

### Conceptual Basis for the Study

This study addresses a vitally important topic in the field of agricultural education, broadly defined. The researchers develop a nicely connected chain of logic for the study, stating that computers are important in agriculture, graduates feel that their computer skills are weak, and freshmen may be entering universities with inadequate computer skills, contrary to popular belief. The researchers further state that the computer skills developed in freshmen-level course offerings are significantly lost over the ensuing years due to lack of continued application in subsequent course work. The presentation of a conceptual model that outlines the relevant variables at play in this study and their relationships to one another, along with additional findings from previous research, would add a great deal to the conceptual basis presented for this study. For example, why would one expect a difference in the computer skills and self-efficacy of freshmen versus seniors, and what factors might theoretically explain these possible differences?

### Procedural Considerations

The purpose and objectives were clearly articulated and well connected to the conceptual basis of the study. A sufficient number of students was selected for each group (freshmen and seniors), and instrumentation decisions and design appeared to be sound. Appropriate data analysis and reporting techniques were used, making the findings of the study very easy to grasp.

### Contributions to the Field

Based upon the findings, the researchers concluded that freshmen have serious gaps in their computer knowledge and skills, and seniors may also lack the necessary skills in some areas. The researchers also concluded that both groups of students lack confidence in their computer skills and have sub-par computer knowledge levels. This study provides evidence that colleges of agriculture need to provide course offerings that will strengthen the computer skills of their students. The study also provides some direction as to the areas of emphasis that should be contained in these courses, based on an array of basic computer usage areas but irrespective of industry expectations. The next logical and needed step in this research program is to determine the factors and experiences that will actually develop higher and more acceptable levels of computer skill and knowledge in college students.