

Rousfield, a few years later, presented the same list of qualities; and interest in students was most frequently listed again as a desired characteristic in college teachers. Mastery of subject, personality, organization of materials and clear exposition were mentioned in descending order.

A third study by Trabue attempted to summarize the attributes of 419 presidents of liberal arts colleges concerning the ideal qualifications of faculty. His study revealed that presidents of these colleges emphasized such characteristics as emotional stability, friendliness, tolerance, and sympathy in the top positions. From these three surveys the results clearly indicate that students and many college presidents, in the main, are somewhat less impressed by intellectual

command than by qualities associated with personal amiability and social skill. It appears then, if these studies can be taken at face value, we as teachers in institutions of higher education should motivate our actions toward keeping not only our intellectual knowledge up to date but continuously be conscious of our social relations with students and fellow workers.

I think it would be unfair for us as teachers to sit idly by and allow a student to continuously miss class and not be reminded that he is only depriving himself. Not many of us would handle the problem of absenteeism in the same manner. Personally I allow the student to miss about five classes, a reasonable number of cuts, I think. At this point the student is asked to remain after class for a short conference.

Many times the problem can be solved. Of course, as we all know, many times the problem can't be solved. By showing enough interest in the student to discuss his particular problem, we will possibly command more respect. I believe we as teachers have the responsibility of conferring with students that miss class. What can be more frustrating to a student and a teacher than to have a student trying desperately to overcome a dozen or so class cuts.

In summary I would like to emphasize that if we as teachers only remember to practice fairness to all students, acquire an interest in their problems, master our subject matter, organize our materials and have a sense of humor, our problem of missed classes and low morale would partially disappear.

## The Problem Student

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Registrars in many universities report more than 50% of a given freshman class fails to graduate. In this paper this group of students is considered to be the *problem student* which is troubled with one or more of the perplexities discussed later. Deans, Registrars, and Department Heads have spent many hours in discussions, meetings, and seminars attempting to solve the "drop-out" problem. The purpose of this paper is not to offer a solution to this problem, but rather to remind members of NACTA of the staggering number of students who need help. Perhaps our efforts will not be in vain if we discuss with the student the problems that affect him.

By and large, the main trouble for men "drop-out" students is a weakness in ability. For women, it

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is marriage; but undoubtedly many return to the classroom later to complete their education. As a general rule, agriculture faculties are not confronted with problems of the women students.

A point that is seldom if ever mentioned during meetings that deal with "drop-outs" is this: a program of study is established and the student is expected to adjust to it rather than adjusting the program of study to meet the needs of the student. For instance, a student entering college is generally expected to take composition, history, chemistry, biology, and a host of other courses prior to being permitted to enroll in courses he is more specifically interested in. He bogs down in low grades and loses interest in college before he gets far enough up the academic ladder to schedule the courses that attract his interests most.

Listed below are some characteristics of the *problem student* and/or factors causing him to be one.

*Lack of ability.* As previously mentioned, this is probably the main cause for men "dropouts." In colleges where selective processes



are used in procuring students, this is rarely the case.

*Studying habits.* The student who fails to achieve proper studying habits will soon run into academic trouble. When he strives to do well and yet receives low grades because of inadequate study habits and methods, he frequently becomes apathetic and disinterested in college per se. The student short changes himself grade-wise. From the academic standpoint, this trait could very well be one of the major causes of the *problem student*.

*New pressures.* Too many new pressures on the student from social, academic, and emotional origins contribute liberally to the creation of a *problem student*.

*Emotional immaturity.* Many students are not ready for the new freedoms and responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with college life. Confusion accompanies low grades and a loss of interest. This fate is particularly common with freshmen.

*Misunderstanding of college purpose.* Many students look upon College as a place similar to high

school and expect to do as well in college. Failing to realize the changes in depth of study, they over-extend themselves in the area of extra-curricular activities.

*Too much spending money.* The number of students suffering from this factor appears to be steadily increasing. There is not much an advisor can do to discourage this habit. When an automobile is involved, as is the case most of the time, students frequently work to

support the car during hours when studying should be done. Such a sacrifice is an invitation to low grades.

*Lack of desire.* Over 45% of the Nation's high school graduates enter college. This is a statistic for which our nation should be proud, except for the drawback that many of these students do so for reasons other than the pursuit of learning. However, with proper methods and persistent advising, many of these

"happy-go-lucky" students can be guided in the right direction on the road to success.

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# Class Attendance

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Every teacher believes that class attendance is one of the essentials in good learning. Every teacher likes to think that the information disseminated, the ideas presented, the problems discussed or the conclusions reached in the classroom are of utmost importance to the student, both as a part of the subject matter and of the individual's complete education. If the teacher does not believe in class attendance, better methods of teaching must be available outside the classroom. We must make the assumption that, in-so-far as American educators are concerned, the classroom and its attendant activities is the best foundation for learning. With this assumption, any class attendance of less than one hundred per cent will tend to disrupt the basis of our educative system.

Educators are prone to say that class attendance will be good if the lecture (demonstration, discussion) is interesting and informative and if the teacher shows enthusiasm

toward his work. An examination of these judgment factors should be considered.

What is interesting? A lecture that keeps two-thirds of a class enthralled with the histrionics of a good speaker may still be boring to the other one-third. It is essential to have the interest of the entire group. Interest may depend upon such mundane factors as the environment of the room or parts of the room. Fresh air, light, temperature and comfort or discomfort of the chairs may have a greater effect on interest shown by the student than any words of wisdom or wit. The environment must be pleasant or the speaker and subject must make the listener forget comfort. Of extreme importance in interest is the general health of the listener including the amount of sleep the previous night. This problem will be present in any group, and especially in students. The press of other affairs or interests both scholastic and personal may have a profound effect upon the attention of the individual. A stiff test coming up next hour is hard for a student to forget. Even a Red Skelton cannot hold the interest of everyone each time he goes before an audience. Eventually we must come to the conclusion that the factors which determine sustaining interest lie primarily within the student. As a result no amount of preparation, allegorical representation, histrionics or novel approaches to lecture can sustain interest that is not intrinsic. Class attendance for some students may be physical and not mental. It is possible that 100% attendance is not as important as the attitude of the listener when attending.

Informative classes are said to lead to good class attendance. There is little doubt students may find information easier to obtain from lectures. However, books are informative, or a classmate's notes will give the important points of a lecture. A combination of books and notes may easily replace a class that is just informative. This is

not intended to argue in favor of entertaining classes but that information should be meaningful to the student.

The enthusiasm of the teacher has a profound influence upon class attendance. Enthusiasm is catching. It is something that can be communicated without long discourse. Everyone enjoys the company of someone enthusiastic about his work and despite built-in deterrents, students usually respond to enthusiasm. This is a problem that research orientated people find in the classroom. The enthusiasm is channeled into research not the teaching. By casual observation, one can see where students congregate. A singer may have nothing to offer musically, but if enthusiastic, he attracts large crowds. Football crowds are made up of many who do not understand the game, but enjoy the enthusiasm of the teams and the crowd. This same enthusiasm will keep classes full. Often young instructors attract full classes every semester, while older and wiser teachers have half filled sections. Except for youth and enthusiasm for his subject, the young instructor has less to offer, yet even for him class attendance is not perfect. Enthusiasm may be ephemeral but often serves the purpose of motivation and its accompanying interest in the subject.

The question may now be asked, what is good class attendance? Is good class attendance necessary for the education of the individual? Perfect attendance certainly is good for the vanity of the teacher and we assume it means improved learning. Yet many institutions have no class attendance regulations, and some European schools require attendance only at final examinations. Primarily then, each teacher must decide for himself just what attendance means and how he expects it to affect the student. Reducing grades for poor attendance would appear to have no basis except as revenge on a dilatory student that did not enjoy the classes. If the