

Curriculum Materials

This curriculum focuses on four farm safety issues. (The term “farm” is being used here as any establishment engaged in production agriculture, including small acreages, farms, and ranches.) The four units address prevention of:

- amputation,
- spinal cord injury,
- hearing loss, and
- farmer’s lung (hypersensitivity pneumonitis).

The lessons in each unit have similar components. The units are designed to give the teacher flexibility in selecting class activities. Each unit includes both a physical and narrative simulation. Physical simulations involve creating “mock disabilities” by restricting students’ normal physical ability. Students are then asked to complete simple tasks with the mock disabilities, demonstrating the kinds of problems and frustrations that can occur with a real disability. A narrative simulation is a written story about how someone becomes disabled through unsafe work practices. Questions throughout the story lead students through decisions that can lead to or avoid disabilities. The narrative also tells of the decisions and problems that one has to deal with after becoming disabled.

Simulations as training materials translate key information into powerful and memorable images (Bruner, 1986; Howard, 1991). Narrative exercises serve as mental models that direct one’s attitudes, judgements, decisions, and behaviors. Physical simulations incorporate all of the senses in the learning experience, exerting influence on decisions about behavior, based not only on mental models but on physical response. The bottom line is, for those students who learn by reading, the narrative simulation is an excellent way to introduce the topic through using a story based on factual information. Students select answers to questions posed throughout the story and receive immediate feedback about the quality of the choices they made. The physical simulations are based on “learning by doing”. Students vicariously experience the disability and the difficulty of completing common farm tasks once “disabled”.

Within each lesson are some key statistics that relate to the topic area. Whenever possible it is good to customize these statistics for your location. You may be able to find local statistics on farm related injuries and disabilities through your local agricultural extension office, closest Agrability project, or the closest Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) project. A list of these projects with contact information is located under “Additional Resources.”

Materials in this curriculum that were created by the University of Kentucky and the Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention or by NIOSH may be copied.