



Media Frequently Asked Questions

What is LifeKnowledge?

LifeKnowledge is a comprehensive framework developed by the National FFA Organization that ensures every single student enrolled in agricultural education realizes the FFA mission of premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Through LifeKnowledge, all students enrolled in agricultural education have the opportunity to develop as leaders.

The LifeKnowledge program approaches this mission in three ways:

1. LifeKnowledge provides a comprehensive definition of leadership.
2. LifeKnowledge is delivered through a variety of instructional materials designed to engage all types of learners.
3. LifeKnowledge provides a form of professional development in which agricultural education can develop the whole teacher in order to develop the whole student.

LifeKnowledge provides teachers with practical and effective tools and materials to help their students better prepare for the future.

What makes LifeKnowledge so unique?

The LifeKnowledge program integrates proven teaching techniques to engage all students. The materials developed for LifeKnowledge are different because they use hands-on and interactive learning techniques to uncover students' individual interests as they learn about agriculture and develop skills that impact their career success. The LifeKnowledge lessons are designed to be turn-key. In other words, agricultural educators can seamlessly integrate LifeKnowledge into technical lesson plans, such as plant and animal sciences.

Why was LifeKnowledge developed?

In 1999, the National FFA Organization began a major initiative to reexamine how we prepare young people for success in life. Agribusiness leaders and supporters of FFA challenged the organization to prove participation in agricultural education programs and FFA really does develop premier leadership, personal growth and career success for students. The research found students weren't fully aware of the choices they made and how those choices would impact their futures. The educational system was not preparing them to be engaged in everyday life for the betterment of their lives and their communities. As a result, LifeKnowledge – Real Lessons for Real Life was born.



What comprises LifeKnowledge?

LifeKnowledge is an approach to developing the whole student by integrating lessons about leadership into real-life topics taught in agricultural education classes.

LifeKnowledge features three key components. At the foundation is a comprehensive definition of leadership. More than 1,000 teachers, teacher educators, industry representatives and others defined competencies that are the necessary signs of success and “essential learnings” of leadership.

The program includes 257 lesson plans structured to help FFA advisors and agricultural education teachers prepare high school and middle school agriculture students to become proficient in these 16 competencies. LifeKnowledge also includes 100 lesson plans for collegiate organizations centered around agriculture to use in their member development.

Finally, LifeKnowledge includes professional development for teachers, including distance learning and instructor-led programs that train teachers to use the LifeKnowledge lesson plans and instructional materials. As a result, teachers can better prepare our young people to become more engaged in everyday life for the betterment of their lives and their communities.

What's next for LifeKnowledge?

On the horizon are self-guided lesson plans and student assessments where teachers and students can measure their growth in areas such as responsibility, conflict resolution and career exploration.

What are some of the competencies?

There are three cornerstones for LifeKnowledge. The first is Leadership. The competencies associated with leadership are action, vision, relationships, awareness and continuous improvement. Successful students will learn the importance of how to develop and conceptualize ideas, identify and use resources and acquire new knowledge.

The second cornerstone is Personal Growth. Competencies here encompass every aspect from physical growth to mental, emotional and spiritual growth. Students become aware of the value of living a compassionate and selfless life, how to think critically and creatively and to live ethically.

Finally, the Career Success competencies revolve around good communications skills, decision making, flexibility and adaptability. They are demonstrated by the ability to solve problems, make ethical decisions and experiment and take risks.



Why is LifeKnowledge important for our youth?

Our young people are entering a world that requires greater individual accountability in work, community and meeting the demands of family. Individuals need the ability to lead, be it a team of one or several. That skill is not innate. Leadership skills must be taught, and LifeKnowledge does that so our youth can make a difference and be better citizens, better employees, better customers and better local leaders.

What impact has LifeKnowledge had in its first two years?

The impact of LifeKnowledge has been overwhelming. After the first two years, FFA membership is up more than 6 percent. More than 40 states experienced an increase in membership. Nearly 8,000 agricultural education instructors have been trained on incorporating LifeKnowledge into their classrooms.

How does LifeKnowledge help teachers reach their students and get the message across?

The LifeKnowledge materials offer lessons that are fun, interactive and engaging. The lessons are very flexible, so they can be used one at a time or all together in a complete course of study. These tools help teachers key in on topics students are interested in so they can help the students develop skills to make the best choices for their future and become effective leaders within their community, school and careers.

How many students and schools does the LifeKnowledge program reach?

LifeKnowledge reaches more than 700,000 students annually, and nearly 50 percent of all U.S. public high schools with agricultural education programs are involved. That means that nearly 7,200 agricultural education programs are being reached with LifeKnowledge.

How many students does the LifeKnowledge program expect to reach in the future?

With so many teachers and students already involved in this program, at the current rate of growth, the LifeKnowledge program has the potential to reach more than 8 million students over the next decade. Eventually, FFA hopes to license LifeKnowledge lessons for use outside agricultural education, reaching millions of students for decades to come.

How does LifeKnowledge help students prepare for “real life”?

The LifeKnowledge program heightens students' awareness of the expectations they will face when entering society and the importance of being active, involved members of society. The program introduces life skills for leadership, personal growth and career success that will help them meet those expectations. Through the program, students learn the rewards of taking more active roles in life, work and their communities and how to make wise life choices now and throughout their lives.

LifeKnowledge



How is this program tailored for the individual student's needs?

No matter how students learn, LifeKnowledge is tailored to meet the needs of the individual learner. LifeKnowledge uses teaching techniques that appeal to students who like hands-on learning, those who learn more through visual aids and even those students who learn best through sound. The LifeKnowledge materials can be easily integrated into any subject matter, transforming any learning environment for every student.