

editor's page

One Teacher's Influence

Our lives are molded by a multitude of influences. Because we, as Extension professionals, have more formal education than the average person, and because we believe in education as a lifelong process, I suggest that our teachers have served as major influences on our lives.

I believe that my decision to express interest in and then accept the editorship of the *Journal* was, in large part, the result of the influence of one of my teachers, Edgar Dale. Dr. Dale, a leader in the field of communications, is perhaps best known for his book *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching*; for writing and co-editing the 287 issues of "The News Letter," which emanated from The Ohio State University for nearly 37 years; and for work on readability (see Jerry Reyburn's reference to the Dale-Chall formula in the September/October issue of the *Journal*). My association with Edgar Dale began when I was a student in his seminar on communication in 1963.

I'd like to share with you a few of the "Daleisms" that have stuck with me. I trust that you'll be able to make a connection between them and the *Journal*. I recall Professor Dale's wit as he "complained" that John Dewey, who was probably America's most influential educational philosopher until his death at 93 in 1952, was "stealing his stuff." Well Edgar, it's OK if you steal some of mine.

I like his definition of communication: the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality.

He once asked a student who requested that he be a member of her graduate committee, "Why me?" "Because I want to be a writer," she replied. Dale's response was, "Show me your rejection slips."

He said the goal of a skillful communicator is to express rather than to *impress*.

He suggested that readers should read the lines, read between the lines, and read beyond the lines. (Have you read Dr. Suess' book *On Beyond Zebra?*)

During one of his seminars, Dale presented each of the dozen or so of us with the latest edition of *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching* with the provision that we read it and respond to it by jotting comments in the margins. Having done so, we returned the book to him. He, in turn, responded to our comments before returning the book to us. I treasure my copy; it shows evidence that he and I were communicating in accord with his definition (above).

As we discussed the book during one class meeting someone asked its price. As I recall, it was about \$12. When a couple of us expressed alarm (this was some 10 years ago), Dale asked whether any of us had recently been to dinner and a show.

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