

casserole

a supplement section of the gateway

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In five minutes it will be midnight, and we will all turn into pumpkins.

The SUB lamps are shining in on us and making our minds empty. Luckily, the Casserole is full.

This week we examine the kind of teaching going on in universities. The cover photo, taken by good ol' B. S. P. Bayer on his trip to England last summer, is a detail of Rodin's statue, "The Burghers of Calais", which stands in the Victoria Tower Gardens in London. We thought it really covered the idea of this issue.

This page carries an interview story with the continent's leading authority on the evaluation of college teachers and teaching methods, Dr. W. J. McKeachie of the University of Michigan.

Page C-3 is reprinted from the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute "Eye Opener". It is an articulate study of what could happen to university education if Student Power were carried to its logical fulfillment.

Some of the campus's top professors and Dr. Max Wyman, Academic Vice-president, talk about their ideas of good professors in our centre spread.

Check the fine arts pages for a review of "The Miser", Studio Theatre's latest production.

And regard the whole thing as the editor's dying words. She is resigning—for depersonal reasons. (Actually, she's been in love with Harv Thomgirt for three years, and has now discovered he is a real snake. Unable to bear the emotional pressure of seeing him in The Gateway office, she has bid a tearful farewell to the high endeavor of Casserole. Good luck, John. Keep your copy clean.)

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McKeachie talks . . .

. . . on universities

"The Professor is a fellow learner"

By ELAINE VERBICKY

Dr. W. J. McKeachie is the kind of professor who gets called to Washington about once a week, by the government or by the American Psychological Association of which he is secretary.

He is also the kind of man who still teaches a freshman course in psychology at the University of Michigan.

Dr. McKeachie visited U of A last week to speak about the professor as a teacher. He was qualified by years of psychological research into instruction in universities.

"The best teachers are the ones trying to work themselves out of a job," he said. "The university teachers of the future will be more problem posers than walking encyclopedias."

Often college professors are computer terminals propped up behind a lectern, programmed to spout information for a certain number of minutes. Dr. McKeachie thinks this is very bad.

"The professor should be a centre of standards for a learner. He should be someone who has achieved some degree of expertise in learning a scholarly field. He is a motivator, not a storehouse of knowledge."

The best professors are the ones who realize what they know will



W. J. McKEACHIE

become obsolete as their students progress beyond them.

"If we are a community of learners, then teachers have the responsibility to assist the students' learning; students have the responsibility for their own learning; and students have the responsibility for their professors' learning," he said.

Somehow, not many people, either students or professors, seem to be accepting the results of his studies comparing strictly factual

lectures with free discussion classes and tutorials for educational efficiency.

"Facts are easy to teach, easy to examine on," he said. "They are also easy to learn. The student doesn't have to cope with uncertainties of this or that relationship or concept."

"The teacher gives out, the students write down, and nobody asks embarrassing questions."

He described an experiment he and a number of professors of psychology used to determine the effectiveness of different types of classroom instruction.

"We divided the students registered for a course into three groups, matching them for intelligence and other factors. The first group had an old-fashioned recitation-and-drill class. The professor would ask a question, get an answer from a student, then ostentatiously mark something down in a big black book. We posted standings at the end of each class and kept a cumulative record."

"The second group was a discussion class—student participation loosely led by the instructor. Its members were given essay exams."

"The third group took a tutorial. The professor came to class with a briefcase full of books, spread them on the table, then sat at the back of the class waiting for students to come with individual questions. Attendance was not compulsory."

Dr. McKeachie chuckled recalling this group. "The university rector called up our professors. Some parents had been complaining because they were paying tuition fees and their children weren't being made to attend class."

Results? The recitation-and-drill group led the field slightly in final results. But five years later more people from the discussion class had remained in the field of the original course than had people from the other two groups. "Discussion classes increased motivation to learn," explained Dr. McKeachie.

Dr. McKeachie emphasized the need for universities to maintain small group experiences in their instruction.

"Big lecture rooms and long dorm halls are not conducive to the kind of learning that ought to go on in a university," he said.

Should universities be limited to a select few?

"In my conception," said Dr. McKeachie, "100 per cent of the people ought to get higher education of some kind. And the lower your ability to learn, the more you ought to be taught how."

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