

Flexible Model Process - Why Is This a Better Way to Do Business

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Components of the Flexible Model

- For test development
- For manual development

One State's Experience with the Flexible Model: New York

- How it works
- Benefits for SLA
 - Considerable time, effort, and dollars saved even as test quality is improved.
 - Produces defensible test yet provides great flexibility with regard to process.
 - Eliminates much subjectivity from licensure activities; SLA has assurance that test items are based on information that is important for the test taker to know.
 - Gives person generating test items a place to start and provides a sufficiently large pool of potential test items.
 - Allows SLA to draw on Extension's expertise when developing test items.
 - Helps produce a balanced test. Items are distributed from throughout manual.
 - Offers certification and licensing managers a sound, evidentiary basis for making licensure decisions; increases confidence that test will be fair to the applicator, rigorous enough to meet the SLA's obligation to protect people and the environment, and defensible.
 - Places licensure programs on the same methodological footing as enforcement (i.e., both are evidence oriented).
- Benefits for PSEP
 - Ensures that manual content aligns with applicator responsibilities and SLA expectations.
 - Makes writing easier by providing a chapter-by-chapter blueprint for manual.
 - Facilitates development of other training materials and activities.
 - Gives Extension educators a role in test development.
 - Improves relations with SLA and regulated community.
- Benefits for Applicators
 - No surprises: applicators know up front what they are expected to learn and demonstrate.
 - Manuals are written at an easier reading level.
 - Reduced repetition in manual keeps learning focused.
 - Can gauge own progress toward meeting performance goals and can identify and fill gaps in knowledge.
 - Test items are clearer and easier to understand, so that knowledge is being assessed rather than reading level.

- Benefits for Public
 - Helps achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that individuals who pass the test have demonstrated sufficient job knowledge.
 - Quality manuals and content-relevant tests help meet increased demand for accountability of SLA and PSEP.
 - Payoff for quality manuals is in outcomes as good manuals use research-based techniques focused on maximizing the ability of pesticide applicators to be good practitioners on the job.
 - Model involves very little added costs (perhaps some travel or mailing costs) and saves dollars by making manual and test development more efficient; allows improved stewardship of public funds.

- States Moving towards the Flexible Model: Nebraska and Minnesota

- Panel and audience discussion

For More Information

- CTAG web site 'tool box' page: <http://pep.wsu.edu/ctag/toolbox.html>
Three documents developed by a CTAG workgroup:
 - A Model Process for Developing Effective, Integrated Pesticide Training Manuals and Licensure Tests. Developed by a CTAG work group
 - Developing Content Relevant Licensure Tests and Corresponding Manuals
 - Storage Chapter example