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today we devote page five to cup copy. two features are run, along with one cartoon on apathy. the school story should be of interest to anyone concerned about education, and the yearbook feature is of some special relevance to u of a students this year.

A place where children . . .

By DONALD ROSENBAUM
Pace
Special to Canadian University Press

"To a very great degree, school is a place where children learn to be stupid. A dismal thought, but hard to escape. Infants are not stupid. Children of one, two, or even three throw the whole of themselves into everything they do. They embrace life and devour it; it is why they learn so fast, and are such good company. Listlessness, boredom, apathy—these all come later. Children come to school curious; but within a few years, most of that curiosity is dead, or at least silent."

John Holt's seemingly harsh indictment of our school system has been substantiated and echoed by students and critics alike, who are fed up with "following meaningless procedures to get meaningless answers to meaningless questions."

Sociologist Paul Goodman explains that "for 10 to 13 years, every young person is obliged to sit the better part of his day in a room almost always too crowded, facing front, doing lessons pre-determined by a distant administration that have no relation to his own intellectual, social or animal interests, and not much relation even to his economic interests. The over-crowding precludes individuality or spontaneity, reduces the young to ciphers, and the teacher to a martinet."

While psychology recognizes that we are all different in temperament,

interest and learning ability, the system continues to impose one curriculum and expect a standardized result. While kids would really like to talk about Dylan or Vietnam or the new 450 Honda, the teacher drones on about algebra, trigonometry and French grammar. Then, three days before the exam, everyone crams to pull through. The result of all this pain and anxiety is that three days after the exam, no one can remember anything useful.

The first mistake that the Protestant Board and other administrations make is to set up curricula which seldom relate to the students' interests, the real world, or each other. This is done in the name of efficiency, with the firm belief that students must know certain facts about chemistry, history or inter-algebra. The board protects itself by disciplining those students who simply aren't interested in the textbook material that is being presented

There are two fatal errors in this policy . . . Firstly, very little useful learning will take place if the students are not interested. In fact, Holt, a teacher himself, has said that "schools could well afford to throw out most of what we teach, because the children throw out almost all of it anyway."

Secondly, there is no good reason why Bob Dylan, Vietnam or anything from any newspaper can not be a point of departure for a free, unstructured and relevant educational experience about real things

—politics, the hippie phenomenon, sex, literature, or the bias of the newspaper.

But instead of real learning, we continue our blind allegiance to correct answers, text books, lectures and exams. Students are coerced into 'learning' by threat of failure, or fear of being wrong. They are motivated—not by curiosity or a real desire to learn—but by marks, scholarships and gold stars.

"Schools give every encouragement to producers," says Holt, "the kids whose idea it is to get 'right answers' by any and all means. In a system that runs on 'right answers', they can hardly help it. And these schools are often very discouraging places for thinkers."

Yet exams are still the standard. Finals, and particularly matriculations, become the goals to which the teachers and the kids must apply themselves. But what kind of goals are these? What is the point of memorizing the material which is recorded far more adequately in the library. The important thing is to know how to use the library and to want to.

Education, as it was originally conceived, was intended to be a dialogue between teacher and learner. Now however, teachers are used as tools of the administration to administer pre-set courses of study to students from their desks at the front of the room. (And yet the teachers wonder why they haven't attained professional status.)

. . . can learn to be stupid

The result is that students, under pressure to do meaningless tasks which they hate, will turn off in class and 'go stupid'. "They deny their intelligence to their jailers, the teachers, not so much to frustrate them but because they have other more important uses for it. Freedom to live and to think about life for its own sake is important and even essential to a child. He will only give so much time and thought to what others want him to do . . ."

The antecedent to Holt's premise is found in public school. Children enter grade one when they are six years old—full of energy, bursting with questions, ideas and plans. They are very quickly settled into nice, neat rows, facing front, and are given pencils, paper and their primary reader.

Psychology again tells us that some have been ready to read for two years, while others are still so unsteady in their sight that they can not distinguish between a 'b' and a 'd'. Nevertheless, each child is expected to get up in class and go through the humiliating and discouraging experience of trying to read the first grade reader out loud to the rest of the class.

Similarly, while the child may not be able to hold a pencil steadily, he is expected to write a little composition about what he did on the weekend, using the few words he can spell and compose in sentences. The result is pitiful, messy, and

confusing for the child. The teacher doesn't really want to know what he did on the weekend or she would have asked verbally, giving the child an opportunity to really express himself.

Thus he quickly learns that school has little to do with real ideas, events, or self-expression. Rather it is a place you must go to five days a week to do meaningless tasks to please the teacher. And so the curiosity, interest and vitality which motivated that child are sadly lost.

Nor is high school much of an improvement. Original thought, self expression, and creative activity are inhibited overtly and by the sheer weight of boring subject material.

There is a very real world outside the narrow confines of the classroom, full of joy, tragedy, wit, change, originality, and real problems. 10,000 people die every day from starvation; the world spends 1120 billion dollars a year on military defense, when we know that there is no hope of defense against the weapons that have been developed; a war is raging at this moment in Vietnam, where thousands die in a bloody, awful death every week. These are the realities that we all must recognize and cope with. How does a high school 'education' prepare us for that?

The teachers who like to think of themselves as 'progressive', point to the changes that are slowly being made, like subject promotion.

But these changes are almost exclusively in methodology or structure. What is far more fundamental is that education become—once again—a dialogue between teacher and learner. The first prerequisite of such a change would require the teacher to give up his or her pedestal and sit informally—no strings attached—with the kids. This alone would give any Protestant School Board Supervisor ulcers.

The second change would make it essential that students and staff determine the subject material, instead of a distant administration which fails to understand and recognize that young people are an integral part of the real world with interests and needs of their own.

The role of formal education is not to fill our heads with meaningless fragments of knowledge. Nor is it vocational training.

Education should nurture the curiosity with which we were all born. It should stimulate a love of learning and equip us to be able to learn effectively on our own. It should make us aware that we are a part of a community, and that our community and thousands like it make up the world. It should equip us to cope with change and finally, to better that world.

These are the only goals worth struggling for and attaining, and thus far, our system of education has failed miserably.

Relevance is in; yearbooks are out

By D. JOHN LYNN
Canadian University Press

This year relevance is in and tradition is out. In the student mood vocabulary of 1967 sacred cows are being slaughtered with little or no consideration going to the old and the mouldy. First symbol to get the axe on many campuses is the traditional college yearbook.

As a record of the year, a catalogue of what happened on and off campus, as a spur to memories graduated twenty years, the old school yearbook is shaking in its foundations.

"It's not relevant," says the activist. "It's a waste of money."

"The students want it," screams the grad class rep. "They like to see their pictures and names in it."

"It never comes out on time."

"But it's a timeless document. In twenty years you'll leaf through it and remember. . . ."

"Rubbish!"

The University of Manitoba has axed its yearbook. So has Sir George Williams University, University of Toronto and University of British Columbia.

Others are itching to follow suit. McGill, Glendon College, St. Francis Xavier, have all debated the idea, but have decided not to abolish the book because of pressures from the "graduates who like to see their pictures" in it.

In many cases the book simply fails to appear. All the material is packed off to the printer, usually in some faraway place, and . . . silence. After some investigation it is discovered that all odd-numbered pages from 43 to 79 were mysteriously lost, causing the delay.

With inflated enrolments at many universities yearbooks are, for reasons of economy, forced to lay out grad pictures in true grid fashion. In the most recent University of Saskatchewan yearbook there are one hundred and eight grad photos, with names, crammed into one page.

In many cases yearbooks contain photos of club executives, students doing silly things at winter carnival, and shots of groups of up to a hundred, in which any possibility of identifying an individual is lost in the distance.

Yearbooks can run away with cost. The cheapest hard-cover yearbook in any college would cost \$5,000. But with embossed covers, color photo spreads, and trick paper there is no limit.

The '65-'66 U of Saskatchewan Greystone cost \$34,000 (U.S.) for printing alone. To this must be added the cost of film, developing, editorial costs, and in some cases mailing.

What makes the whole thing objectionable to the activist is that in most cases the levy for the book is automatic—the book does not stand on its merits in the free enterprise market.

But it will have to next year at Carleton.

The student council there decided after heated debate that the yearbook was a waste of money, and will in future be put out to sale on a commercial basis, with no student government support.

Several alternatives to full yearbook production have been proposed. One campus editor, exasperated at the vagaries of yearbook production, has suggested student council pay for a grads picture book to be given to grads at convocation, and that council publish a full-scale yearbook every three years.

A second solution adopted by several universities involves binding a complete volume of the college paper. This is particularly suitable to larger universities who have trouble making the yearbook either personal enough to appeal to the students, or economically feasible for the same reasons.

