THEME: Innovative Student Management Strategies
Discipline, student management, or whatever you wish to call it, it boils down to maintaining an environment for learning by all students. Students should be in school to learn. This is an assumption which, unfortunately, too often does not describe each student encountered by a teacher of vocational agriculture.

We ponder the reasons that cause us to spend valuable instructional time in controlling a minority so that the majority may have the opportunity to learn. Authors in this issue note that student teachers and first-year teachers are particularly troubled by disruptive students. Experienced teachers are also frustrated by occurrences which disrupt their class. Neophytes should not feel alone. Best assured, every teacher experiences unpleasant situations which they would prefer not to interfere with the decorum of the learning environment. No teacher should feel all alone.

Disruption
Disruption is not a dichotomy of being disrupt or not, but a matter of degree, a continuum within which all teachers operate. The level of tolerance of teachers for disruptive activities varies greatly. What bothers some teachers does not bother others.

Silence is golden to some teachers, but to others it frustrates total student dissatisfaction. Noise and idle chatter do not significantly affect some teachers, but may irritably irritate others. The point of the matter is that each teacher must define the acceptable and the unacceptable. Students must be carefully apprised of the parameters of what constitutes acceptable behavior.

Once students are aware of what is and is not permissible, they should be expected to adhere to these guidelines. Teachers should be sure that students are informed. Teachers must place the perimeter of acceptability. If they do not, then, like an amputee, students will instinctively attempt to push out the boundary which constitutes the cell wall of acceptable behavior.

Societal Expectations
Several authors in this issue cite the Gallup poll to document the public's concern with discipline in the schools. They note its high ranking among concerns.

Let us examine the underlying tenets evolving from society which might precipitate such a notation from the public. The fact is that the public expects schools to train its students to be alarmists about their political and social situations. Modern teachers face expectations not a part of the professional responsibilities of teachers from the past. Do not use them as a standard against which to measure yourself. Establish personal standards and maintain them.

All with the expectation of society to curb its ill, where is the time for the so-called basics? We must not allow vocational education in agriculture to be pushed aside as alarmists attempt to intervene in an excellent educational system to perpetuate their interests. We must keep the faith in the efficacy of our program.
Solutions To Discipline Problems

By William G. Camp, Theme Editor

What is the difference? Do experienced teachers magically find a cure for student discipline problems but lose the ability to motivate students? I do not think so. I believe two things happen.

The first is that prospective and beginning teachers are so swamped by the exaggerations from the media about the severity of the student discipline problem that they are overly concerned about something that may or may not be a problem to them. In almost all cases, discipline turns out to be much less of a problem for agriculture teachers than these newcomers fear.

The second thing that happens is that, with experience, the teacher begins to recognize that students do all sorts of things that you do not expect, or want them to do, but not all of these things are discipline problems. In fact, most of the things that beginning teachers see as discipline problems, are not discipline problems at all.

Research indicates that the most serious student behavior problem for agriculture teachers is in the area of attitude. Attitude is primarily a problem in motivation, not in discipline. In an article in this magazine several years ago, I discussed the difference between REAL and PERCEIVED discipline problems. With experience, teachers realize the difference. They may not call it the same thing, but they learn that even though student discipline may be a problem, better student motivation is the answer most of the time.

Summary

As you read the articles in this issue, you will see that the best way to solve discipline problems is not to correct them once they occur. Rather, the key is to prevent them from occurring and the way to do that is through good classroom management and good motivational techniques. On the other hand, it would be foolish not to believe that all student discipline problems can be avoided, even with the best teaching and motivational techniques. Thus, a couple of the articles deal with the question of student discipline from the standpoint that problems will occur and they offer some helpful suggestions.

Legal Concerns and Classroom Control

By Lee Cole and Forrest Gathorne

A North Carolina native who is a former State FFA officer, Dr. Bowen received the American Farmer Degree, and has taught vocational agriculture in both North Carolina and Virginia. He finished the Ph.D. at The Ohio State University in 1980 after moving to Mississippi State University where he teaches courses about microcomputers, communications, and youth organizations. His goal as Editor will be to get more secondary and post secondary teachers to prepare articles about their programs. The Theme Editor concept will continue and more emphasis will be placed on contemporary issues, the evolving mission for agricultural education, and the business side of agriculture.

You were supervising students in the hall, outside your classroom, when one of them accused you of cheating. A freshman vocational agriculture class was entering your classroom. A student inside the classroom was pushed and fell backward over a desk, hitting his head on the floor. You heard the commotion, entered the room and found a student laying unconscious on the floor. Can you be held negligent?

The School Attorney

If a lawsuit for negligence against the school district was brought, the complaint would probably name you, the principal, the superintendent, and the school board as well as others who may have had some direct responsibility toward the injured student (i.e., others students involved). Upon receipt of the complaint, the attorney for the school district would be called in and would assume whatever leadership and direction was needed until the case was closed.

Because you were the person directly responsible for the supervision of the classroom at the time of the accident, the school attorney would probably direct most of his or her attention to you and the incidents leading up to and immediately following the accident. You must focus your attention on the job at hand and help the school attorney present the best defense possible.

As a practical tip, it is helpful after a serious accident to document the events surrounding the incident. Memory tends to diminish with time; therefore, courts place great credibility on statements of fact written near the time of their occurrence.

It is very important at this stage in the lawsuit that you be very objective and honest with the school attorney. Sometimes you feel you may not have been correct in legal significance and be crucial to a good defense. Do not try to modify facts at the trial for your attorney where the suppressed facts are brought out by the other side and the school attorney is caught unprepared to meet the legal issues raised by their introduction. Be accurate and honest with information for your attorney. Attorneys do not like surprises.

The Other Attorney

While on the subject of attorneys, it is equally important to remember that the attorney for the other side is also interested in knowing what your testimony will be. As with the school attorney, the focus will be on you because of your proximity and participation in the events surrounding the incident.

It is advisable to consult the school attorney as to what you should say about these events to the attorney or investigators representing the injured student. Many attorneys recommend to their clients they talk to the other attorney only in their presence.

In an effort to gather information about the case, the other attorney may request a deposition from you. In case of a deposition, you will be called to the court house or an attorney's office and asked questions about the case by the other attorney. Your answers will be given under oath and usually recorded by a court reporter. This will be done in the presence of the school attorney who is available to advise and assist you in your responses. The testimony you (Continued on Page 6)

EDITOR-ELECT

Bowen Named Editor-Elect

Blanina E. Bowen, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education at Mississippi State University, was recently selected to be the next Editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine. He will serve as Editor-elect during 1985 and start a three year term as Editor in January, 1986. Dr. Bowen's work in agricultural education/journalism started 12 years ago when he was a copy editor for the high school yearbook. Since that time, he has acquired numerous experiences with the print medium. As a student in agricultural education at North Carolina A&T State University, he wrote over 350 articles as a reporter and sports editor for the campus newspaper, The A&T Register. During the summer of 1974, he was a reporter for the Wilmington, North Carolina, Star-News Newspapers, Inc. where he completed an internship through the Newspaper Fund program sponsored by the Wall Street Journal.
THEME

Student Management on Field Trips

By GEORGE WHEELER
(Editors: Mrs. M. Wheeler, Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Newton County Regional Vocational High School, Alton, Illinois, and Mrs. C. Wheeler, Principal, Newton County Regional Vocational High School)

1. Plan your trip so that everyone is actively involved. Students must have appropriate activities to do all the time.
2. Select the location carefully. You must be familiar with the people, the organization and the situations in which you are going. For example, when looking for a site for your students to learn to milk cows, try to select a farm with as many milking stalls as you have students.
3. Confirm where you will meet, the day and time of arrival and the time of departure. You should also confirm who you are going to be speaking with, along with the purpose and special arrangements regarding the trip.

Preparing the Students

1. The importance of this trip must be emphasized for the students to see the value of the learning from the trip in relationship to the entire unit.
2. Prepare the students for their responsibilities. Some trips require special equipment, clothes, paper and clipboards, and a list of questions.
3. Set your behavior expectations high and clearly define them. Do this by telling them what you think about consequences about behavior which is not up to your standards, discuss them in terms of the impact the problems will have on the agricultural program, and the class regarding public relations, along with depriving individuals of learning opportunities.

Prepared by the students for their responsibilities. Some trips require special equipment, clothes, paper and clipboards, and a list of questions.

Distractions abound on tours. The teacher must constantly remind students to stay with the group.

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Student Management on Field Trips

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Before Leaving School

When the class comes in at the beginning of the period they should be reminded needed, to prepare themselves for the trip and meet in a designated area. Take a minute or two to make comments to the total class. Review where you are going and the purposes of the trip. Check to see that the students are prepared. Assist students who need help but do not lose more than a minute or two because it is most important that you get to your destination on time. Leave names of students who did not show up with the office.

At the Site

1. Before unloading the bus or the van, take another minute to remind the class of the importance of correct behavior. Comments such as “Be sure to stay together, listen carefully and ask questions” may be all you need to say. At this time, remind them of their individual responsibilities and the importance of utilizing the time efficiently.

2. Remember to be in control at all times. Even though you have a host, you must take charge in seeing that the class is conducted the way you want it. You must guide the host but control the students’ behavior. It is best when you have prepared both the host and the students well, then you can spend your time monitoring and adjusting both learning and behavior.

3. Make the introductions and begin the questions. Have other students continue the questions while you begin to quietly move around to encourage and check the students’ participation. When two students are talking, your approach is very important to bring them back on track. You could easily create animosity against you and your objectives by being harsh. If you said to them quietly “you have a problem hearing back here” rather than “shut up and pay attention” your results could be more effective.

4. Correct minor behavior problems early. Whether it is talking, slouching or just not paying attention: it is best to remind the students early what they should be doing.

5. Be positive with your approach to the problem. A personal confrontation could be a disaster on a trip.

6. Individuals need to be approached one at a time. Be reasonable yet firm.

Be Prepared for Distractions

Distractions are common on field trips and too many of them can cause you to lose the attention of many of your students. You must accept these distractions as normal occurrences and it is up to your creative talents to bring the students back to the theme of the lesson. Examples of distractions may include a dog jumping on the students, employees working on some equipment nearby, or a good looking calendar on the wall.

Today

Many times students may not stay together on a tour because of their individual interests. Some want to stay at one demonstration area and another would like to investigate some piece of new equipment in more detail. You cannot blame them, but at the same time you must control this. They must be reminded to stay with the group. If they have a desire to see or learn more about the part of the tour they must be encouraged to ask questions to the host. Again, during a tour you must be moving among your students to keep them attentive and to help spark more interest.

Behavior Evaluation

On a test, not all students will get a score of 100 percent. By the same token, not all students will remember all your behavior expectations when they are distracted. You need to reinforce the behavior which will result in maximizing the learning. It is important that you review with the class the effectiveness of the field trip. If behavior problems interfered with the learning process then the students should be aware of that. If, on the other hand, your objectives were met and you want to reinforce the behavior, you could comment such as “because this trip was so successful and you all got so much from paying close attention and showing you energy, I will plan future tours in the same way.” The hosts with a reaction to the trip, be sure to share those comments with your class.

Even though you have two or three successful trips, do not assume all will be perfect the next time. A few reminders of behavior are always needed, perhaps not emphasized as much as the first few times.

If you have thought about not using field trips because of the extra planning, the potential student problems, plus the traveling, you should consider that. They are too valuable to eliminate because of two or three students. You cannot get discouraged or stop using field trips, because if you do, it is the students who will lose.

The Cover

A very effective way to maintain control of a classroom environment is to observe the teachers from the back of the room. Miss Crow looks on as a student practices what he has learned in conducting an EPA meeting. (Photograph courtesy of Jim Garrison.)

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MARCH, 1985

Special Needs Students: A Management Challenge

Discipline in our public schools is perceived by the American people as being one of the biggest problems facing educators today. In fact, the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools has cited discipline as a major problem for a majority of the past sixteen years (Gallup, 1984). While citizens are concerned about discipline in the schools, they are not alone. Teachers and administrators also view lack of discipline as a major problem in schools.

Discipline is one part of a system that is called student management. Student management is a process whereby teachers preserve order and maintain control of their classrooms (Ohrich, et al., 1980). While effective student management is often viewed as effective discipline, it involves more. It refers to the control of the educational environment in the classroom and laboratory. This article focuses on management techniques for special needs students in vocational settings.

Few instructional programs are in greater need of an effective student management system that are vocational agriculture classrooms and laboratories. The inherent safety and health concerns are seldom greater in any other vocational program. Vocational agriculture instructors have not had to be as concerned in the past about behavioral problems because students have traditionally entered the programs with a high level of motivation. Since the passage and implementation of Public Law 94-142 (Education for all Handicapped Children Act) in 1977, a more diverse group of students has been entering vocational agriculture. I will plan future tours in the same way.

Who are Special Needs Students?

Several terms have been used to describe students who have entered vocational programs in the last several years due to the passage of PL 94-142. These students are now described as having special needs. L. Allen Poff describes special needs students as including those who may be disadvantaged, handicapped, having limited language proficiency or other special needs (1984).

With approximately twenty percent of all vocational students classified as having special needs, the challenge for vocational agriculture instructors is clear. The development of effective student management techniques is essential if students are to be provided the best possible learning environment.

Management of Traditional Students

When vocational agriculture instructors are preparing for special needs students, it is imperative that they realize that these students may have experienced some degree of failure in other areas of education. Many of the traditional principles of student management will continue to be effective. Some common student management techniques are discussed below.

Be prepared for instruction. Being unprepared is one of the surest ways to lose control of the classroom. Students will quickly sense your unpreparedness. Take the time to plan for effective instruction.

Establish and enforce guidelines for classroom behavior. Students will function at a higher level when they understand the parameters of the classroom. Teachers will have fewer problems to deal with because most students feel more comfortable with clearly established guidelines.

Be consistent in behavior and actions. When instructors treat all students in a fair and even-handed manner, students will exhibit more respect and consideration for others.

Reinforce positive behavior in students. Students like to receive recognition for good behavior. It is more effective to reinforce a student who is behaving in a positive way than to punish one who is negative.

Maintain a high level of enthusiasm for the task. When instructors are enthusiastic about what they are doing, the effect spreads. It is hard for the student to be disinterested when the teacher is enthusiastic.

Initiate and maintain contact with parents. A major strength of the vocational agriculture program is the contact that teachers traditionally have had with parents. This contact allows the development of respect for the teacher in the student’s home. Teachers in other subject areas do not have the same opportunity to interact with parents.

Maintain contact with you that you are challenged. Most students challenge the system at some point. If an instructor (Continued on Page 10)
Special Needs Students: A Management Challenge

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for loss of composure when challenged, a signal is sent to all students that the teacher can be "had."

Seek outside help when needed. When all other approaches have failed, seek the assistance of other school personnel in solving a problem with the student. It is important to recognize that there may be a very small percentage of students who will not be able to function within your classroom.

Management of Special Needs Students

While traditional approaches to student management are important to consider, they do not guarantee success with special needs students. In order to develop an effective student management system for special needs students, instructors must accept the fact that many of these students have experienced a high degree of failure in the educational system.

Special needs students may enter a vocational agriculture classroom with negative attitudes or m negativities due to physical or emotional problems. The most certain avenue to failure is for the instructor to react in a negative manner. If instructors can remain positive but firm, special needs students gradually are able to begin to see their own weaknesses as positive elements in the classroom. They may be able to develop new attitudes and become more self-directed.

Provide positive reinforcement and feedback. The special needs student has typically experienced failure. This student often feels inadequate or inferior because educational goals have been unattainable. Short-term goals will initially give students positive feedback and enable them to feel good about accomplishing an educational task. Structuring tasks in increasing increments allows students to attain course objectives and skills. Small methods of reinforcement can be utilized. Issuing certificates for completion of tasks or establishing student of the month programs gives special needs students goals to strive for. One of the authors has used scratch-and-stamp stickers as positive feedback for successful completion of daily assignments. The need for frequent formal feedback is important. Remembering that special needs students cannot function with long-term goals dictates the need for frequent, structured, formal feedback or progress reports.

Provide self-help educational materials. Some of the traditional vocational agriculture students have problems with reading, writing, and basic computation skills. Many of the special needs students will need these materials. The vocational agriculture instructor needs to incorporate a high degree of basic skill training into the formal instructional effort to give students the opportunities for training on an informal basis. The authors are familiar with a vocational instructor who quizzes students on multiplication tables while they are involved in related laboratory activities. Working to help strengthen students’ overall basic skills will assist them in other academic areas and will make them stronger overall.

Use a broader range of motivational techniques. It is not a matter of developing a better act, but rather making the instruction highly relevant. Convince students that the skills you offer will be of benefit to them. A field trip might be a better way to introduce a topic than some sort of classroom activity, in attempting to motivate students.

Passus a strong eye and powerful self-concept. Challenges to the instructor’s authority will occur in traditional environments. Some special needs students have made a career of playing the system and will be challenging. The mark of professionals is how they respond when challenged. Allowing oneself to be personally affronted by student challenges greatly reduces the teacher’s control. The physical or psychological distance that is so important to maintaining effective control.

Retain the option of ultimate control. Occasionally, the vocational agriculture instructor of special needs students will find that nothing seems to be effective. At that point permanent removal of the student is the only viable option. Courts have upheld the decision for special needs students to be removed from classes (Phygire, 1981).

Summary

The vocational agriculture instructor faces a unique challenge in providing a quality learning environment for special needs students. Many instructors do not have the formal training to be effective. Preservice and inservice methodology related to special needs students must be developed and implemented. Appropriate evaluation procedures are needed to measure the effectiveness of existing special needs programs.

The previous suggestions will assist instructors of special needs students in developing effective student management techniques. They are not a panacea for all special needs problems. The ideas represent methods that some successful special needs instructors have found to be effective. Agricultural educators face a challenge in developing effective programs for special needs students. Central to that challenge is the need to develop effective student management procedures. One of the leaders of special needs in vocational education, L. Allen Phelps, believes that a critical area of federal policy through the end of this century will be in providing special needs populations with responsive vocational programs (1984). We, as teachers of vocational agriculture, can and must meet the challenge of that need.

References


THEME

Classroom Management: Understand, Anticipate and Plan

By Ray Herren

Editor’s Note: Dr. Herren is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

Boredom

It has often been said that a misbehaving student is a bored student. While this axiom is not all inclusive, it contains a large element of truth. Students can sit still very long without some sort of activity. Teenagers are by their nature very energetic. If this energy is not channeled in the proper direction, disruptions are bound to occur.

The very best tool that can be used to prevent misbe- havior in the classroom is a well developed, interesting lesson plan. The plan should include activities designed to keep the students occupationally occupied for the entire period. As the lesson progresses, the signs of boredom such as fidgeting, idleness and disruptions. Students work at different speeds so it is always advisable to have several backup activities planned for those who finish early. (Continued on Page 12)

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Immaturity

It is important to always keep in mind that high school students are not adults. Occasionally, students come through the program who are mature and act very much like adults, but these students are the exception rather than the rule. Generally, students in high school are in the process of developing and maturing. While they may have taken on the physical characteristics of adults, they still retain much of the attitudes and thought processes of children. This makes it doubly difficult to deal with this age group because they are often torn between acting as an adult or as a child. Though the students may wish to be considered adults, their actions may be closer to those of children and need the closer supervision and attention that such actions demand. Do not assume that your students are mature and responsible, but work with the intention of assisting the students in becoming mature and responsible.

For example, many students see disruptive behavior in the classroom as being fun or as being a game in which the student is pitted against the teacher. Clever remarks are made, small practical jokes are pulled, and ridiculous questions are asked for the purpose of irritating the teacher. These little annoyances probably cause more problems with beginning teachers than anything else. The teacher often feels that the behavior is not really bad enough to warrant disciplinary measures, but the problem still causes the teacher to feel stressed.

Student Personal Problems

Perhaps the most difficult of all causes of student misbehavior is the problem of student behavior that is disruptive to any manner will not be tolerated. When students are not allowed to begin their games, the activity is quickly dropped. Care should be exercised so that too much stuffing of classroom activity. With a little experience on the part of the teacher, he can determine almost immediately the difference between good activity and bad activity.

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A Step in Time Saves Nine: Handling Discipline Situations (Continued from Page 13)

over-reacting to this situation if he had developed a plan for handling discipline problems prior to entering the classroom. Just as a good athletic coach develops a game plan for neutralizing the opposing team’s offense, a vocational agriculture teacher needs to develop a game plan to handle discipline problems.

Using an Escalation Plan
Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) advocate using a Teacher Behavior Continuum or escalation system when developing a teacher’s discipline game plan. An escalation plan is simply a lesson plan for handling discipline problems. The teacher develops (either mentally or on paper) a series of steps for handling discipline problems. The steps in the plan become progressively more severe. When a typical problem occurs the teacher starts with step one. If this does not stop the problem, the teacher moves to the next step until the problem is resolved. A severe problem occurs, the teacher would start at a higher step in the plan. By pre-establishing which disciplinary actions are to be taken at which time, teachers can avoid several common mistakes.

First, escalation plans reduce uncertainty. Many teachers still recall the discomfort associated with inadequate planning for certain lessons during student teaching. This discomfort also strikes experienced teachers when they believe they might be faced with a disciplinary situation for which they are not prepared.

Second, escalation plans, if properly used, prevent teachers from over-reacting to harmless student behavior. Dale, in the illustration, could have used lower steps on the escalation plan to alter student behavior instead of sending the students to the principal’s office.

Third, escalation plans result in increased learning. Valuable instructional time is not spent continually reacting to student behavioral problems with the same disciplinary methods. By escalating the disciplinary response, teachers can more easily return students to instruction.

A Sample Escalation Plan
The following escalation plan is only a sample of what a teacher might use. Different teachers have different disciplinary philosophies, and therefore will have different plans. The important point is that teachers should have some kind of plan developed.

Referring to Dale’s example, the first reaction to the whispering incident might have been a prolonged stare. A prolonged stare lets students know that the behavior is unacceptable.

If the offending behavior persisted after the stare, Dale’s second action might have been to stand next to the student. People maintain a “comfort zone” around its periphery, and this is often evident in large classrooms with few students. Rarely will students sit immediately next to other students unless they are good friends. A teacher can often bring about behavior modification by violating a student’s comfort zone.

A third area which is related to the student’s comfort zone, is physical contact with the student. If standing close to the student does not end the undesirable behavior, try placing your hand on the student’s shoulder.

If this is unsuccessful, the next step in the escalation plan might be to verbally confront the student about the undesirable behavior. Emphasize that the behavior is undesirable, not the student.

Step four is to isolate the student away from the rest of the class. Be sure to remove all stimuli from the isolation area, and keep the area away from any location where instruction takes place. This prevents the teacher negatively reinforcing instruction.

Step five could be a conference with the student. Ask the student to explain why he or she has been asked to attend this conference, and what is wrong with the behavior exhibited. Explain to the student what the consequences of the next rule violation will be.

Calling in the parents for a conference with the student is step six. Again, emphasize to the student that behavior is not acceptable.

If the parent-teacher conference fails, the seventh and final step might be to refer the problem student to the principal. Although most educators agree that teachers should handle their own discipline problems, there comes a time when students must be turned over to someone else, especially if there is a threat of violence.

Conclusions
Regardless of what steps are taken on each teacher’s personal escalation plan, there are several important points to remember. First, it is important to let students know which behaviors are acceptable and which are not, and to be uniform in administering punishment. In addition, teachers should enter the escalation plan at a step which matches the severity of the discipline problem. For example, if two students are fighting in the laboratory, a simple stare would probably not be the most appropriate teacher reaction. Finally, some teachers recommend documenting discipline problems and resulting punishments for counseling and legal purposes.

Every teacher is going to be faced with days where nothing goes right. At times, we may be tempted to strike back at students in the same manner as the fictitious Dale in our introduction. An escalation plan is the “step ladder” that ensures that teachers are prepared for handling discipline problems as they occur.

Reference

THEME
The 4 “Fs” That Equal An “A” in Classroom Management

When someone mentions student discipline, student management, or student misbehavior; what are the first thoughts that enter your mind? That trouble maker in the fourth period class or that kid in sixth period that just ruins my day. Perhaps, today, this very minute, while you are reading this article, you have had a good day and you seem to have forgotten about those problems you dealt with yesterday or two weeks ago. Whatever your thoughts, we are all concerned about student discipline problems.

According to the late George Gallup, in his annual surveys of the public’s opinion toward the schools, the public sees the lack of discipline continuing to be the top problem for schools to contend with, as reported by 27 percent of the respondents (Gallup, 1984, p. 36). On the other hand, Mr. Gallup conducted a similar survey in 1984 with educators, specifically teachers (Gallup, 1984, p. 58). In contrast, teachers see the lack of parental support as the most pressing problem. Only 19 percent of the teachers surveyed rank discipline as the number one problem.

According to a recent study conducted by the author, vocational agriculture teachers do not see student misbehavior as a serious problem (Garrison, 1982). As a matter of fact, the most serious problems, according to vocational agriculture teachers, are those related to poor attitude.

Therefore, what are our discipline problems? Who can determine what they really are? How serious are they? How can we handle them? An escalation plan is the “step ladder” that ensures that teachers are prepared for handling discipline problems when they do occur.

The Four F’s
I recall my first year of teaching in a rural high school in Alabama. That year was not only frustrating for me, but was an excellent learning experience in many ways.

My high school vocational agriculture teacher, Mr. D.M. Ed-diemann, told me one thing that has been a rule I have tried and found to be a strong basis for a successful classroom environment. It is what he called the 4-P principle. Always be FIRM, FAIR, FUNCTIONAL, and FUN. I think Mr. Ed-diemann had a lot to say in those four words.

Two of these steps are easy to understand. But it is impor-tant to note the arrangement of the terms. Notice that fun comes last. Classroom teachers are firm, consist-ent, fair, and functional can naturally create a fun learn-ing environment for students. It is by-product of a well planned and professional teacher’s work.

An instructor who is fair December has to demand the respect of students, because they see that the teacher will be fair to all parties. Students quickly realize which in-structors are fair, and they react likewise. We would emphasize the firm and functional portion of these principles. Being firm simply means being consistent. It is important for the instructor to set the stage for ap-propriate behavior within the laboratory and classroom. An instructor that is firm will identify what is expected of the students both daily and throughout the year. A firm in-

Horticulture Skills

An organized laboratory and tool room assist students in finding the right tools and supplies. They set the tone for a businesslike class.

Classroom participation by every student is important in maintaining classroom control. A student who participates usually will become active in all phases of the instructional process.

March, 1985
Looking Beyond Agricultural Education For Microcomputer Software

Software provides the key to unlock the potential uses of the microcomputer. It has been suggested that the lack of software may be the single most limiting factor in using microcomputers. The underlying assumption (3) that students are primarily users of programs rather than programmers themselves.

A scan of agricultural curriculum supply catalogues, indicates a short supply of agricultural software; although the number has increased with each passing year. Several reasons proposed for the infrequent use of programs compatible with any one type of microcomputer; however, certainly be significantly fewer than the total number advertised. Other limiting factors which determine usable programs include program content, age level, reading level, and program quality. To the very discriminating eye, the number of agricultural programs judged appropriate for classroom/laboratory use may be severely limited.

Software From Other Disciplines
Software from other disciplines may prove valuable to agricultural education. This may be particularly true when ongoing research is done in other disciplines.

Establish Realistic Expectations
Vocational agriculture teachers must recognize that no one program from any discipline will do everything. Teachers can identify which subjects are often the areas where they need the most help. They must also recognize that they may have to work with other teachers or outside agencies to get the help they need.

Using Non-Agricultural Software
Computer programs from areas other than agricultural education may be useful to vocational agriculture teachers. However, these programs may present difficulties for the teacher/student for reason including (1) the need to adapt software to the specific subject matter and interest level; (2) they often lack content background material; (3) they may have been designed to fit into the specific course being taught; and (4) they may not provide much useful feedback or evaluation to students and teachers.

In all cases except tutorials, software is not intended to stand alone, but to be used in conjunction with other strategies and techniques. Often the documentation (instruction in hard copy) gives little background material or ideas for classroom use. This is a particular difficulty with complicated programs that are difficult for teachers and students to understand.

Good software, and even if it's not good, can be good because students do not perceive it as difficult. Good documentation and supplemental instruction. If documentation does not exist, the teacher can provide it.

Another way in which you can adapt software from other disciplines and, yes, even improve agricultural software is by providing students with guidelines to help them use the software. These guidelines may be printed instruction sheets that show the students how they can control the program. Some time this information appears on the software itself, but not all, not all, or is hidden in the written material. This kind of information might include how to (1) read the manual, (2) retrieve "help" function, and (3) obtain instructions to perform specific functions. This information can be used to adapt software to the needs of the student.

Having this information handy can make the software easier to use.
An Evaluation System For Microcomputer Courseware

By Richard C. Marx, Shirley A. Crase and Michael Womack

An Evaluation System

Can students access the program menu? Are "help" options available when needed? Does the documentation provide sufficient information to run the program? Are trial data supplied for learning to run the program? Teachers need assistance in answering these questions and evaluating other aspects of courseware quality.

The final version of the microcomputer courseware evaluation system contains two components. These are the evaluation form and an accompanying guide. The microcomputer courseware evaluation form consists of three parts, each with a separate purpose. Part A organizes descriptive information about the courseware being evaluated. Part B lists 74 evaluation criteria organized into eight sections.
Remote Controls

A concurrent focus was made in the area of hi-tech product development and evaluation where some of the tools envisioned for student use were assembled from off-the-shelf components. The first effort was to develop a unit with the capability of remote farm management. It features a control system which allows the activation and deactivation of solaroids, motors and lights via telephone. It also monitors the opened or closed condition of switched windows and doors and triggers "calls" up to seven predetermined 11-digit telephone numbers upon an unauthorized entry.

A Commodore 64 computer is connected by a modem (modulator-demodulator) to an ordinary modular telephone jack. A modem converts computer output to a kind of signal that can pass over public telephone lines. This computer is kept at the farm and runs 24 hours a day. It is called the "base terminal." An identical unit is kept at the operator's home and is similarly connected to the phone lines. This computer is called the "remote terminal." Like the "base terminal," it can transmit and receive commands entered via its keyboard.

Connected to the base terminal is a switching device called a relay. On command from the remote terminal, it can control devices on the farm that are connected by direct hardwires. These devices would include magnetically activated water valves (solaroids), electrically driven motors and lights. This relay can also monitor incoming signals such as those generated by a burglar alarm switch or a soil water saturation sensor.

The software for our total farm instrument control and security management system was custom designed by the instructor's brother, Tom Kajihara. It is menu driven and features four main menu items.

The instrument control and security control subprograms are grids representing time slots in 15 minute or 30 minute increments for an entire week. For instrument control, four channels of each switchable devices are available for scheduling. These devices can be scheduled by the clock or upon demand under sensor control. For example, a sprinkler system can be turned on every hour around the clock or only when moist probes indicate low soil water levels. With the right sensors, this system will record with correct efficiency and water needs. Furthermore, greenhouse temperatures fall below a danger level by turning on a heating system or calling the operator's home and delivering a specific audio tone. At the time of this writing, the program was not able to secure rights to use a voice synthesizer program for this purpose.

Word processing programs will be used by the students to write job applications and business correspondence during the second third of our quarter year. Students will use spreadsheet and database software to make crop projection and accounting inventories during the fourth quarter.

These operations will be first taught using traditional "pencil and paper" methods, as part of this project's mission is to compare traditional against computer related methods. We anticipate a trade-off between extra time spent on this dual task of instructions and valuable information gained on computer assisted instruction usage, and the actual computer usage in the agriculture classroom.
BOOK REVIEW


The book develops a unified program by evaluating and integrating biological, chemical, and natural control through a systems approach. Individual chapters are written by recognized experts in insect pest management. The level of the book is at the postsecondary level or for advanced secondary students. It could also be used as a reference for anyone involved in pest control.

A most impressive aspect of the book is that although the topics (chapters) are complete and self-contained there is a logical flow across chapters. The Pest Management Concept provides a reason for concern and is presented first. Following this introduction are the interrelated aspects of ecology and economics. As in any good pesticide management text, the spectrum of sound control methods are presented in detail. Theory is wisely built in order to support recommendations. Five chapters in the book are devoted entirely to specific pest management needs. They include: 1) Cotton; 2) Forage Crops; 3) Alfalfa; 4) Corn, and 5) Domestic Animals. One chapter is devoted to analysis and modeling in pest management. Another chapter concerns the future of pest management and ties the topics together as issues are presented. The book seems to be very current with the newest technology. In addition, extensive bibliographies at the end of each chapter support text and give the reader additional sources for additional study. This book should be valuable to both those who want general knowledge of the field and those who want detailed knowledge of specific issues or topics.

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This text is a revised edition of the 1973 first printing. This book is based on the notion that profitability of farming is more and more dependent upon farming as well as technical operation ability. In order to facilitate understanding of current mathematical applications of farm management, the authors have reduced calculations to a minimum.

Part I of the book is devoted to the organization of farm planning - machinery, buildings and land. Part II centers on the organization of farm crop and livestock enterprises. Part III continues with procedures for the combination of farm enterprises. Topics treated here include budgeting, under- tainty and methods of combining enter- prises to maximize resource alloca- tions. The book's final part, Part IV, deals with farm management, record keeping and record analysis systems. One author received his education at the University of Cambridge and is a Land Economy Specialist, the second studied at the University of London and is a specialist in British Farm Man- agement.

This book would make an excellent supplemental text for farm management classes. The text would also provide invaluable information for farm management teachers who need to under- stand modern farm management techniques. Instructors of management agriculture classes may wish to consider Farm Planning and Control as a supplemental text. Those with a specific interest in teaching farm management at the community college or with adult farmers will find the text interesting and useful reading.

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A Presidential Visit

Wilco FFA Chapter Meets President Reagan

On Tuesday, October 16, President Reagan, along with Senator Percy, Governor Thompson, and Congressmen Hyde and O’Brian visited the Wilco Area Career Center in Romeoville, Ill. President Reagan included Wilco in his schedule in order to see a vocational training center.

Student excitement rose dramatically as four helicopters of the Presidential party landed on the Wilco golf course. During his tour of the facilities, President Reagan was escorted by Wilco director Dr. Roger Claar. FFA member Darren Wyss, from Lemont High School, met President Reagan at the door of the Wilco greenhouse and gave the President a Wilco jacket. While passing through the greenhouse, Floral Design, and Horticulture classroom, President Reagan and his associates shook hands with students.

President Reagan paused to tell Floral Design students his wife, Nancy, enjoys arranging flowers and what a worthwhile career a floral designer can be. The President also commended students working on landscapes design on choosing to study a promising vocation.

Charlotte Smith, the Wilco FFA President, was introduced to President Reagan in the Horticulture classroom. Charlotte presented a FFA Blue and Gold Award to President Reagan for his sincere interest in Agriculture Education and in recognition of this visit.