

Teaching Aids... The Colloquy...

The Colloquy

by

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Broad changes in the Agricultural curriculum, facilities and farm operations at Sam Houston are being made by Dr. Brown, in order to provide an educational and research atmosphere in tune with the dynamic, modern Agricultural needs in Texas.

Dr. Brown holds a B.S. in Agricultural Education from Michigan State University, an M.S. in Dairy Science and a Ph.D. in Animal Breeding from Texas A&M University.

He has had wide experience in college and university teaching and research. He has cooperated in more than 30 research publications. Dr. Brown is well known for his leadership in the areas of cattle breeding and dairy judging.

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The Laboratory ...

Classroom Television

Students usually respond favorably to changes of pace in their classroom sessions. A guest speaker, a film, or a colloquy can provide a welcome change from the lecture hour. A state Farm Bureau Safety Director has illustrations to capture the interest of an Agricultural Mechanics class for a period on "Farm Shop Safety Practices". Students *understand* ovulation after observing it in a colored movie. Three or four dairymen with good DHIA records usually can sell a Farm Management class on the values of record keeping. The effectiveness of even a superior instructor is enhanced when he calls in experts for specific topics.

The colloquy has been particularly useful in many learning situations in Agriculture. Planners of various agricultural shortcourses have recognized its value for a long time. They know that a good way to get a group of farmers talking and asking questions is to put some men from their own ranks on the stage as resource people.

This teaching technique should be utilized for short-courses or in the classroom, however, only after its advantages and limitations are well understood. Colloquy is defined in the *Dictionary of Education*¹ as "a method of collective inquiry characterized by the presentation of testimony by a group of experts and questions, answers, and discussion by both the experts and the audience on the matter under consideration". Panel discussions may become colloquys when interested audiences respond with questions and comments to points raised by panelists.

The key to success in use of the colloquy is effective selection of the experts. Each prospective panelist should possess some unique knowl-

edge in the area to be discussed. Each should be able to contribute experiences which the regular class instructor has *not* had the opportunity to gain. Invitations to serve on the colloquy staff then should go to those individuals who have, in addition to their valuable experience, some ability to communicate to the student audience. Greater emphasis should be given to selection of a wide range of special knowledge than to selection of speaking talent.

The organizational skill of the instructor will be needed to prepare panelists and audiences for the colloquy. Suggestions on points to be covered should be given to each panel member in advance. A time schedule and brief topic outline also may be helpful. Requests by the instructor for written summaries ahead of time may benefit speakers in organizing their presentations. With summaries in hand, the instructor also will be aided. He can make appropriate reading or other assignments so that students may prepare for the colloquy.

The effectiveness of the actual colloquy session also will depend to a great degree on the leadership skill of the instructor. Usually he will serve as discussion leader. It will be his prerogative to encourage panelist-student dialogue which accentuates the central theme. With tact and skill he must keep the discussion on course. Finally, he will be the one to adeptly mold together panelist presentations, questions and answers, discussion and summary statements so that the colloquy becomes a meaningful learning situation.

1. *Dictionary of Education*, edited by C. V. Good, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1945. p. 84.