

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.

*The author expresses appreciation to Dean John Weems, Registrar of Middle Tennessee State University, and Lee and Judy Sikes, students of Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee, and Austin College, Austin, Texas, respectively for their suggestions.*

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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

student is not doing well, he has already been punished for poor attendance. On the other hand, if he is doing well despite poor attendance perhaps a re-evaluation of classroom procedures, materials and subject matter is necessary. The answer to improving attendance is not a simple one of limiting the number of cuts or reducing grades. The class must be so important in itself that failure to attend leaves a void in the student's academic life. Perhaps the following procedures will help to improve class attendance.

1. Motivate: At the beginning of each class take a minute or two to blend the last meeting into the present one. This gives students time to adjust to the classroom, the material, and you. While it may be time saving to jump squarely into the subject of the day, it leaves the students gasping for breath, with a helpless "I am behind" feeling. Take a tip from entertainers and warm-up the audience. The use of fa-

miliar terms and expressions tend to prepare the student for the more abstract.

2. Speak effectively: Follow good speaking practices, maintain eye contact, use personal experience, use gestures, vary voice, use the blackboard, and visual aids. These common practices are often neglected in the college classroom.

3. Discuss: Large classes do not lend themselves to discussion methods; yet we all realize that participation by students enhances the learning process. A question-answer session some time during the period gives the desired result without a large expenditure of time. The questions can often be turned into motivating forces and serve as a guideline to the thinking of the class.

4. Summarize: Use a summary at the end of each period. Keep check of the time and be prepared to stop five minutes before the end of the hour. Use this five minutes to sum-

marize the most important phases of the lecture. Students may use this period as an opportunity to organize notes for later study. More important, it allows the student the opportunity of listening during the period, knowing he will have a chance to catch up during the summary.

5. Examine: Use the pop test: A short five or ten minute test at the beginning of a period does two things: encourages attendance and encourages preparation. The average student, despite all protestations, enjoys showing what he knows. The increase in attendance comes, of course, from fear of a low grade if the quizzes are missed; but the test is still a useful 'tool' for improving class attendance.

In conclusion, worry less about class attendance and strive to make each class period one of such interest and importance that students hate to miss.

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# Education for Future Agriculturists

By

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Man's knowledge is increasing at such a rapid rate that the modern college professor has a great problem in making decisions as to what and how to teach the agricultural student of today.

It has been estimated by modern educators that if all man's knowledge and scientific advancement from the dawn of civilization to 1950 is given a value then the amount of knowledge accumulated between 1950 and 1961 has again increased by the same amount. It is estimated that another doubling of man's knowledge will take place between the years of 1962 and 1967.

Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, Chairman of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission stated that "The amount of scientific information published around the world every 24 hours would fill seven complete 24-volume sets of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Reading around the clock from day to day, one man would need 460 years to read one year's output."

The modern agricultural curricula need to reflect the vastness of agriculture today; for agriculture involves suppliers to those in production, and involves the complex

of marketing, processing, transportation and distribution. It also involves the important links of education, research conservation and technical services as well as the sociological and economic aspects of our population as stated by Professor Sledge of the University of Wisconsin.

The modern U. S. farmer of today produces food for himself and 33 other people. In Russia, as a contrast, one farmer produces food for himself and 1½ other people.

In order for agriculture in this country to supply all the food and services needed today and in the future, the modern agricultural curricula in college should, according to the University of Wisconsin, help students develop the ability to solve problems, to recognize basic problems, to identify alternatives; to seek and test for satisfactory solutions, and thereby to help them grow intellectually and mature emotionally. The General Education program at Fresno State College, with its requirements in the fields of social science, natural science, literature, philosophy, the Arts, Health and Physical Education, oral and written English, Psychology and mathematics is designed to help students achieve the objectives of the above requirements.

The agricultural curricula should help prepare students for entry into

technical, scientific or professional phases of modern agriculture and serve as a *fundamental background* for subsequent intellectual growth and professional advancement. This is done at Fresno State College where students may major in 11 different production areas or in one of the agribusiness fields or in a strictly science option in agriculture. The teaching of many courses has changed in recent years. For example in livestock judging courses, in the past the students would place the animals, the instructor would give the official placing and go on to the next class. In our modern judging courses, for evaluating meat animals, the students place the live animals, estimate the size of the rib eye, the thickness of fat over the rib, the percent of pelvic and heart fat, the percent of retail cuts, the federal grade and the dressing percentage. The animals are then slaughtered by the meats class and all the above information gathered so the judging students can learn how to evaluate completely the meat animal.

At Fresno State College this modern approach to judging for teaching animal evaluation has been well received by the students.

The students should be taught an organized curricula *making* a cohesive program which is a combination of natural science, social science, humanities and technical and pro-

Continued Page 56