

#### Academic Leader can:

- design institutional programs with faculty assistance
- create a variety of development options
- publicize growth opportunities and results
- realize that too often the follower in education finds too late that the "trend" is but a "fad" while the leader, through a program, may offer valuable educational experiences. Think of new ways to package your product.
- evaluate institutional objectives and personal needs of faculty prior to developing programs
- remember that well-designed and effective administrative rewards do more for the institution's health by encouraging high levels of achievement than laxity, indifference, and acceptance of less than good performance.

#### Faculty can:

- be solicited to assist administrators
- acknowledge that teacher finds his/her competency within the body of knowledge by having taught it, wrestled it, or shaped it. Faculty can and will share this expertise.
- select and suggest growth activities
- receive personal satisfaction from participation in professional development
- be rewarded by means other than the distinguished teaching awards and money.

### Design Component

The design of a faculty development program must feature the individual. **EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE SOMEBODY.** Some strive harder than others for identity and visibility. The program should feature the individual with the concept of *MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY*. More important than any item on the suggestion list for faculty and administrators is the development of an attitude and awareness of the continued need for faculty to renew themselves and the potential for rewards through job satisfaction and personal happiness. Not all motivation flows from work; some of it comes from personal fulfillment.

Programs should be simply designed, realistic and within the potential for faculty participation. High level bureaucratic arrangements and schemes are not likely to attract your best and most dedicated faculty. The challenge to each of you today is to design or take part in facilitating self-growth programs or activities which feature and develop an attitude where faculty will seek involvement as a way to make themselves **HAPPY**. By accepting this responsibility we will meet the challenge of the 1980's and make the teaching profession personally rewarding by selling faculty on self-improvement with the self-identity theme **MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY**.

### References

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## Invitational Presentation

# Making The Classroom A Learning Center

Robert L. Beck

During the past two decades, we've seen renewed interest on the part of professional associations and societies in improving teaching in colleges of agriculture. While NACTA has certainly taken the lead, other associations have at least given token attention to the matter. In all the concern, however, too little emphasis has been given to the role of teachers in developing a learning atmosphere for the time actually spent in the classroom. Too often, the classroom has been used as merely a transfer point for information that, hopefully, the student can use later. Yet the time spent in the classroom probably represents the greatest block of time that a student will devote to a course.

Thus, a growing concern of mine has been, "how can I as a teacher facilitate the establishment of a learning atmosphere in the classroom?" This is not to de-emphasize the need for motivating the student outside the classroom but rather to call attention to how each in-class period is used. How can I take full advantage of that time in making it a learning situation?

This concern prompted me to do two things. First, the literature (primarily the *NACTA Journals*) was checked for ideas or insights. Second, some of our senior students were asked to identify some factors contributing to the classroom learning atmosphere. The following represents a very brief summary of my findings.

#### Review of Literature

The literature search was interesting but not extremely helpful. More was found on identifying the teacher's role in the classroom than on how to perform that role. The teacher must be able to: 1) motivate students, 2) provide a stimulating environment for that motivated student, and 3) present a relevant body of information. One formula for effective teaching suggested that about 70 percent of the time be allocated to interactive-cooperative procedures; 20 percent to individualized learning, and the remaining 10 percent to competitive classroom situations. One article indicated that through thinking in class, students become actively involved in learning.

A great deal of emphasis was given to teaching tools and techniques such as computerized learning systems, resource learning centers, audio-tutorial, computer games. This is not to be taken as a criticism of these techniques or the amount of emphasis given to them.

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Most of these, however, are methods of motivating the student outside the classroom. Part of last year's NACTA conference dealing with learning and the learning process was helpful. Although we may not fully understand the learning process, we do know that the environment affects the amount of learning that takes place. We are also aware of the complexities of providing a good learning environment because of the multiplicity of factors involved.

#### Student Survey

The feedback from graduating seniors was helpful in identifying factors that contribute to a learning atmosphere in the classroom. Each student was asked to respond to two questions: 1) what promotes, or sets the mood, for a learning atmosphere in the classroom? And 2) what tends to squelch classroom learning? The sample was small and was not randomly selected. I was only interested in gaining ideas and not the statistical significance of the sample.

Their responses tended to fall into three major categories: 1) physical facilities, 2) classroom procedures and 3) the teacher.

**Physical Facilities** — The learning environment is definitely influenced by the physical facilities. However, this is something over which most of us have little control.

**Classroom Procedures** — Students tended to emphasize the importance of a friendly, relaxed classroom atmosphere where there is a free exchange of ideas through a discussion format.

**Teacher's Role** — The teacher's role in establishing a learning environment cannot be overemphasized. The teacher's attitude, or mood, may set the tone of the class for any given day. Students look for a well-organized, enthusiastic, serious teacher who is well informed and up-to-date on the subject being taught. In addition, they expect the teacher to be able to relate the subject matter to real life situations, i.e., make it relevant. They look for, and easily detect, any lack of interest toward teaching and/or students and expect this interest to extend beyond the classroom. If the teacher is too preoccupied with research to prepare for class or if the teacher has been "pushed" into a course, this soon becomes apparent to the student and affects the learning environment.

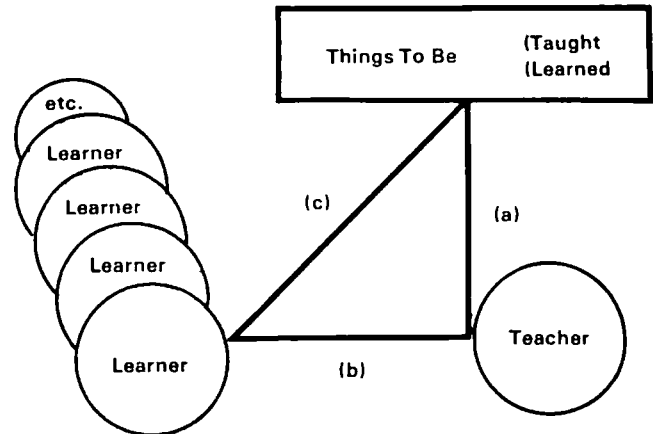
#### Summary Comments

The learning atmosphere in the classroom may take two forms — an overall and a daily mood. We need to be concerned with both. The overall tone of the class is usually set during the first time or two that the class meets. A learning atmosphere is then established and altered each time the class assembles. Perhaps this daily mood is more crucial to establishing a learning atmosphere. While it is not self-correcting, it is more easily altered. Unconsciously, sometimes, we may squelch any learning by our actions or expressions as we walk into the classroom. While we may not understand the learning process, we know that it is a complex process; and to control all the factors involved in establishing a learning atmosphere each time a class meets is likewise complex.

In trying to put all these thoughts into a useful framework, I found three things helpful: 1) a teaching-learning triangle, 2) a seminar on nonverbal communication, and 3) the term "leader-in-learning."

The several dimensions of learning can be illustrated in the following teaching-learning triangle.

Figure 1. The Curriculum



SOURCE: Robert H. Anderson, "Improving Teaching Effectiveness at the University Level," *NACTA Journal*, Vol. XX, No. 3, September 1976, p. 13.

Line (a) represents the teacher's command of the subject-matter. Line (c) depicts the relationship between the learner and the various facts, skills, concepts, and techniques that are supposed to be learned. Line (b) represents the rapport that exists between the teacher and each student as well as between the teacher and the class as a whole. It is this relationship (line b) that inevitably influences the learning atmosphere in the classroom. It is here that the teacher's attitude toward teaching and students plays a vital role. Our success in establishing good rapport will affect, to a large measure, line (c). While each teacher must have command of all three dimensions of the learning triangle, the teacher-learner relationship is crucial.

I like the term used by Dr. Shrode in referring to a teacher as a "leader-in-learning" because it more nearly defines our role as teachers.<sup>1</sup> We need to make certain that a learning atmosphere exists in the classroom. Perhaps we need to view the classroom as a learning center and our role as primarily a resource person. We need to spend the time in the classroom in challenging and helping students to think through and apply the concepts which they have already studied. It is only in the classroom setting that the individual student can have so many resource people (fellow students and teacher) to draw upon for help. They should be encouraged to use each period to its fullest in a real learning experience. The classroom should never become just an information "transfer station", but rather it should be a "learning center" — in the strictest sense.

<sup>1</sup>Robert R. Shrode, "My Philosophy of Teaching," *NACTA Journal*, Vol. XX, No. 3, September 1976.