

## SESSION VI GETTING STARTED WITH MICROCOMPUTERS IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Walter vom Saal, *President*

### Getting started with microcomputers in undergraduate education: Hints and guidelines

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Microcomputers can serve many functions in undergraduate education, including control of laboratory experiments, presentation of classroom demonstrations, generation of handouts, and monitoring student performance. Panel members of a symposium presented several general guidelines for the use of microcomputers, and specific guidelines for selecting and purchasing equipment and for daily operation of a microcomputer facility.

At the 13th annual meeting of the Society for Computers in Psychology, November 16, 1983, the authors participated in a symposium on Getting Started With Microcomputers in Undergraduate Education. A variety of uses of microcomputers in undergraduate education were described, including control of undergraduate laboratory experiments, presentation of classroom demonstrations, generation of handouts, and monitoring student performance. Walter vom Saal described the use of Atari microcomputers for student designed research in a research methods laboratory course; David Eckerman described laboratory control with Apple IIs connected to a hard disk; Peter Balsam described instrumenting TRS-80s for laboratories in animal learning, perception, human learning, and statistics; Cynthia McDaniel described a number of applications of microcomputers in an introductory psychology class.

The authors may be contacted at the Departments of Psychology of their respective institutions; zip codes are, respectively, 17551, 27514, 10027, and 41076.

We then suggested the following guidelines based on our experience using microcomputers in undergraduate education. It should be emphasized that this is not an exhaustive list, and the items are not listed in priority order. However, we did feel that these guidelines might be useful to others establishing or planning to establish a microcomputer facility.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- (1) "If you want something done right, do it yourself." BUT:
- (2) Don't get hooked on computers.
- (3) Don't get hooked on programming.
- (4) Don't get hooked on the glamor of technology.
- (5) Don't assume your colleagues will be as excited about computers as you may be. Some will be enthusiastic, some neutral, some negative. Many will express positive views but do little because of lack of time, other commitments, or a general discomfort with computers.
- (6) If additional faculty involvement is desirable or

# Microcomputers On The Farm Getting Started

**RC Schank**



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