

Extension Methods

Methods Classified by Type of Contact

Teaching methods used by Extension personnel can be classified by the number of people and the type of the contact. There are three types of contacts: individual, group, and media.

- **Individual contacts** - a one on one contact in which an Extension educator provides personal consultation to the client. The contact may be a site visit made by the educator to a farm, home, or office, a phone call, or a client's visit to the Extension office.
- **Group contacts** – when an Extension educator teaches a number of people in a group, including training meeting, demonstrations, tours, etc.
- **Media contacts** – the use of media sources such as radio, newspaper, television, and exhibits to distribute information and influences large numbers of people.

Electronic technology such as e-mail, the web, online courses, and Centra may be an individual, group, or media contact depending upon intent.

Methods Classified by Type of Communication

Teaching methods may also be classified by the one of three forms of communication used including written, verbal, and visual communication. Written forms of communication depend upon the written word. Verbal communication depends upon the spoken word and visual communication depends upon eye appeal. Visual aids are frequently used to supplement the verbal and written word to build attention, maintain interest, or increase teaching effectiveness. Method demonstrations, meetings, television, and web environments combine visual material and oral presentation.

| WRITTEN | VERBAL | VISUAL |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Bulletins | Meetings | Result Demonstrations |
| Leaflets | Farm/Home Visit | Exhibits |
| Fact Sheets | Office Call | Posters |
| News Articles | Telephone Call | Multi-Media Presentations |
| Personal Letters | Radio | Videos |
| Newsletters | | Charts |
| E-mail | | Television |
| | | Web-Based |

Methods Classified by Type

The use of technology is important to Extension educators and the Extension system. Teaching technology is by three functions. These three functions may overlap, depending upon the type of program and the approach taken by specialists and agents. The relationship of media technologies to these three functions depends upon the audience size and type.

- **Information delivery** - information flows through many channels of communications from the Extension Service to its clientele. This may include new articles, meetings, or personal consultations.
- **Educational program delivery** - education programs are prepared and delivered by Extension specialists and agents to upgrade the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of the clientele. A program may involve many different activities or learning experiences. Together learning experiences become a program focused upon special audiences, special needs, and special problems.
- **Problem solving** - clients turn to the Extension Service for expertise, knowledge, and skills needed to solve individual and group problems arising on their farms or ranches, homes and families, and community.

Excerpts from: Seevers, B. Graham, D., Gammon, J. & Conklin, N. (1997). *Education Through Cooperative Extension*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.