

No discussion of "the laboratory" in agricultural education would be complete without mention of the farm itself, which is probably the most important laboratory we have. The use of the college farm in serving as a laboratory for the teaching of agriculture classes was well covered by Professor Ed D. Moore writing in a previous issue of the NACTA Journal. (6) Due to the fact that quantitative measure of the returns to the farm as a laboratory are almost impossible to make, too many people are prone to view the farm and measure it in terms of whether it had a profit or a loss last year. Many other facilities have returns which are intangible so there should

be no reason why farm facilities have to be justified as to whether they "pay their way".

It seems apparent that the ability to think and use information which has been given to the student is just as important as the information was in the first place. We have too long overlooked the importance of the laboratory in bridging this gap between the theoretical and the practical.

REFERENCES

1. J. R. Wells, Committee Chairman, "Laboratory Equipment for Agricultural Courses" NACTA Journal Vol. VII, Number 3, September 1963, p. 12.

2. Harold B. Alberty, "Should the Modern Secondary School Curriculum Be Experience-Centered?", Teaching In The American Secondary School—Selected Readings, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, N.Y., Chap. 31.
3. William Clark Trow, "The Learning Process", What Research Says to the Teacher, Series 6, National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. pp. 24-27.
4. Donald Wynant Huffmire, "Teacher Demonstrations, Laboratory Experiences, Projects", Science Education, Vol. 49, Number 3, April 1965, pp. 262-264.
5. Richard E. Beitzel, "Laboratory Management", Journal of the National Science Teachers Association, Vol. 30, Number 3, April 1963, p. 63.
6. Ed. D. Moore, "Using the College Farm in Teaching Agriculture Classes", Journal of the National Association of College Teachers of Agriculture, Vol. III, Number 3, February 1960, pp. 6-7.

TV Classes For Agriculture

by

F. E. BECKETT

Louisiana Tech

Television is arousing new interest in "non-live" teaching. The possibility exists that television may become a permanent part of the educational scene. The "non-live" teaching movement failed once in a similar medium, the 16mm film. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it was killed by episodes such as the one described here.

Shortly after the bell rang, the teacher entered the classroom. He had a film can in his hand. Obviously, he planned to show a movie. He fumbled with the projector about ten minutes and finally had the film threaded and ready to go. He turned the machine on immediately and there were loud cracking sounds. The film was threaded improperly. After another 5 minutes he turned the projector on and the movie began. The film, produced by a manufacturer of farm machinery, was about hydraulic systems. It carried a great deal of hardsell advertising and very little technical information. The 25-minute show finally ended. A sizeable part of the class was asleep. The instructor asked, "Are there any questions?" There were no questions. Only five minutes remained in the period so the class was dismissed. And so, ended another crime against education committed in the name of visual aids.

"Non-live" teaching can be an excellent educational tool. In many areas it is equal to live teaching. In some, it is superior. The behavior of protozoa can be shown to

a whole class through film. The concept of the internal combustion engine can be depicted through animation in a manner that is superior to any other method of presenting the information.

The development of a chick embryo can be condensed into a very short time and can be shown vividly to a class. It would be impossible to do this through incubation in the classroom.

If a film or TV tape is to be used by many people, great time, effort, and expense can be devoted to its production. Because of the cost involved, quantity production of high quality TV tapes or movies must have the support of a large group of colleges and universities.

Everyone who has passed through our school system has been exposed to good and bad films. In recent years there has been a tremendous interest in classroom television. Many universities and colleges have closed circuit television available and are actively using it in teaching courses. One junior college has presented its entire course offerings on television (1). Considerable money is being spent in developing lessons for use with television apparatus. Some professional groups have made great efforts in preparing visual aids materials for use at various educational levels (2). In agriculture the effort has

been small. Agriculture is in danger of falling behind other disciplines if it does not develop these aids to their full potential. There is an urgent need for group efforts directed toward production of germane, high quality visual aids for college agriculture. There is a great need for an information service that will enable a teacher to evaluate those aids that may exist already.

NACTA may be the agency that should sponsor these efforts. A possible procedure for making information available about materials already in existence follows:

1. Select courses that are fairly uniform over the United States.
2. Catalogue and review all films and TV tapes that are available for possible use in these courses. A review stating the strong and weak points of each visual aid should be published in the NACTA Journal.

A program for bringing new materials into existence should be formulated. The actions outlined below could be a beginning.

1. Select a course or courses to be developed.
2. Study materials that are available and determine areas that need new materials.

3. Obtain financial support for planning and producing needed films and tapes.
4. Have groups of competent teachers and technicians plan and produce the needed materials.
5. Ask all teachers who are to use the material to come to a central location for a summer institute. Go over the materials and procedures for using it in detail.
6. Have subject matter experts continuously revise the ma-

terials based on the criticisms and suggestions of teachers and students who are using them.

This program must be a continuing one. One of the damning criticisms made of visual aids is that they quickly become out of date. When material becomes out of date, it should be dropped. There may be some questions as to whether this material produced in the manner outlined should be placed on television tape or 16mm film. Television tape is more economical. If television tape facilities become universally available, the material prob-

ably should be placed on tape. If the production were to begin today, perhaps 16mm film would be the preferred medium. Although production of 16mm movie is more expensive than production of television tape, facilities are universally available for using 16mm film.

LITERATURE CITED

1. Schramm, Wilbur, *Educational Television—The Next Ten Years*, Institute for Communications Research, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1962. Page 55.
2. Anon. "Science Course Improvement Projects", National Science Foundation Bulletin numbers NSF 62-38 and NSF 63-15.

The Missed Class and Student Morale

by

RIEFORD B. FLOOD

Central Missouri State

Dr. Rieford Brown Flood attended Arkansas State Teachers College and the University of Arkansas, graduating from the latter in 1947 with a BSA degree, again in 1949 with a Master of Science degree, and in 1964 with an Ed. D. degree. He is married and has two children. He has been employed at Central Missouri State College since 1963 where he is currently an Associate Professor.

The problem of absenteeism is as old as our institutions of higher learning. The majority of colleges have rules and regulations to cope with the problem. These regulations vary greatly among the various institutions. Some even go far enough only to require the student to pass the required tests for the specific course, regardless of class attendance, to receive a grade. I think most colleges have a reasonable system for dealing with the problem of students missing classes. I shall approach the subject from the standpoint that we as teachers are responsible for a great amount of absenteeism. Naturally, class attendance is a direct result of student morale.

The question has been asked many times: if you give students a *free hand*, do they have the personal resources and the maturity to make satisfying lives for themselves out of their own materials? If there were no regulations requiring students to meet class, what would the outcome be? The state of being free concerning class at-

tendance is certainly a state of mind and a state of feeling which will reflect individual action. Although it is obviously not true to say that only in a free situation can morale be high, it is true that to have a free choice requires a high degree of morale on the part of those who are participating before it can be made to work. A free situation also requires a quality of mutual respect among the individuals in it, especially if they are students, who, in the absence of regulation by the college administration, must answer to their peers.

In our highly specialized system of education within our various educational institutions, only a very few have allowed complete freedom among students. During the 1920's and 1930's the experimental approach to higher education was introduced in many colleges. This approach rested on the idea that in planning a college educators had an opportunity to build an institution in which ideal conditions for individual fulfillment could be created. The theory behind this approach was that students were capable of self-government for which they would take full responsibility. The students were given the responsibility of formulating rules and forming social groups. In fact, the student body was given complete authority over such things as infractions of rules and class attendance. The students enrolled in courses and were at complete liberty to advance on their own initiative. In 1952 and 1953 an attempt was made to get some idea of satisfaction among students that were enrolled in one of these institutions. In response to a questionnaire as to the least satisfying or most frustrat-

ing experience they had had at the college, 15% did not answer. Of the 85% who did reply, 22% listed as their major frustration disappointment in a course or a teacher, 17% gave relationships with other students, and 14% gave frustration about themselves. In other words, they were unable to live up to the standards which they had set for themselves. Approximately 13% were dissatisfied with their relationships with faculty members. Fifteen per cent listed lack of friends and 8% said the courses were too vague.

It appears from this and other studies of a similar nature that complete freedom in higher education is not the most desirable situation. I am of the opinion the student body will be much happier and receive much more from its college experiences with guidance from college officials in all phases of campus activities. I have taught in institutions of higher learning since 1956 and from this experience I have found that the morale and attendance is better if a few simple rules are followed. In many cases the attendance and morale will be higher in the more difficult subjects. I think the key to the problem lies within the teacher himself. At this point I would like to insert the results of three studies made which I think are worthy of consideration by us as teachers of agricultural subjects. All three studies deal primarily with characteristics that students want in teachers. R. J. Clinton found from a list of eighteen qualities that the five most frequently desired by students were, in descending order, interest in students, fairness, pleasing personality, humor, and mastery of subject.