

**Pleasing to the Palate: Satisfying the Educational Appetites of our County Partners  
World Cafe Session Results  
2008 UWEX CES Department Head Conference**

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**Introduction**

As part of the UWEX CES 2008 Department Head Conference a World Cafe session was held to solicit input from Department Heads, WNEP Coordinators, and Extension administration about the educational programs that we lead on behalf of county government. The World Café format is a relatively new community input process, first developed by Juanita Brown, David Isaacs, and several colleagues in 1995 as a way to engage large groups of people in natural dialogue process on issues that matter. The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, as part of their holistic systems thinking work group, has been using the technique for the past three years. For more details on the World Cafe methodology and research see [www.worldcafe.com](http://www.worldcafe.com).

Approximately 50 participants engaged in two rounds of questions. For each question participants moved to new tables though a table host remained at each table and took notes for the group. These notes were compiled on flipcharts. Once the two rounds of questions were completed, each table reported out on their responses. The two questions used for the session were:

*Please identify and share examples of educational programming with county government.*

*What advice would you give others as educational program opportunities arise with county government?*

**Question One Results – Please identify and share examples of educational programming with county government.**

*Group One*

- Jail Programming
- Drug or Diversion Court
- Court-ordered Parenting Programs
- Lunch N Learn Programs with County Staff
- Strategic Planning
- County Board Orientation
- Visioning for the County
- WNEP
- Educational Forums on County Board Topics
- Caregiving
- Land Use Planning
- Conflict Management

- Committee and Coalition Work
- Financial Management Programming
- Library Planning and Organizational Development
- Land Conservation and Zoning Educational Programs
- Cross-training of Parent Aids
- Aging Unit and ADRC Planning and Organizational Development
- Long Term Care Redesign Assistance

*Group Two*

- Farm Technology Days
- Water Quality/Quantity Water Testing and Nutrient Management
- Gardening Programs with Inmates
- Life After Incarceration; Working with Inmates
- Parenting Programs with WNEP
- Substance Abuse, Community Involvement
- Youth in Governance Initiatives

*Group Three*

- Teen Court
- County Economic Development
- Development of County Human Resource Manual
- County Strategic Planning
- Emergency Government Support
- County Board Resource Manual
- Tribal/County Board Orientation
- Candidate Forums
- Census/Redistricting Education and Support
- Land Use Planning
- Organizational Development for Staff (i.e. Time Management, Conflict Management)
- Diversity Training
- Recycling Education and Cleansweeps
- Youth Government Days
- Facilitation of Tribal/County Government Meetings
- Divorce Court/Children in the Middle Programs
- Board Size and Reorganization

*Group Four*

- Strategic Planning with County Board and Department Heads/Managers and Committees
- Department Head Leadership Committee Assistance
- Organizational Development
- Use of Outcomes Measurement
- Nutrition Education for Senior Meal Sites, Economic Support, WIC, and Nutrition Services
- Drug Court where Participants Work with Family Living Agents
- Programs with Jails

- Risk Management for those who Work in Jails
- Comprehensive Planning, Including the Agricultural and Natural Resources Element
- Teen Court
- Regular Monthly Discussion with Staff and Administration
- Land Conservation Programming such as the Water Resource Plan and Nutrient Management Planning
- Educational Programs with the County Forester
- Horticulture Agents Conduct Educational Programs for County Employees
- IT uses Wisline and Fiber Optics Systems
- At Risk Youth Development Programs

*Group Five*

- Smart Growth
- Natural Resource Preservation
- County Fair
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Strategic Planning
- Grantwriting
- Emergency Government
- Youth in Governance
- Teen Court
- Facilitating Priority Setting Processes
- Parenting Programs
- Jail Programs
- Individual “topic” training to Other County Departments
- Local Government Wisline Site
- Redistricting and Census Analysis and Support

**Question Two Results – What advice would you give others as educational program opportunities arise with county government?**

*Group One*

- First determine the need vs. a cause that someone wants to us to champion
- Work on needs that are aligned with County Board
- Be aware of time constraints, ability to program well
- What programs will sunset to take on County Government Programs
- Determine how you will get credit for your work with the partnership
- Communicate with the County Board partner
- Show value with the fluff
- Cross-programming opportunities can be captured
- Are there opportunities to generate revenue and capture grants as a result of the county government programs?
- Cross county programming and expertise should be considered

### *Group Two*

- Realize that other departments have pride and professionalism.
- Be mindful of the political environment
- Anticipate pitfalls
- Recognize the system “face time” benefits
- Don’t respond, “We don’t do that.” Consider, “But maybe we should or figure out how.”
- Be prepared, no winging it
- Make sure that there is an outcome

### *Group Three*

- Maintain regular communication with the County Administrator
- Develop relationships with County Board Members and County Department Heads
- Define what is being requested

### *Group Four*

- Be aware of political context of an issue
- Receive explicit support from county committee
- Knowing your role within a project
- Run your role or the project by colleagues
- Get input from your potential partners, including other governmental units
- Make sure resources are available to carry out program/initiative
- Keep in mind the big picture
- Demonstrate professional courtesy with other county departments
- Look for common threads within overall programming
- Work smarter, not harder
- Look for available UW resources on an issue
- Remember the specialists’ contributions or potential ones
- If you commit, better do it well

### *Group Five*

- Take all opportunities
- Expectations may be great, be aware
- Use volunteers
- Be good at what you do
- Make opportunities when you see them
- Be proactive to county needs
- Ensure that there is extension recognition in the programs
- Know your audience, intimately. Seek information from them
- Everyone has a price
- Learn when to say no