



Training the Trainers: To What Effect?

PROGRAM EDUCATOR

Debbie Dietrich, Berks County

PROGRAM AND TARGET AUDIENCE

Extension youth programs include new, challenging programs such as Character Counts!_{sm} in Our 4-H Clubs. What makes programs like this challenging is that the instructors, people who are largely volunteers, agency staff serving youth or school teachers, first require training. When extension educators train instructors so they in turn can teach youth, the program model is referred to as Train the Trainer.

Knowing what to evaluate and how to do it can be challenging.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In Character Counts!_{sm} in Our 4-H Clubs, the objectives included the following:

- Overall objective: As a result of training, 4-H volunteers, agency staff serving youth and school teachers will obtain the knowledge and tools needed to become confident/comfortable teaching character to youth.
- Specifically, 4-H volunteers, agency staff serving youth and school teachers will:
 - learn what the Six Pillars of Character are: **Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship** (knowledge)
 - participate in a self-assessment to understand their own character (knowledge)
 - learn how to utilize the Character Counts!_{sm} framework in their 4-H club (knowledge)
 - become confident/comfortable about their own ability to teach “character development” in their programs (attitude)
 - participate in learning activities which they in turn, will want to use in their club meetings to “teach” character (intention)
 - develop an action plan that includes both topics and how they will be taught (intention)
 - following the program, submit an application for an award that includes selected topics and how those topics were taught (behavior)

EVALUATION PART I: SURVEY AT THE END OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

An evaluation survey was developed to use at the end of the training workshop and it included the questions below.



Questions #1 and #2 measure knowledge and attitude, respectively.

Initial

impact:

perception

of value of

knowledge

gained

Question 1. Using the following scale, please rate the quality of new information you gained for each of the following segments of this leader training:

What is Character?	POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
The Six Pillars of Character	POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Activities to Teach Character	POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Berks County's Model	POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT

Initial

impact:

perceived

confidence

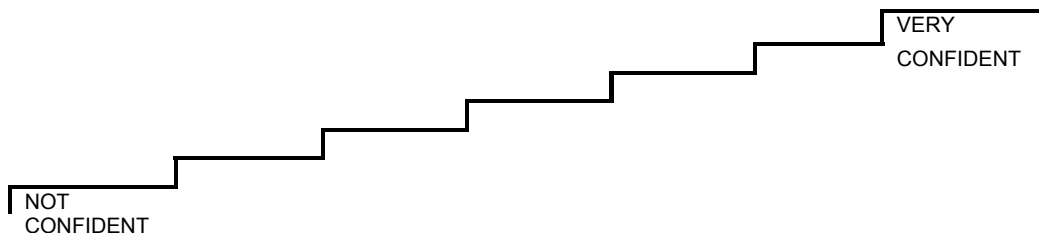
in

applying

what was

learned

Question 2. Please place a **B** on the step signifying how confident you felt about your ability to teach your club members about Being People of Good Character *before* this workshop. Please place an **N** on the step signifying how confident you feel about your ability to teach your club members about Being People of Good Character *now, after* the training.



Question #3 measures participants' intentions, and it uses an open-ended question. This type of question in this situation has several benefits.

First, it allows the extension educator to observe how the instructors in the class can creatively apply the information they learned to an array of classroom situations.

Second, it does not restrict that creativity by providing a list of possibilities.

And third, it allows the extension educator to assess the usefulness of the information presented – a measurement of training quality, in addition to being a measurement of training impact.

Initial

impact:

intention

to use

materials

Question 3. Which of the ideas that were presented today will you use back home this year at your local 4-H club meetings?



Question #4 is an interesting question. It measures the educational objective, intention to use what was learned, and it measures expected impacts. But because the question is open-ended, it also garners some *unexpected impacts*, those impacts outside the intended program objectives. Some unintended impacts have included:

“ . . . all of us [meaning the instructors] have room to grow on building character”

“ . . . games can be used also. I do use books and talk about issues but haven't used games.”

Another long-range benefit of both of the above open-ended questions is that the extension educator can distill and collapse all of the first year's answers into a set of answer categories to use in the *next* training as part of a quantitative question. These answer categories will reflect the valid perspective of the participants and have stronger validity than if an educator had made them up. See [Tipsheet #59: Creating Valid Answer Categories](http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS59.pdf) (<http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS59.pdf>).

Intended

and

unintended

initial

impact

Question 4. What was the most important thing you learned or realized today?

EVALUATION PART II: THE ACTION PLAN

The extension educator required the 4-H volunteers and agency staff serving youth to complete, at the end of the training workshop, an action plan that included information about the training topics they will teach to youth. The action plan asked for specifics about how the instructors plan to conduct that teaching. The specifics included *when* they will teach, *who* they will teach and *how* activities such as story books, games and worksheets will be used. (See below.)

Club Plan of Action

**Character Counts!_{sm} in 4-H
Leader Training
March 22, 2004**

Name of Club _____

Leaders developing this plan _____

Goal for each club: *To become a Character Counts!_{sm} in 4-H Club by conducting 2 “lessons” on Trustworthiness and Respect. Each lesson should be at least 15 to 20 minutes in length.*

Please describe for TRUSTWORTHINESS:



What will you teach?

How will you teach it?

Who will teach it?

When will you teach it?

Please describe for RESPECT:

What will you teach?

How will you teach it?

Who will teach it?

When will you teach it?

What additional information, materials or helpers do you need to accomplish the goal?

Benefits for the Participant. The benefits of an action plan are twofold: it is educational and quietly evaluative. The action plan is not seen by the participants as an evaluation tool, but rather as a “take home” item from the training that will help the instructors implement more easily, the good ideas they obtained while at the training. It reinforces the learning but can also be used as an evaluative tool.

Benefits for the Extension Educator. When the extension educator reviews the action plan, she/he can observe at once, the degree to which the most important ideas and recommendations made in the workshop were intended to be implemented by the instructor. An action plan is an excellent device to reinforce learning for instructors and to evaluate the impact of the training for them.

EVALUATION PART III: APPLICATION FOR AWARD

As part of the development of the educational program, an award system was established to encourage certain instructors, the 4-H leaders, to follow through with their action plan and actually “do it.” The leaders submitted the application for the award to the extension educator as validation that the training actually took place on the 4-H club level. See example of application below.



**Character Counts!sm 4-H Club Application
Level 1 Award***

Club's Name _____

Brief description of club program on the Character Pillar of **TRUSTWORTHINESS** (include information on the activity the youth participated in and the length of time of the activity)

Who led the program?

Brief description of club program on the Character Pillar of **RESPECT** (include information on the activity the youth participated in and the length of time of the activity)

Who led the program?

Briefly tell us how you felt the programs went. Were the members interested and receptive to the information? Did any parents share comments with you about the program, either positively or negatively?

Please submit this form at the completion of both activities or by October 15th in order to receive recognition as a **Character Counts!sm 4-H Club**.

Send to: Debbie Dietrich
 Berks County Cooperative Extension
 PO Box 520
 1238 County Welfare Road
 Leesport, PA 19533

The above application was identical for the Level 2 award for conducting RESPONSIBILITY and FAIRNESS programs, the Level 3 award for conducting CARING and CITIZENSHIP programs and the Level 4 award for conducting CHARACTER REVIEW and ETHICAL DECISION MAKING programs.

Benefits for the Extension Educator. The application for award provides an evaluative process, as the extension educator is able to compare the leader's application with his/her action plan, assess which activities were most popular, and consider additional club member impact, an aspect the leaders found exciting too. From these data, the educator can also report statistically as impact, that of the X (number of) clubs with leaders present at the training, Y (number of) club-level programs took place using the topics and methods described in the action plans.



PART IV: SELECTED FINDINGS

- In 2001, the Character Counts!sm in 4-H Steering Committee was established which began implementation of a 3-year plan to include character education in traditional 4-H club programming. The committee established the Award Program for clubs completing activities in 2 Pillars of Character during the year. Since 2001, 200 members in 10 clubs have participated in activities on Trustworthiness and Respect, earning their club the Level 1 Award.
- In 2002, 5 clubs earned the Level 2 award (75 members participated in activities on Responsibility and Fairness.) one leader noted on the application that the activities were “Well received, doing games is a great way to get the info across; 4-Hers learned while having fun.”
- In 2003, 15 leaders from 8 clubs attended the third Character Counts!sm in 4-H Leader Training. When asked to indicate how confident they felt about their ability to teach Caring and Citizenship to their club members before the training, the average response was 2.9 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being very confident. The average response after the training was 4.4 with an average increase of 1.6 steps.

APPLICATION TO OTHER EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Extension educators can apply these ideas to evaluate other train the trainer type programs in Extension such as ***School Teacher Training, 4-H Program Leaders Training, 4-H Leader Program Assistant Training, Master Gardener Training, agency personnel (YM/WCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, Scouts, etc.) and after-school child care providers***

For more information on evaluating instructor training in the train the trainer model, see PA Example 6: [Measuring the Impact of the Master Gardener Training Program](#).

For more information on using an action plan as part of an evaluation, see Tipsheet #18: [Activity Oriented Evaluation](#).

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Deborah Dietrich (dad7@psu.edu). This Web site is copyrighted by the Pennsylvania State University. The information may be used for educational purposes but not sold for profit.