

*MEASURING
PREPAREDNESS TO
ADVOCATE FOR
AGRICULTURE: A PRE-
TEST/POST-TEST*

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Introduction and Review of Literature

- There is a large gap between public perceptions and knowledge of science (Funk & Raine, 2015).
 - Scientists have trouble communicating with the general public (Folta, 2012; Ruth, Gay, Rumble, & Rodriguez, 2015).
 - The public struggles with seeing differences between their attitude and scientific information (Folta, 2012; Ruth, Gay, Rumble, & Rodriguez, 2015).
 - Consumer misinformation and distrust in science has made it increasingly important for agricultural communicators to be equipped with the knowledge to advocate for a variety of industries (Steede, Gorham, & Irlbeck, 2016).
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About the Class

- Two Major Components:
 - Guest Speakers
 - Representatives from state or national organizations for their industry
 - Discussed the industry
 - Discussed challenges the industry faces in advocating
 - In-Class Lectures and Activities
 - Role-playing Exercises (Elevator Speeches)
 - Online communication techniques
 - Interpersonal communication techniques
 - Formal and informal presentation techniques
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Purpose and Research Questions

- The purpose of this research was to determine how students' knowledge and ability to advocate for agricultural increases over the course of a semester while enrolled in an agricultural advocacy course. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Do students feel that their overall ability to advocate for agriculture increased through the course of the semester?

RQ2: Which industries or commodities saw the greatest increase in confidence to advocate face to face?

RQ3: Which industries or commodities saw the greatest increase in confidence to advocate online?

Methods

- Researcher- developed pre-test/post-test instrument through Qualtrics.
 - Students enrolled in Advocating for Agriculture at Texas Tech University were administered a Likert-type survey at the beginning and end of the fall 2016 semester.
 - Students were asked to respond to four statements regarding 15 agricultural industries with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree.
 - The statements enquired about student knowledge, comfort level with face-to-face advocacy, comfort with online advocacy, and connection with an expert in each of the 15 agricultural industries.
 - Demographic information was collected including membership in 4-H and FFA, family involvement in farming and ranching, and individual involvement in farming and ranching.
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Findings

- Twelve students completed both the pre-test and the post-test.
 - Do students feel that their overall ability to advocate for agriculture improved?
 - Increases in Knowledge $t(12) = -2.28$, $p = .036$, Cohen's $d = -1.209$
 - Comfort level with face-to-face advocacy $t(12) = -3.21$, $p = .009$, Cohen's $d = -1.194$
 - Comfort with online advocacy $t(12) = 2.94$, $p = .022$, Cohen's $d = 1.448$
 - Connection with an expert $t(12) = -2.90$, $p = .016$, Cohen's $d = -1.174$
 - *Paired samples t-test*
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Findings

Which industries or commodities saw the greatest increase in confidence to advocate face to face?

Commodity	Mean score increase
Peanuts	1.33
Corn	1.28
Cotton	1.25
Sorghum	1.00
Dairy	.92
Horticultural crops	.92
Equine	.92

Findings

Which industries or commodities saw the greatest increase in confidence to advocate online?

Commodity	Mean score increase
Corn	1.27
Cotton	1.25
Equine	1.11
Sorghum	.92
Peanuts	.83

Conclusions

- Students enrolled in the course significantly increased their ability to advocate for agriculture, both online and in person.
 - Biggest increase came in confidence about crops
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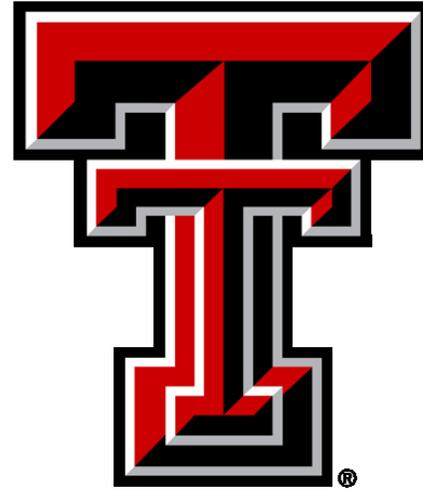
Discussion

- Other agricultural programs would benefit from implementing an agricultural advocacy course into their curriculum.
 - Course could be offered in any department.
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Future Research

- Qualitative interviews at the start of the semester and conclusion of the semester
 - Qualitative interviews with students who have completed the course and later completed an internship
 - Survey and qualitative research with agricultural communications graduates who completed the course during their undergraduate work
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*Thank
You*



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