate during the "structured" mixer activity. That chance to warm up, meet their coalition colleagues and share concerns about homelessness with each other will provide some excellent groundwork for further learning—provided no one gets stuck in a snow bank parking their car! They also might decide that this is more than just a task-oriented group—it's also a pleasant one to be a part of, and they'll show up again.

I'll use some "advance organizer" strategies to orient people to our morning. That should be done immediately after everyone arrives, so the "mixer" activity can be introduced right away. Adults who like to socialize and interact with

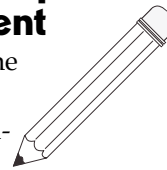
each other will be fully energized by the mixer. But it will accommodate those adults who feel somewhat apprehensive about the homelessness topic too, by providing them with small forums of 2-3 people with whom to share concerns.

That's a good start for now. I need to give more thought to what I want to say by way of introduction and orientation. It's important for these folks to feel comfortable with, excited about and empowered to deal with this topic. We're on the right track, I think.

Would you care to join Jonette at this first meeting of the housing coalition? We're ready to sign up! Creating an effective learning environment is a very exciting dimension of educational design. Have fun as you work next on your own.

Applying the concepts: Your issue statement

Take another look at the issue / situation statement you've selected and consider how you might apply the concepts we've been talking about here. You're tuned in to your learners and their needs. The content is examined and organized, learning objectives are written and checked. Appropriate teaching strategies and techniques have been selected. Now consider the kind of learning environment needed to accommodate the plans and decisions you've made. What are the physical requirements? How can you accomplish them? What needs to be done to respond to the psychological, social and cultural needs as well? Make notes about the choices you make for referencing later on. And remember, there are no "correct" answers—only guidelines that await your creative touch and vision. This is a fun exercise. Have a good time with it!



Looking back—a checklist ✓

You did it! In designing an effective learning environment, you made several important decisions. The checklist below is a reference for doublechecking the choices you've made.

In creating an effective learning environment for your issue/situation statement, did you consider:

- **1.** the physical needs, and how you might accommodate them? (Will your physical learning environment be the appropriate type, size and location for your learners and learning needs? Will you be able to control the lighting? Is it without glare? Is the space ventilated? Free of distracting noises? Easily accessible to all learners including handicapped? Are the tables and chairs comfortable and moveable? Are rest rooms, drinking water, telephones, etc. conveniently available? Is it aesthetically pleasing?)
- **2.** the psychological needs and how you can be sensitive to them? (Have you planned ways to help your learners feel comfortable, at ease, confident and excited about learning?)
- **3.** the social needs and how best to respond to them? (How will your learners get acquainted with each other and with you? Have you provided opportunities for learners to interact during the learning experience?)
- **4.** the cultural needs and ways to build understanding about them? (How will you show sensitivity and respect for the cultural or ethnic diversity of your learners? How can all learners be enriched by the values and experiences of a culturally diverse group?)

Educational design concepts

Unit 5 *Assessing learning outcomes*

You've spent a lot of time thinking about your learners, designing content and objectives, selecting appropriate teaching tools and creating a fair and effective learning environment for your situational statement. What's next? A crucial part of educational design is one of the final steps, assessing **learning outcomes**.

Assessing learning outcomes is part of the larger process of evaluation. (Because it's such a complex topic, we won't be covering much about evaluation in this learner's guide. There is an EVALUATION core competency module however, which can provide you with more detail on this matter.) Basically, assessing learning outcomes means evaluating whether you've reached your learning objectives. This clearly will show you if you've been successful in designing educational experiences.

Learning objectives

After reading and doing the exercises in this unit, you will be able to:

- ▼ Describe several ways you can assess if your learning objectives have been met
- ▼ Design a simple set of questions to assess the learning outcomes for your issue/situation statement

Self assessment

Please read the following statements about **Assessing learning outcomes**. Circle one number after each statement to indicate your present knowledge level about this educational design concept. ("1" represents no knowledge of this concept; "5" represents full knowledge of this concept.)

	No knowledge		Full knowledge		
1. I can devise a simple tool to assess what my learners have learned in various educational experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can develop a set of questions that assess the learning outcomes for my issue/situation statement.	1	2	3	4	5

If you didn't answer all statements with a "4" or "5," please read on to learn more about **Assessing learning outcomes**. If you feel confident in your understanding and application of these concepts, you're welcome to move to the conclusion of this learner's guide.

Key concepts

Evaluation is the process of deciding something’s value. In educational design, it means determining if your programs will be/are/were of value to clientele, government officials, community leaders, Extension administrators and staff, as well as yourself. Evaluation can be formal, such as conducting field experiments or using surveys, or it can be informal, such as a brief chat with one of your learners.

At what point can you evaluate? Before the program (needs assessment), during the program (to make changes based on feedback from learners), and/or after the program (assessing learning outcomes). For example, if a number of wells become contaminated in an area, the local CRD agent might consider this a good opportunity for public education. This is a very informal needs assessment or evaluation.

Or suppose a 4-H faculty member is holding a series of workshops for youth-serving professionals on environmental education. After the first workshop, one of the participants tells the agent that she cannot see the text on the overhead transparencies, and the appropriate changes are made for the next time. This is a simple example of evaluating during a program.

Tyler defines evaluation as “the process of determining to what extent [learning] objectives have been realized” (1949). This is one of the most common ways to conduct evaluation. For the purposes of this unit, we’ll focus on this definition of assessing learning outcomes, also known as **objectives-based evaluation**.

Assessing learning outcomes is critical to understanding how well you designed a specific program, and whether you met your educational objectives. It can also help you document the impact of your total educational program when writing your year-end plan of work, quarterly narrative reports and statistical summaries. (Learn more about how to do this in the PRO-GRAM DEVELOPMENT core competency module.)

There are several steps in the process of objectives-based evaluation. You should:

- ▼ identify learning objectives;
- ▼ specify evaluation standards;
- ▼ design evaluation tools and methods;
- ▼ analyze data;
- ▼ determine if your learning objectives were met;
- ▼ report the results.

You already learned how to develop effective learning objectives in Unit 2. But how do you specify “evaluation standards?”

Whenever you assess a program, it’s important to take some time to clarify your values, and decide which standards you will be using when evaluating. What constitutes a “successful” program? What if you can’t measure exactly what happened? For example, when you appear on television or radio to educate the public, it isn’t always easy to get an exact reading of the number of people who listened or watched. Is a program successful if it reached 80% of the target audience? 60%? 20%? According to Brack and Moss (1984), for some controversial subject matter areas and non-traditional audiences, 20% may make quite an impact.

Evaluation can be formal, such as conducting field experiments or using surveys, or it can be informal, such as a brief chat with one of your learners.

How do you assess whether learning occurred? In most extension teaching/learning situations, learners usually aren't tested. Many extension educators rely on a post-

As long as your learning objectives are well written, it should be fairly easy to write questions to measure learning outcomes.

program/meeting/consultation evaluation form. A “happiness index” is too frequently the only method used in a such a form, but you can usually do much more! *At a minimum*, your evaluations should reflect if learning

objectives were reached, so that you can demonstrate program effectiveness in your quarterly and annual reports.

It's fairly easy to devise a form that assesses learning outcomes. You can relate questions to your learning objectives. As an example, let's take a look at the learning objectives written for two different programs discussed in Unit 2.

EXAMPLES—

I. A workshop on using credit wisely

Objective: After completing this lesson, learners should be able to rectify mistakes in their credit card billings. (A family living agent could test the learners' comprehension by asking them to identify two ways to correct mistakes in the billings.)

II. A pest scouting program

Objective: After viewing the videotape, learners will be able to—

1. Identify the European corn borer on plants in the field.
2. Describe the various methods of controlling corn borers in the field. (An agricultural agent could measure comprehension by asking learners how to identify corn borers in the field and to describe at least two methods of controlling them in the field.)

As long as your learning objectives are well written, it should be fairly easy to write questions to measure learning outcomes.

Of course, these are not the *only* questions you can ask on a post-program evaluation form. You can ask participants to rate the helpfulness and quality of the program, as well as question how they expect to use the information. You can see if they felt the different teaching strategies and techniques used were effective. You can also collect demographic information, and ask participants why they attended. Again, you can learn more about various methods of evaluation in the EVALUATION core competency module, or consult an extension evaluation specialist.

One problem with objectives-based evaluation is that adult learners' objectives sometimes can be very different from the instructor's objectives. Although this is not necessarily a bad thing, this may make assessing outcomes a little bit more difficult. It helps to add open-ended questions to your evaluation form, such as “Please indicate ideas from today's (workshop, meeting, etc.) that you can apply to your (job, life, etc.).”

Before you conduct an objectives-based evaluation, consider the resources you have available: budget, time and people. You need to decide if you will require help in designing the data collection instruments and analyzing the data. For big projects, there are times when you are justified in hiring an outside evaluator, especially if a less biased evaluation is in order.



Take a moment to read Apps' book, pages 123–125, for additional information on evaluation including how to do an end-of-class or program analysis. The Appendix on pages 127–131 in Apps' book also shows specific examples of evaluation forms used for various teaching situations.

Summary

We hope this has given you a brief overview of ways to assess learning outcomes of educational design. As you've seen, developing solid learning objectives makes the job of assessing learning much easier! Once you've shown that your participants have learned from your efforts, you'll be well on your way to demonstrating significant impact in your overall educational efforts.

Applying concepts: the “Homeless issue”

Let's revisit Extension family living agent Jonette one more time. You'll remember that she was busy designing a workshop for professionals on issues affecting the homeless in her county. As the workshop approaches, it's time for her to decide how she's going to assess participant learning.

I don't have many resources to do this evaluation, so I'll use an end-of-workshop questionnaire. It will provide me with enough information to report results on my quarterly and annual reports.

To develop the questions for this form, I'll use my learning objectives, which were:

“After participating in this workshop, learners will be able to:

1. Define homelessness
2. Identify the number of homeless people in This County in the past year
3. List two reasons why homelessness is increasing in This County
4. Describe several ways in which communities can begin to address the homeless problem in This County.”

I'll rework these as follows to create my workshop evaluation:

Homelessness Workshop Evaluation

1. Define homelessness.
2. Identify the number of homeless people in This County in the past year.
3. List two or more reasons why homelessness is increasing in This County.
4. Describe two or more ways in which communities in This County can begin to address the homeless problem.

I'll also ask participants to state their occupation, and to list specific things they will do after completing the program, which is a nice, open-ended question. This last question will help me decide if behavioral changes occurred. If I have time, I can follow up on the group by telephone to see if anyone has actually implemented these changes, or talk with group members directly.

I'll be really happy if our coalition starts meeting regularly and addresses some of the issues and possible solutions we discussed in the workshop. If that happens, my efforts will have been a success!

Checklists for effective educational design

For your convenience we've combined the checklists at the end of each unit to help you quickly review and assess your efforts. Use them with these module materials, but also let them guide you through other design efforts that you face along your educational journeys.

Each checklist refers you to pages in the preceding five units. Glance through those pages for information relevant to the questions used in the checklist.

Unit 1: Understanding learners and their needs

(reference pages 14-18)

Looking back— a checklist



In designing learning experiences to accommodate your learners' needs, did you consider:

- **1.** the learner's personal history? (Will there be an opportunity to express viewpoints; sort out what fits and what doesn't; unlearn and relearn information?)
- **2.** the learners' preferred styles of learning? (Will content be taught using a variety of strategies and techniques to accommodate the varieties of ways that people prefer to learn?)
- **3.** the learners' personal, family, work and social responsibilities that influence the choices made about learning? (Will the learning experience be in a convenient location? Will learners be able to work at a pace that's comfortable for them? Will the time of day work well with the learner's schedule?)
- **4.** the variety of reasons which motivate adults to learn? (Are you accurately tuned into the learner's interests and needs? Do you understand the practical applications being sought? Are you sure your content is "relevant" to the learners? Will you need to help them see needs of which they are still unaware?)
- **5.** the psychological dimensions that affect how adults learn? (Do your learners lack confidence in their ability to learn? Do you know what might be eroding their confidence? Have you planned for ways to help them reduce their anxiety?)

**Unit 2:
Examining and
organizing content**

(reference pages 20-28)

**Looking back—
a checklist**



As you organized content and developed learning objectives for your issue statement, did you:

- **1.** limit content to a reasonable amount?
- **2.** allow time for interaction between you and your learners? Between learners and each other?
- **3.** address specific areas of learning when developing your learning objectives, such as cognitive, affective, psychomotor?
- **4.** use specific action verbs when writing your learning objectives?
- **5.** use simple sentences when writing your learning objectives?
- **6.** limit learning objectives to a reasonable number, given the time allowed for teaching?
- **7.** build on simple concepts, and proceed to more complex ones?
- **8.** try freewheeling or mind mapping as a way to organize content?

**Unit 3:
Selecting appropriate
teaching tools**

(reference pages 30-34)

**Looking back—
a checklist**



In selecting appropriate teaching tools for your issue/situation statement, did you consider:

- **1.** the different kinds of learning objectives being addressed? (Will your selected tools be appropriate for providing information, teaching a skill, or developing in-depth understanding?)
- **2.** the characteristics of the learners? (Will your selected tools be appropriate for learners of different ages, educational and experience levels, learning style preferences and personal history?)
- **3.** the subject matter? (Will your selected tools work well with the various dimensions of the content?)
- **4.** the characteristics of the teaching tools? (Will your selected tools be appropriate for the amount of prep and/or teaching time available? Are they too simple or too complicated?)
- **5.** the learning situation? (Will your selected tools be appropriate for the location, group size, time of day, length of learning sessions, etc.)
- **6.** your personal preferences? (Are you skilled, experienced and comfortable in using the tools you've selected?)

Unit 4: Creating effective learning environments

(reference pages 36-44)

Looking back— a checklist



In creating an effective learning environment for your issue/situation statement, did you consider:

- ___ **1.** the physical needs, and how you might accommodate them? (Will your physical learning environment be the appropriate type, size and location for your learners and learning needs? Will you be able to control the lighting? Is it without glare? Is the space ventilated? Free of distracting noises? Easily accessible to all learners including handi-capped? Are the tables and chairs comfortable and moveable? Are rest rooms, drinking water, telephones, etc. conveniently available? Is it aesthetically pleasing?)
- ___ **2.** the psychological needs and how you can be sensitive to them? (Have you planned ways to help your learners feel comfortable, at ease, confident and excited about learning?)
- ___ **3.** the social needs and how best to respond to them? (How will your learners get acquainted with each other and with you? Have you provided opportunities for learners to interact during the learning experience?)
- ___ **4.** the cultural needs and ways to build understanding about them? (How will you show sensitivity and respect for the cultural or ethnic diversity of your learners? How can all learners be enriched by the values and experiences of a culturally diverse group?)

Unit 5: Assessing learning outcomes

(reference pages 46-51)

Looking back— a checklist



As you worked on the last exercise, did you:

- ___ **1.** consider the resources available for evaluating learning outcomes?
- ___ **2.** write evaluation questions that accurately assessed whether your learning objectives were met?
- ___ **3.** think about the type of results that will make your educational efforts a success?

A few concluding remarks

You've persevered! Congratulations. This guide has taken you through many challenging journeys in educational design. You've probably trudged through more than one valley of frustration. But we also know that you've shared some exhilarating mountain-top views of design successes, too.

We hope that the educational designer within you possesses a new confidence and a reinforced set of tools to create quality educational experiences in Cooperative Extension. Take these tools with you and use them whenever an educational challenge knocks at your door.

Best wishes!

Educational design core competency module evaluation

1. Your position in UW-Extension _____
2. Number of years in that position _____
3. Primary reason(s) for participating in the Educational Design Core Competency Module _____

4. Please circle one number after each statement which best describes your knowledge level about educational design content after participating in this module.

1 indicates no knowledge. 5 indicates full knowledge.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I am able to understand learners and their needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. I am able to examine and organize content. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. I am able to select appropriate teaching tools. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. I am able to create effective learning environments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. I am able to assess learning outcomes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. I can successfully apply these concepts to issues/situations that I deal with in extension. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. As you worked on your issue/situation statement:

- a. Did the educational design material address your major concerns? _____
If not, what was lacking? _____

b. Was the educational design material easy to use in its present format? _____

c. What changes, if any, would you suggest to make these materials easier to use?

6. Many of you have participated in other core competency modules. Which do you prefer as a method for learning core competency subject matter?

- a. Face-to-face (one-day meeting)
- b. Self-paced study supported by audio teleconferences
- c. Other suggestions: _____

7. Would you recommend that other core competency modules be developed as self-paced study units? Please explain. _____

8. Additional comments or thoughts: _____

Thank you! Please return your completed form to
Dave Miller
Cooperative Extension
Professional Development
619A Extension Bldg.
432 N. Lake St.
Madison, WI 53706

Glossary

Advance organizers: based on Ausubel's work; a short statement or summary of what learners can expect from their educational experience; for example, a program agenda.

Affective learning: focuses on changes in feelings and emotions such as interest, attitudes and values.

Audio teleconference: when three or more individuals, each at different geographical locations, meet via telephone.

Cognitive learning: deals with recall or recognition of knowledge, understanding and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.

E-mail: an abbreviated reference to electronic mail, which refers to communicating with individuals or groups using computer hardware, software and modems or networking systems.

Educational design: the process of creating effective learning experiences that reflects an understanding of the learners, the content, and ways to facilitate and evaluate learning.

Educational technologies: mechanisms or equipment which extend or increase the effectiveness of teaching strategies and techniques. Examples include overhead projectors, slides, video and audio tapes, teleconferencing technologies, computers, etc.

Freewheeling: a non-linear process of "mapping" or drawing ideas which starts at the core of an idea and then develops outward.

Happiness index: a question or set of questions on a post-meeting evaluation form which asks if participants were "happy" or satisfied with the educational experience. A disadvantage is that it does not assess learning.

Instructional tools: (see teaching tools)

Instructional aids: (see educational technologies)

Issue/situation statements: the descriptions of educational challenges typically faced within Extension.

Learner profile(s): the descriptions of individuals or groups who participate in educational experiences.

Learning environment: the physical, psychological, social and cultural factors that can influence if and how learning occurs.

Learning objectives: a statement describing what you want your learners to learn after participating in an educational experience; learning objectives are usually formal and written in a specific format.

Learning outcomes: what was learned as a result of a particular educational experience. Focuses on the learner, not the program or evaluator.

Learning taxonomy: (see taxonomy of learning)

Mindmapping: (see freewheeling.)

Objectives-based evaluation: based on Tyler's work; the most common form of educational evaluation, which is based on whether learning objectives were met during the course of teaching.

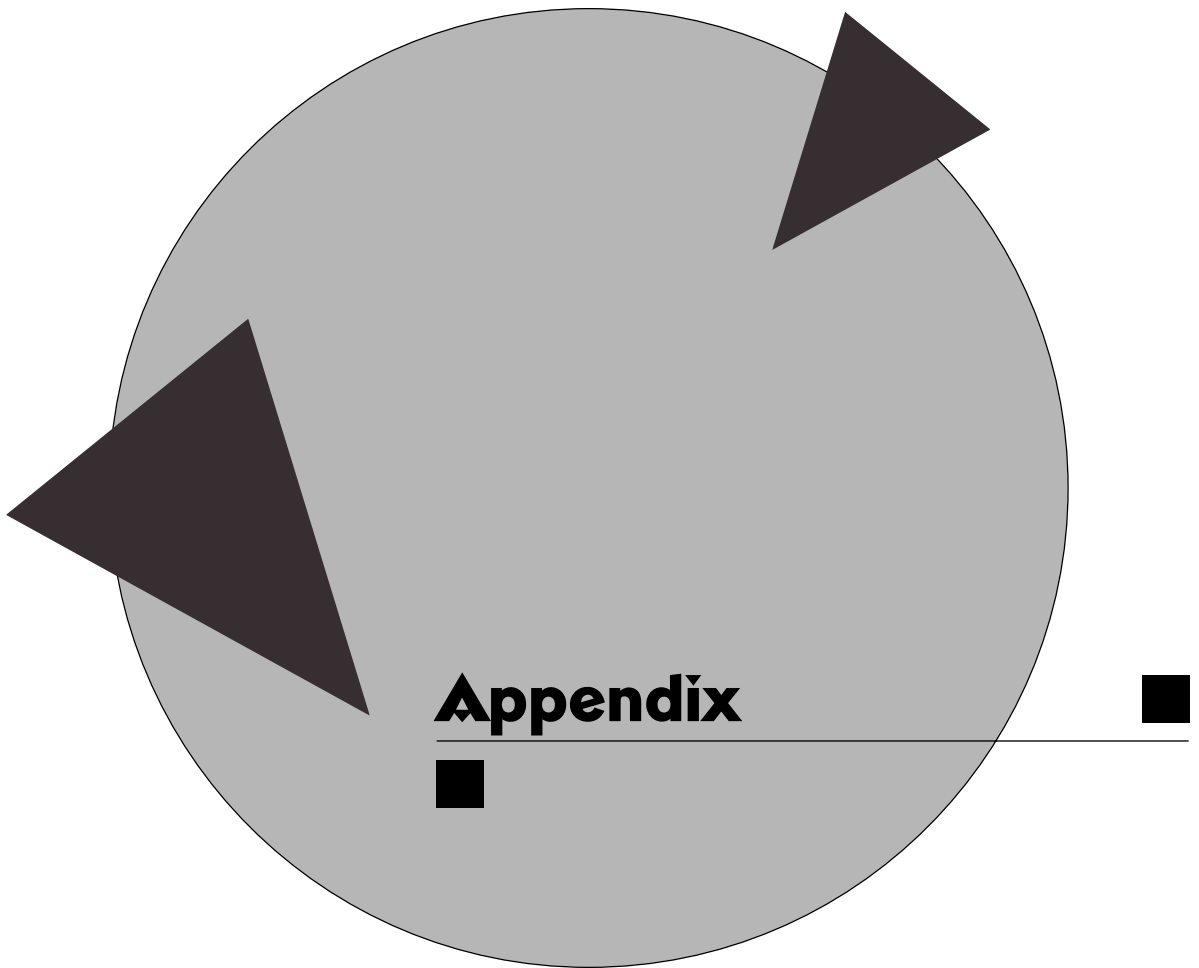
Psychomotor learning: emphasizes motor or muscular skills and/or manipulation of objects.

Taxonomy of learning: based on Bloom's and Krathwohl's work; describes the major types of learning—cognitive, affective and psychomotor (see those terms for more information).

Teachable moment: the prime time for learning; for example, if your washing machine breaks down and you need to buy a new one, that is the teachable moment for you to learn more about washing machines.

Teaching tools: the various strategies and techniques used by instructors to help learners interpret and understand content.

Watershed: the region draining into a river, river system or body of water.



Appendix

An issue/situation example

Homeless in This County

Note: Used as an *example* issue in Units 1 through 5 to illustrate how to apply the educational design concepts to issues and situations faced by extension faculty and staff. This issue is *relevant to rural and urban counties alike*.

This County defines homelessness as: “Staying in an emergency shelter facility, living in situations not thought of as housing (cars, tents, barns or sheds), or sleeping on the streets or under bridges.”

It is estimated that more than 500 people in This County were homeless at some time during the past year. Of the 320 who found help at the emergency shelters, about $\frac{1}{3}$ were men, $\frac{1}{3}$ were women and another $\frac{1}{3}$ were children. The fastest growing group is families with children. Recent studies have shown that for every person in a shelter there are typically two people on the streets or otherwise living without a home. A key reason that so many county citizens are struggling with homelessness is the acute lack of housing for very low income persons. The shortage is in part due to a 50% increase in the number of households living in poverty since 1979 and a decrease in the number of housing units that rent at levels affordable to this income group. There is a great need for transitional housing programs that can help people get back on their feet again.

Homelessness has been identified as a key issue for This County to address. UW–Extension has been asked to provide leadership in organizing a housing coalition of concerned people to help understand and counteract the factors contributing to homelessness.

Learner profile

Name: Wayne Zinkerman

Age: 45

Sex: Male

Ethnic/Cultural background: Italian-American

Educational background: Bachelor’s degree in Business

Special needs: Asthmatic

Urban/rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Likes to talk with other people about ideas; prefers hands-on, experiential learning

Marital status: Married

Number and ages of children: son–14; daughter–11

Employment status: Housing Authority director for six years

Prior experience with UWEX: Has worked with CRD agent on housing-related issues

Any other factors: Was raised to believe that everyone is responsible for their own success; failure is individual’s own doing.

Issue/situation statements A-J

Select ONE of the issue/statements which follow to use in the “Applying the concepts: Your issue statement” sections in Units 1 through 5, or write your own, using the guidelines found on page 71.

Issue/situation A

Community collaboration on environmental education

Prepared by Dorothy Heintz, Oneida County 4-H youth agent

The county strategic planning report has identified environmental education as one of the top priorities for extension to address in the next 5 years. Discussion with colleagues has led to you being asked to develop a community-based plan to address environmental education programs targeted to youth. An assessment of current youth education programs identified some efforts in local school science classes, some out-reach classes from the local community college on a fee basis and a yearly conservation speaking contest. Curriculum materials came through many agencies and youth programs but were not being utilized. There seemed to be some value in working together with these agencies and local schools to provide planned opportunities for youth to experience hands-on environmental education that would have a positive impact on local communities.

Your task is to bring together community professionals to develop a structure for teaching environmental education to youth in an experiential format.

Learner profile

Name: Stan Warren

Age: 40

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural background: White

Educational background: College graduate

Special needs: Stan has multiple sclerosis. This limits his physical coordination and mobility.

Urban/rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Group meeting during working hours

Marital status: Married

Number and ages of children: Two children, ages 10 and 14

Employment status: DNR education coordinator, many years of experience

Prior experience with UWEX: Has attended community programs from time to time

Any other factors: Stan was asked by his supervisor to work with Extension and other agencies to help develop an environmental education program for youth as part of his work assignment. Stan fully supports his assignment. He is inclined to develop hands-on learning experiences for physically disabled persons because of his own experiences.

Issue/situation B

Drinking water quality

Prepared by Peter Manley, Wood County community resource development agent

Co-author: Jim Fanta, Dodge County crops and soils agent

Approximately one-half of the homeowners in your county have private wells to supply their drinking water. All rural and suburban homeowners have private wells. Because the groundwater table is fairly shallow, about two-thirds of these homeowners have installed their own wells using "driven-point" systems, which are more susceptible to contamination because of their shallow depth.

Many homeowners have concerns about their drinking water quality and recognize they can purchase water sample analysis bottles at the Extension office. Homeowners typically come to you with one of three types of questions. First, they may have become concerned about some aspect of their drinking water: taste, color, odor, staining, etc. Secondly, they feel that their well is too close to a contamination source (fertilized field, old landfill, service station, feed lot, etc.), and want to know if their water is safe to drink. Third, homeowners want to know whether to purchase a treatment system and, if so, what type to purchase.

Local water treatment companies offer free, but somewhat inaccurate tests of certain water quality parameters. Results are often slanted towards purchasing a treatment system. Dairy plants also test the water of dairy farmers, but usually only for nitrate. Most homeowners are seeking reliable information. However, some are certain they have a problem even when tests indicate otherwise. On the other hand, some homeowners say their water is acceptable if it is not making them sick.

Your objective is to educate homeowners on how to ensure a safe drinking water-supply for themselves.

Learner profile no. 1

Homeowner with drinking water concern

Age: 32

Sex: Female

Ethnic/cultural: Polish

Educational background: Vocational degree

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/rural: Suburban development

Preferred way of learning: Quick individual consultation

Family: Married; 3 children in grade school

Employment status: Works at phone company in customer service

Prior experience with UWEX: Limited to newspaper, radio exposure

Other factors: Primarily concerned with healthy drinking water quality for young children; information on treatment system alternatives requested

Learner profile no. 2

Dairy farmer with production & health concerns

Age: 51

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: German

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Office visit, consultation at a meeting

Family: Married; 4 children; 1 son at home

Employment status: Farms full-time with son

Prior experience with UWEX: moderate ongoing experience with ag agent; kids were in 4-H; consulted CRD agent on several issues; wife has been in Homemaker Club for many years

Other factors: Dairy plant test showed 20 ppm nitrate level (twice recommended health limit). Farmer is concerned with losing Grade A dairy status; wants to know if nitrates are causing high somatic cell counts; if so, will they affect family's health? Considering remodeling his barnyard.

Learner profile no. 3

Rural homeowner

Age: 69

Sex: Female

Ethnic/cultural: White, European ancestry

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: Elderly, does not travel much; some hearing loss

Urban/rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Visual, hearing, but not a good reader

Marital status: Married

Number & ages of children: Four grown children

Employment status: She and her husband are retired with private retirement income and social security.

Prior experience with UWEX: None

Any other factors: This individual always takes the most negative outlook possible on any situation. She calls the Extension office looking for a means to stop the farmer adjoining their one-acre country property from using fertilizer or pesticides because it is polluting their well and making them ill. She has not had the water tested but has installed a \$1250 water treatment system. Her only problem is how to get the farmer to stop polluting their well.

Learner profile no. 4

Cash crop/swine producer

Age: 45

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: White

Educational background: High school and Short Course graduate

Special needs: None evident

Urban/rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: An avid learner; attends meetings and reads popular press and newsletters.

Marital status: Married; wife employed off farm

Number & ages of children: Three children, ages 10, 13 & 16

Employment status: Self-employed swine producer and cash cropper.

Prior experience with UWEX: Moderate user of extension. Attends meetings of interest, reads the newsletters, respects extension's recommendations.

Any other factors: Has contacted Extension because he has become concerned with the groundwater issue. The problem as he sees it is: What should he be doing on his farm to minimize impact on the groundwater? He doesn't know what will work, what will be cost effective, and he is concerned about negative impacts he may have been responsible for in the past.

Issue/situation C

Fair housing

Prepared by Karen Dickrell, Outagamie County Extension family living agent

At a recent interagency meeting of human service agencies that work with culturally diverse families (Hmong, Afro-American, Native American and Hispanic) there was a lengthy discussion on housing issues faced by families. Agencies find that many families have problems locating affordable housing that meets their needs. Housing that is available has one or two bedrooms, so families with more than four members have difficulty finding homes.

Besides finding homes that are large enough, there is a problem with housing discrimination. One of the refugee nurses reported that a (Hmong) client had called about an apartment that was for rent and was told that it had already been rented. When she (an American of European ancestry) called the same landlord a half hour later, she was told the apartment was still available. A local TV station reporter conducted a similar apartment search with a Spanish-speaking person and came up with similar results.

Housing discrimination has been an issue as evidenced by a situation that made the front page of the newspaper. The situation has generated letters to the editor and there have been numerous comments in the "It's Your Call" section of the local newspaper.

The situation in the papers involved a Hmong family that was looking at a house. As they walked around the house a neighbor told the couple, "You don't want to live here. This isn't a place for your people." The Hmong family ignored the statement. Later that week the family started receiving phone calls. The caller threatened them, and tried to discourage their moving into the neighborhood. Because the phone calls persisted, the Hmong family had them traced and secured legal advice. An investigation

revealed that it was the potential neighbor who was the source of the phone calls. The case went to court and the individual was found guilty of harassment and fined.

Add to this the conversation you overheard at a recent Extension meeting. Two people were saying that "all this fair housing stuff isn't fair to the landlord...a person doesn't know which way to turn."

As you reflect on all of these issues it becomes clear to you that there is a lack of understanding when it comes to fair housing laws. Some community landlords are not following fair housing practices and regulations. The general public is questioning what the fair housing laws are and what constitutes discrimination.

Why are you concerned? Why are these issues surfacing now?

The diversity mix in your county has increased in the past decade and continues to rise. Recent census data reveals the figures below.

County Population

European American	110,000
Afro-American	1,555
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	1,300
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,850
Other	1,104

Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Strategic Planning Committee in your county (in 1990) identified the following as issues Cooperative Extension should address.

1. Lack of rental housing for larger families.
2. Increased mobility of low-income families as more families move from city to city.
3. Families of inmates moving to the area where a new prison has been built.
4. More immigrants moving to the county from Thailand.

Your annual meeting with the strategic planning committee is coming up soon. You have been working in the county for two years, but have yet to tackle any housing issues. Your predecessor mentioned some of them, but you cannot find any record of work done in the housing area. Given this information, what do you prepare for the planning committee as a situation statement? What steps might you propose to take in programming that addresses these issues?

Learner profile

The Strategic Planning Committee consists of 16 members—9 men and 7 women. The committee members have served since 1990. They represent a variety of organizations and businesses in the county; 75% of the committee members are urban residents and business people and 25% represent the agricultural and non-urban communities. Committee members have families that represent single parent, divorced, blended, dual-income-no-kids, grandparent, and dual income with children. Committee member ages range from 18 to 73. The majority of the committee are European American, with a Hmong couple, one African-American, and a Native American.

Issue/situation D

Financial management skills training for JOBS program clients

Prepared by Donna Doll-Yogerst, Oconto County Extension family living agent

Your county's income level remains at 25% below the state average. Lower educational attainment and lower paying jobs contribute to the lower income level. The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program Consortium contacted the UW-Extension office and asked you to provide workshops and budget counseling support for their clients. JOBS program clients are AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) recipients who are required to secure employment through the assistance of the JOBS program. Of major concern to the county JOBS program director is that many clients return to AFDC after failing at a job. After 30 days of employment, 95% of clients are still employed (5% have dropped out of the job market and are back on AFDC). After 180 days (6 months) of employment, 50% have dropped out of the job market.

County JOBS program clients statistics

Average age:	34
Assessed math level	9th grade
Assessed reading level	11th grade
Average grade completed:	11th grade
Entrance wage level:	Minimum wage or slightly above

Most of the JOBS clients in your county do not show interest in upgrading their job skills, furthering their education or utilizing other avenues which would help to increase their income level. Many JOBS program clients secure employment, but at low pay. Thus, skills to stretch their income and manage their financial resources are increasingly important.

The JOBS program director feels clients need money management training and experience to be successful as income earning family members. He is concerned that his clients are not successful at maintaining their employment and feels they have very poor money management skills and practices. Money management training might help change the situation. You have been asked to develop educational materials and programs to assist clients in developing solid financial management skills. Possible content areas might include: goal setting, budgeting, using credit and planning for the future. Budget counseling has also been requested.

Reaching limited-income clientele is one of your county's diversity goals. You are aware that access to limited-income clients is more easily achieved by working with agencies who have direct contact with such clientele. Most of the JOBS clients have had no prior contact with UW-Extension.

Learner profile

Age: 34

Sex: M and F

Ethnic/cultural: White

Educational background: Completed 11th grade

Special needs: Low math skills

Urban/Rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: TV

Marital status: Married

Number and ages of children: a son, 3 years old and a 1-year-old daughter.

Employment: Unemployed on AFDC

Prior experience with UWEX: None

Other factors: Low motivation. Required to attend workshop. Some participants view it as a waste of time.

Issue/situation E

4-H project leader training

Prepared by Dorothy Heintz, Oneida County 4-H youth agent

The 4-H Leaders' Association has identified project leader training as a high priority for the year. The Leaders' Association has asked the Extension office to provide this training.

The county 4-H program has 750 youth enrolled in a wide range of project areas. Two hundred adult volunteers work with youth in the various projects. The 30 clubs are scattered around the county with a concentration of membership close to each of three cities located in the county.

Most project leaders are recruited by club organizational leaders. A majority of project leaders have experience with the project subject matter. A few have just agreed to be project leaders because someone needed to do it and they were willing to learn. Many new project leaders do not have an understanding of 4-H or its activities.

The county is predominantly rural. Employment is a combination of family farms and local industry. A smaller portion of people are employed in professional roles.

Learner profile

Name: Susan Smith

Age: 35

Sex: Female

Ethnic/cultural background: White

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: None

Urban/Rural: Rural non-farm

Preferred way of learning: Individual learning

Marital status: Married

Number and ages of children: Three children ages 5, 9, 12 years

Employment status: Works full time in the office at the local school

Prior experience with UWEX: Has been to the county fair several times and has friends whose children have been involved in 4-H.

Any other factors: Husband also works full-time in a non-agricultural job. Children are involved in other youth programs as well as 4-H. The family is very busy and spends little time at home due to schedules. Mrs. Smith was talked into enrolling her children in 4-H by her sister. She was asked by the club organizational leader to be a cultural arts leader because of her artistic abilities.

Issue/situation F

Hmong parenting

Prepared by Cathy Nelson, Milwaukee County Extension family living agent

The Hmong community in Central City has grown from 175 to 2000 in the last 13 years. The Southeast Asian refugees have chosen this Wisconsin city because of its proximity to the state university. Because of the language barriers, over 50% of the families have difficulty finding steady employment and depend on AFDC-U for subsistence. Many of the males are depressed because they feel that they cannot support their large families with the minimum-wage, no-benefits kinds of jobs available to those with limited English reading and writing skills. Women may be more employable, but have difficulty coping with employment and parenting large families. Husbands are not comfortable sharing parenting and home care responsibilities.

Initially children did very well in school and were compliant students. Parents who have greater language difficulties depend on their children to communicate with the outside world. Most children do not abuse that role but some children are rebellious. Many parents want to use “traditional” par-

enting styles—including corporal punishment—that were acceptable in Laos. The children threaten to report them. A few Hmong youth are involved in gang activities. This frightens the parents. They are bewildered about their parental roles when their children have become so “Americanized.”

The school district has asked the UW-Extension office to develop a parenting program for Hmong parents. The Extension office is aware of parenting programs that have failed. It has approached the Mutual Assistance Agency that serves the Hmong community to develop a partnership for working with the parents.

Learner profile

Age: Male, 34 Female, 31

Sex: M and F

Ethnic/Cultural: Southeast Asian Hmong

Educational background: Male has been in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for 6 years. Female has 1 year of training at the technical college in an allied health program.

Number and ages of children: 7 children aged 16, 14, 12, 9, 5, 4, 2

Special needs: Interpreter needed

Urban/Rural: Urban

Preferred way of learning: Learns by listening in groups, but is receptive to videos in Hmong.

Prior experience with UWEX: Female has heard presentation by Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) staff at a Women Infant Children (WIC) site. Male has no experience.

Employment status: Both spouses unemployed

Any other factors: Provisions for child care will be very important so that couple can attend the parenting program. The husband will not let his wife go to a program by herself.

Issue/situation G

Major alfalfa winterkill

Prepared by Jim Fanta, Dodge County crops and soils agent

It's been a tough winter in Any County, Wisconsin. A freeze-and-thaw cycle has existed all winter, and the potential for alfalfa winterkill is strong. In late March, the alfalfa breaks dormancy for the fourth time and after a week of warm weather, the temperature drops to 10°F at night and 20°F during the day for three days. Following this cold blast, 50% of the hay fields don't regrow. They are mostly or entirely dead.

This affects almost every dairy farmer in the county. In initial telephone contacts, it's learned that a few farmers have escaped damage and a few have lost their whole crop. Surviving stands were previous year seedings plus a few other fields with the right slope or crop variety able to withstand the weather.

The phone calls begin with farmers seeking advice about what to do. With the beginning of the planting season only two weeks away, a lot of cropping plans need to change in a hurry. Farmers know they are going to be short of high quality alfalfa forage. On the positive side, there is higher than normal hay carryover from previous years.

Learner profile

In this case, no single person profile is adequate. The situation affects almost every dairy farmer in the county. There is no way you can talk to each of 450 farmers individually. You do have a good working relationship with most of the feed, seed, and fertilizer sales firms in the county. The concern, of course, is what to raise to meet forage needs and how to re-establish all of the lost stands. It will entail establishing some new stands on killed alfalfa stands.

Issue/situation M

Nutrient and pest management

Prepared by Jim Fanta, Dodge County crops and soils agent

The Ripple Creek Watershed Project is just getting started. Water quality testing by the DNR indicates the largest contributor to water quality degradation is phosphorous loading from livestock operations. The second largest contributor is sedimentation and the phosphorous associated with it.

Extension has been asked to obtain information and conduct education for residents of the watershed. The watershed has a high density of dairy animals, and farm operators often grow some extra acreage of cash crops (corn primarily). A few beef, hog and cash crop farms are also present.

The sentiments of the farmers in the watershed range from lukewarm (at best) to anti-DNR because of clashes with a tough local warden. About half of the local feed, seed and fertilizer representatives work on a salary plus commission basis so they are not very happy about losing fertilizer sales if farmers adopt nutrient and pest management practices. A couple of representatives have even told growers not to take nutrient credits because "they don't work."

The watershed is on the edge of the county, 26 miles from the county seat. There are some Extension users in the area but they are not community leaders.

Learner profile no. 1

Dairy farmer

Age: 46

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: White, middle-European ancestry

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: None

Urban/Rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Learns best by listening but is a good reader too.

Marital status: Married, wife employed off farm

Number & ages of children: 3 children ages 16, 14, 10

Employment status: Self-employed dairy farmer

Prior experience with UWEX: Minimal, via telephone, usually on variety or chemical recommendations.

Any other factors: Hard working, honest farmer. Owns 300 acres and rents another 100, milking 80 cows with family labor. The farm buildings are very near Ripple Creek as is most of the farmland with moderate slopes to the creek. His farm buildings have been identified as having a high impact on the creek. His barnyard runoff is channelled right into the creek but he's never seen it as a problem. He looks at manure spreading as a way to dispose of a waste. He primarily uses conventional tillage. Has not used nutrient and pest management practices. Has read about it, but sales representative has talked him out of trying it. Cash crops (corn) about 100 acres. Very vocal individual whose opinion is respected by others. Has an open battle with DNR warden who arrested his son last fall on a very technical aspect of a game law violation. Doesn't want to have anything to do with the DNR or its programs.

Financially, he makes a living. He is tight financially but does not have any unhappy creditors. Discusses major purchases with his major creditor and carefully evaluates the situation before he buys.

Learner profile no. 2

Cash crop farmer

Age: 26

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural background: White

Educational background: High school graduate plus one year of college

Special needs: Severe financial difficulties. May soon face foreclosure—severe emotional stress from this situation.

Urban/Rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Has been so busy and stressed out trying to stay in business has really not paid attention to anything requiring special learning.

Marital status: Married less than one year

Number & ages of children: None

Employment status: Self-employed farmer

Prior experience with UWEX: Minimal use in the past. Knows who the county agent is but never sought other than peripheral advice.

Any other factors: Very hard working proud young man who bought land when land prices were high. Owns 300 acres and rents 450 more. Has a fairly new line of machinery on which he also owes money. Sees the government programs as welfare and won't have anything to do with them. His lender has made working with Extension a part of his current operating loan. Uses conventional tillage because of the high yields and right now couldn't care less about water quality; he just wants to survive.

His land is in the watershed and some of it may be eligible for cost-sharing practices but he is not a major threat to water quality. He is not really happy about working with Extension because it will take time and he was ordered to do so by his lender. He is even more reluctant to share financial information because that is his and his lender's business—but he also wants to survive as a farmer.

Learner profile no. 3

Rural homeowner

Age: 36

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural background: Hispanic

Educational background: Vocational school graduate

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Rural homeowner

Preferred way of learning: Enjoys reading, but radio and television appeal also.

Marital status: Divorced/contemplating remarriage

Number & ages of children: Two children, 16 and 18 years old

Employment status: Employed as a guard at a correctional facility.

Prior experience with UWEX: None

Any other factors: Has heard a lot about water quality in the news media and is aware that a watershed project exists for Ripple Creek through a watershed newsletter. He is not well accepted by the local community due to ethnic differences. Owns a farmette on the creek and rents the 16-acre field to a neighboring farmer which pays the property taxes. The field is highly erodible but the farmer renting the land is opposed to any change in his tillage practices. The runoff from the field into the creek concerns him but he needs the rental income too. His problem: How can he

help improve the water quality, keep his land rented and not alienate the neighbors?

Issue/situation I

Property tax relief for wooded and forested lawns

Prepared by Peter Manley, Wood County community resource development agent

Wooded or forested land accounts for approximately one-third of your county. About half of the wooded land is private and non-industrial. It is usually owned as part of a farming operation or for recreational purposes.

Property taxes have increased on such land for two reasons. First, property tax rates in general have increased. Second, the valuation of such land for tax purposes has increased as more people have purchased wooded acreage at higher prices for hunting, recreational or residential use. Profile from production of timber can no longer justify the purchase price and property taxes on such land.

The state has a property tax relief program for wooded acreage. In exchange for substantial tax relief, owners must manage their wooded acreage according to certain standards and allow certain public uses of the land in the program.

In addition, two other property tax relief programs are offered. One program is geared toward farmland preservation, offers more limited tax relief and is very restrictive. Another program is directed toward poor landowners and is much less restrictive.

Many landowners are interested in the program but do not trust "government programs." Some landowners are in very poor financial condition and may soon lose their land to foreclosure. Many more are just disgusted with rising property taxes and want to avoid paying them.

Learner profile no. 1

Dairy farmer

Age: 48

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: German

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: Stress due to difficulties of meeting mortgage payments

Urban/Rural: Rural

Preferred way of learning: Individual or small group; newsletter

Family: Married, 3 children

Employment status: Full-time farmer; spouse works part-time in local school as a teacher's aid

Prior experience with UWEX: Moderate user of ag programs; feels comfortable with agents

Other factors: Referred to Extension office by FHA office that holds the loan on which the farmer is behind in payments

Learner profile no. 2

Recreational landowner

Age: 42

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: German

Educational background: College graduate

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Urban

Preferred way of learning: Individual or classroom/workshop

Family: Married, 2 children

Employment status: Insurance agent, wife employed in home only

Prior experience with UWEX: Assistance with horticultural matters

Other factors: Strong interest in development of wooded acreage for wildlife; little experience in owning rural land; somewhat interested in hunting

Issue/situation J**Public drinking water supply**

Prepared by Peter Manley, Wood County community resource development agent

A city of 30,000 has five municipal wells, all located outside its boundaries in an adjoining town. Due to increased water demand and the age of the five existing wells, the city is planning to add another high-capacity municipal well on land that it owns within the adjoining town.

The adjoining town is primarily suburban with a population of 11,000. Residents near the proposed municipal well have complained to the town board that the new municipal well will dry up their private wells. The town board is also concerned about future annexations by the city, and worried that industry will be prevented from locating near the municipal well and the subsequent effect on nearby homeowners.

The proposed municipal well will be close to a small stream. Local environmental groups and Department of Natural Resources officials are concerned that the municipal well will affect the water levels in the stream. The stream seldom flows throughout the year and is not a highly valued fishery.

Learner profile no. 1

Municipal utility director

Age: 38

Sex: Male

Ethnic/Cultural: German

Educational background: Bachelor's degree in engineering

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Urban

Preferred way of learning: Written; face-to-face meeting

Family: Married, 2 children

Employment status: Manages municipal utility

Prior experience with UWEX: On several chamber committees with CRD agent

Other factors: Has had no problems with previous wells; feels that the city has a legal right to put in the new municipal well

Learner profile no. 2

Town board chair

Age: 52

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: Polish

Educational background: High school graduate

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Suburban

Preferred way of learning: Phone consultation; face-to-face meeting

Family: Married, 3 children (one at home)

Employment status: Craftsman in local paper mill

Prior experience with UWEX: Utilizes local government education opportunities through CRD agent; familiar with all county staff; has contacted CRD agent for assistance on municipal well issue.

Other factors: City and town have become increasingly uncooperative due to annexation disagreements; town is facing increasing pressures for additional services as it continues to grow

Learner profile no. 3

Town resident, owns home near proposed municipal well

Age: 38

Sex: Female

Ethnic/cultural: Unknown

Educational background: Bachelor's degree, fine arts

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Suburban

Preferred way of learning: Office visits

Family: Married, 2 children

Employment status: Homemaker

Prior experience with UWEX: Has consulted with family living agent on nutrition concern, children are in 4-H, has participated in groundwater program offered by CRD agent

Other factors: Resident is very concerned that the proposed municipal well will "dry up" their neighborhood's wells or adversely affect drinking water quality.

Learner profile no. 4

Conservationist

Age: 62

Sex: Male

Ethnic/cultural: German

Educational background: College degree

Special needs: None apparent

Urban/Rural: Lives in city

Preferred way of learning: Workshops, office visits

Family: Married, 5 children (none home)

Employment status: Lawyer

Prior experience with UWEX: Active in natural resource issues with CRD agent. Has utilized several state natural resource UWEX workshops and specialists; consulted with ag agent on plant problems.

Other factors: Primarily concerned with proposed municipal well's effect on the nearby stream; well versed in laws affecting water ways.

Guidelines for developing your own issue/situation statement and learner profiles

- ▼ Make it approximately 200-250 words in length.
- ▼ It should be related, but not necessarily limited to your program area.
- ▼ Try to be as specific in focus as possible. Avoid broad, generalized descriptions (for example, parenting skill needs of single parents versus strengthening the family unit).
- ▼ Show the percentage of county population affected by the issue or situation and their geographical distribution. Does the issue extend beyond the county?
- ▼ List factors (barriers?) that will affect response to the issue (geographical, psychological, historical, controversial, etc.)
- ▼ Explain the immediacy of the need to address/resolve issue—for example, are there life-threatening elements involved?
- ▼ Are there any other factors that should be included?

Learner profile criteria

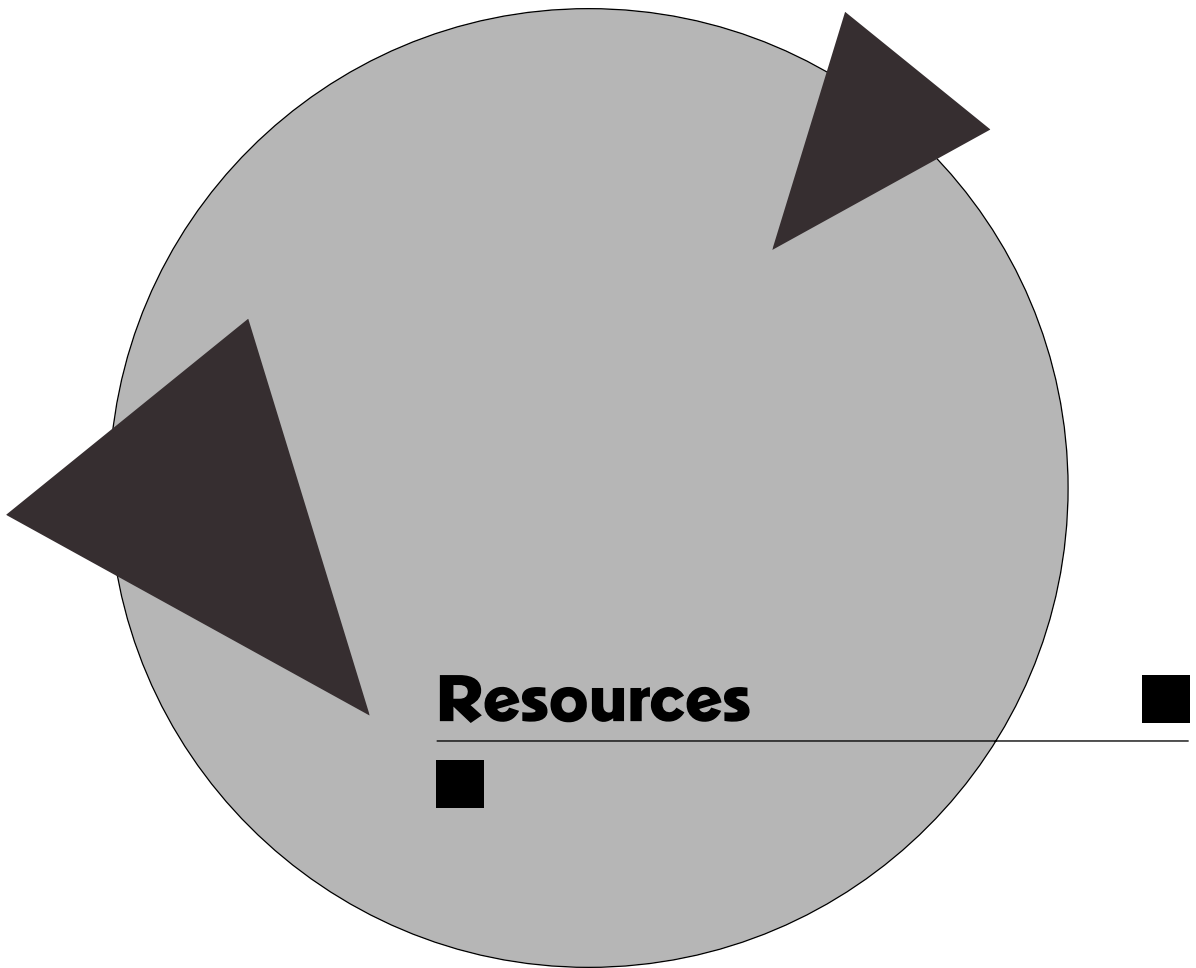
- ▼ Age
- ▼ Sex
- ▼ Ethnic/cultural background
- ▼ Educational background
- ▼ Special needs
- ▼ Urban/rural
- ▼ Preferred way of learning
- ▼ Marital status
- ▼ Number & ages of children
- ▼ Employment status
- ▼ Prior experience with UWEX
- ▼ Any other factors

An exercise in acknowledging your wonderful self

You might consider using the form below to “break the ice” when you want to enhance learners’ confidence in themselves and their ability to learn.

<p>An exercise in acknowledging your wonderful self</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Your proudest moment _____</p> <p>Your happiest experience _____</p> <p>What you respect most about yourself _____</p> <p>One realistic goal you would like to achieve _____</p> <p>How you can help make the world a better place _____</p> <p>Your greatest strength _____</p> <p>Your purpose for living _____</p> <p>Why you feel good about yourself _____</p> <p>One fear you’d like to overcome _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Signature of bearer _____</p>
--

Excerpted from Self-Esteem Passport II by Michael Krawetz



Resources



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- Apps, J. and Cybela, J. (1993) *Discovering and developing the teacher within you*. University of Wisconsin - Extension.
- Creativity /learning tapes referenced in Unit 4 are available from:
- Creative Learning Tools
P.O. Box 37
Wausau, WI 54402-0037
715-842-2467
715-848-9463 FAX



Educational design resource persons

Joan Cybela, distance education specialist
105 Delzell Hall
UW-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897
715-346-2173
cybela@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu



Terry Gibson, director, Program Support

605 Extension Building
432 North Lake Street
Madison, WI 53706-1498
608-262-4877
gibsont@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Issue/situation statement resource persons

Karen Dickrell, family living agent
Courthouse, Room C103
410 South Walnut Street
Appleton, WI 54911-5987
414-832-5121
dickrell@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu



Donna Doll-Yogerst, family living agent
Courthouse
300 Washington Street
Oconto, WI 54153-1621
414-834-6845
doll+yogerst@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Jim Fanta, agriculture agent

Ag Center, Suite D
390 Read Cedar Street
Menomonie, WI 54751-3386
715-232-1636
fanta@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Dorothy Heintz, 4-H & Youth agent,

P.O. Box 1208
3375 Airport Road
Rhineland, WI 54501-1208
715-369-6160
heintz@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Peter Manley, community resource development agent

Courthouse
400 Market Street
P.O. Box 8095
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8095
715-421-8440
manley@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Cathy Nelson, family living agent

1304 South 70th Street, 2nd floor
West Allis, WI 53214
414-475-2339

nelson+c@wisplan.uwex.wisc.edu

Contact person: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Equal opportunity and affirmative action resource person

Vicki Washington, Assistant to the Chancellor for Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity

501 Extension Building
432 North Lake Street
Madison, WI 53706-1498
608-262-3049

washington@infosys.uwex.edu



How to communicate by e-mail

If you'd like to conveniently toss around a question, comment or concern to other participants and resource persons involved with this module, you can do so by electronic mail, or **e-mail**. Using your WISCOM software, choose the SEND MAIL option from the menu and forward your thoughts to:



G_DESIGNER

listed with the group mail recipients on your WISCOM software. We'll also send you notes of update and encouragement periodically, so check your mail!

Information about core competencies

The core competency modules referenced in this guide are:



Teaching and Learning
Program Development
Evaluation
Educational Technologies

Contact Dave Miller at the UWEX Cooperative Extension Human Resource Development Department at 608-263-1945 for more information about these and other core competency modules.

Authors: Joan Cybela is a professor and distance education specialist with the University of Wisconsin–Extension, Cooperative Extension. Edrie Greer is a professional development and telecommunications administrator at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

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Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide

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