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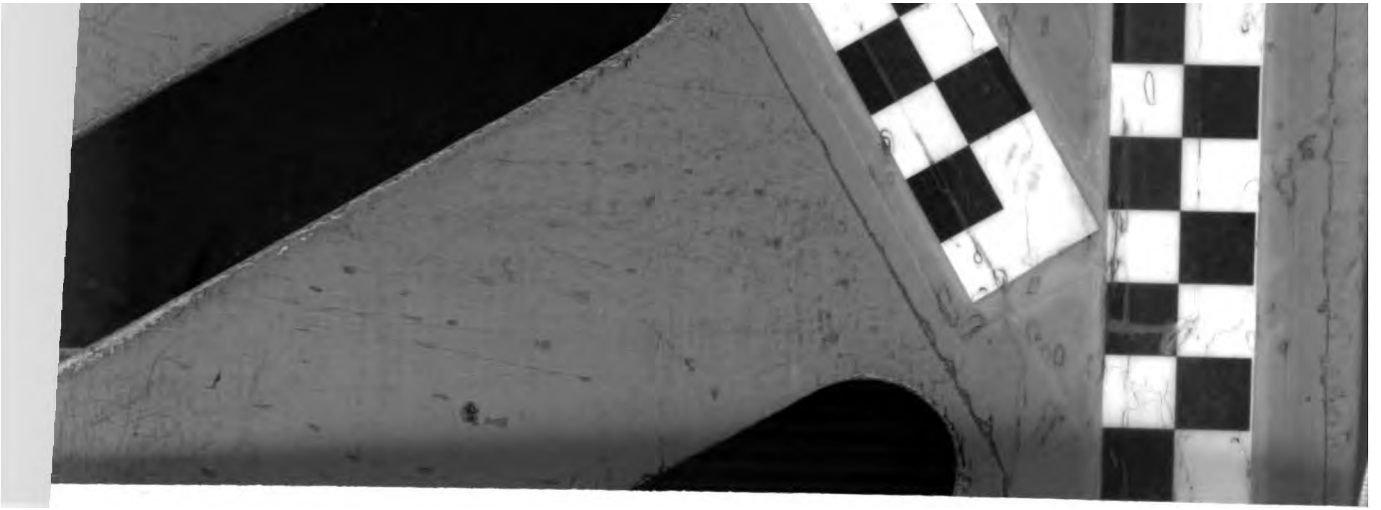
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EXTENSION TEACHING IS AN ART

by

Joseph Di Franco
Extensionist



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INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE CIENCIAS AGRICOLAS
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Turrialba, Costa Rica
December, 1966

EXTENSION TEACHING IS AN ART

Joseph Di Franco

Teaching should be the art of helping someone else in his effort to change himself (i.e. learn)*.

Have we in extension acquired this ability? If not, why not? Is it because we only look upon our work as a job or a means to earn a salary? Certainly this is important but what about the reason for this job being a paid one. If there is a price or salary it must be for a purpose. We come back full cycle then that the job of extension is to teach others. For our efforts we are getting paid. Yet if we are not teaching we are not earning our pay. Going through the motions, planning, holding meetings, giving lectures, etc. may take up most of our time but end in poor results. Teaching is more than just a job. It is also an art. Are we artists? Just as a painter may study use of colors and techniques, he may spend much time planning what he wants to paint, he may spend his energies putting paint on canvas and yet he may not come up with a picture he is satisfied with or others may enjoy. Is he an artist? Certainly not until he changes the canvas into something of beauty or meaning is he recognized as a true artist. The same is true of teachers. They may work at the job but never become true educators. Fortunately the art of teaching can be acquired. Once the science of teaching is learned

* Adult Education XVI, Number 1, Autumn 1965. Editor's notes.
Thurman White, page 2

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and sufficient practice has taken place teaching can result in effective learning.

This will not happen:

- (1) If the extension worker is not sincere in his desire to work with people. This is the "canvas" he must convert into meaningful action. He must want and like to work with people. Unlike a painter who works with abstract things, oils, brushes, canvases; the teacher works with human beings.
- (2) If he does not thoroughly understand what the individuals' needs, motivations, desires and resources are, he must work with something the individual can be taught to accept and understand as important to himself not only what the teacher believes is important. It becomes an action of both teacher and learner. Teaching is not a one-way action or an end in itself.
- (3) If he considers education so important that he uses coercion to obtain his ends. This only defeats the very thing we are trying to accomplish - to help people change themselves not force them to change as many have tried to do in the past. History is full of such stories where leaders have tried to force upon individuals what they thought was good for them through laws, edicts, punishment and drastic means.

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- (4) If he underrates his audience. Too often teachers and extension educators in particular, lose patience with their students. Some even believe that it is a hopeless task to teach rural adults, or certain classes in society. It certainly is a hopeless task because with this attitude the teaching exercises are doomed to failure. The truth is the right way has not been found or applied by the teachers. The very essence of education is to help people change; this can be done at any level, class, group or locale of the individuals if the right attitude and methods can be found.
- (5) If he does not know the techniques, methods and skills of teaching. The teacher, in addition to having sincere interest, believes in education and believes that those he serves must know how to do the job. He must learn the advantages and disadvantages of his methods for specific purposes. A person who only has a desire but does not know how to do the job may be well liked but he will not help people learn. Nor can he ever acquire the satisfaction of real accomplishment.
- (6) If he does not know his subject matter. This is the purpose of his teaching - to teach something! The changes of knowledge or skills he wishes to bring about are the objectives. It is fundamental that a person know his subject matter.

The first of these is the fact that the Government has
not been able to secure the necessary co-operation
of the States in the implementation of the
provisions of the Constitution. This is due to
the fact that the States have not been
able to agree on the necessary amendments
to the Constitution. The second is the
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agree on the necessary amendments to the
Constitution.

In the case of extension personnel we would add or know how to acquire the subject matter (through specialists).

Thus if we are to become proficient as extensionists (teachers) we must:

- (1) Be sincere in our desire to be teachers.
- (2) Understand the desire, needs and interest of those with whom we work.
- (3) Believe in education but not so strongly we want to use force.
- (4) Not underrate those we wish to help.
- (5) Know the techniques, methods and skills of teaching.
- (6) Know the subject matter.

Unless teachers are able to acquire these qualifications they will only be teachers in name but not deed. They will draw their salary and may have a professional title, but they will not be educators. This applies to extension workers. They too must become educators in the full sense of the word. Once they accomplish this ability they can join the group of successful teachers who are the artists of their profession.

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

1. Extension Philosophy
2. Evaluation in Extension
3. Subject matter specialists in Extension: roles, problems and adjustments
4. Extension organization: for administration and for program planning
5. Elements that contributed to the success of the United States Cooperative Extension Service
6. Local leaders in Extension
7. A collection of principles and guides
8. Pre-requisites to progress in agriculture: Land, Labor, Capital and Knowledge
9. Coordination - the key to successful extension education services
10. The U. S. Cooperative Extension Service
11. Program building: part of the process of extension
12. Differences between Extension Education and Community Development
13. Agrarian Reform and Extension Education
14. The Nature of Extension - to change people
15. Teaching vs. Learning
16. Steps in organizing rural youth in Extension
17. Some factors that do not contribute to efficient or effective extension work in Latin America
18. Adults responsibility to youth
19. Importance of using rural people as leaders in rural development
20. A job to be done

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21. The essence of extension education
22. Leadership vs. Administration
23. Facts are the best antidote for rumor
24. Social Science - A necessary ingredient in rural development
25. Extension methods
26. Extension is not a panacea
27. Basic training for extensionists and agricultural leaders





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