

Letters to the Editor

Student Motivation

I'm writing in response to your plea for articles dealing with student motivation.

In my school district, student motivation is a serious problem. Absenteeism, cutting and just a general "I don't care" attitude seems to be the rule of the day for a large number of our students and, I might add, parents. Faced with this problem, I thought many hours about what I could do to awaken interest on the part of both student and parent. I came up with a way that would benefit me by establishing communication with parents, benefit and motivate my students, and finally was in itself an interesting new idea. After teaching a particularly hard concept, I ask my students to teach the same concept to their parents using their notes, etc. After a few days I call the parents and give them a quiz over the phone on the concept and the grade is credited to the son or daughter. The advantages of this idea have been numerous. Parents loved it. Students were finally speaking to their parents in teaching them, and I got a chance to chat with the parents about the progress of their son or daughter. The project was well received by one and all!

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Role in AIBS

You are quite aware of my long-term interest in NABT affairs. I have served on its committees faithfully and feel special satisfaction about my contribution some years ago in revising its financial structure. It is because I am still interested that I write

this letter.

The roster for candidates for 1977 NABT officers and directors has just arrived. I note that only five of the twenty candidates are members of the American Institute of Biological Sciences. I suppose I would not be quite so shocked if this were a random list of NABT members; however, presumably we have here the leadership group for NABT.

I recognize the importance of educational societies doing all they can to develop high standards for teaching their subjects. However, I have been concerned for many years about the "isolation" of a large part of this society structure and population from intimate, continuous contact with the particular subject involved. Let us turn to biology teachers in particular.

AIBS is carrying on a very important program of social responsibility in the areas of government and in extracurricular fields where biological input is needed and important. Such a program needs the general support of biologists. Looking ahead to the future, it desperately needs the guidance of the teaching profession to develop future biologists who are dedicated to the principles involved.

In recent years, *Bioscience* has emphasized general review articles on important developments in a broad range of life science subjects. We believe that these are excellent background for people teaching biology, and some of them are suitable reading even for students on the high school level. We have also covered such major problems as the international food crisis and some of the interesting controversies in biology itself: e.g., the pros and cons of research on recombinant DNA.

Much more could be said, but these are certainly some of the most

important considerations.

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Cellanelle, Not Organelle

I have felt for some time that the word organelle, as used in many high school biology books, is not the proper term to be used in reference for a part of a cell. This has reference to the ribosomes, Golgi apparatus, centrioles, lysosomes, etc. It does not meet the definition of an organ so why use the term organelle? It is a cell so the appropriate word should be cellanelle. This word should be brought into the mainstream in our discussion of cells. As biologists we should use the most appropriate word in the appropriate place.

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Required Courses

I think that you miss the point when you blame required courses for all of the ills in the educational system today.

Required courses give students the chance for experiences in many areas to which they might not ordinarily be exposed. How many high school students (or for that matter college students) are ready to decide what they wish to do with their lives, and what courses will be relevant to them? It is often through such exposure in a required course that a person may find something that really turn him on.

I agree with you that traditional education does not prepare a person for life; however, abolishing required
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