

Why Johnnie Can't Coach a CDE

Poster Abstract

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Introduction

The spring semester is a busy time for student teachers. Student recruiting, training and practicing with FFA Career Development Event (CDE) teams is one of many activities a student teacher has the opportunity to look forward to during their 12-week internship. Unfortunately, student teachers going out in the fall semester have less of an opportunity to gain experience recruiting, training and practicing with students for FFA CDE's than do their spring student teaching colleagues due to the scheduling of career development events during the spring of the year. Competitive events can serve as a mechanism for agricultural educators to motivate students to perfect and advance their occupational skills (Gamble, 1986). However, Gamble (1986) noted no significant relationship existed between contest preparation and occupational preparation. Can Career Development Events prepare students for careers in Agriculture?

Deeds and Thomas (1999) found the advisor was considered to be the key factor for students in deciding which CDE to choose to participate and that teachers should engage in activities that enhance classroom instruction and career opportunities.

The Agricultural Issues contest is a new Career Development Event offered during the annual Oklahoma State University Interscholastic Event during the month of April. Providing an opportunity for students to identify, research, plan, and present an agricultural issue before an audience of judges is one of the objectives of the event. Although, this event provides an opportunity to promote the integration of analyzing agricultural issues and public speaking skills in local school academic subject matter areas, there has been very little participation at the state level contest. Fewer than five teams have registered and actually participated in the annual FFA activity.

The purpose of this activity was to provide the fall 1999 student teaching class with an opportunity to train and coach a FFA career development team for competition during their 12-week student teaching experience. A goal was to expose more students and FFA chapters in Oklahoma to the Agricultural Issues Career Development Event.

Methodology

The state-winning Agricultural Issues CDE team and coach from the spring 1999 state contest were invited to the OSU campus to make a presentation to the student teacher group during the four-week block early in the fall 1999 semester. Utilizing costumes and props, FFA members conducted their presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of corporate swine operations in Oklahoma. Student teachers assumed the role of judges and asked questions of the participants. For the entire student teacher class, this was their first exposure to this particular

CDE. Following the presentation, FFA members and student teachers interacted during a question and answer session to discuss why FFA members compete in CDE's, what FFA members expected from their CDE coach, and provided suggestions for motivating high school students to get involved and participate in such activities.

At the completion of the four-week block, student teachers were challenged to go out to their cooperating centers and recruit and train an Agricultural Issues CDE Team for a special invitational contest to be held later in the fall semester on the OSU campus. The OSU Collegiate FFA Chapter was charged with coordination and sponsorship of the event. Since this was an invitational contest, and no student teachers had coached an Agricultural Issues team prior to this activity, nor had any of the cooperating centers fielded an Agricultural Issues team, previous experience was not a factor or an advantage for any team participating in the contest. All student teachers indicated a willingness to train and bring teams to the contest. Over half of the student teachers in the fall class brought student teams to compete. Undergraduate agricultural education students and Collegiate FFA members served as official judges. The Collegiate FFA Chapter provided plaques to the first and second place teams and a barbecue lunch for all participants.

Implications

1. Student teachers going out in the fall were provided the opportunity to recruit and train a career development event team from their cooperating center during their 12-week internship.
2. Evidence of coaching a student CDE can be included in the student teacher portfolio.
3. FFA members were exposed to a new CDE.
4. More Oklahoma FFA chapters have been exposed to the Agricultural Issues CDE.
5. It is expected the FFA members will encourage their advisors to continue training for the Agricultural Issues contest and participate in the State FFA Oklahoma State University Interscholastic Field Day in spring 2000.

References

Deeds, J., & Thomas, S.S. (1999). Student perceptions of career development event preparation. Paper presented at the 49th Annual AAAE Southern Agricultural Education Research Meeting, Memphis, Tennessee.

Gamble, K.J. (1986). The personal, educational, and occupational benefits received by participants in the National FFA contest program. Paper presented at the Thirteenth Annual National Agricultural Education Research Meeting, Dallas, Texas.