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ABSTRACT

Ten issues of the newsletter "Techniques for Teachers of Adults" are reproduced in this handbook. The 10 chapters are as follows: I. Teaching Adults Is Different . . . or Is It?; II. Underprivileged--or Underestimated; III. Planning Is Suddenly the "In" Thing; IV. Helping Your Students Develop Self-Confidence; V. Reading Is Basic; VI. Learning Is an Active Verb; VII. Are You Fostering "Non-Think"?; VIII. Once More--with Feeling; IX. Everybody Has a Message; and X. Replenish Your Idea Bank. Other titles published by the NAPCAE are listed, and information concerning NAPCAE memberships is provided. (DB)

tested

for teachers of adults

TESTED TECHNIQUES
FOR
TEACHERS OF ADULTS

Published by the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC CONTINUING
AND ADULT EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Adult education programs draw upon a vast pool of human talent and resources to provide a greater variety of offerings than ever before to our adult population. From various walks of life instructors have been engaged to teach such courses as bookkeeping, art, auto mechanics, basic communications skills, law for the layman, preparation for the high school equivalency examination, Americanization, yoga, English literature, French II, or belly dancing. Many teachers are employed in business and industry. Others come from area vocational schools, public elementary and secondary schools, or from the local university or community college; some are homemakers and retirees who enjoy sharing, on a part-time basis, their knowledge about a particular subject. Whoever they may be and wherever they may come from, quite often they are self-made teachers of adults who have had to test—and in many cases, grope for—techniques and methods which they hope will bring about maximum results when teaching adults.

For the past twelve years NAPCAE has attempted, through publication of a monthly newsletter called *Techniques*, to offer to the teacher of adults suggestions for involving adult students in a variety of meaningful and creative learning activities. Two earlier publications—*A Treasury of Techniques for Teachers of Adults* and *The Second Treasury of Techniques for Teachers of Adults*—brought together some of the most valuable material from these newsletters. With the emergence of new teaching approaches and with the current focus on dealing with important social issues in our classrooms, the NAPCAE Publications Committee decided to review and select ten of the most popular and helpful issues of *Techniques* which have been published in the past several years and to include them in this new publication, *Tested Techniques for Teachers of Adults*.

By adhering to the newsletter format in the make-up of this booklet, we are attempting to present in a clear, concise fashion ideas which can be extracted readily and applied effectively in many adult education teaching situations.

The NAPCAE Publications Committee 1971-72

CHAPTER I

TEACHING ADULTS IS DIFFERENT . . . OR IS IT?

Now They're Using Adult Methods With Children

For years adult educators have been passing along the tried-and-truism: teaching adults is different from teaching children and youth. And they were right. For many reasons—smaller classes, higher motivation, absence of authoritarian supervision—teaching adults *is* different. Teachers of adults have long tried to individualize instruction, to boost each student's self-esteem, and to make instruction relevant. In fact, the word "relevant" was familiar to teachers of adults long before it achieved its current popularity with teachers at other levels.

Today, however, the methodology used in the most innovative schools for the young has a striking resemblance to that used in adult classrooms. "Adults are not a captive audience," teachers of adults are invariably told. "They can drop out at any time. That's why you must use every device at your command to win—and *hold*—their interest." Very true . . . and it's just as true of students in the lower grades who, statistics show, are dropping out *en masse* because the schools cannot win and hold their interest. In short, the very same advice that has been given to teachers of adults for years is now being given to teachers of children and youth. These methods, it has been found, are based on principles that apply to learners of any age.

There are three ways, however, in which adult students *are* different: 1) they bring to the learning situation a greater background of life experience: most of them have held jobs and raised families, while many have been in the service; 2) research shows that the *ability* of older adults to learn does not change with the years but they may not learn as rapidly as they once did; 3) most adult students are in class because they choose to be there, not because the law says they must.

Here are some examples of the methodology and the laws of learning applicable to adults:

- The student is more likely to learn a piece of information or master a particular skill if he knows "what's in it for him" . . . if he can see a fairly immediate use for his new learning. If his ultimate goal is to get a job, he may wonder why he needs to learn to spell. It is the teacher's job to show him that misspellings on a job application form may lower his chances of being hired. (In this case, the words he is learning to spell should be the ones he's likely to need to spell.)
- The student needs to know what he really wants from the course. The teacher can't tell him this, but with the teacher's help he should figure it out for himself—and keep it firmly in mind. The teacher must first discover the student's motives and then reinforce them constantly by showing him the connection between what he is learning and what he set out to learn. By asking questions in the first class session . . . group discussion . . . informal chats with students during coffee breaks or at the end of class, it is usually possible to find out student goals. "Often the teacher will find student goals are unrealistic," says Curtis Ulmer in *Teaching the Disadvantaged Adult*. "In these cases, the teacher must work with the student to bring his expectations down to a reasonable level. Short-range goals which are more easily attained may be substituted for long-range goals which seem unobtainable or unreasonably far off."
- Both adults and children bring their emotions with them to class. Threats of withdrawal of the teacher's approval affect students acutely, and may even cause them to drop out of class. Adults are just as sensitive as children to sarcasm or ridicule from the teacher, to coldness, rejection, judgmental attitudes. Whereas children may react more openly—with discipline problems or by skipping school—adults react with silence or inattention and with their ultimate weapon: dropping out of class.
- "Activity on the part of the student is essential to learning," according to *Administration of Continuing Education*, a NAPCAE publication. "Principles that are memorized do not produce the same retention as those that are reasoned out by the student and actually used. A lesson on reference sources is more realistic and meaningful when conducted in the library, having the students actually find material by using the card catalog themselves."

- The experience and knowledge a student brings to class should be used to help him learn. This approach, long familiar to teachers of adults because their students often have wide knowledge and experience, has proven to be a tremendous help in motivating young students as well. It boosts a person's self-concept (and gives him greater confidence in his ability to learn) when the teacher sometimes looks to him for advice . . . or asks for his special knowledge of a topic. For example, a man who is learning to operate business machines to advance in his job may be able to give the other students sound advice on human relations: how to get along with your co-workers on a job . . . something he has learned through practical experience.
- A learning experience that is interesting, vivid, and intense is remembered longest. A detailed account by the teacher or from a textbook can be dull . . . but it can be brought to life by a guest speaker, by role playing, through a panel discussion by several students who are questioned by the others, by a short film on the subject, and other imaginative learning activities. Methods should vary as much as possible in any course.

ALL METHODS DON'T WORK WITH ALL STUDENTS

"There is no evidence to show that any teaching method is generally effective in achieving educational goals for all students," says the *Faculty Handbook* of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School. Some adult students want a rigid, authoritative teacher. This is particularly true of less able students, especially the more anxious ones who *want* the teacher to control their instruction.

Adults who are highly motivated to achieve and are independent types usually do well when they have responsibility for their own learning. They enjoy and are successful both in discussions and in independent study situations. In general, group methods, discussions, etc., are more effective with the more intelligent and the more sociable adult students. Many adult students are torn between the need to be dependent and the wish to be independent.

WHERE THE GENERATION GAP IS GREATEST

When the adult students are 45 years of age or older, chances are greater that they require certain special and unique teaching

approaches. Here are some of those approaches and reasons why they may be necessary.

After a person reaches his forties, his vision tends to decline rapidly. That is why, if you teach older adults you should:

- Make sure that the classroom and work areas are well lighted and students do not face the lights.
- Arrange seating so that the older members of the class are closest to you and to any visual materials or demonstrations you may be using.
- Use charts, diagrams, and pictures that are large, with sharp contrasts and neutral backgrounds.
- Make sure that all writing and printing, whether on blackboards, on posters, or in textbooks or workbooks, is large and very legible.

As we grow older, our hearing declines and so does our ability to understand rapid speech. You may not need to talk louder—merely more slowly—to be understood by many older students. You should also:

- Try to eliminate noises, both inside and outside the classroom, that may interfere with the students' hearing.
- Make sure that when individual students ask questions, these questions are repeated loud and clear for all the class to hear before you answer them.
- Keep your face turned toward the class while speaking, so that those who depend to any extent on lip-reading will be able to understand you.
- Use the blackboard freely to reinforce what you are saying—so vision will supplement hearing.

OTHER PROBLEMS UNIQUE TO ADULT LEARNERS

Older adults learn just as well as young adults, it simply takes them a little longer to complete their learning tasks. Teachers are wise to remember this when they give tests and conduct their activities.

Many adults come to class bursting with enthusiasm and eager to learn, but many arrive there tired after putting in a full day's work at home or on the job. Unlike for children and youth, learning for them is not a full-time activity but an extra one. They are giving up time they may have devoted to family life, watching television, sports, other leisure activities. They literally may not have time to carry out homework assignments.

The adult student tends to be impatient, wants to learn fast, and wants to be able to put his learning to immediate, practical use. He becomes annoyed at anything he considers to be "busy work," possibly because it may have been a struggle to get to class, his time in class is short, and he wants to put every minute of it to worthwhile use.

SOME CAPSULE CLUES TO WORKING WITH ADULTS

The following tips have been gleaned from the talk and writings of teachers with vast experience in working with adults.

- Short units of work give them a happy feeling of mastery and success that brings them back for more.
- Important points should be repeated frequently. (Is a commercial ever run just one time on television? It's the repetition that gets through to you.)
- Remember the importance of frequent, short breaks for older adults; they tend to tire more easily.
- In learning new skills or information, older adults often have to break old, rigid patterns of thought or attitude, long established in their lives. Teachers can soften this experience for the adult learner by explaining that this is a common problem and not especially peculiar to him.
- Adults often have feelings of insecurity and fear of competition with the younger adults in the class. This means that every opportunity should be taken to praise their good work. Their errors should be minimized . . . and sarcasm or ridicule avoided at all cost. Accent the positive, not the negative.

CHAPTER II

UNDERPRIVILEGED—OR UNDERESTIMATED?

Underprivileged, disadvantaged, undereducated—these are just a few of the words used to describe men and women who are poor and have had little schooling. Teachers would be wise to add a new word to their thinking: underestimated. During recent years, since more and more students have moved into adult basic education and high school completion programs, teachers have found that disadvantaged adults have strengths, talents, contributions to make—as well as obvious needs and weaknesses. When we consider them only as needy individuals who require our special help, it is easy to feel superior and condescending—an attitude which they sense and deeply resent. If we really want to help, we must also look for and honor their unique talents, thus boosting their already shaky self-esteem.

HOW TO FIND THEIR STRENGTHS

- Recent studies have shown that teacher expectation plays a large part in student progress. Students with low results on IQ tests have been placed with teachers who knew nothing about their IQ or their history of poor academic achievement. They advanced markedly over the year, at which time their teachers were aware that they were "slow learners." You are more likely to discover student abilities when you honestly feel that they have abilities.
- Don't always look for traditional academic skills. During a special course for dropouts in Seattle, the students spent part of their time outdoors doing conservation work. A young man who had been one of the poorest achievers in the classroom turned out to have high qualities of leadership in the field. The teacher's obvious appreciation of this student's help gave a great lift to his self-esteem. The

student who can always fix the overhead projector when it breaks down ... the "negative thinker" whose hostile remarks are always funny ... the withdrawn young woman whose writing, though crude and misspelled, shows feeling and insight ... these skills are not hard to discern. You may have a harder time discovering that the sullen-looking man in the back row is a tender and loving father, with a real feeling for children and an unusual ability to win their confidence.

- Be friendly and noncritical. In a cold, authoritative classroom climate, shy and fearful adults don't blossom: they wither. They hide their individual skills for fear of ridicule or rejection—both of which they have probably experienced throughout their lives.
- Encourage them to talk freely about topics of interest to them, and their special interests and abilities may emerge. If some remain silent, be patient. It may take time to win their trust, particularly if they are in a class of more advanced, articulate adults. Silence may not mean they aren't benefiting from the course. At the final meeting of a parent education class, one low-income mother said: "Maybe you all thought I should talk more. Well, that's not my way. But I listened and when I went home I talked about it with my family. Last week I was sitting down and my teen-age son came up and kissed me on the cheek. I'd do it all over again just for that."

HOW TO BUILD ON THEIR STRENGTHS

There are several ways you can use a student's individual skills to boost his self-concept and thus give him greater confidence in his ability to learn the subject-matter of your course.

- Employ student skills in the classroom whenever possible. For example, the student with mechanical ability can run the audiovisual equipment. The "wit" can give five-minute talks on topics of interest to all. The superior writing of the withdrawn one can be used to help others analyze what good writing is. The man who relates well to children may be able to advise students who are having problems with their children.
- This use of student skills should not be too obvious, or it may appear as a condescending pat on the head. Sometimes it is more effective when not done within earshot of the

entire class: when you take Mr. Jones aside, tell him you can't cope with the new film projector and would he mind running it? The more real their contribution to the group, the more it will help their self-esteem. By the same token, excessive praise of their help has a condescending ring which they are quick to catch. Appreciation, of course; don't gush.

- Let them solve problems and make decisions. Research on small groups has shown that problem solving and making wise choices can be learned by people at all social levels. As they grapple with problems (even a problem as simple as where to go on a field trip) students with human relations skills will have an opportunity to use them.
- Recognize their progress. When we realize what it means to us to receive recognition, whether through a raise or through a better job or just through a pat on the back, we should be able to appreciate what it means to a person who—all his life—has known little appreciation. A home economist awarded certificates to all the members of her class as they completed a series of meetings. One mother said she framed it and hung it in her living room. She had never graduated from school. Now she was showing her family and friends that she, too, could graduate from something.
- When you know a student can perform a task, encourage him to persist. A Job Corps machine shop instructor assigned a new Corpsman to grind a tool. "When he said he couldn't do it, I told him to give it another try. He did it perfectly the third time. Pretty soon he was helping others. When he found he could do that job, he got confidence. Before that, he hardly spoke at all."
- The student's job experiences have probably given him strengths you can build on. The very act of getting a job has given him experiences that may be useful to other class members. How did he find the job? What was the job interview like? Was he ever fired, and if so—why? A group discussion of job experiences—how to get and hold a job—can show disadvantaged students that they have knowledge which can help others. Women's strengths as mothers and homemakers can be built on in the classroom. A student who is extremely shy about expressing herself may bloom when you ask her to provide cookies for student social gatherings, or write down her favorite recipes for the group

to share. Discussions of parental problems have such a strong emotional appeal that even the most silent students find themselves speaking up and sharing their knowledge.

- Don't expect instant miracles, but do keep on trying. It's not easy to believe that students who appear dull-witted, sullen or actively hostile have hidden strengths. But no one is without positive characteristics . . . no one is unable to make some contribution. And remember that student contributions need not be dramatic. A student whose work is unusually neat and well-organized may be able to help you check supplies and keep records . . . That simple responsibility may bolster his self-confidence.

WHAT ARE YOUR TEACHING STRENGTHS?

Like your students, you too have strengths and weaknesses. It will help you to improve if you know where your teaching abilities lie . . . and where you may be failing your disadvantaged students. Check yourself against the following list of characteristics which, research has shown, teachers of underprivileged adults seem to need!

- Patience. Some students take longer than others to perform a task. Rushing them will only make them more anxious, more likely to make errors.
- Versatility. Some students have a short attention span. This means they will be happier and more successful if given several short tasks during an hour. If they need a lot of drill at a certain point, for example, present it in a different way each time. They don't like doing "what we did before."
- Optimism. Since some students tend to be discouraged easily, their teachers should be positive thinkers, should believe in miracles where human beings are concerned. They should send out rays of confidence to their students . . . so the students begin to have confidence in their own successes.
- Understanding. Disadvantaged students are usually more anxious and insecure than the average adult student in the classroom situation—for a number of reasons. On the one hand, their teachers need to recognize this fear, sense when things are too much for these students and ease up on them. On the other hand, their teachers need to expect more of them and push them gently to do more, to learn to use the skills they have acquired.

- Acceptance. The need for warm, uncritical acceptance of a student's slowness in learning, his offbeat and perhaps dirty clothing, his sometimes shocking language, cannot be overemphasized. By commenting on what the student does right--rather than pointing out his errors—the teacher can help bring about change. Criticism will only alienate him and encourage him to drop out.
- Cultural awareness. Undereducated adults, in many cases, have a value system widely different from that of adults of the middle and upper classes. Awareness of differences in cultural background can help a teacher accept the fact that some of his students react differently than others to traditional teaching techniques. His awareness of why these students act as they do help him to accept them and seek new ways to help them.
- Sensitivity. Rarely do students speak up and tell you they are anxious, feel inadequate, or don't see any relationship between what you are teaching and their everyday problems. Yet these feelings often cause student dropout. Teachers must be sensitive to these signs of negative feelings. Ready promises followed by procrastination or "forgetting"; consistent bewilderment or blocking in spite of several explanations; dependency on the teacher or classmates for answers; frequent absences; persistent refusal to participate in class activities or pay attention; apathy or active hostility; defensiveness, reticence, or meaningless agreement with everything you say. All of these are calls for help.
- Genuine liking for "different" people. If you don't really like people with values and backgrounds different from your own, you can't hide it. Try as you may to conceal your feelings, you'll give nonverbal clues to them through gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice. Through unhappy life experiences, disadvantaged adults are particularly alert to nonverbal messages, which reinforce their feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness.
- Sense of humor. A cheerful attitude, the ability to see the bright and humorous side of classroom situations, helps to create a warm learning climate.

TESTING YOUR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

If you have slow learners in your class or students with reading difficulties—no matter what subject you teach—it is not fair to

test them the same way you test other class members. Chances are they feel fearful about school tests, so they need all the reassurances they can get.

Here are some ways to help them:

- This may be the first time in years that some of your students have taken formal tests. Therefore, make your explanations perfectly clear, and repeat them more than once.
- Be prepared to answer patiently the most simple, obvious questions. Your friendly, relaxed attitude will help the students feel comfortable, unthreatened by the testing situation.
- Simple materials may be used to do practice-testing in advance so individual students may become familiar with the process.
- Check the wording of your tests. Be sure the words are short, simple, and familiar to all of your students.
- Some students may do better with verbal tests, given in private. They may know the material well but have difficulty expressing their knowledge in writing.

CHAPTER III

PLANNING IS SUDDENLY THE "IN" THING

Planning a course, a unit, or a single class session suddenly appears as a brand new idea . . . with such names as "behavior modification," "systems analysis," and "setting instructional objectives." Naturally, it's not new at all and no matter what you call it, good planning still has three basic elements:

1. Deciding on your major objective and your sub-objectives. These are now being described, more and more, in behavioral terms instead of being a mere assimilation of facts and data. Today's objectives are more likely to be the students' ability to do something or a change in the students' attitudes.

2. Deciding on teaching techniques designed to achieve the major objective and each sub-objective.

3. Getting and providing feedback. This means finding out whether each student has actually achieved the sub-objective: whether he has performed the skills involved correctly, whether he has revealed a change in attitude, etc. It also involves letting each student know whether he has succeeded or failed—and letting him know this every step of the way.

The trend is to break down the major objective into very small and specific sub-objectives, which the student then must achieve one by one. *The new key element is: the student does not move on to the next learning task until he has proved to his own and the teacher's satisfaction that he has successfully performed the one he is working on.* A sub-objective may be as small as reading a paragraph or writing a sentence correctly.

WHY IS PLANNING IMPORTANT?

A study of students in an eighth-grade mathematics class revealed the following reasons for their high incidence of failing grades: the students didn't know what the purpose of the course was and so had little motivation to perform well in it . . . they didn't know what the basic assignments were nor the relative importance of the tasks which they were set to do. Therefore, they sometimes spent too much time on "extra activities" while ignoring the essential ones. The teacher developed and organized a plan for the course with specific objectives . . . told the students what they were expected to do and achieve . . . and let them help decide on class assignments. The rate of failures dropped dramatically.

Planning is important for a number of reasons: it gives the students confidence that they are moving toward a goal which they all feel is important and realistic. It helps you, the teacher, keep the learning activities varied and thus more interesting and provides you with organized rather than haphazard feedback on the progress of each individual in the class. It helps you discover which of your teaching techniques work and which do not.

DECIDING ON OBJECTIVES

A good plan of activities has several ingredients:

- VARIETY. By providing a number of different activities in every class session, you keep students alert and you are more certain to appeal to each student's unique interests and learning style.
- STUDENT INVOLVEMENT. Some activities should give students opportunities to do more than merely memorize facts. They should be given practice in abstract thinking, in problem solving, in looking up answers for themselves.
- FLEXIBILITY. Don't tie yourself to a program of activities just because you've written a lesson plan and feel you should stick to it. "The trouble is not with schedules or lesson plans per se," says the *IDEA Reporter*, published by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., "but with the fact that teachers too often see them as a means to an end. Even when students are excited about something directly related to the subject matter, teachers sometimes ignore or suppress the interest if it is not on the agenda for that period."

- LEEWAY. Don't overcrowd your schedule with activities—things you feel must be done. Allow some leeway so student enthusiasms or discussions can take over and interesting byways can be explored. Some of the best learning sometimes develops in these class "happenings."

WAYS TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK

- One educator says that students are more open to learning after a quiz or a test than at almost any other time. That's why it's so important to evaluate their tests immediately, rather than wait till their interests have cooled. They are eager to see where they have failed and find out what they can do about it. The easiest way to provide this instant feedback is by letting the students check their own answers right on the spot.
- Personal attention from you, the teacher, is another form of continuous feedback for students. Try to take time, at least once during each class session, to look at and appraise what each student is doing. They hunger and thirst for this kind of personal attention and reinforcement . . . for your nod or smile of approval for a job well done . . . for your help at analyzing why they worked a problem wrong.
- Consider using programmed instruction for some class members, or for some area of your subject matter. Programmed texts provide feedback at *every step* of the learning program. In fact, the student cannot proceed until he has successfully solved the problem or answered the question on which he is currently working.
- Tape recorders are recommended as an excellent way to keep students informed of their successes or failures in oral classroom activities: reading aloud, oral reports, group discussions, foreign language conversation, speech making, simulated job interviews.
- Have each student write a self-evaluation of his progress. He should answer such questions as: Where do I feel I've been most successful in this course? In what areas do I feel I need help, further explanation, or practice? Such an activity will help students think in an organized way about what they are doing. It will show them that they have had successes as well as failures.
- From time to time encourage class discussion of the class learning objective . . . whether students are moving toward that objective and, even, whether the objective should be changed. Perhaps it is too general: perhaps it should be

broken down into several smaller and more realistic goals.

- Personal conferences are usually the best way to provide feedback to students who are shy about discussing their problems before the class . . . or to students who are having serious learning difficulties. Such students may be discouraged, and part of your feedback procedure should be to point out where they have succeeded as well as to discuss where they are weak and what can be done about it. Together, you and the student can decide whether a different teaching approach would be more helpful . . . and you can decide whether more frequent praise and help over the hard spots are needed.

IS TEACHER EVALUATION BUILT INTO YOUR PLANS?

Feedback on teaching techniques, though it may be the most important element of all, is rarely built into lesson plans. How effective is your teaching? Do you have any idea which of your approaches are succeeding and which represent just so much wasted time? The following teacher-evaluation questionnaire is adapted from the *Faculty Handbook* of the Graduate School, U.S. Department of Agriculture:

1. Do you readjust your lesson plans to meet student needs?
2. Do you actively seek criticism of these plans?
3. Do you constantly test your teaching techniques for: a. maximum student participation, b. handling individual differences, c. student progress in subject matter?
4. Do you ever ask students to give their opinions of your teaching techniques? (Such student critiques can be given anonymously.)
5. Are you satisfied with the interest and enthusiasm of your students?
6. Have your students learned ways to evaluate their own work?
7. Do you see any evidence that you've stimulated outside study or practice?
8. Do you have a high or a low rate of student dropouts?
9. Have you initiated any new teaching techniques in your current course, or is your approach pretty much the same as the last time you taught it?
10. Do you make use of resource people, of special student abilities, of tape recorders, overhead projectors, films?
11. Have you established a friendly, informal atmosphere in your class or does it tend to be rather structured and rigid?

CHAPTER IV

HELPING YOUR STUDENTS DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE

A Basic Need For Many Adult Students

Many adult students are shy and hesitant about speaking before a group. They never express opinions in class, are reluctant to hold jobs that involve meeting the public, tend to withdraw when drawn into church affairs and other organizational events. Often a student who is very talkative in an informal situation or when the class is divided into small groups, will freeze up and get weak at the knees at the idea of standing before the entire class and delivering even the smallest speech.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Teachers in adult basic and adult high school classes, in business education, and in many other areas, can help their students tremendously by giving them experience in making brief talks to the class. The students receive many rewards from this kind of training, and will greatly appreciate the increased self-confidence they'll acquire, the greater ease with which they'll be able to participate in church affairs, PTA activities, club meetings, union meetings, and other group events.

"After using the above type of training with some success in my regular classes of high school English students, I found it equally successful with my adult classes," says Agnes Irene Brady, Pensacola Junior College, whose techniques are described in this chapter. "The pupils always express gratitude afterwards, especially for their growth in self-confidence. One lady was able to apply for and hold down a job as a cosmetics saleslady. One man, who at first held his notes in his hand while shaking from nervousness, reported that he was later able to speak out freely in his Sunday School group. One man, exceedingly timid, asked permission to make a talk a second time as he had forgotten one of the important points the first time. They all grow noticeably less nervous when they realize that many of their fellow classmates are in the same boat."

HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

First of all, it is important for you to recognize that your students have this need . . . that many of them have valuable contributions to make not only to this class but to any civic or social group to which they may belong—and that their shyness and inexperience are blocking them from making these contributions and even from advancing in their jobs. Then, arrange your lesson plans to allow practice time for this important activity. You are now ready to take these steps:

- Talk with your students, both individually and collectively, about what you plan to do and why. They will probably realize their needs, but be reluctant to "try out" in the classroom. That's to be expected. If they weren't shy about trying, they wouldn't need this help at all. Open class discussions of the problem are helpful. It's much easier when they can talk together about their feelings. You might share some of *your* early feelings in facing a roomful of students. The chairman of the board of a large oil company once said that he was terrified before audiences in his early days until he remembered that all persons in the room, intimidating though they seemed, were just "naked bodies underneath." Encourage your students to use the classroom as a laboratory or testing ground.
- Encourage, invite, but never insist that each student participate. When he is ready for this, or for any other experience, he will respond to it. Encouragement is fine, but for a teacher to try to force participation by insistence or argument is very bad. It may cause embarrassment, and even cause him to lose some pupils.
- Arrange for very brief talks at first, even of only one or two minutes duration. Later in the program, encourage longer talks, of up to ten or fifteen minutes perhaps, depending on the number of students involved and the length of the class period. At the end of the course, it is nice to ask each student to bring a sample of his hobby to class and, later, to tell the others about it while showing it around. For example, students could bring a stamp collection, slides taken during a vacation, pieces of embroidery, or other needlework.
- Some students may sincerely desire to talk before the class but can't get themselves to do it. It sometimes helps to arrange a panel discussion or forum where the timid ones

feel themselves part of a unit and less alone while speaking. When such a student finds himself able (happy surprise!) to do this, he often volunteers to speak completely alone and should then be given the opportunity to do so.

- Following these oral practice sessions, constructive criticism may be given (very tactfully, of course), and suggestions made for improvement. Sometimes they like to hear themselves on the tape recorder or ask fellow students for comments and suggestions.

One thing is very important: when commenting on any student's speech (or any other work for that matter) always begin with praise. No matter how poor a talk or any piece of work may be, there is bound to be something good about it. Point this out first, then proceed to suggestions for future improvement.

Great care should be taken never to embarrass or discourage a student. Most adults come to class after a hard day's work and are to be admired just for their presence. Many adult students have a deep-seated feeling of inferiority, often based on past failure in regular school or for other reasons. Recognize this fact, and remember that this applies more strongly than ever in the students' oral practice sessions.

GIVE STUDENTS SOME ADVANCE TIPS

Before the practice sessions begin, list on the blackboard several things a person should be careful about when speaking before a group, such as:

- Choosing a topic in which he is interested, and with which he is familiar.
- Speaking clearly and distinctly, neither too fast nor too slow.
- Speaking in a voice suited to the size of the room, neither too loud nor too soft.
- Having good posture. Standing still (usually) but not being stiff or rigid. Avoiding unnecessary movements.
- Using notes if he needs to, but not reading his speech.
- Knowing what he is going to say. If he is absolutely sure of his subject, and what he wants to say about it, he has taken the first step in the conquest of his fear.
- Looking at the audience. Not keeping his eyes cast down, though he may glance at his notes from time to time.

- Using good grammar, but not panicking if he slips up and makes a mistake; even the best speakers do this sometimes.
- Looking pleasant, even smiling if he can. It puts his audience at ease; they want him to succeed almost as much as he himself wants to.
- Using the blackboard, if it will help clarify the points he wants to make. He must not make the mistake of speaking to the board; when speaking he should turn toward the audience as much as possible.

HELP YOUR STUDENTS SELECT TOPICS

Many timid students have trouble deciding what to talk about to the class and can't think of a topic for even a two-minute speech. Yet a little probing will reveal that they do, indeed, have special knowledge of interest to others—even if it's on something as simple as "The Secret of Making a Good Angel Food Cake."

Here's how some teachers have discovered individual students' special areas of knowledge and have encouraged them to talk about these to the entire group:

- Many teachers ask students during the first class meeting to fill out a questionnaire or write down on a sheet of paper any work experience they have had, reading they have done, or previous courses they have attended on the subject they are studying. This is a guide to topics on which they can speak to the class later on.
- Have a short general discussion of the topic "How Students Can Help Each Other Learn." During such a discussion you can get across the values of "student teaching." You can encourage your students to tell about any special skills or knowledge they have that could help others in the class.
- A teacher of sociology and government said he looked for students' "backgrounds" as sources of varying points of view. Students with foreign backgrounds gave the class political, social, and cultural comparisons from their first-hand experiences. People working in industry gave labor's opinion; veterans and servicemen gave the attitude of the military. Oldsters liked to talk about the good—and not so good—old days. Young people liked to air their views on the "generation gap," student unrest, and Vietnam. He kept the talk lively by keeping it informal and giving the student speakers the treat of success without the threat of failure.

- "Whenever I have a student who has knowledge of an area of physics beyond the textbook, I ask him to lecture on it," says one teacher. "Sometimes students bring exhibits or demonstrate a principle in class."
- Point out to your students that their topics needn't be—in fact, shouldn't be—too broad and all-encompassing. Better to speak on something specific they feel comfortable and knowledgeable about, than to stumble through a talk on "The Implications of the United Nations on World Trade." (Unless that happens to be a student's special field of knowledge.)

CHAPTER V

READING IS BASIC

And–Believe It or Not–You're A Reading Teacher

Teaching reading is part of your responsibility–whether your prime job is teaching auto mechanics, law for the layman, sewing, business education, or whatever. Chances are that at least some members of your class have poor reading skills.

"Masses of American students are coming out of the public schools unable to function effectively because of reading deficiencies," according to *Reading Crisis: The Problem and Suggested Solutions,* a special report from the National School Public Relations Association, NEA. And a Harris poll, made for the recently formed National Reading Council found that 13.5 percent of the American adults surveyed cannot read well enough to function effectively in today's society. When 1,685 persons, 16 years of age and over, were asked to fill out some commonly used forms, 13 percent answered incorrectly more than 10 percent of the time and were considered lacking in basic reading skills; 34 percent had difficulty filling out a Medicaid form; 11 percent in filling out an application for a personal bank loan; and 8 percent in filling out a driver's license application.

Day-by-day living in this country demands reading ability. Here are just a few of the "coping skills" involving reading, as recently identified by Rural Family Development (RFD), University Extension Television Center, the University of Wisconsin:

Filling out official forms and job applications . . . Reading job want-ads and passing a driver's test . . . Evaluating product claims in advertisements and on labels and reading safety warnings on cleaners, pesticides, drugs, appliances and mechanical equipment . . . Ordering goods from mail-order catalogs and understanding

installment contracts and product warranties . . . Following instructions on dress patterns and in cooking recipes, and writing family and business letters.

NOT ONLY THE DISADVANTAGED NEED HELP

Just because the individuals in your class are high school or college graduates does not mean they do not have any reading problems. Their difficulty may be a slow and inflexible rate of comprehension . . . or they may need help in reading with a more critical, analytical attitude . . . or in reading textbooks or technical material in a more organized and efficient way. They may dislike reading and need your encouragement to do more reading outside of class on subjects of interest to them.

What this all adds up to is: no matter what you teach—your success and that of your students is blocked unless you blend some reading instruction into your class activities.

HOW TO TEACH READING IN ANY CLASS

There are many ways in which you can weave reading instructions into your regular classroom activities. It's not hard to do, and it certainly oils the wheels of learning. Included in the list below are techniques used by content teachers in the University of Chicago Laboratory School, as reported in *Reading Crisis.* In that school, everyone from the French instructor to the football coach has taken on the job of improving students' reading skills:

- A home economics teacher can show students how to read and use complex instruction booklets, sewing patterns, and cooking recipes; how to read and interpret newspaper advertisements. New words should be written and studied by students who are not familiar with them.
- A typing teacher can include lessons on how to read for copying (typing letter-for-letter without thinking about meaning) and on how to digest office instructions.
- Never assume that all of your students can read and understand new words or technical terms. Always introduce new words to the class with a formal introduction: either by writing them on the blackboard; by asking students to repeat them aloud, figure them out, or look up their meaning; or by writing them down several times.
- Ask your students to underline unfamiliar words whenever they encounter any in their textbooks, in other instructional materials, or in outside reading. After they finish

reading the material, they can look up the new word and write its meaning on the margin.

- Ask the students to bring in lists of technical or special words used in their work. Write these words on the blackboard or overhead projector, and discuss them with the class.
- Repeat—and repeat—and repeat. Just because a word has been defined and written down once by your students doesn't mean they'll all remember it the next time they encounter it. If you've ever studied a foreign language you know how true that is.
- Help your students adjust their reading rate to the kind of material being read. One reading specialist reminds us that it takes a different kind of reading to get through a science or mathematics chapter where every word counts, than it takes to read a humorous story or light feature.
- Don't assume that all of your students know how to use a textbook efficiently. To avoid embarrassing those who do not, you might give the class an "instant refresher course" —thus assuming that they know but need to be reminded of how to use the table of contents, footnotes, glossary, author's organization, study-questions, summaries, and index.
- To develop critical reading, have students search out and tell you what the writer of a particular news story or magazine article wants the reader to believe . . . how the writer stressed the "pros" and ignored the "cons" of the argument.
- To help students learn to read directions, ask them to underline the most important words in a set of directions . . . then ask them to implement the directions. Also, have them write their own directions on how to perform a simple task.
- Encourage "side reading" by bringing to class newspaper and magazine articles and paperback books related to the subject being studied.

READING DIFFICULT AND TECHNICAL MATERIAL . . . TIPS FOR STUDENTS

The ideas on the next two pages may be reproduced and distributed to your students, particularly if they seem to be frustrated and unhappy about tackling tightly-written material. The tips are condensed from the NAPCAE best-selling handbook, *How Adults*

Can Learn More–Faster:

- Be prepared to slow down to a crawl, reading the tightly written pages word for word. Sociology, history, economics, political science, physics, and mathematics are often slow going for the most efficient reader.
- Read definitions carefully, figure out what they mean, then rewrite the definition in your own words. Underline key words and phrases of definitions.
- Break down scientific experiments into steps. Number each step. Then, close the book and write the steps in your own words.
- Read technical matter creatively. Ask yourself, what does this information imply? What effects does it have? For example, in reading a paragraph on the gradual reduction of the underground water table ask yourself how this affects crops and wildlife, the life of the farmer himself, and economic conditions in the area. This kind of reading is not easy; it demands a lot from you but is tremendously satisfying. It helps you to understand, to remember, and to think for yourself.
- Turn paragraph headings into questions. This device is surprisingly effective in propelling you through complicated reading matter. For example, in a book on the psychology of learning a paragraph headed "Sheffield's Preponent-Response Interpretation" should be recorded by the student like this: "What is Sheffield's Preponent-Response Interpretation?" His first purpose in reading the paragraph should be to track down a short, concise answer to that question. He then should write it down in his own words.
- Look up and write down words you don't understand. This is very important when you're studying material in which technical terms and symbols are used. In mathematics, for example, you'll come across words and symbols whose meanings you must know and remember. Write these and their meanings on file cards or in your notebook, to be committed to memory later.
- Restate math problems in other ways. For example say to yourself, "I have rate and distance. I need to discover time."
- Do outside reading in your technical subject. Look in the public library for books, pamphlets, and magazine articles on the subject you are studying. To be sure a book will serve your purpose, read its table of contents and skim

through it to see if vocabulary and approach are too simple or too advanced. To be sure its information is not outdated, look on the flyleaf to see when it was published. This is especially important in such rapidly changing fields as computer technology, television, atomic energy, space technology. Your most recent information on subjects like these will be found in trade and technical journals. Reading other books and articles on the same subject can be of great help if you're having a hard time understanding a particular point. In other words, when you read other explanations it may all come clear to you.

- Underline the most important ideas on a page in red pencil, and the supporting sentences in blue pencil. This will also help you greatly when you're reviewing the subject for a test.

CHAPTER VI

LEARNING IS AN ACTIVE VERB

"Learning takes place only during activity; it is never a passive process of absorption but on the contrary is a very active process of reacting," says A.I. Gates, in his book *Elementary Psychology*.

What student-activating techniques have you decided to use this term? If you are a new teacher of adults, you may plan to use the same methods you used as a teacher of children and youth . . . or, if you have never taught before you'll probably use methods you were exposed to during your own school years. If you are an experienced teacher of adults, chances are you'll use techniques you employed in the past without re-examining them. Sounds pretty haphazard, doesn't it? Yet it is possible to be more scientific about it, for there is some knowledge of what works best with adult students. According to the Hollywood (Calif.) Adult School, the following methods are most successful. They are listed in the order of their effectiveness:

1. Actual experience through simulating real-life situations: workshop activities, discussion methods, special projects.
2. Laboratory experiments, solution of problems.
3. Drill and practice.
4. Demonstrations, with functioning materials and equipment.
5. Sound motion pictures and other visual aids.
6. Communication methods: lectures, verbal illustrations.

Obviously, student involvement in the action is the key to success in adult learning as it is in all learning. Note that the least effective technique is teacher lectures and explanations . . . yet studies show that most teachers do 80 percent of the talking in their classrooms!

HOW TO PLAN FOR STUDENT "ACTIVISM"

Some courses lend themselves easily to student involvement: arts and crafts, typing, cooking and sewing, woodworking. In many courses, however, teachers must do purposeful planning to make sure their students will do more than just sit back and listen. The following approaches have helped pull even apathetic students into the action:

ROLE PLAYING: An excellent "involvement device" when a class is examining human relations problems . . . job interviews and office behavior . . . parent-child relationships . . . police-community relationships . . . drug abuse . . . air pollution . . . and other neighborhood problems. It is a spontaneous acting out of a given situation by two or more students who show the feelings of the people in that situation as they see those feelings. Give all class members opportunities to be the actors so that there is total involvement.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Students who are shy and silent during general class discussions will usually speak up when the class is divided into small groups. Each group can be given a question or topic to talk about or a problem to solve. This method works well in social studies, public affairs, history, and literature classes. It is also effective in getting adult basic education students to discuss their problems and express their feelings.

SPECIAL PROJECTS: Several small projects are usually more "student-involving" than one large project, unless the large project provides enough action steps for all class members. Ideally, students should work in teams of two or four in such projects as: tracking down special information and reporting to the class . . . collecting materials for display or bulletin boards . . . maintaining a class clipping and reference library or file . . . looking into a specific neighborhood problem such as litter . . . making surveys.

AUDIOVISUAL AIDS: Tapes are especially effective because they are easy for all students to use, unassisted . . . they are easily available because both tapes and tape-recorders are relatively inexpensive. Students can check their reading progress . . . their foreign-language accents . . . their speech mannerisms . . . can tape role-playing sessions for future discussions, etc. Films can be useful if they are not just passive "watching" sessions; they should be stopped frequently for student questions and discussions.

FIELD TRIPS AND GUEST SPEAKERS: Field trips are becoming less "guided tours" and more action-oriented undertakings. Cameras and tape recorders go along and short questions are asked that sometimes lead to practical involvement in solving problems which plague the community. Of guest experts, one teacher says, "The idea of these visits is not to instruct . . . but to provide opportunities for dialogue." Students learn more from it: instead of merely listening to the expert they can talk with him. They also learn more if they can help decide which expert to invite.

Several of the techniques which are discussed above have been employed successfully for years and can be reused effectively countless numbers of times in your classes . . . but the development of new approaches to involving students actively in the learning process continues. Gaining increasing popularity in many phases of education and training is the use of simulation games. The vast number of games which have been produced commercially in recent years with special appeal to adults attests to the widespread interest in and support of this innovative technique. A brief description of these games and their various uses may encourage even you to give this exciting teaching method a try.

SIMULATION TECHNIQUES: HOW AND WHY THEY LEARN BECAUSE . . . LIFE IS LIKE THAT

One of the most successful, action-oriented teaching techniques is the use of simulation games. The purpose of these games is to involve students in situations similar to those which they face, or will face, in real life . . . and so give them practice in solving real problems. Students are presented with information which will help them make decisions . . . they interact with each other and, just as in real life, their decisions often depend on what those around them do. Additional facts and problems are fed in as the game proceeds . . . card spinners and other devices can build chance or luck into the game, simulating even those unpredictable factors of real life.

For example: in "Consumer," one of nine, life-situation games developed during a games research project at Johns Hopkins University, the players try to get the most for their money when presented with a bewildering array of advertising and credit purchase plans. Changes of prices, special sales, and new credit regulations could, conceivably, be fed into such a game as it proceeds.

WHAT GAMES CAN DO FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Through the Johns Hopkins project, and other schools using simulation games, it has been found that this teaching technique has the following benefits:

- The games are self-judging: a player knows he has won or lost by his own decisions, by what he himself has done or not done. The teacher is no longer the judge or critic.
- The student is able to practice again and again the roles he must play in earnest outside of the classroom or in his future life. He can see his own errors in judgment and correct them.
- The most impressive characteristic of games, some educators feel, is their ability to motivate students. No one has to force them to play the games. In many instances, the students urge reluctant teachers to let them play them.
- Real learning can take place. Some Baltimore students took part in a presidential-election game. After they played, they exhibited much greater comprehension of an election then taking place in their city. Election news which had bored them previously, now held their interest and made sense to them.
- Students gain confidence in their own ability to accomplish something or act effectively, according to the Hopkins researchers. They develop a greater sense of being able to cope with their environment and a greater interest in trying to do so. This, of course, has great implications for disadvantaged students who often tend to believe that their lives are ruled by random events beyond their power to control.
- Poorly motivated students, who fail in conventional classes using conventional teaching methods, often do well with simulation games.
- On the other end of the scale, bright students (who dislike school because it does not give them a reward for independence, creativity, nonconformist thinking) also benefit from games techniques which give them a chance to use their unique qualities.
- Games answer students' demands for relevance in the curriculum.
- Simulation games help students to learn how to learn and increase their ability to learn new facts and skills.

- "Students become personally involved in simulations," says William A. McClelland, executive vice-president, Human Resources Organization, in the *American Vocational Journal*. "Even though they know it is not the real world of work in which they are operating, dimensions of the real environment are incorporated . . . in learning situations which do not jeopardize their future if they fail to do well."
- With simulation games, teachers can study group processes more effectively and observe how students view the world from the decisions which they make.

HOW TO USE SIMULATION GAMES

Should you use a game which has been prepared for you or develop games of your own? If you've never used games, the best initial approach is probably through prepared games. After this indoctrination to the games technique, its advantages and possibilities, you and your students can develop games geared to their specific problems and needs.

The following tips will help you make more effective use of games, whether you try published or class-developed simulations:

- Provide your students with some background information before the game begins. Studies show that most students play poorly and learn little from games unless they have some previous knowledge of the subject or are studying it at the same time.
- If it is a team game, select team membership carefully. Try to keep the teams balanced, with good players on each side. Avoid placing shy students on the same team with their more aggressive classmates . . . so the shy ones will have a better opportunity to become involved. "In one international affairs game we witnessed an 'unholy alliance' between two major nations who logically should have been rivals because the leaders of the national teams were 'going steady,'" reports an article on simulation in *The Social Studies* magazine.
- It is often wise to hold up the game from time to time for analysis of what has been going on . . . so students can discuss their own and each other's tactics, strategies, motivations.

- Any guidance given by the teacher should be lighthanded rather than authoritarian. The teacher's role should be to keep the car on the road, but not to determine its destination. If the students are influenced by the teacher to arrive at predetermined conclusions or decisions, even subtly, they will learn little from the game process.
- When developing your own game, be sure it is appropriate to the level of the students, the background information they already have on the subject, and the time available. If the game is too complicated, students will become confused and lose interest.
- One of the most important elements of games teaching is the debriefing session which takes place when the game ends. "Debriefing helps students put things in perspective," says *The Instructor*. "They go beyond the simplicity of the game to the complex, life situations, teaching the students to decide whether their strategies would be appropriate in another setting or at another time." It helps them develop new games and new strategies.

REFERENCE

Simulation Games in Learning. An introduction to a new and powerful educational technology. Edited by Sarane Boocock and E. O. Schild. Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212. 288 pp. $8.50.

CHAPTER VII

ARE YOU FOSTERING "NON-THINK"?

With the best intentions, are you "force-feeding" your students with "facts" which they are expected to swallow without question or with very little question? It's a tempting approach because time is short and you have a lot of subject matter to cover. But the "teacher talk—student listen" technique, when overdone (which it often is), has great drawbacks. It squelches student creativity. It does not provide training in problem solving. Most serious of all, it reinforces in students the habit of bland acceptance, or "non-think."

Professor Calvin Taylor, University of Utah, one of the nation's top authorities on productive thinking and creativity, says: "Student potential for a wide variety of thinking and learning is greater than we often assume. I urge that you regard your students as thinkers and not merely learners. I believe that when students are treated as thinkers and not just as knowledge-absorbers, all of their potential abilities will develop more fully."

If you're saying, "All this sounds fine, but first things first. I must teach the facts of my subject. My students expect and need that information." True. But they also need much more. What does the world of business and industry want most in the adult student you turn over to them as employees? Here's what the president of a major telephone and telegraph company says business needs:

- Men who have been taught—even forced if necessary—to think for themselves.
- Men who distrust the obvious.
- Men who doubt the methods of the past.
- Men who are able to conceptualize the future.

- Men who have the boldness and imaginativeness to pioneer in the development of new business systems and new businesses.
- Men who have the ingenuity and drive to develop and re-improve new devices and techniques.

These creative personalities are needed at every level of the business world. The typist who is moved from the steno-pool and eventually becomes a well-paid administrative assistant is not the one who merely takes good dictation. It's the individual who thinks ahead for the boss, creates a better filing system, is dissatisfied with the old, accepted office routines. Unfortunately, many teachers tend to favor and encourage the conforming student: the individual who gets good marks, who is emotionally stable and who doesn't rock the boat. The boat-rocker, the student who looks at things in new ways, is low on the popularity list with most teachers according to many studies of teacher attitudes.

BUT ARE ALL STUDENTS CREATIVE?

"The ordinary child and the average citizen who clearly do not possess special talents are nevertheless continuously original and creative in everyday affairs," says *The Step Beyond: Creativity*, a publication of the National Education Association. It points out that adaptation of tools and machinery, ingenious repairs and temporary makeshifts, homely labor-saving devices, quick repartee, keen argument, and discriminating judgment in confused situations are all partly original and/or creative.

The big question is: are you encouraging your students to strengthen their creative, problem-solving skills? Do you know how to do this while at the same time provide them with the subject-matter information they need?

WAYS TO TRIGGER STUDENT THINKING

- Encourage student acceptance of offbeat ideas. One expert says that any group has a few individuals with strikingly offbeat ideas . . . and that the conformists in the group regard these people as crazy. Discuss this with your students, when someone suggests a "nutty" idea. How crazy is that idea? Crazy enough to be useful, to change a trend, to revolutionize class-thinking, to improve an accepted way of

doing things? Such a discussion can have two positive results: it can help conformists accept change and become more open-minded to new concepts . . . and it can encourage shy individuals to express their own "nutty" ideas which they have carefully concealed for fear of ridicule.

- If your students have jobs, give them the following assignment: during the next week, look at your work and work surroundings and tools with a critical eye. Think of three ways in which these could be changed for greater efficiency. The same assignment can be given to women who do not have jobs outside the home; they could think of ways to make homemaking more efficient.
- Set up a class "Think-Tank"—a five-minute session at the end of each class period for ideas exchange. Start off with a discussion about creative thinking by stressing that everyone does it in one way or another; inspire your students to question accepted ways and to look for better ways of doing things, both in class and out. Encourage your students to criticize you and your methods. Ask them to bring in examples of creative thinking they've read about or observed. Bring in examples or news clippings of your own, showing creative thinking in the fields of planning, decision making, communications, human relations . . . but especially in the subject matter you are teaching.
- Your attitude should be that of a questioner—a fellow-searcher for truth, with no final and absolute "answer" to dispense. Encourage the idea that no statement, either by you or a student, is immune to questioning and probing . . . that no textbook or authority has the final, godlike answer.

A problem, anecdote or situation used by a teacher to stimulate student thinking is known as a "discovery incident." Here are some incidents and approaches that have spurred students to explore their own thinking and ideas:

- Have students state or write any preconceived ideas they have about another country, race, or political party . . . ideas they have picked up from reading, movies, TV, personal experience, or hearsay. Then state the purpose of the discussion or unit: to prove or disprove these ideas. Research on the subject, then, has a point understood by all students. "This technique is especially helpful in motivating slow learners by giving them direction and goals," says the social

studies teacher who recommends it. "At the same time, it encourages all students to examine their notions about people, areas, and issues . . . and students realize the importance of having facts on which to base their judgments."

- Provide students with reading materials that present more than one point of view. Look for textbooks that encourage students to think, not to accept others' thoughts. Look for books that present different opinions and interpretations, include opposing viewpoints of persons who lived during times of stress. Even events like the American Revolution can be looked upon in more than one way.

- Show films or blown-up, still pictures of rundown neighborhoods in the local community, young men loitering on corners, children playing in the streets. Use them to spark student discussion of social problems and their possible solutions.

- Basic education classes often use easy-to-read newspapers to teach current events but rarely use editorials that show different points of view. When using such publications, ask questions that force students to give opinions. Bring to class statements of different opinions on Vietnam, for example, and ask students to comment on them. Ask them to give reasons for their points of view. Use the comments of the more articulate students to arouse interest in the other students. To make such discussions more meaningful, ask students how major events, such as Vietnam, affect them in their daily lives.

- Investment classes can read about stocks, discuss them, then decide on one in which to make an imaginary investment. As the stock fluctuates in value, students can discuss possible reasons for its rises and falls.

- One English Literature course changed its name to "What's So Funny?" Students discussed what makes them laugh, what humor is all about—and under the skillful guidance of the teacher, found themselves comparing the humor of "The Road Runner" with that of "The Taming of the Shrew." Student enthusiasm for the course was high, and the dropout rate was at an all-time low. The teacher asked many questions, provided few answers. She pulled out ideas the students didn't know they had till they voiced them.

QUESTION: HOW GOOD ARE YOUR QUESTIONS?

The questions a teacher asks can either close off or open up students' minds to creative thought. Many surveys have been made of the kinds of questions teachers ask, and how they affect student learning. The studies show that the majority (in some cases 90 percent) of teacher questions require factual recall on the part of the students. Few require thinking—creative thinking, critical thinking, convergent and evaluative thinking. It would appear that many teachers consider a good memory the most important equipment a student can have.

So—analyze the questions you ask your class. Start by quizzing yourself:

- Do you frequently ask questions that start with "How" or "Why" rather than "What is" or "Who is"?
- Do your questions sometimes spark controversy and force students to disagree with you and with each other?
- Do some of your questions allow for more than one response? For example, do you ever ask "In what ways" or "For what reasons"—to clue students that there often is more than one correct answer to a question?
- Do you always give your students plenty of time to answer your questions? (One study showed that when a teacher waits five seconds for students to answer rather than one second the students give longer, more thoughtful, responses. When a teacher, after a very brief wait, answers the question himself or has another person answer, students tend to give short answers or say that they don't know.) Allow ample time for reflective thought after each question. It takes patience on your part, but it is worth the waiting.
- Do you usually say, "Does everyone understand?" It is an unusual student who feels comfortable about admitting before the group that he doesn't understand what you've been discussing. How embarrassed he would be if he were the only one who didn't understand! You get a better response if you say, "I'm sure I've made this as clear as I should. Clue me if there's anything more we all need to know about this."

AND HOW ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS' QUESTIONS?

Who should ask more questions in class, the teacher or the students? When students are enthusiastic and motivated, they barrage the teacher with questions. Yet, in the average classroom,

the teacher does most of the questioning. One study showed that forty questions were asked per class hour. All forty were both asked and answered by the teacher! Some teachers are afraid they can't answer students' questions and subtly or overtly discourage them. Help your students to think more creatively and productively by:

- Encouraging students' questions. One way is by "waiting them out." One teacher after demonstrating a scientific process waited ten minutes before his students, unable to stand his silence, began asking questions.
- Resisting the impulse to answer students' questions yourself. Find out first whether other class members, or the questioner himself, can figure out the answer.

TEACHING FOR CREATIVITY: WHAT RESEARCH HAS FOUND

In the past ten years, many studies have been made to discover teaching techniques that help students to think and create. Here are some of their findings:

- It is not necessarily the high-IQ student who emerges as the productive and creative star when creative teaching techniques are used. In fact, teaching for creativity often uncovers valuable talents among students who had mediocre academic skills: they were found to be good solvers of practical problems and some had leadership abilities and human relations skills.
- The teacher's need to cover certain amounts of subject matter often cuts off divergent and evaluative thinking on the part of the students. The teacher should be careful not to shut the door on this kind of thinking, though he should know how to control it.
- Group progress can be either deterred or encouraged by the teacher's attitude toward his students. Critical attitudes showed definite signs of curtailing students' progress in creative and productive thinking. Personal praise tended to increase the participation of individual students.
- The teacher should avoid conducting monologues; involvement on the part of the students is more conducive to learning, thinking, and creating.

TESTING YOURSELF AS AN INQUIRY TEACHER

Several studies have shown that when teachers change to more inquiring techniques—students improve their ability to think.

Unfortunately, most teachers tend to be talkers, fact-givers, rather than persons who concentrate on getting students to discover and state their own opinions and track down their own facts. Do you know which kind of teacher you are? There are several ways to find out. One way is to think seriously about your own feelings and assumptions: 1) Do you tend to be upset when a student questions a statement you have made or criticizes you? 2) Do you feel that the teacher's principal role is to present information? 3) Are you impatient? (Sometimes it's very hard to "wait out the students"—wait for them to come up with answers which you could supply so quickly and easily. The temptation to supply what is needed is great.)

You can assess yourself as an inquiry teacher by filling out the following–

CHECK LIST

	Regularly	*Sometimes*	*Seldom*
1. My lessons present some problem, question, or contradiction that sparks student thinking.	_____	_____	_____
2. My questions lead students to explore, explain, support and evaluate their ideas.	_____	_____	_____
3. I encourage students to move from particular cases to more generalized concepts.	_____	_____	_____
4. Topics are critically examined, not "taught" as closed issues with a single, "right" solution.	_____	_____	_____
5. I avoid criticizing or judging ideas offered by students.	_____	_____	_____
6. I try to make students aware of how much one's opinions reflect one's biases.	_____	_____	_____
7. I encourage students to arrive at value and policy decisions they can back up and defend.	_____	_____	_____

CHAPTER VIII

ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

"Feelings and emotion play a critical role in blocking and enhancing learning," says Walcott H. Beatty, professor, Department of Psychology, San Francisco State College. For many years, research has supported this opinion but only recently have educators and psychologists made systematic efforts to apply it to teaching. Sensitivity training, affective education, the mankind curriculum, the humanist approach to education, human relations training, ... all these are efforts to improve the emotional climate of classrooms and thus improve learning.

All of these approaches have great implications for teachers of adults . . . . particularly for those teachers whose classes include high school dropouts or disadvantaged students. Why is this so? Because dropouts and the disadvantaged are often the "alumni" of school situations where students' feelings were either ignored or trampled upon; where students were rejected or put down more than they were accepted and bolstered.

TEACHING PEOPLE TO LIKE THEMSELVES

Can you really teach people to like themselves, and so be more relaxed and confident about their ability to learn? Experts in human behavior say "yes":

> "People develop feelings that they are liked, wanted, acceptable and able from having been liked, wanted, accepted, and from having been successful. One learns that he is these things, not from being told but only through the experience of being treated as though he were so. Here is the key to what must be done to produce more adequate people."
>
> —Arthur W. Combs, in *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming:* A New Focus in Education, ASCD. 1962.

A noted psychologist called this "learning about self from the mirror of other people." Teachers, by their very name, and by the leadership role they play in the classroom, are very powerful mirrors. With a word, a gesture, a look, they can make a student see himself as inadequate, inferior to the others, a born loser . . . or as a person with capabilities, just as worthwhile and likeable as students who are faster learners or as students with more outgoing personalities.

Here are some ways to build your students' self-esteem:

- Begin by accepting and liking them just as they are: shy, vague, inattentive, aggressive, angry, or whatever. Look behind the behavior to the scared, uncertain or anxious person. From the positive base of your liking they will be much more apt to move forward and achieve.
- The belief that people are strengthened by threats and failure is a fallacy. Make your classroom a world of positive people, things and events. When students make mistakes, correct them quietly. When they have successes, praise them with a pat on the shoulder, a smile, or a public display of their achievements.

PRACTICES THAT PUT STUDENTS DOWN

Today's horrible thought: some teachers *like* to put students down. They don't know it but they get ego-gratification from student failure, says the *Teachers College Record.* Here are put-down practices observed in some classrooms:

- The phony praise approach. Praising students for cleaning the chalkboard well or for other piddling achievements is really saying, "You can't do anything important so I'll praise you for this." Even slow students get the message.
- The superior language approach. Using words, either in conversation, explanation, or teacher-made tests which the teacher knows some students don't understand. Students are usually too embarrassed to ask what the words mean, so communication is muddied, tests are failed.
- The guilt approach. This works best if the teacher is superficially a good guy, and not disliked by his students. His technique is to make the students feel they have failed him personally by not learning when "I've worked so hard to help you."
- The poor materials approach. Teachers who want student failure often choose materials which will achieve that result, without knowing why they made such a choice.

- The "bright-is-right" approach. The teacher pays more attention to the high achievers in the class and makes his approval and liking of these students apparent to the whole group. Nothing works more effectively to turn off slow students, who figure the only way they can win approval is the one way they can't achieve it: namely, by being brighter than the bright guys.

PRACTICES THAT BUILD STUDENTS UP

- Let your students know that they can express their personal feelings, attitudes, ideas, concerns and doubts without fear of criticism or embarrassment. This is done most effectively by example. You might start by expressing some of your own feelings and fears openly and casually. Then, when a student breaks down and admits failure or fear, your response might be, "You're not alone in that. I've felt that way, and I'm sure the rest of the class has from time to time." Never, never ridicule a student, no matter how outlandish or apparently "stupid" his statement may be.
- Show students that you believe it is good and desirable to be individual, different, to think in one's own way. To encourage every student to explore his own thoughts and express them, you might remark, "Well, that's what the textbook says, but that's just one man's opinion and we don't necessarily have to agree with it. What do you think?" ... Or, when a student suggests an offbeat approach to solving a problem, one that may sound silly or even provoke laughter from the others, your reaction could be, "Hold it, everybody. Joe's hunch may be a good one. Let's give it a try ... if it doesn't work we can think of another." (This last comment assures Joe that failure would not be humiliating or disastrous.)
- Avoid a competitive "who's best" atmosphere in your classroom. Allow each student to set his own pace and thus compete with himself rather than with others in the group. (This is one secret of the success of programmed learning in adult education.) One way to do this: offer the group a major task or assignment, then suggest other activities students can undertake instead of, or in addition to, the principal task. Competition often sparks students who are high achievers, but discourages less able students.

THAT LAST CLASS–DUD OR DYNAMO?

Will your course just run down like an unwound clock, leaving students with a blah feeling? Or will the last session of the year be so full of electricity that it will charge students with an irresistible urge to enroll for another course next year—and continue learning during the summer? It depends on you. Teachers have used the following tactics to keep student enthusiasm bubbling high till the moment they say, "That's all till next year. Have a terrific summer!"

- Your students now know each other well. Many friendships have been formed. Why don't you suggest that they get together during the summer months and continue some of their learning activities on an informal basis without the teacher being involved? Such meetings could include:
  - –Outdoor sketch trips for art students (bring your own picnic lunch).
  - –Reading-and-discussion sessions for students of literature, public affairs, history or government.
  - –Summer sewing circles for students of dressmaking, drapery making, upholstery and slipcover classes.
  - –Conversation and cool drinks for foreign-language students, so they can practice their newly acquired tongue.
- Plant the idea of another adult education course, either during the summer or next fall. To do this successfully, you'll need to build on each student's individual interests or skills as you've observed these during the course. For example, a student in a ceramics class has expressed interest in sculpturing. His teacher pointed out that a local art museum offered sculpture courses during the summer, and that it would be wise to sign up early. Your last class might be a brainstorming session on ways to continue learning during the summer . . . or on ways to use a student's new knowledge or skills during the summer.

CHAPTER IX

EVERYBODY HAS A MESSAGE

Do You Read Me?

We are all one-man communication centers: sending and receiving messages every minute of the day. Our messages are often silent and given quite unconsciously—a gesture, posture, facial expression, tone of voice. According to Julius Fast's book, *Body Language*, we speak as loudly nonverbally as we do with words. What does this mean to teachers? It means that the silent student is saying something just as important (perhaps more important) as are his more vocal class members. His silent messages may be varied: I don't understand what is being discussed ... this topic bores me ... it has no meaning to my life ... I have personal problems which keep me from concentrating on what's going on here in the class. Do you read the messages your students are sending you? Do they read the messages you are trying to convey to them verbally ... or do they read only your nonverbal messages of which you're not aware?

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

Students are extremely alert to the nonverbal messages a teacher sends out, whether they seem to be "paying attention" in the traditional sense or not. If you are trying, but failing, to establish a friendly and open classroom atmosphere your facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures may say that you want just the opposite—that you really want a classroom in which you are the boss, the big authority; one in which you run the show. The way you answer students' questions may be judgmental and defensive ... may show that you are afraid of a climate in which you might be criticized.

For example: you have just finished explaining the mathematics lesson. A student says, "I don't understand why you put the decimal point after the two." Perhaps you answer in a gentle, patient voice, "I explained that you count over three

places. Any more questions?" Such a response is an example of ineffective communication. The student's question is actually feedback about himself, and should be treated as such. It shows that he, and maybe others in the class, did not understand your explanation. But you interpreted the student's question as criticism of your teaching. Your message to the student was, "It's your fault you didn't understand. I explained it quite clearly." But evidently your explanation was not clear, because at least one student didn't understand it. To improve your communications you might have said, "That's an important point, and I want to be sure that everyone understands it. Now, we find the place by counting over three places. Let me try to explain it another way. . . ." (The example of poor communication was adapted from an article in *The National Elementary Principal.*)

Constant feedback is especially important in the teacher/student relationship. Are the students getting the right message from you? Are you giving them a negative, nonconstructive message via your tone of voice, facial expression, brusqueness . . . a message that subtly criticizes or ridicules them and makes them hesitant about speaking up again?

HOW TO GET FEEDBACK

Never assume that your students understand what you are saying verbally . . . or even that they are listening. There are several ways to find out:

- **Maintain eye-contact.** As you teach, constantly sweep the room with your eyes to see how many students are looking at you and seem interested. Watch for the slight frown, the glazed stare, the wondering glance, the preoccupied look. Watch for subtle changes in expressions . . . nuances that often reveal hidden emotions. Julius Fast says, "Some scientists have found as many as forty positions of the (eye) brows alone, though most agree that less than half of them are significant . . . there is no end to the number of signals we can transmit with our eyes and the skin around them."
- **Set up your own "mini-course."** One of the new practices in teacher training is quick, five-minute teaching sessions during which the student teacher tries to explain a specific point and his students evaluate his teaching technique. In an adult education class you can explain a point for several minutes, then ask the students to evaluate your teaching by telling you whether they felt it was weak and what they need to know that you did not provide. You'll get much

more feedback from this innovative approach than by asking your class the trite, old query, "Any questions?"

- Use instant feedback. The quicker the feedback the more effective the learning. That is the principle on which programmed instruction is based . . . and it works. Even without programmed textbooks, you can try the instant-feedback technique. After you've explained a point or demonstrated a skill, give each student an opportunity to show whether he understands your instruction . . . either by stating it verbally or by writing down what he thought you said . . . or by demonstrating the skill. This will show you instantly which students are having learning difficulties, what those difficulties are, and what kind of help each student needs.
- Try a suggestion box. Many students feel shy about criticizing their teacher . . . even though the teacher may be doing things that block their learning. Set up a class suggestion box and tell students you want them to drop any criticism or suggestions in it which they may have about your teaching or the class situation in general, without requiring them to sign their names.

PERSON-TO-PERSON TALKING TECHNIQUES

The personal interview provides the best way of communication with those students who have difficulty speaking out in a group. But it takes skill, personal warmth, and an honest liking for people with all their frailties and foibles, and–above all–the ability to listen. Creative listening is not always easy and does not come naturally to everyone. It requires practice. Try the following approaches in your next student interview:

- Ask only one question at a time, and give the student plenty of time to answer. Don't be afraid of long silences. Let the students be the first to break the silences (the pressure to break them will build up to a very tense atmosphere), and they may subsequently reveal problems or emotions which they have been hiding.
- Draw the student out by asking questions that require more than "yes" or "no" for an answer. To encourage further talk, simply repeat (in a calm, nonjudgmental way) the student's last statement: "You say you don't enjoy the class anymore." The student relieved by your placid reaction to his implied criticism, will usually elaborate and

give reasons. Be alert to the clues that lie in the student's associations of ideas in his answers, sudden shifts in subject (you may have been approaching an area of deep feeling or problem), opening and closing sentences, references that crop up again and again, gaps in answers, and inconsistencies. All of these are "signposts" to what the student is really thinking or feeling.

- Watch particularly for nonverbal clues ... the adult student's posture and gestures. Fidgeting and restlessness, twitching, and rigid self-control are common tip-offs to emotional tension and high feeling.
- Fight any tendency you may have to make decisions for the student. Once you have disclosed his real problem through skillful questioning and listening, your job is to supply information and possible solutions from which he can choose. Ideally, you will make your viewpoint apparent without making the student feel that he is expected to handle the situation your way.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CO-WORKERS

"The more we get together ... together ... together! The more we get together the happier we'll be!" Remember that old song? It's especially true for teachers who want to establish good working relationships with other staff members. You aren't getting all the help you're entitled to from your school if you don't make contact with the librarian, the audiovisual people, the guidance counselors. If you teach at night, this may take some extra effort but it may well be worth it. For example, from the audiovisual department you need a constant flow of communication about:

- The new teaching materials for adult basic education that are now flooding the market.
- New films, tapes, and records which are becoming available in your subject area.
- New, technological equipment which is being purchased by your school system ... and when it will be available for you to use.
- Rules and regulations about checking out and returning AV equipment.

If you have teacher-aides or volunteer helpers (thousands are active in our schools today), good communication with them is essential. You can't just turn them loose in your classroom with-

out any planning or direction and expect to receive real help. Here are some basic communication steps to ease the way for your auxiliary personnel:

- Let them know at the start exactly what you want them to do. Naturally, you will stay flexible and their roles may change as time goes on and their special abilities emerge . . . but they will feel more secure if their duties are clearly described in the beginning.
- Inform them about the school's schedules, routines, and regulations so they will not make embarrassing mistakes.
- If they are new to the school take them to: the teachers' lounge, the library, the audiovisual materials center, the coffee bar . . . and introduce them to the people they'll be working with: the adult school director, the librarian, and other members of the adult school staff.

CHAPTER X

REPLENISH YOUR IDEA BANK

This chapter consists of a roundup of reminders and suggestions—of teaching methods you may have used in the past but have forgotten, or approaches that may be brand new to you. Use it to replenish your idea bank. Ideas breed ideas, so you'll take out a lot more than you put in.

BEG, BORROW, OR STEAL . . . IT'S LEGAL

Where do you think people get ideas? Even the most talented comedy writers admit that much of their material is made up of old routines, switched around and updated, that completely new comedy approaches are practically unheard of. And not only Milton Berle is an idea thief. Here are some ways you can pick the brains of others to snap up your teaching routines:

- Be a "teacher-watcher." Come to school at a time when your own class is not in session, and visit the class of another teacher. You might even want to visit a regular high school or elementary school class. No matter what subject or what age level is being taught, you may pick up techniques that hadn't occurred to you before.
- Invite teacher criticism. If there's a teacher whose judgment you trust, ask him to visit your class and make suggestions. (However, if you are super-sensitive, this may not be for you. Furthermore, if you're super-sensitive and fear criticism, you're probably not the relaxed, receptive person adult students need.)
- Explore the ideas of your students. Their thoughts may be the most practical of all, and who knows you and your teaching methods better than they do? Ask them the following questions . . . openly, if they feel comfortable about

criticizing you, or in writing. Make it clear that they need not sign their answers.

—If you were going to teach this class next year, what would you do differently?

—Have you ever thought of dropping out? Why?

- Use student power by having a brainstorming session in class. Purpose: to involve fresh minds in dreaming up better teaching techniques.

WAYS TO KEEP IT INTERESTING

Teachers have always known that to keep their noncaptive audience coming back for more, their lessons must have quick, practical applications. Adult students should get from each class meeting some idea or skill they can use *now*—on the job or at home.

This is not always possible, of course, but the following ideas may help:

- Are you sure you know what is of interest to your students? In two parent-education projects in California, the topics which sparked the most vigorous discussion came directly from the students. Topics introduced by the teacher—as a result of his own analysis of what the students wanted and needed—were rarely seized on by class members. So let your students be your guide. Find out why they're in the class, what they expect to use their learning for, and what particular aspects of the subject they're most interested in.
- It's not enough to theorize about job opportunities. What jobs are actually available in your area? Have students call employment offices, check classified ads, and make lists of jobs they could realistically apply for or be trained for. If some of your students are already involved in job training, give them vocabulary words they'll use in their new work.
- Math problems should, wherever possible, be related to the interests and backgrounds of the individual students. Women are probably more interested in solving problems having to do with shopping, budgeting, cooking. Men are more interested in problems involving automobiles, job situations, sports.
- Bring it down to the here-and-now. If your students study the Bill of Rights, for example, help them to see how it affects their lives today, and what their lives might well be

like without the protection of that Bill. Study of government can be as dry as a legal brief unless the student can see how it touches himself and his family.

- In a bookkeeping class, students enjoy applying their new knowledge to organizing their own household or business finances for tax purposes . . . as a change from setting up books for mythical corporations.
- What are the characteristics of good salesmanship and of bad salesmanship? A class in distributive education could be asked these questions, then urged to watch for these characteristics next time they do any shopping and to report their experiences to the group.
- What is the most practical use many adults can make of their improving ability to read and write? Filling out a job application form is something many of them will be doing. So hand out application forms to all your adult basic education students, and devote some class time to filling them out. When students encounter words that are new to them, like "educational experience," "military service," "references," write them on the board for explanation and study.
- A parent-educator might suggest that his students observe a "noncritical weekend" with their teenagers. Listening to what their youngsters have to say and learning about how they feel is important . . . but they will rarely open up if they get nothing but criticism. "Listen More–Learn More" could be the parents' slogan for a two-day moratorium on criticizing their youngsters.
- Ask your students to name one or more things learned in your class that they've been able to use outside of class. This will help you discover how relevant–or irrelevant–your teaching has been.

WHAT CAN YOU TEACH IN FIVE MINUTES?

Five minutes of class time are left; your students have finished the session's planned activities and are shuffling their papers and their feet. Do such odds and ends of time usually go down the drain? Don't let them. English teacher Ted Hipple made a collection of short, self-contained lessons for those end-of-class doldrums, and said, "What has been a pleasant surprise to me is that sometimes the interest generated and the learning effected have been greater in those end-of-class fillers than in the previous forty-five minutes." And why not? Radio and TV com-

mercials get a lot of messages across in just sixty seconds . . . and they are often longer remembered than the program.

The following suggestions may rev up your thinking. Some are adapted from Mr. Hipple's "shortie" lessons, reported in the *English Journal*:

- Teach two or three spelling demons. Words like "receive" and "separate" are often easier for students to remember when taught in five-minute capsules than in long class-periods.
- Ask for student comments on a current news story. Did they hear about it through newspapers, radio or television? Which do they think is the most informative news source . . . the most reliable . . . the most influential?
- Collect newspaper clippings related to the subject you teach, and use them to spur the discussion. If you teach auto repair, for example, you might use a clipping on the air-pollution-by-automobile controversy. How would changed motors and/or fuels affect auto mechanics?
- Present two or three new vocabulary words—whether you teach English or a foreign language. Explain their derivation and give examples of how they are used. Ask each student to say or write a sentence using one of the new words.
- Ask students, "What is the toughest thing you have had to cope with in learning this subject?" Their answers will be enlightening to them (maybe they've never thought out their greatest difficulty) and to you. You'll be clued to the specialized needs of each student, as well as to mistakes you may be making (proceeding too quickly or too slowly, using words students don't understand, etc.).
- "Can you spot the mistake in these sentences?" Write on the blackboard three or four sentences containing grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors which you know your students are advanced enough to recognize. They'll enjoy airing their knowledge, which, at the same time, will be reinforced in this way.
- Ask students to write down the most important ideas they've learned during the class session now ending . . . or the most useful things they've learned during the entire course.

ONE TEACHER'S TIME-SAVING TIP

Peter E. Leousis, a teacher at Dixie Hollins High School in St. Petersburg, Florida; that state's "Biology Teacher of the Year"

for 1969 and winner of one of the "Outstanding Educators of America" awards in 1970, sent *Techniques* the following, time-saving idea which, he says, has saved countless man-hours which teachers and students can utilize in other ways:

"Those of us who teach courses of a continuing nature frequently have new students enrolling every week or two. Each new student needs introduction to the class and the course. This often involves 15 to 30 minutes of the teacher's time—time that could be spent giving other students individual attention. In fact, many students would soon resent listening to introductory information given repeatedly.

"One approach to this problem is to prepare written, introductory material to hand to new students. This approach can be reinforced by involving the additional sense of hearing. Make a tape recording of the introductory material. When the new students arrive, provide them with the written material and start the recording. This is best accomplished in a separate but adjoining room. If a separate classroom is not available, earphones will serve satisfactorily and be less distracting to others. If necessary a far corner of the classroom can be used, keeping the audio volume at a low level.

"Whatever the course content involved, there is basic information typical of all courses. Some examples:

- When does the class meet? How long is the class? When do students get a break?
- How long does it take a person to finish the course, and with what exceptions?
- Does the student receive credit for attendance if he is late to class or leaves after the break?
- When do you provide opportunities for individual help?
- What is your method of checking attendance?
- What is your grading system?
- Will there be a variety of experiences, such as films, slides, field trips, visiting lecturers, etc.?
- How can the student get the most out of each experience?
- Are library facilities available, and if so, at what hours?
- What kinds of tests and homework will be given, and how are they graded?
- What are the fees for the course?
- What registration information must students provide?

"The few hours you spend writing and tape recording this material will save you hundreds of hours of needless repetition as

new students enter your class. The students do not feel neglected, because after the tape recording ends you answer any questions they may have. Last and most important, you can now be in two places at one time . . . working with your old and new students at once."

MAKING CREATIVE USE OF PRINTED MATERIALS

If you use newspapers from time to time, and perhaps a few government pamphlets, you've only stuck a toe in the vast sea of printed material that can help your students learn. And if you're not experimenting with new uses of the printed matter at your disposal, well, here are some tips to start your own "idea-bubbler":

- Tempt students to read more about your subject by bringing to class provocative paperback books they can easily read and understand. Ask your librarian for one of the many lists of the thousands of paperback titles.
- Make greater use of technical and trade association journals. Students may not know that there are magazines catering to almost every specialized interest—from office management to auto repairing. Articles from such magazines can be the basis of lesson-units, can be posted on bulletin boards, or made into photo-copies and distributed to the class for study.
- Make a new rule for yourself. Never read a newspaper or magazine without scissors or a razor blade at hand to clip out cartoons, feature stories, editorials, sport stories, pertinent local news stories, how-to-do-it features, that you feel will interest some members of your class. It will be a rare day that won't turn up some item you can use in class.
- Acquaint your students with the fantastic world of free materials they can send for . . . from government agencies, business houses, trade and professional associations. Make it a definite project to look at lists of such free materials . . . then have each student select one and write for it.

If this book has been helpful, you may be interested in other titles published by NAPCAE for teachers and students:

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