

State and Local

A&M helping teachers better science classes

By Lisa Williams
Reporter

Rural elementary school teachers are going to class to learn how to enhance science classes and make them more exciting for their students as part of a science improvement project at Texas A&M.

Linda Descano Nelson, grant and funds coordinator for the A&M Center for Mathematics and Science Education, said the state-funded program was created in response to school administrators, teachers and University educators who felt new science education programs were not being extended to the rural school districts.

Since June 6, about 32 teachers from four surrounding counties have been attending the two-week workshop on campus to learn "hands on" teaching methods as part of the Rural Elementary Science Improvement Project. The objective is to make lessons fun for students while keeping costs down.

The RESIP workshops are just one stage of a five-month demon-

stration project devised by the center to develop innovative strategies and creative ideas that increase student interest and knowledge in science. Faculty from A&M's colleges of education and science will conduct the program.

"The teachers' workshop focuses not only on content knowledge in life and earth sciences, but also introduces new ways to apply these concepts in the classroom," Nelson said.

"The 'hands on' technique is designed to be more interesting and easier to learn than the alternative, which is plain, rote memorization," she said. "The activities are innovative, fun, easy to set up and easy for the children to use, yet they get the information across."

"For instance, take the concept of buoyancy. By dropping some raisins into a neutral-colored soda, a teacher can actually show the kids about buoyancy. It doesn't cost a lot of money, it doesn't require special equipment, and yet each child can actually experiment with it. We call these 'low cost, no cost' activities."

Karlyn Hulse, an Allen Academy fourth grade instructor who is participating in RESIP, said that this "hands on" method will make science come alive for her classes.

"The new science lessons include group projects and lots of experiments," Hulse said. "The kids are not only going to like what they're learning, but they'll also learn to cooperate better in solving problems. I've got some ideas that I know my kids are going to enjoy a lot more than the books."

Nelson said to encourage use of the new lessons, material kits with about 15 science activities are assembled during the workshop. Teachers also learn to develop thinking skills, to identify resources, to evaluate student progress and to effectively manage their science programs, she said.

Hulse said, "Participation in the project has been a lot of fun and it's been a real learning experience for me."

"We've gotten first hand instruction from a meteorologist, a chemist and a physicist. Their information has added a great deal to my science knowledge," she said.

But teachers are not the only focus of RESIP's plan for improvement.

Nelson said RESIP's program began in early May by recognizing school principals' roles with a two-day leadership workshop concentrating on their importance in establishing, monitoring and supporting good science programs.

"Without the principals' approval, new projects can't be executed," she said, "so the workshop concentrated on voicing teacher problems with students and with resources, as well as encouraging the new programs." "The principals reacted so enthusiastically to the project that we received over 60 applications for the teachers summer workshop. Another incentive for participation is American Association of Teachers credit or three hours graduate credit from A&M," she said.

Another thrust of RESIP involves using community members as science resources.

"We explore businesses within the schools' communities and then we help the schools find guest speakers and set up science fairs, tours and field trips," Nelson said. A community resource guide for the school district's use also is compiled, she said.

The University's center was established in 1986 to stimulate improvement in math and science instruction by linking schools with the resources of A&M and the private sector.

Police Beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department from June 3 through Monday:

MISDEMEANOR THEFT:

• Ten bicycles were reported stolen from various locations around campus.

• A student reported that someone stole her Visa card from her purse and charged several items in the College Station area.

• A wall telephone was reported stolen from the Engineering and Physics Building.

BURGLARY:

• Police received a report that someone stole a 12-volt battery, a gas-powered hand blower and a small saber saw from the Veterinary Medicine School's feed and storage area.

BURGLARY OF A MOTOR VEHICLE:

• A student reported that someone stole her 35mm camera from her vehicle while it was parked on campus.

• A student reported that someone siphoned several gallons of gasoline from his vehicle, which was parked on campus.

FORGERY:

• A student told police that two hot checks in his name were

written at the MSC Main Desk by someone else.

MINOR IN POSSESSION:

• After stopping a vehicle for speeding, an officer determined that the driver and passenger had been drinking. An empty beer can and a partially full can of beer were found in the car.

CRIMINAL TRESPASS:

• An officer responding to a steam tunnel alarm found three students and two teen-age girls in the area just outside the MSC tunnel entrance.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF:

• Someone detached a section of fence around the golf cart compound and drove a cart onto the 14th and 15th greens. The greens were damaged by "donuts" made by the cart's wheels.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT:

• A student reported that someone waved a knife at her from a car while she was at the east gate of campus.

FALSE IDENTIFICATION AS A POLICE OFFICER:

After receiving a report of a vehicle chasing another vehicle across campus, an officer contacted one of the drivers, who had reportedly flashed a badge at the other driver.

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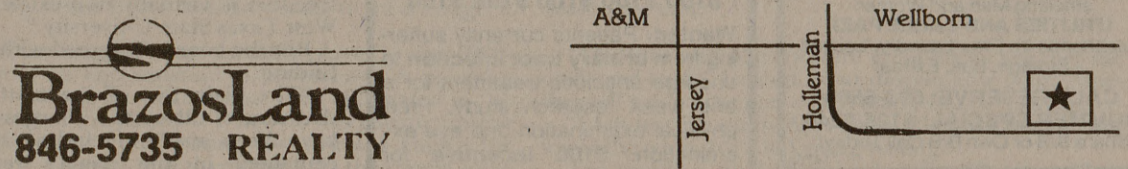
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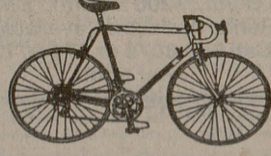


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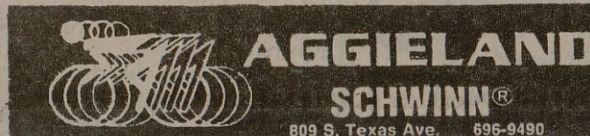
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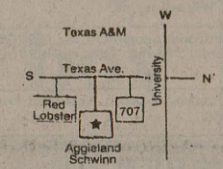
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1.17	2,750	5,000	695	1,400	2,000	695	1,400	2,000
1.15	2,995	6,000	695	1,400	2,000	695	1,400	2,000
1.11	2,350	4,600	695	1,400	2,000	695	1,400	2,000
1.11	3,950	8,000	695	1,100	1,18	695	1,100	1,18
1.09	2,195	4,000	695	1,100	1,11	695	1,100	1,11
1.09	2,750	5,000	495	1,000	70	495	1,000	70
1.09	3,850	7,000	495	1,200	70	495	1,200	70
1.04	2,150	4,000	275	500	65	275	500	65
1.03	3,595	7,000	375	600	63	375	600	63
1.01	1,495	3,000	335	500	58	335	500	58
1.01	1,895	3,000	335	600	57	335	600	57
1.01	3,495	7,000	335	500	53	335	500	53
1.01	2,185	4,200	335	600	51	335	600	51
.95	1,895	3,000	210	400	26	210	400	26
.95	2,395	4,600	165	300	10	165	300	10
.93	1,595	3,000	185	400		185	400	
.92	1,850	4,000	215	400		215	400	
.92	1,650	3,200	165	300		165	300	
.91	3,195	6,000	155	300	.90	155	300	.90
.90	1,595	3,000	118	200	.75	118	200	.75
.90	1,750	3,100	111	200	.58	111	200	.58
.89	1,350	2,600	95	180	.51	95	180	.51
.89	895	1,700	78	140		78	140	
.88	1,340	2,600	63	120		63	120	
.83	1,595	3,000	55	110		55	110	
.82	1,785	3,100	48	90	2.16	48	90	2.16
.80	1,025	2,000	45	90	1.37	45	90	1.37
.77	885	1,800	41	80	.75	41	80	.75
.77	1,075	2,000	35	70	.41	35	70	.41
.75	950	1,900	30	60	.38	30	60	.38
.75	1,135	2,200	14.95	30		14.95	30	
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