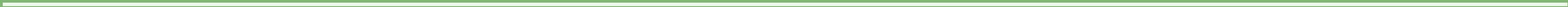


ISCORE 2020

FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS WITH WHITE RURAL GROUPS - HOW DO WE ENGAGE THEM?

Virginia Hanson, Assistant Teaching Professor
Department of Agricultural Education & Studies



YOUR PRESENTERS

Virginia Hanson, Assistant Teaching Professor
Agricultural Education - Communication

Mattea Contreras, Senior
Agricultural Systems Technology

Joshua Lieb, Senior
Agricultural Studies

Stefany Naranjo, Junior
Agricultural Education - Communication and
Global Resource Systems

Department of Agricultural Education & Studies



Agricultural Education - Certification

95 - 100
undergraduates

Agricultural education,
gr 5-12

Agricultural Education - Communication

80
undergraduates

Commodity groups,
media, corporations,
policy work,
education, government,
extension

Agricultural Studies

380-400
undergraduates

Returning to family farms,
other farming, sales,
insurance, banking,
government, extension

AGEDS 327: SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION FOR AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

- VISUAL COMMUNICATION - PHOTOGRAPHY
- & VIDEOGRAPHY
- JOURNALISM
- PUBLIC RELATIONS
- CRISIS AND RISK COMMUNICATIONS
- TECHNICAL WRITING



SO FAR, SO GOOD...

To summarize **highlights of the history of agricultural communications in America** and how agricultural communications has changed with the evolution of communications technology

To identify **various modes of communication** in the professional agricultural and life sciences community

To **write for various audiences** using the appropriate modes of communication, including newswriting, technical writing, and writing for social media

To plan and complete **various communications projects** for agricultural and life sciences audiences collaboratively and independently

To describe the fundamental steps involved in **basic photography and video production**

To present information effectively to agricultural audiences using **public speaking skills**

To describe what **risk communication and crisis communication** are and their best practices

To assemble an **agricultural communication portfolio** showcasing various modes of communication



Fall 2016 Semester

"Farm income to fall in 2016 amid low grain prices" -Des Moines Register, 2/9/16.

"USDA: 2016 to be another bad year for farm commodities," -Des Moines Register, 2/25/16

"Donald Trump's immigration plan could affect the nation's milk supply" -CNN, 3/1/16

"Wisconsin dairy farmers challenge Donald Trump on immigration" -Ag Web, 3/28/16

"Dairy industry may suffer if Trump is elected, say farmers" -Fox News, 6/21/16

Where are you having discussions?

Food for thought:

Department of Agricultural Education & Studies

485 undergraduate students total (4169 total in CALS)

13/485 students of color

90.7% of Iowa identifies as "White alone" -Census.gov (population estimates July 1, 2019)

Urban populations - 75 percent of households have a subscription to broadband internet.

Rural populations - **as low as 65 percent** - US Census Bureau, 2018

Iowa has 543 public libraries, and 75% of them are in towns with 2500+ population. Towns with smaller populations have no library, many no library and no contract with another town's library, thus **"the residents of those towns would be without any kind of public library services."**

-Scott Dermot, State Library of Iowa

From Ezra Klein, author of Why We're Polarized:

In 2016:

Democratic Party - 44% non-white; largest religious group is Unaffiliated

Republican Party - <10% non-white; largest religious group is Christian

"The Density Divide" - Will Wilkinson

There is now no city in America denser than 900 people/square mile that is Republican.

Psychological attraction to communities:

Likes change, tumult, diversity - "openness to experience", correlates with liberalism - > attracted to cities

Likes tradition, slower pace, connection to large family networks, correlates with conservatism -> attracted to rural communities

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ROLES: LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR FACILITATORS

FACILITATORS (2)

- Research a timely agricultural topic
- Identify sources for peers to use
- Read up on a topic and identify key facts
- Draft discussion questions
- Facilitate a discussion
- Listen actively in discussion
- Effectively close a discussion
- Reflect on their skills as facilitators

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ROLES: LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

- Use provided background knowledge and prior knowledge to begin exploration of topic
- Articulate opinions using facts, stories, and examples
- Challenge their own thinking (“What do I know about this topic? What do I want to know? What have I learned through this discussion?”)
- Listen actively to peers
- Use advanced techniques to participate actively in a discussion such as identifying connections, “piggybacking”, raising new questions, committing to listening, making inferences or predictions, sharing experiences and articulating the connection, citing information and inserting it into the discussion
- Write accurate and effective summaries and analyses



STUDENT TOPIC SELECTION

Past topics researched and presented in discussions:

- Generational differences in talking about agriculture and sustainability
 - Women in agriculture - how their roles have changed and grown
 - Mending the rural/urban divide
 - The Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences
 - Rural communities and mental health issues
 - Plant-based meat & cultured meat - what will people eat in the future?
 - Organic vs. conventional - will we ever get along?
 - How to connect with the public (the 98% not involved in agriculture)
 - Presidential candidates and their positions on ag issues
-

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Why are consumers choosing to purchase plant-based meats and where do you see this trend going in the future?

Now that we have discussed the most common causes of machinery and livestock fatalities, what agriculture safety practices do you use on your farms or in your jobs?

How do you see women's roles in agriculture changing in the future?

What are some ways that we can decrease the suicide rate of farmers?

What are the differences in adult ag education vs the youth ag education that you have experienced?

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ROLES: THE INSTRUCTOR

INSTRUCTOR

- Facilitates setup of discussion by revisiting structure of the activity
- Does not participate in the actual discussion
- Participates only if there is a need to repair overall safety of group or challenge misinformation
- May suggest additional resources

STUDENT LEADERS REFLECT: MATTEA

Identity and experience:

- Latina student in CALS and in a tech program
- Urban background

Why these discussions are important:

- Discussion does not seem to be a part of conservative White culture.
- These opportunities for students allow them to risk engagement with others.

Next steps:

- Include more room for discussion about ag issues affecting urban people and urban communities.
- Don't be afraid to stop the discussion and give new direction.



STUDENT LEADERS REFLECT: STEFANY

Identity and experience:

- one of view Hispanic students in CALS
- from a rural background

Why these discussions are important:

- Very few of my White peers have experienced diversity in a professional setting.
- Format allows students to have a space and environment where they can talk about topics that most people avoid.
- Relating discussion points to the ag industry provides a new perspective.

Next steps:

- Students need to continue to put their thoughts into words, hear others do the same, and "hear them out."



STUDENT LEADERS REFLECT: JOSH

Identity and experience:

- non-traditional student/military experience

Why these discussions are important:

- We need to advance the conversation to get more students into situations that challenge how they think and speak regarding gender and race.

Next steps:

- In class, we addressed physical safety directly, but revisiting safety of discussion and differences important to reiterate.



Key takeaways for fostering a culture of discussion with White rural students:



- dedicate regular time, creating a routine
- create a safe space
- create a discussion format with roles
- agree on a method for participation
- give students opportunities to reflect in class and in writing
- insert necessary discussions into the routine
- dial back to show them that you were listening, offer resources
- promote a culture of literacy and lifelong learning

A FINAL WORD

From an Agricultural Studies major in his portfolio reflection letter:

"In the past, I thought that communicating with people outside of agriculture was some huge feat that no one could conquer...This semester has taught me that we can look at ag communications as a bunch of small conversations we should be having with everyone in our lives."

Thank you for giving us your time.