

Agriculture teachers, reported job titles, kind of employers, employment rates by majors and a list of all reported salaries. Also included is an outlook for Agricultural employment.

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Communications Between The Agricultural Classroom And The Consumer

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"Communications Between the Agricultural Classroom and the Consumer" is an interesting and intriguing topic. I have chosen to respond to this topic because I believe it to be a most important consideration. To me, I interpret the communication to be between the agriculture teacher and the student in his classroom. The teacher is the initiator of the communication, and the student is the consumer of the instruction offered. What the student does and becomes as a result of the instruction could well evaluate the effectiveness of the communication.

Effective communication then involves an effective teaching process. Currently, accountability is all the vogue. The college professor is asked, "How successfully have your students performed?" The student is asking, "Which course will do me the most good?" To effectively answer these questions an analysis of communications in the agricultural classrooms is required.

In order to have desirable communication in the agricultural classroom it is obvious that efficient and effective instruction must occur. But it is a complex task to adequately analyze effective instruction. How often have you heard such statements as "It was a successful operation, but the patient died." "That was a great lecture, but I do not remember what was said." Obviously the previous statements do not adequately portray what actually occurred in each situation.

One of my students came up to me after class one afternoon and said, "This class period was the best hour I ever spent in my life." Obviously I was pleased since this type of a comment is not often given. I did ask the student why he made the comment since I thought this particular class period was representative of the usual class session. The student replied he made the statement because it was a presentation of the right material at the right time in an effective manner which gave him new knowledge and helped him organize his existing knowledge so he could make more intelligent decisions.

Good teaching, then, is a process which involves the teacher, the student, and the instructional materials and resources used *to impart knowledge*. The instructional materials used should be the best available or at least the best the institution can afford. I accept the challenge to attempt to make each teaching session "the best job of teaching I can do for that hour." Each student has a different learning style and I recognize that, and realize that I as a teacher, may not be equally effective in reaching each student. Therefore, I try to vary my teaching methods in order to better reach students because of individual likes and dislikes for particular methods of instruction. No one teaching method is the best. No teacher I know has the availability of unlimited instructional materials. Therefore, the teacher must do the best he can, and draw upon the available community resources to enrich the instructional program in his classroom.

The two principal functions of the teacher are to impart knowledge and to maintain a desirable learning climate for the student group. Obviously the teacher must be highly competent in his technical field to be highly successful. However, the teacher must be aware of the needs of each student, and to motivate each to succeed and progress in his chosen field. It is rather simple to state that if the teacher knows his subject matter well and organizes his material effectively the student should be able to

master the knowledge which he needs. If the teacher is a good student of his discipline himself, then he should be able to keep his course content current and relevant to meet student interests and needs.

The concept of maintaining a desirable learning climate for the classroom group is a complex issue. I have tried to analyze the approach used by the five outstanding teachers which I have had since this also is a technique in evaluating effective classroom instruction. As I remember them, the teaching approaches used were different, the personalities varied, there were men and women included, they were of varying ages, and they were different in every aspect but two. The two common characteristics which each shared were their knowledge of the subject matter, and the fact that I perceived that they understood me as an individual and wanted me to achieve.

I do not wish to over simplify effective teaching because it is a complex subject. In my opinion, having effective teaching can be defined as a process involving a mutual commitment of the teacher and student to impart and acquire knowledge by the use of the best instructional materials available. The teacher's commitment involves a mastery of the subject matter he teaches, and an understanding and sincere dedication to the achievement of each student. The teacher will need to be a student of learning theory, teaching methods, and individual and group behavior in order to understand his particular students as individuals and members of his class.

The student also has responsibilities in the learning process. He should have a commitment to the subject matter being taught and to the teacher. He should attempt to learn all that he can, and to make each class period the best hour of his life. The student should also trust the teacher as an expert in the subject matter field, and assume that the teacher is knowledgeable and skilled in directing his learning.

The third consideration for effective teaching besides those for the teacher and student is that the most efficient and effective instructional materials and resources are utilized. The instructional materials and resources are extremely important because some are more appropriate and effective than others for didactic, heuristic, and philetic types of teaching. Some materials and techniques are also more effective than others for the attainment of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills by the student.

In the final analysis an evaluation of the instruction program should be made over a long period of time. Immediate feedback is important. A feeling of relevance on the part of the student at the time of instruction is important. However, the best and most effective evaluation will occur five or more years after the instruction was given. At this time the student as a consumer of the instruction will have utilized what was learned in the classroom and could be more accurately evaluated. At this time it will be possible to accurately determine if the student as a consumer of knowledge was successful. It will also be possible to determine if the student as a consumer used the knowledge in continuing his education, and if he were dedicated and enthusiastic about his particular field of endeavor.