

an audience of practitioners. If the research being reported grew out of previous research or if the research is testing hypotheses deduced from a well defined theory, this underpinning and its contribution to the research should be made evident; however, an elucidation of the related theory and research is most appropriately left for other audiences at other times.

### Methodology

The presenter who has a propensity to use research and statistical jargon in an effort to impress his audience rarely passes up the opportunity at this stage of the presentation. It is essential that the presenter resist that temptation. Instead, it is strongly recommended that brief comments be made relating to the following: from what persons or units data were collected; how data reporting units were selected; how data were collected; procedures used to avoid usual pitfalls of data collection procedures (e.g., nonresponse to questionnaires, reliable and valid instruments, etc.); and statistical procedures used for summarizing and analyzing data. The researcher is urged to use nonstatistical terms as much as possible in describing methodology. A practical rule of thumb is to describe the procedure in sufficient detail so any limitations on the valid interpretation of findings which are imposed by the methodology used are clearly indicated.

It is easy to use a major portion of the time allotted for the report for procedural considerations. Remember, the listeners are primarily interested in what the research revealed. Leave the details of design and statistical analysis to written reports. Those interested in these details will search them out.

### Findings and Implications

Here is what the audience is waiting for. The major portion of the time allotted for the presentation should be used for this part of the report. The listener appreciates a strategy that related findings to specific questions posed at the beginning of the report. Findings should be described primarily in nonstatistical language. Data pertaining to each subproblem or subquestion should be presented in simple, understandable tables, charts, on graphs. The overhead projector is a very useful tool at this stage of the presentation.

When presenting data, do not confuse the audience with meaningless statistics such as carrying correlation coefficients to four decimal places or reporting percentages to two or three decimal places. This type of detail is rarely if ever warranted in oral or written reports of research in education.

---

If detailed and elaborate explanations are appropriate for any part of the report, this is the appropriate section. The presenter should present facts and a discussion of the facts in sufficient detail for the audience to have a clear understanding of the findings of the research. The researcher has an obligation to point out any limitations which the design or conduct of the study has imposed on the interpretation and generalizability of the findings.

The researcher should make it clear when he is reporting findings of the research and when he is drawing implications of the findings for policy and program development. The researcher should not be reluctant to formulate recommendations that are supported by the research. If the audience perceives that the presenter is proposing recommendations not supported by the findings, he will hear about it whether time has been allocated for questions or not.

### Preparing and Presenting the Report

A well presented report requires much thought and effort in its preparation. The presenter is responsible for adhering to the time limits established for the presentation; and a fact often overlooked or ignored is that the program chairman is responsible for insuring that the presenter has the full time allotted for the presentation. If discussion is to follow the presentation, it is the presenter's responsibility to see that the formal presentation does not infringe on time allocated for discussion and reaction.

I recommend that the presenter prepare a formal paper when reporting research in agricultural education at conferences and conventions. The preparation of a paper encourages specific consideration of several of the suggestions mentioned above. First, it more or less forces the researcher to give serious consideration to what outcomes of the research are to be reported and to the manner in which the report will be organized and presented; second, it encourages, but does not insure, the production of a report that will fit the time allocated; and third, it provides the researcher with a means for reporting in more detail some aspects of the research. The preparation of a formal paper does not mean that the paper must be read verbatim. Writing a paper forces one to clarify what is to be communicated. The actual presentation may be a paraphrase of the paper or quotes of some parts of the paper. Copies of the paper distributed after the presentation provide additional details for those who desire more elaborate descriptions of rationale, procedure, or findings. A formal paper has another very practical function--it provides the presenter's department chairman and dean with tangible evidence of scholarly activity that can be used in documenting recommendations for promotion and salary advancement.

The use of charts, graphs, tables and other visual media are almost necessary for an understandable presentation. The presenter is very familiar with the data; however, the audience is being introduced to the data for the first time. To expect the audience to grasp even the most important findings from a verbal description only is, for all practical purposes, to attempt the impossible.

#### Summary

Agricultural educators, whether teachers, supervisors, or teacher educators, are usually impressed by reports of significant research that are presented in an understandable and common sense manner. Reports of research at conferences and conventions attended by agricultural educators do not always meet these criteria. If oral reports of research are to be an effective means of disseminating research in agricultural education, careful attention must be given both the content of the report and the manner in which it is presented. The major thesis of this article is that practitioners in agricultural education are most interested in findings and implications of research. Some suggestions designed to encourage the preparation of oral reports of research that are understandable and practical were presented.

\* \* \* \* \*