

simple statement usually makes criticism valid to the majority of people.

We can assume that we are in a position at least to look at what is being done with the idea of taking remedial action where it is needed. If the profession fails to do so and this neglect of the teaching function is as serious as some evidence seems to indicate, then, as has occurred historically, some other group will justifiably move in to fill the void unwittingly created. This as a normal sequence of events may be illustrated by observing what has happened in a number of the sciences which failed to recognize applied aspects. In the area of agriculture, we may trace as an example the origin of horticulture from within the ranks of the botanists.

The logical development in college teaching, assuming a shortage of those who meet desired current standards, will be for the teaching faculty to be composed of professional teachers whose basic education is in teaching and not in the subject matter being taught. Cooper has said, "Col-

lege faculties devoid of questioning, wide ranging intellects would not only be barren of intellectual excitement, but sterile in research as well".<sup>4</sup> This may be the direction that the teacher function in higher education is being pushed—primarily by those who would object most.

All professors are concerned with the autonomy of their particular academic subdivision. Time has seen the passing of some academic specialties and the birth of new ones. Undoubtedly, there were certain signs common to all these areas of intellectual concern as they began to fade. No doubt one of the most striking signs was when the subject matter could be taught more effectively by another discipline.

There is hope that full realization of our neglect of imparting the teaching function to the scholar by graduate school faculties may halt this trend within the various disciplines. This would preclude the need of outside help.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

## What Does It Mean To Teach?

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Let us begin by asking, "What is a teacher?" The dictionary states that "a teacher is one who teaches, or instructs: especially one whose occupation is to instruct." Teaching is "to make aware by information, experience, or the like; or to give instruction."

This tells us what a teacher does or should do, but nothing is said relative to the method of doing it. Therein lies the difference between an effective teacher and an ineffective one, and good teaching versus poor teaching. There are of course other important factors.

In altogether too many instances it is apparent that the instructor is not primarily interested in helping the students. The larger the college or university the more likely this situation is apt to exist. In smaller colleges the sole responsibility of a teacher is to teach, and excellence in teaching is the prime factor behind professional advancement. In larger universities people are also hired to teach but too often the administration looks primarily at the "creativity" of writing and publishing when considering a person for promotion. Ability as a teacher is given little more than lip service.

This often results in causing the young ambitious teacher wanting to advance rapidly, or just to advance, to use his teaching assignment merely to earn his "bread and butter". His main interests and energies are given to research and publication. As a consequence his teaching and students become secondary. A recent experience

brought this forcibly to my attention. One of my advisees came to me greatly disturbed by what was transpiring in one of his classes. This student is an above average student but had just received a second "D" on a written assignment. After the first paper he had gone to the instructor to find out his trouble and get some help. He was brushed off with the statement that you "either know the material or you don't." Further questioning of the student revealed that during the first meeting of the class the instructor made a remark to the effect that "you people might just as well not be in this class because you won't know any more at the end than you now know."

This class is already demoralized. A conference with the departmental chairman revealed that the instructor has been in previous difficulties with his chairman and also with his colleagues. The chairman, however, made this pertinent remark:—"this instructor is a very capable man and accomplishes a really vast amount of work. He is publishing regularly and will doubtless make a name for himself. On the other hand he is tactless and gauche beyond belief."

Unfortunately, there are probably many of this kind of teacher; but we would be safe in assuming that the majority of teachers are conscientious and dedicated to teaching and helping young people. In recent years a number of universities have taken to recognizing and honoring outstanding teachers for excellence in teaching,—research is secondary. Here at Southern Illinois

University this laudable action is done by the Alumni Association and the award is accompanied by an honorarium of \$1000. My undergraduate Alma Mater is doing a similar service each year for outstanding teachers with monetary awards coming from the University Foundation.

The Director of Resident Instruction in the College of Agriculture in one university reported that in his college a real effort is made to determine the faculty member's main interest, whether teaching or research, or perhaps a desire to do both, and is assigned accordingly. The man who prefers mostly teaching is rated on his ability and effectiveness as a teacher just as strongly as the man who does research and publishes, when it comes to consideration for promotion in rank or an increase in salary.

We are told that there is a shortage of college teaching personnel and that the situation will become increasingly worse as college enrollments continue soaring. The immediate result is larger and larger classes per instructor, particularly at the freshman and sophomore levels. Often these classes are taught by graduate assistants with no previous teaching experience nor any training in the art of teaching. It becomes an impersonal kind of teaching and does little or nothing towards inspiring the student, sparking his interest, and improving his morale.

Sheer numbers of students at large universities together with the apparent lack of concern for the individual and the difficulty of getting to know faculty personnel has been reported as one of the basic causes of the unrest among students on the campuses of several universities this past year.

Many institutions of higher learning have developed an honors program for the superior student. Generally, classes for these students are relatively small and are of a seminar type, thus providing maximum opportunity for discussion and repartee with the faculty person in charge. This kind of situation is ideal but available only to a select few. Something comparable should be available to the masses of students.

This is not to imply that a teacher of a large class cannot do effective teaching. It does mean that he must do a superior job in order to reach and challenge the majority, if not all of the students in his class. The almost impersonal nature of a large class demands that the teacher should have definite office hours and be available to his students and encourage them to stop in.

Most of us, I am sure, easily remember one or two outstanding teachers in our college experiences. But why do they stand out? Dr. Harry E. Bradford, (now deceased), formerly Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Education at the University of Nebraska, was for me the Master Teacher. Perhaps part of it was my frame of mind because I had cast aside all reservations and had fully committed myself to becoming a teacher of vocational agriculture. Dr. Bradford not only was an excellent teacher of subject matter, but had the ability to excite and inspire me and really opened up the vistas of teaching as a profession. He was a perceptive man and keenly

aware of his students' problems and potential. After having launched my teaching career, it was Dr. Bradford who quietly, but insistently, urged me to work for a Master's degree.

As my adviser I found a new dimension in the man. He was a tough taskmaster and I learned my lesson well, but again it was his ability to inspire and open new avenues of thought and action for me that has marked him indelibly on my mind.

At the doctoral level it was Dr. L. J. Norton, (now deceased), professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Illinois. Not only did I have classes under him but he was my research and thesis adviser. Dr. Norton was a master in his field and an excellent teacher in terms of getting his material and ideas across to his students. Again the close association with him in research and thesis work may have influenced me. However, he demanded and accepted only the best from his students. He was blunt and gruff at times but was always available for consultation. He was meticulous but fair and would go the second mile for the student who was really trying.

Out of 90,000 letters from students, Dr. Paul Witty of Northwestern University has made up a list of the twelve qualities it takes to be a good teacher. Do you agree with him?

1. A friendly attitude
2. Consideration of the individual
3. Patience
4. Wide Interests
5. Good manners
6. Fairness
7. Sense of humor
8. Good disposition
9. Flexibility
10. Interest in the individual
11. Generosity
12. Skills

With regard to the actual teaching of a class, I asked a class of 30 students last winter to put down five characteristics they thought most important for a teacher to possess and demonstrate in good teaching. There was a range of 38 distinct and different suggestions but the most repeated and in rank were these:

1. Presents material in an understanding and interesting way.
2. Knows his material
3. Good personality
4. Speaks clearly
5. Sense of humor
6. Friendly with students
7. Good appearance
8. Enjoys teaching.

Teaching is a sharing process, a two-direction process—not a one-way-affair. It is inter-communication. It includes the collision, the creative interaction of minds. Many college professors assume that the way to improve learning is to improve lecturing. They forget that students can learn effectively and efficiently from books, films, discussions, recordings and other means. If the professor is only presenting known, already recorded information, the lecture is a poor way

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particular about details and special points of emphasis and interest. They were well organized; their presentation never lagged, and there was no hesitation while they decided what to present next. They possessed enthusiasm. Light shone in their eyes as they explained their subject and one very often said, "Now don't you see, fellows?"

Bro. Hall feigned cock-sureness and blew himself up like a big bull frog. He dramatized. He even praised. But oh, he also scathed. He was especially insistent that new words in the text be learned. (I just recently retired my collegiate dictionary which I used as a freshman). He offered a mighty incentive for excellence: if a student presented an outstanding paper, he would be asked for a copy to be placed in a permanent file. I twice knew the thrill of this experience and can attest to its value as a teaching tool. Freed-Hardeman College offered a one-hour course in speech correction (which I took several times) known as "Spoken English". Bro. Hall doubtless invented this course judging from the enjoyment he evidenced in teaching it. In his critical analysis, he would say, "Mr. Jones said ' . . . He should have said' . . .".

Perhaps I could not appreciate this man when I was his student. I suspect I rather feared him; but now I think I must have been able, even as a most immature freshman, to see beneath his protective armor and spot the "heart of gold" that dwelt there. Truly, I have appreciated his teaching ability for a long time now.

Mr. Huddleston taught a range of agricultural subjects when I first entered Tennessee Tech; therefore, I had several classes under him. I remember well his enthusiasm and the sheer joy that surged through him as he cunningly presented his subject. He made it sound as if this great truth had just been discovered and he was letting one in personally on classified information. He built up tension and then sprang the punchline so that the student had an aid by which to remember. He made details important. His explanations were the essence of simplicity and clarity. Another less interested in the development of the student might have become worried with the detail and have appeared bored with his own presentation. Mr. Huddleston gesticulated expressively, and he frequently brought the class to more rapt attention by asking a question of some individual or by simply saying, "Now fellows. . ."

His topics usually began with a question: he then proceeded to present answers.

Mr. Huddleston was a ready and willing counselor and he gave full attention to his advisee. I think I can remember his saying, "Now that is what I would suggest that you do, Johnnie".

His training was in Vocational Agriculture, but Mr. Huddleston developed himself into an able agronomist as he was allowed to specialize at his institution. He has done outstanding work in the American Society of Agronomy. Perhaps I am not entirely sure why, but I consider Willis

Huddleston a master teacher.

My personal contact with Dr. Dicus was limited to the classroom, although I knew much of him as a public figure. Physics was a new subject to me when I started his course. His ability to make the subject interesting and the content easily grasped was striking, and I remember his direct manner vividly. My retention of specific facts learned in the class is almost nil, but I well remember his ability to make matters clear so that I had no difficulty understanding. As I remember now, his lectures moved at a goodly pace; and when he finished, he stopped.

Dr. Henderson professed me after I was a mature man and working on a doctorate. This, having been fairly recent and myself at a mature age, perhaps makes my evaluation of him more valid. I felt that I was able, in his classes, to take notes that contained in essence everything that he said in his lecture and this was not because of his slow speed. His ability to organize material, cut through the subterfuge, and present a clear picture was almost uncanny.

He enjoyed teaching as evidenced by his participation, his smiles, and his attention to detail. He presented his material with confidence and I suspect never had a doubt but that any student who was trying would find his presentation crystal clear. Students came from departments all over the campus, to take his course to "understand" statistical methods. He is a past master at organization and clarity of presentation.

Many others of my college professors had outstanding abilities as teachers but somehow these four fall into a special category.

I am sure that it is not significant that two are agronomy teachers and that three names start with the letter "H". It is interesting, however.

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to convey it. He should be a model of a man thinking, not merely a man reciting.

Isn't it strange that there are so many slow learners in our schools and so few slow teachers? We think that we will improve our colleges by better selection of students, but rarely assume that there is a positive correlation between poor teaching and poor students.

So finally, what does it mean to teach? To teach is to transform by informing, to develop a zest for life-long learning; to help pupils become students—mature independent learners, *architects* of an exciting, challenging future. Teaching at its best is a kind of communion, a meeting and merging of minds.