

serve adequately all his students. But if our society is to be best served through education, it must be accomplished. The students all along the continuum, from one end to the other, respond to a teacher who is both a leader and a helper of learning. Students who have been well taught are quick to agree that it takes more skill to

put into a student's heart the ideal of democratic living than it does to take out his adenoids, that it is more difficult to develop in him an appreciation for the good, the true, and the beautiful than it is to remove his appendix, and that it is more important that a warped personality be straightened than that a crooked arm be made whole.

Our Most Important Product | the STUDENT

by Hilbert Kahl

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One of our first objectives as members of The National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, is improvement of teaching.

Studies on how we can improve our teaching have been made the past few years. I'm sure that many reports that we have heard and read have been most valuable. Many more studies will be made in the future to keep us up to date in our instruction, but let's hope we never get so involved in subject matter and teaching techniques that we overlook our most important product—THE STUDENT.

Regardless of the materials we might collect, the visual aid materials we may use, or the finest teaching methods, we must remember that we can't lose sight of the product we are working with—THE STUDENT.

The first two years at the college level are probably the most critical years to many of our students. For most of them, it will be the first time away from home, away from parental guidance that they may have had; it will be the first time the student will have to make decisions on his own. He will also be forming attitudes, both academic and social. Our purpose should be to help him achieve in the classroom, but it is equally important that we strive to help him reach greater levels of self-confidence and maturity in personal development. This help should be made available to him at the beginning of his college life.

I'm sure we all find that each beginning year brings us new challenges as each class and each individual presents new problems that must be handled differently. Seldom do we find that one student's problems—whether they be academic, social, financial, or personal—can be directly identified with another's. Therefore, it seems of great importance that while we are sharpening our performance through attention to mastery of subject matter and excellence in instruction, we must also extend our efforts to

communicate with the student, to give time to listen to him, to help guide him if and when he needs our guidance, and especially to try to understand him as an individual.

There are many things to be considered while working with this delicate product. One of the most important is communication: it must be established first. He has just entered a new world, and he must know that we are here to help him where and whenever we can.

In an article, "The Power of the Open Heart," Ardis Whitman wrote, "True communication begins when we not only accept the other person, but also accept him with delight—despite all his faults and frailties—in a world where people need as they have never needed before, the gift of speaking to one another in trust and understanding."

As the number of students we have in our schools increases, communication becomes more and more difficult because of time. But how can we help the student with his problems unless we can communicate with him? Only after a student learns to communicate and feels free to express himself have we taken the first step towards developing our end product. In addition to our lesson preparations, our teaching loads, and our many other activities, communication with the student is still a must: it should be cultivated at every opportunity.

We must, of course, give attention to curriculum. We might define curriculum as a body of prescribed educational experiences, under supervision, which leads to qualifications in citizenship, trade, and profession. Curriculum should be carefully planned, evaluated, and revised from time to time.

Our methods of teaching may be the best possible: but if our materials are outdated, we are not providing our end product with the necessary information that he should be receiving. Many of our students will not have the opportu-

ity to complete four years of education, and a drop out should have received up-to-date information and experiences which will be of benefit to him.

As instructors, we should never assume that our instruction materials are such that they do not need revision. Various committee studies have shown that in developing our curriculum the ever changing local, state, and national demands of our student should be carefully considered. Rather than being just so many words or lectures, our instruction should be kept simple, up-to-date, and something our end product might be able to use regardless of whether he continues in school or takes employment before completion of a degree.

Another item I feel important is evaluation of our instruction. This may be a means to keep us current in our techniques. Various forms and numerous means of evaluation have been brought to our attention by our own committees. Many others are available; but regardless of what we use, regular evaluations should spur us on to continue to find ways to improve.

In a survey of the freshman class entering our department this fall, we asked them to answer the following question: "From an educational

standpoint, what factor do you feel is most important to you as a student?" We received many answers; but, much to our surprise, the one answer we received from many students was: "An instructor who is willing to give me some of his time to help me to become a better student."

This answer was rather surprising to us, coming from freshmen students; however, I feel that the students who come to us today are seriously seeking to improve themselves and to acquire up-to-date knowledge.

Again we might add in conclusion, these students should be given more than just "book-knowledge." They will be forming attitudes, philosophies, and morals. Let's improve our instruction and our programs, never forgetting that this student may need more than just a classroom instructor. He may need a person who is willing to take another step to help him when he needs help.

Many other items could be listed which could help us to do a conscientious job in developing our end product. However, if we continue to improve the above mentioned areas, we will be helping the student a long way on the road to academic achievement and personal maturity.

CHALLENGES

for Students of Agriculture

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Why does one need to study agriculture? This question is often present in the minds of individuals who don't understand that agriculture is a very exacting science. From generation to generation, people have understood agriculture to be only the enterprise of farming. The average member of society doesn't realize the importance of agriculture to a nation such as our own United States.

Agriculture in the modern day encompasses many facets because an understanding of each is necessary in order for one to grow food and place it in the hands of the consumers. The basic agricultural disciplines include animal science, dairy science, agronomy, horticulture, agricultural engineering, and agricultural economics. The study of agriculture draws heavily upon the areas of the physical, natural, biological, and social sciences.

Farming, as it is commonly conceived of, is only one small applied phase of the broad science of agriculture. Students of agriculture must be aware of the fact that they are studying the

science which is to continue providing food for the ever increasing numbers of occupants of our nation and the other nations over the world.

As we view the opportunities for the student in agriculture, we need only to enumerate the labor needs of agriculture proper and agricultural-related industries. In actual farm production there are only seven million persons employed, and opportunity in this segment of agriculture is continually declining. Since 1950, the productivity of the farmer has increased. In 1954, one farmer supplied food for himself and 17 other persons; whereas in 1964 the farmer supplied food for himself and 32 other persons. Because of increasing productivity, labor has been released from farm production. The same trend will continue in the future.

The expanding opportunities are present today in the farm supply industries and the food processing and distribution industries. There are 7 million workers employed in the farm supply industries and 10-11 million employed in the food processing and distribution industries. Many of these positions require highly trained individuals with knowledge of many phases of agricul-

*See Page 99 for Biography