

Students shouldn't count on calculators

BY PAULINE CAMPBELL

Seeing a math, physics, agriculture, or business student with a calculator, be it a basic calculator, a scientific calculator or a TI-83, isn't uncommon.

According to Ms. Polly Abney, financial management teacher, students are becoming dependent on this technology for answers to basic calculations.

Ms. Abney has observed students dependency on calculators for such things as computing their grades and check balancing, which only requires addition and subtraction.

"Some students have to have a calculator," for basic math, such as adding cost for price lists and record-keeping, says Ag. teacher Mr. Roy Reynolds.

"Most students are dependent on calculators, but others just use

them to check their work," commented Ginny Campbell a Data/Measurements student.

Ms. Connie Riddle, who teaches Accounting, believes students have become so dependent on calculators they do not check to see if they have keyed in the correct numbers. They assume the answer they are given is correct because the calculator gave it to them.

"Calculators are only as accurate as the numbers you put in. Wrong number, wrong answer," said Ms. Riddle.

According to Ms. Riddle, students should have some reasoning skills in order to determine if the answer the calculator gives them is reasonable.

Although there are cases where the calculator is very beneficial and students are not dependent on them.

Most of these cases occur in advanced classes, where students do trigonometry, calculus, and other advanced topics.

"Calculators in advanced classes are needed, such as AP Calculus. Those students have shown proficiency in math and have the mental maturity to use a calculator without losing their ability to do mental math," said physics teacher Ms. Stephanie Harmon.

Advanced Topics student, Aaron Ridner said, "Calculators are extremely necessary for advanced math classes because of the amount of work that has to be done."

"Calculators have there place, but don't become dependant on them," said Data/Measurements and Geometry teacher, Ms. Dawn Stallworth.

that if a student has never written a proficient open response in the class room, they will never get a proficient on the state test.

While the question about open responses goes unanswered, Mr. Hale does know what can be done right now.

"In order to meet our goal, student attendance will have to improve." This makes sense. If you are not at school it is difficult to learn the things taught at school.

He goes on to say, "Connecting objectives of lessons to real life experiences will help students retain information and concepts better."

RCHS must score higher on the next testing period to improve its ranking among surrounding schools and every one must do their part in order for RCHS to succeed.

"I want to challenge the students to improve our ranking among our neighboring schools," said Principal Hale.

Senior trip is on the move

BY JACOB HELTON

Last year's seniors failed at getting a senior trip. However, this year's seniors may change that.

Student Council President Courtney Alexander and Vice President Angie Boreing are currently working on a proposal to take before the SBDM.

This proposal will contain plans for where the seniors want to go, how they want to get there, how to pay for it, and what they want to do once they get there.

If the proposal is approved by the SBDM Council, "ALL SENIORS that plan on attending the trip need to be at the meetings," said Mr. John Hale, the RCHS Principal.

Miss Alexander and Miss Boreing, along with the Student Support Committee, made a decision to go to Williamsburg, Virginia. They made this decision because of security issues in our nation right now. They also decided that the seniors should travel by charter bus.

"It is less expensive," Miss Boreing said. She ended by saying that money and safety were considered.

According to Courtney Alexander, there are many things to do in Williamsburg such as visit Virginia Beach, Busch Gardens, and several Civil War sites.

Chairman of the Student Support Committee SGM Keith Taylor and Student Support Committee member David Riddle both agreed that the best way to succeed with a senior trip was for students to get involved and stay involved.

"The seniors last year were not involved enough," Mr. Taylor stated.

The results from the survey that was given to seniors in A/A showed that 106 of 116 students wanted to have a senior trip. But, according to Mr. Riddle, there is a lot of work that has to be done in order to have the trip.

Students felt that any where from \$100.00 to \$500.00 was a good price to pay to get to go on the senior trip. They also thought that fund-raisers, such as car washes and bake sales, would be a good idea.

The proposal suggests students meet certain criteria in order to be eligible for the trip. Number one: Good attendance. Number two: Discipline. Number three: The student has to have passing grades.

Alexander hopes that the senior class will have a senior trip.

"We are going to do everything possible to get it because this senior class deserves one."

We are going to do everything possible to get it because this senior class deserves one.
--Courtney Alexander

CATS: CONTINUED FROM FRONT

nine weeks of intense study in the concepts of geography, economics, sociology, and government. Instead they take one eighteen week course to cover the thirty-six weeks of material. This change was made when the state began to require all students to have one credit of world history.

"We are currently reviewing the test data looking for trends and will be conducting meetings with all content areas," says Hale. "The goal is 100 and we aren't there in any area yet."

Mr. Hale along with the teachers of Rockcastle High School will be working together to improve scores.

"We are currently in the process of reevaluating our courses and adopting new text books," Ms. Harmon said. The Science Department along with other departments will be doing their part to raise scores. In fact, Social Studies began this process during the summer.

Because the scores did lower from

the previous testing period, the question concerning the number of open responses administered during class has been popping up in the minds of students here at RCHS.

Though it is uncertain how many open responses will be given, the importance of them is credited by most teachers.

"Open responses are more than a CATS tool," says Ms. Harmon. "Open response questions not only assess a student's learning but a teacher's teaching."

Mrs. Nancy Bussell, head of the English Department, adds: "Teachers should use discretion to teach the methods of open responses. Students need to know that any answer given in good form will merit some score."

The English department was successful during the last testing period. Reading scores went up three points and writing scores jumped six points.

Mrs. Coleman also knows the importance of open responses. She says

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