



FEATURING —

COMPETENCY BASED INSTRUCTION
ADMINISTRATORS' VIEWS
RADIO BROADCASTING
AG. ED. RESEARCH IN PROGRESS
POST-SEC STUDENT CONVENTION

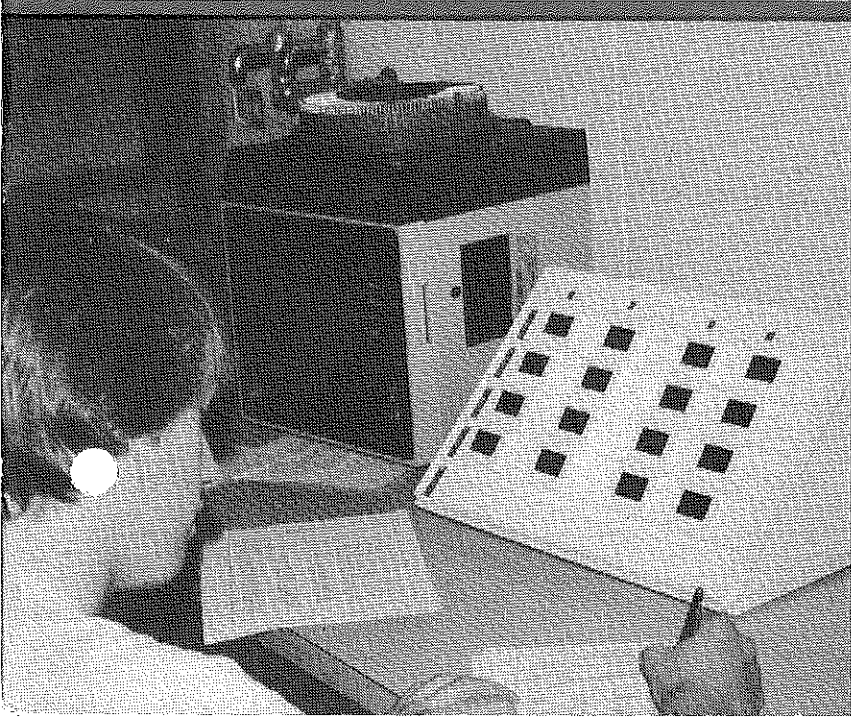


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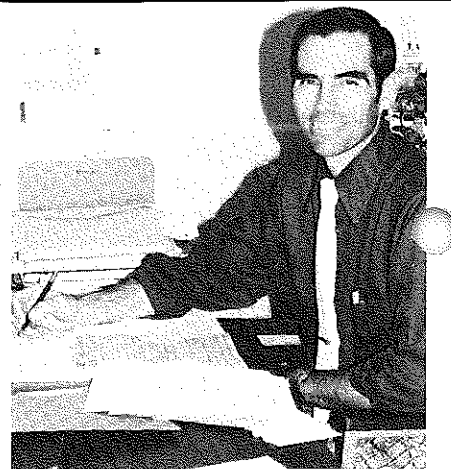
March 1979



**Theme—Classroom
Instruction—Getting
The Ideas Across**

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

FROM YOUR EDITOR



James P. Key

Some teachers spend a great majority of their time in the classroom while others spend very little time there. Each teacher must decide where they are going to put the emphasis in their agriculture program and how they are going to teach their objectives. Most teachers would agree there are three major components to a well rounded agriculture program: the classroom instruction, the supervised experience program and the student organization—FFA. They would probably have varying opinions about how much emphasis and time to allot to each of these components. However, I believe each teacher would agree classroom instruction is a most important tool for teaching agriculture.

GETTING IDEAS ACROSS EFFECTIVELY?

The next question is, "How can we use this tool most effectively to get the ideas across?" There are many ways, some of which have been mentioned in articles in this issue, some of which have not. First, a most useful way of getting the ideas across is to use a variety of methods. Simply using a variety of methods in itself is effective because it presents changes to the students which heightens interest. Even more important, however, is using a variety of methods and choosing the specific method for its unique ability to get that particular idea across. Choosing the method for its contribution to the learning situation and ability to increase interest is using the classroom teaching tools most wisely.

Does our interest and enthusiasm about an idea make any difference about how well that idea gets across? In most instances, how well the idea gets across is in direct proportion to the interest and enthusiasm we as teachers exhibit. If we are not interested or enthusiastic, the students could care less. If we show our concern and motivation, it's catching. The students then become motivated and the ideas get across much easier.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT—EFFECTIVE?

This list of ways to use the tool of classroom instruction more effectively is neither exhaustive, nor ordered according to importance. However, if I had to list the thing I consider most important to getting the ideas across in the classroom, it would be student involvement. The more the student can be involved actively in every phase of instruction, the more learning takes place. If the students are only actively involved in note taking, greater learning takes place than would have been possible if they had been simply sitting passively, attempting to learn by only listening.

I feel, however, the greatest learning takes place when students are involved in doing the real thing, even in the classroom. Think of how many ways students can carry out actual work skills, right in the classroom. The list will surprise you. Next best, and if thoroughly thought out and organized, a simulated situation is conducive to learning. Whether it be a mock interview or practice parliamentary procedure contest, learning increases. Also motivational games actively involve students in the review and reinforcement process and makes learning fun. When was the last time your kids said, "Hey, class was fun today!" I'll bet it was a time when you had them very actively involved in an idea that then took on importance to them.

It perhaps takes a little more time to plan a variety of methods, arrange and control your learning environment, generate and show enthusiasm for your subjects, and actively involve those students in the learning process; but it is more than worth every bit of time and effort when you realize how much better those ideas are getting across.—Ed.

(Please submit articles 2½ months in advance of Theme to allow publication time.)

COMING ISSUES COMING ISSUES COMING ISSUES

COMING ISSUES

- APRIL — Supervised Experience—Doing to Learn — Learning To Do
- MAY — Agricultural Mechanics — Developing Important Skills
- JUNE — Summer Opportunities — Supervision, Planning, In-Service Education, Conferences, Repairs, Other Activities?
- JULY — International Agricultural Education — Filling the World's Breadbasket
- AUGUST — The Overworked Ag Teacher — Determining Priorities

- SEPTEMBER — A New School Year — Opportunities Unlimited
- OCTOBER — Our Grassroots Community Relations — Parents, Advisory Committee, Administration, Legislators
- NOVEMBER — Adult Education in Agriculture — An Extension of Our Vo-Ag Program
- DECEMBER — Horticultural Occupations — Learning to Beautify

COMING ISSUES

DID YOU SET THE TABLE?

Student 1: "What did you do in ag class today?"
Student 2: "Nothing."

by
Barney M. McClure
Vo-Ag Teacher
Gatesville, TX



Barney M. McClure

Have you ever overheard a conversation similar to the one above? While some students never like to admit they learn anything, if comments such as these are being heard with any frequency, maybe it's time to take a look at something called "classroom teaching".

Every agriculture teacher wears many hats. He is a coach of leadership and judging teams, a public relations agent, often a livestock show specialist, and sometimes almost incidentally, a teacher. It is almost too easy to let classroom duties slide. Have you ever thought: "I've got to finish this report, I'll just let the class have a study period", or "I need to work with the livestock judging team this period, the rest of the students can look at magazines". While supervised study periods and the use of magazines can be used effectively, they can be so only if the class is well planned, and often the time just isn't taken.

I know that we all fall into traps like these occasionally, but sometimes it just takes a reordering of priorities. My contract states that I am hired as a "High School Teacher-Vocational Agriculture". When we get to the bare facts, teaching our classes is our most important job. Other things we do are important, but most of them grew out of our instructional program, and in some cases have been given more importance than they deserve.

The length of our school year is set by the legislature, but with class time lost to pep rallies, assembly programs, exam days, and announcements, we have precious little time to teach. It can't be wasted on ill-conceived or non-existent lessons. The total vocational agriculture program must be founded in a strong teaching regimen. If a good job is done teaching soil science, training a land judging team is half done. However, if you try to train a land judging team without teaching soils, you will spend much more time to get the same results.

Respect gained by a good classroom teacher can also pay dividends down the road. A teacher that carries out his duties in a professional manner and expects good conduct from his students in the classroom, will experience few problems from students on an overnight FFA trip.

GET ORGANIZED

Everyone at one time or another has said "I just don't have enough time". The truth is that we all have the same amount of time in a day, some are just better at organizing and using their time. It might be a valuable experience to keep a daily log for several days or a week. Write down the time spent in workday activities. It might be surprising just how much time is spent in unproductive activities. After evaluating work habits, some adjustments can be made. An extra half hour a day spent in necessary activities can help you get rid of the "I don't have any time" rut. The whole purpose of getting organized will be to give you more time to prepare lessons, obtain teaching materials, and make you a better teacher overall.

DO YOU SET THE TABLE FOR YOUR CLASS?

It is up to me to make sure the atmosphere in my class is conducive to learning. I try to start each day with a neat classroom, and each class with everything needed in the room.

A good class is based on communication, and students need to realize the lines of communication are open.

I try to meet the students at the door as they come in the classroom and say hello or make some comment to them. I encourage the students to be on time and often every member is in class a minute or so before the tardy bell rings.

I never start class until the bell rings, however. These few moments prior to class time are valuable in just talking to the students about any wide variety of things from football to fur trapping. I have also found that it won't crack my face to laugh or smile in class, and helps to make things more pleasant.

MEAT AND POTATOES

I like to think of education as an exchange of ideas. The word exchange implies the ideas flow both ways. It is important to involve each student in the lesson. It's tempting to concentrate on bright students, and forget about the rest of the class. Most of my classes are a cross-section of students with varying abilities. This means that often it is necessary to state an idea two or three different ways to make sure all students understand. I like to watch the faces of my students when explaining things. Their expressions and eye movement are often as easy to read as a road map.

It's easy to overdo this or that teaching method. Don't forget there are more teaching methods than lecture and question-answer. Tests can also be a teaching tool and emphasize certain areas.

CONCLUSION

Your enthusiasm gives you away to your students. They quickly learn in what areas you are most interested. If classroom teaching is approached in a haphazard or negative way, students will pick up on this, and they will have a negative attitude also. I hope that classroom teaching isn't always the last thing that is gotten to. Good teaching is the framework for a solid total program in vocational agriculture. ♦♦♦



Ellen Pellack proudly displays her original design!

FEATURING: IT WORKS! COMPETENCY BASED INSTRUCTION

by
Ms. Terri Elston
Instructor of Ornamental Horticulture
Tinley Park, IL



Teri Elston



Richard Brouette shows competency in producing a Christmas Wreath.

In the 1970's dare we imagine 15, 16, and 17 year old students so enthusiastic and involved in attaining competencies in ornamental horticulture that they revel in competing to achieve more than their classmates?

Dare we imagine students so motivated, eager and turned on, that they demand, as they enter the classroom, to know what competency they are expected to achieve that day?

These teenagers do exist and are achieving competency levels in job entry skills in the field of ornamental horticulture as participants in a pilot program at Tinley Park High School, Tinley Park, Illinois. These high school students are involved with a competency based curriculum in ornamental horticulture that spells out for them what they are to do, how they are to do it and to what criterion level.

The students are given a competency sheet at the beginning of each class. The competency sheet, which states the competency to be attained, consists of six columns: the skills to be attained; the tasks to be performed; the materials required; the specific activities to be performed; a suggested means of measurement/evaluation, and a recommended time period. (See competency sheet example)

The items in the columns on the student competency sheets are numbered in sequence to aid the student in the performance of activities and tasks in order to achieve the skills listed that leads to competency in that area.

Items in the Task column are marked either with a "T" or a "K." The "T" designates a psychomotor task and the "K" a cognitive task to attain a specific concept. The competency stated at the top of each student page gives an exact description of what the student is to be able to do as a result of the learning activity called for by the lesson.

The first column on the competency sheet states the skills to be gained. The second is a guide for the acquisition of the skills and knowledge specified in the competency. The third column gives a list of materials, supplies, manuals and textbooks, etc. that are needed by the student to carry out the prescribed activities. In the fourth column are the activities the student is to perform in order to acquire the skills and knowledge specified in the competency. Then, the fifth column provides the student with a means of interim checks and self-evaluation with immediate feedback.

COMPETENCY 10A Given a small deciduous shade tree in late winter or early spring, the student will prune the tree to maintain desired shape and to remove dead, diseased branches and water sprouts to the 90% criterion level to the satisfaction of the teacher.					
SKILL	TASK	MATERIALS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES	MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION	
				Possible	Earned
10A-1.1 Learn purposes and methods of pruning shade trees.	10A-1.1.1K Identify objectives of pruning shade trees.	10A-1.1.1 Slide Film Objectives of Pruning Deciduous Trees - #615 Slide Film Projector Pencil and Paper	10A-1.1.1 View slide film. Note objectives of pruning.	10A-1.1.1 10	
	10A-1.1.2K Identify objectives of pruning - time to prune and equipment needed.	10A-1.1.2 Subject Matter Unit Pruning Shade Trees - #5004 Circular Pruning Evergreens and Deciduous Trees and Shrubs - #1003 Handouts - Worksheets	10A-1.1.2 Read subject matter unit and circular. Fill out worksheet.	10A-1.1.2 20	
10A-1.2 Recognition of dead, damaged or rubbing branches, water sprouts and sucker growth.	10A-1.2.1K Identify dead, diseased or rubbing branches, as well as suckers and water sprouts.	10A-1.2.1 Figure 1	10A-1.2.1 Examine tree and identify parts to be pruned.	10A-1.2.1 20	
			10A-1.3.1T Cut off unwanted branches, water sprouts, and suckers.	10A-1.3.1 Pruning Shears Pruning Saw Ladder	10A-1.3.1 Start at top of tree and work downward removing undesired growth. Remove sucker growth completely.
10A-1.3 Make proper cuts when removing tree limbs.	10A-1.4.1T Apply paint.	10A-1.4.1 Tree Paint 2" Paint Brush	10A-1.4.1 Paint wounds 1" or greater in diameter with tree paint.	10A-1.4.1 20	
10A-1.4 Paint wounds.	10A-1.5.1T Remove all cut material.	10A-1.5 Student	10A-1.5.1 Remove and dispose of all cut material. Clean the work site.	10A-1.5.1 10	
10A-1.5 Clean work site.				Total 100	
				TIME	
				2 Periods	

A task analysis to identify the skills and general knowledge concepts required for job performance was conducted and then verified by Tinley Park High School's Ornamental Horticulture Advisory Council and local horticulture businesses. A horticulture cluster core, consisting of 18 tasks, was determined from the list of essential and preferred tasks as identified and validated by the Advisory Council.

The Horticulture Cluster Core consists of the following tasks:

- Identify horticulture plants.
- Take soil samples.
- Test soil for N.K.P. and soluble salts.
- Determine fertilizer requirements according to soil tests.
- Fertilize plants.
- Identify plant insects and disease manifestations.
- Identify and remove dead and diseased plants and blooms.
- Control plant insects and diseases.
- Add chemicals to control weeds and soil insects.
- Plant seeds, flowers, trees and shrubs.
- Select proper time to plant seeds, annuals, seasonal plants, trees and shrubs.
- Transplant seedlings.
- Pot plants.
- Cut and care for cut flowers.
- Water new seedling, plants and nursery stock.
- Label plants, planted rows and areas.
- Prune and trim plants and trees.
- Seed and reseed lawns, turf and fairways.

Comments from evaluators of the pilot program as to commendable points observed were as follows:

"Students' enthusiasm seems to transfer from the immediate competency to the entire field."

"They seem genuinely interested in what is happening in the classroom."

"Student participation is 100%!"

"Students are proud of their achievement and know instantly that they have acquired the competency."

"Student/teacher interaction is positive and congenial."

"The students are all involved, all eager, and all performing."

Individualized, competency based instruction works! It gets the ideas across! Vocational students can thrive and learn in this type of an atmosphere. They can pace themselves and achieve to their own individual potential. ◆◆◆

*This Competency Based Curriculum was produced under a contract with the Illinois Office of Education/Department of Adult Vocational-Technical Education. Ms. Terri Elston, the author of this article and developer of the Curriculum, is a Biology and Horticulture Instructor at Tinley Park High School. Additional information may be obtained by writing directly to Ms. Elston.

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STORIES IN PICTURES

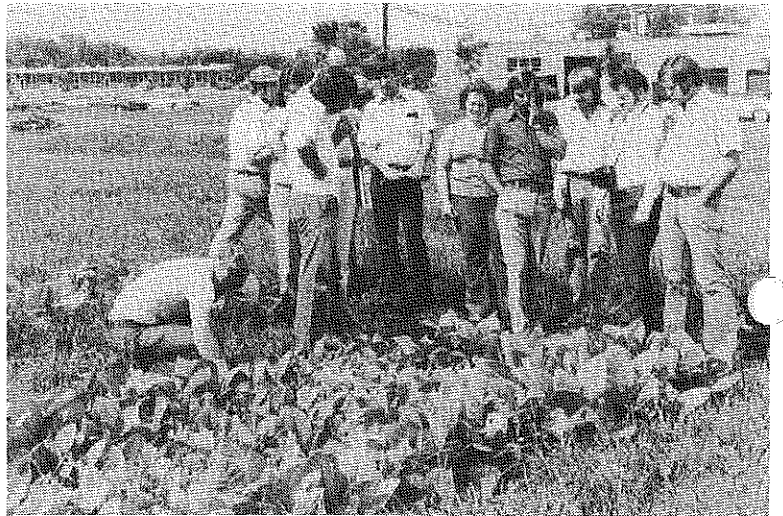
by
*Joe
Sabel*



Mr. John Hobart, Vo-Ag Instructor, Cannon Falls, MN, gets his idea across to students studying FFA with a "Pyramid Game" he developed in a summer course in AgEd at the University of Minnesota. (Photo courtesy Gary Leske, U. of Minn.)



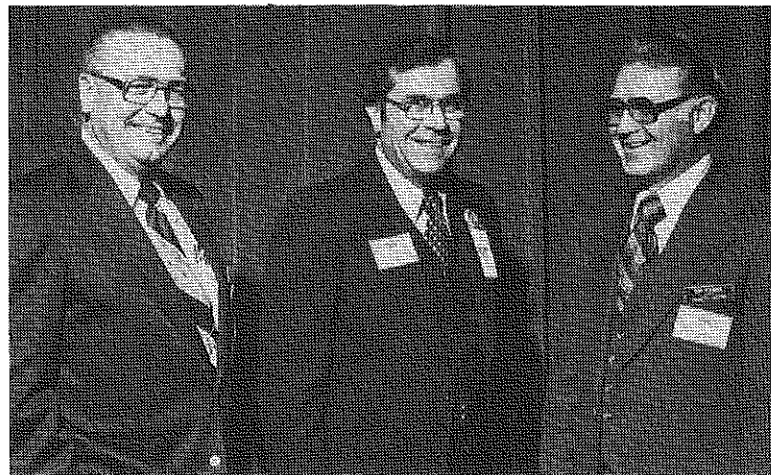
Glen C. Shinn is shown reviewing a filmstrip from his new "Working in Agricultural Mechanics" kit in preparation for a special methods class in agricultural mechanics for undergraduate students at Mississippi State University. Shinn authored the kit which is published by the Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company. (Photograph by Jasper S. Lee, Mississippi State University)



Rodney Wallbrown (right center), Vo-Ag Instructor at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, discusses tobacco production with a group of Indiana Vo-Ag teachers. The Indiana teachers were touring several states during a traveling graduate course. (Photo courtesy Gary Moore, Purdue)



Working with actual plant materials in the school greenhouse is a means that Mr. Lee Sandager, Vo-Ag instructor, uses to get ideas across. (Photo by Forrest Bear, University of Minnesota)



(Left to right) James W. Guilinger, NVATA President; Dr. Daniel Dunham, Deputy Commissioner of Education in charge of U.S.O.E. Bureau of Vocational, Technical, Occupational and Adult Education; Sam Stenzel, NVATA Executive Director. Dr. Dunham is the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner for Occupational and Adult Education in the U.S.O.E. He attended the National FFA Convention and made a special effort to get acquainted with agricultural education leaders, including members on the NVATA Board of Directors. (Photo courtesy NVATA)