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THE HAZARDS OF WINDOW PEEPING

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When studying the development of a chick embryo by opening up an egg every few days to observe its growth, two problems arise. The first is that every egg does not begin its development at the same time or proceed at the same rate. Second, the disposal of the embryo after it has been studied (especially after taking on the appearance of a mature chick) is awkward. The psychological impact upon the child in *killing the poor little chick* is difficult to assess and, for some students, may even destroy the educational objectives of the whole study.

One possible solution to this problem was provided by Stauss (3) in an article outlining the complete procedure for cutting a *window* in an egg to observe its day-by-day development. This procedure was followed in the classroom and a few chicks were lost along the way (probably due to the growth of micro-organisms that entered the egg during the construction of the window), but for the most part the procedure was successful.

The incubator, first used in this experiment, lacked a *window* and the eggs had to be removed constantly for viewing. It was soon learned that the *window* fogged up when the eggs were removed from the incubator and that if the eggs could be left in the incubator, development could be more readily observed.

This latter problem was overcome by following incubator designs outlined by Neumann (2) and Coulter (1) which had windows at the top, so that the embryos could be viewed without removing the eggs from the incubation chamber. Later, a larger incubator was made of wood with a plexiglass lid for even better observation.

One new problem now presented itself. In many embryos the egg sac did not withdraw into the chicks the last few days of their development. This may be due to the fact that the eggs were not rotated daily because of the window. Nevertheless, the window and new incubator design provided more meaningful observation of chick embryo development.

Literature Cited.

1. Coulter, J. 1972. An incubator – “cheap, cheep!” *Science and Children* 72:21.
2. Neuman, P. 1968. We hatched baby chicks. *The Instructor* 76(8):30.
3. Stauss, N. G. 1969. Embryonic development in view. *Science and Children* 69:16.