

Computer helps students learn physiology

NEWARK, Del. -- Physiology and anatomy students have been memorizing the names and locations of the glands and muscles since time immemorial, but Dr. Paul Sammelwitz' animal science students at the University of Delaware master the age-old lessons in a new way.

Sammelwitz' students supplement their regular classroom and laboratory work with Plato, the computer-assisted learning system. Upon registration for Sammelwitz' courses,

each student is assigned a regular time-slot with the computer.

At the computer center each student faces a typewriter-like keyboard topped by what appears to be a television screen. When the student types the appropriate code, the assigned lesson appears on the screen. First the student sees an unlabeled diagram of the human endocrine system, for example. As he or she pushes button A, the adrenals are located on the diagram. The student pushes

B and Plato points out the pituitary gland — and so on. Each student can take as long as he needs to master the lesson. When he feels he has the glands down pat, he can ask Plato to test him. This time it's up to the student to tell Plato the name of each gland on the diagram. If the student misses too many, Plato politely but firmly types out, "Suggest you go through this lesson again."

Project Plato is not new to the University. The system is used extensively by many

departments on campus, to teach such diverse subjects as plant science, mathematics, music and nursing. Sammelwitz himself has been using Plato with his students for the last four years. But up until this year he had to rely on lessons that had been programmed for veterinary students at the University of Illinois. While these adequately covered much of the factual material Sammelwitz wished to cover, much of the material was more detailed than necessary

for Sammelwitz' freshmen and sophomores. However, the lessons did enable Sammelwitz to skip much of the rote memorization lessons in class, leaving more class time to explain how and why the body systems function as they do.

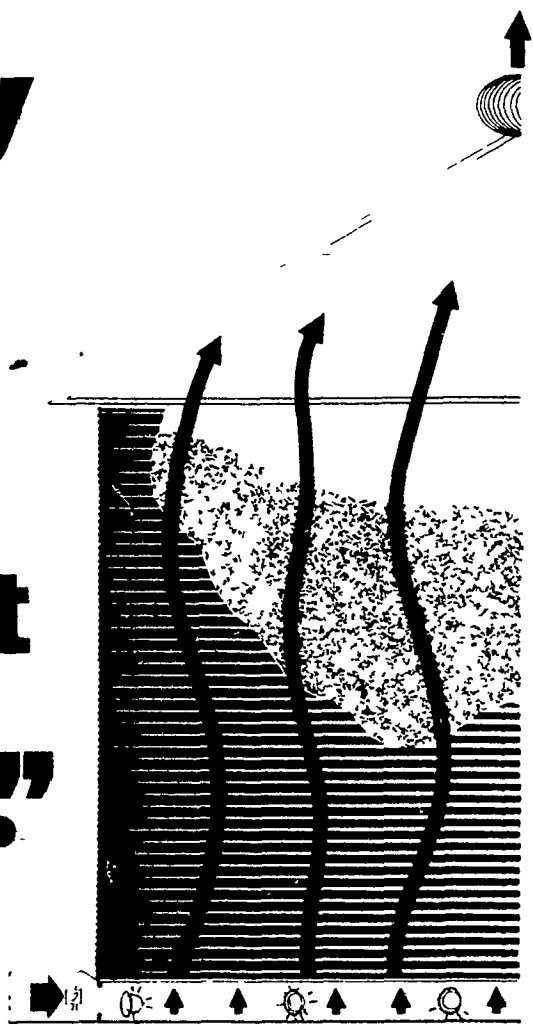
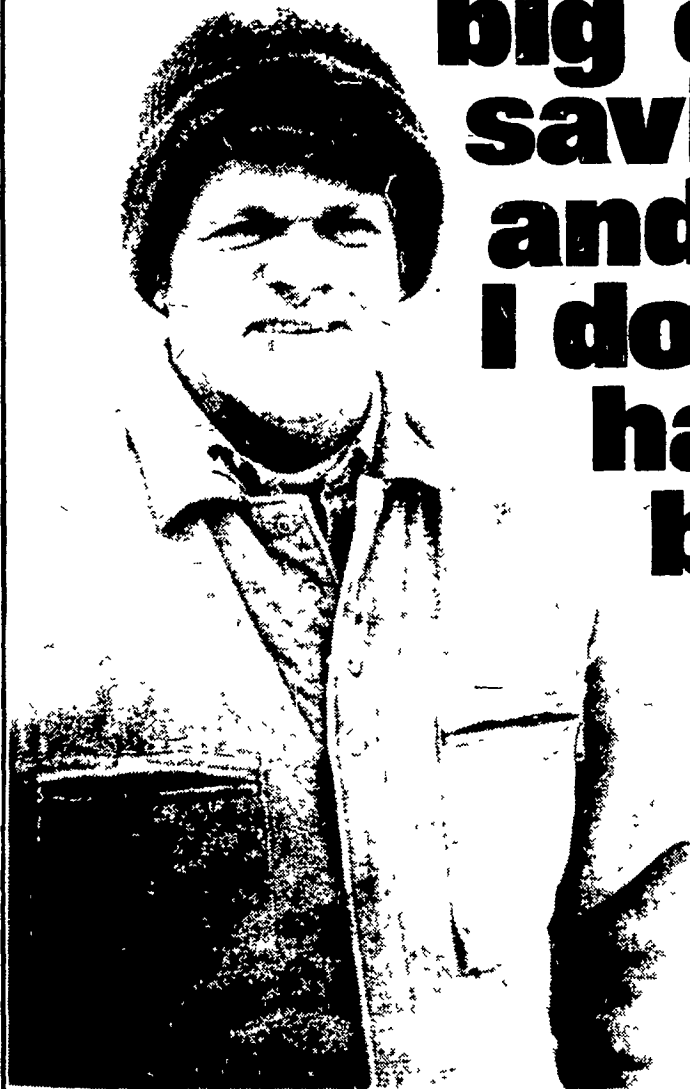
Still, Sammelwitz wanted the material to conform better to his own lesson plans, so this year he took the matter into his own hands and designed several lessons specifically for his introductory level courses. So far he has programmed

lessons on the endocrine systems of mammals and birds. he plans to cover the rest of the body systems eventually, but he says it will take years to finish the job. The students agree it's a worthwhile long-term goal, since they easily notice — and appreciate — the improvement in the lessons Sammelwitz designs himself.

Visitors will have a chance to try Plato for themselves at Ag Day, today, April 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Agricultural Hall in Newark. Sammelwitz will set up a computer terminal in the lobby of Agricultural Hall for the event, which also features live animals, pony rides, a plant sale, and fun and games for the entire family. Youngsters will be able to match wits against Plato in arithmetic, and the computer can even show everyone how a flower grows.

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Red Lion Area FFA winners named

RED LION — The Red Lion Area FFA parliamentary procedure team captured first place honors in the Adams - Franklin - York Counties FFA area contest held at York Vo-Tech on April 17, while two Red Lion public speakers placed 2nd and 3rd.

The parliamentary procedure contest consisted of each team conducting a business meeting and demonstrating their ability to use proper parliamentary practices in handling of assigned items of business.

The members of the winning team were: Barb Snyder, Ken Sechrist, Darlene Schrum, Francine Lewis, Chris Reachard, Greg Innerst, Blaine Grove, and Todd Grove.

Marie Deavers placed second in the Conservation Public Speaking contest with a speech entitled "Conservation - Use But Don't Use Up" and Beth Holtzinger placed third in the FFA Public Speaking contest with a speech entitled "Agriculture's in Your Future - Why Ignore It?"

The participants in this contest were those who advanced from the individual county contest. These winners will now compete in the Regional contest which involves competition from a 12 county area, to be held at Shippenburg on May 1.

Feed manufactured by class of animals is as follows: Beef cattle and sheep, 21 per cent.; broilers, 19; dairy cattle, 18; chicken starter, grower, layer, breeder, 16; hogs, 16; turkeys, 4; all others (pet, horse, fish, etc.), 6 per cent.