

# Tested Recipe for Teaching

by Ann Sindt, H. JI. 2

Dr. Wilma Brewer, new head of the Food and Nutrition Department, has developed a basic recipe to promote favorable instructor-student communication. It consists of a mutual understanding, "aids" for the presentation of knowledge, and the spice of the instructor's personality.

This recipe is the link necessary for making the classroom a profitable media for the dissemination of knowledge.

"The brilliant student seeks out information on her own," explains Dr. Brewer, "and is not so dependent on classroom instruction for learning." However, the "brilliant" are the exceptions, and the greater percentage of students must be stimulated in the classroom to think in broader areas.

An understanding of each student as an individual enables the instructor to be better aware of points that may be unclear to the students. In striving to achieve this path of understanding, Dr. Brewer arranges as many personal interviews with students as her time allows.

"Personal contact with students breaks down some of the learning barriers when they exist," continues Dr. Brewer. "Preconceived ideas concerning a course often prevent an instructor from reaching the student. For this reason, an understanding of course objectives may make the student more receptive."

Besides the usual lecture, Dr. Brewer has found the use of different types of visual aids to be most helpful in gaining response from the students. Bulletin board material serves as a garnish for course material to increase students' interest.

Lantern slides enable Dr. Brewer actually to "show" the students in tangible form what she has presented in lecture form. Food displays in terms of nutritive value and exhibits of experimental white rats help to interpret nutrition concepts in the classroom.

A new Vu-graph projector enlarges graphs and charts on a screen while Dr. Brewer gives explanatory material. And there are display cases in which topics applying to the department are presented in exhibit form.

"There is no end to the possible visual aids that can be used," comments Dr. Brewer, "and they are all helpful in attracting interest in course material and relating it to broader implications."

Variations on her "basic recipe" are acceptable and often prove successful. Dr. Brewer points out



that the way that seems best is not always adequate when applied to different situations. For instance, when communicating with freshmen, it is necessary to introduce other methods than those used for seniors. "Freshmen are in an area that might be quite new to them, so basic principles and vocabulary must be stressed. But seniors have the basic knowledge to delve into the course material, and it is easier for the instructor to stimulate independent thinking."

Personality, as well as age differences, require new approaches and tactics. "For instance, some students wish to have the assignments spelled out for them with exams packaged and delivered, and the students, in turn, deliver this back." Instructors who find their students asking for a custom-made course must place more responsibility on the students by requiring more of them in terms of original projects.

Dr. Brewer's experience as a college student began at Kansas State. She received her M.S. from Washington State and her Ph. D. from Michigan State.

She explains that at the time of her college career communication as such was not thought of as a separate area of learning. Since then, communication has been capitalized, and theories on the subject have been formulated.

Despite rules and theories, every situation is different. Both teacher and student must experiment to give and gain the intended message.