



WHAT IS THE POINT OF IT ALL?
... creativity and imagination are easily stifled

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"suggested" approaches resembling their own.

The faculty consultant(s) should meet with the principals and co-operating teachers of the schools to be involved in order to formulate ground rules to be implemented during student teaching.

It was suggested that, where possible, more than one co-operating teacher be assigned to each student, and they should spend a reasonable amount of time in the classroom observing the student teacher.

The faculty consultants should observe the student teachers in action at least twice a week, and seminars should be held at the end of the school day.

"The present grading system is artificial, and a pass-fail approach accompanied by a written evaluation would be preferable," the report said.

The total evaluation of the effectiveness of the student teacher should include the following:

- self-evaluation by the student teacher
- written and oral evaluations by co-operating teachers
- informal evaluations by the students being taught
- evaluation by faculty consultants, including a pass-fail grade.

The students on the committee proposed in the report that a curriculum committee composed of interested students be formed annually. The initial "ad hoc curriculum committee" would elect an executive from among its members. The elected chairman would function as the liaison between the committee and the faculty.

The committee would be responsible for following up recommendations from the previous year, and it would concern itself with course evaluation.

The present committee expects the implementation of its proposals will lead to improved and informed communication between students and faculty in the Faculty of Education.

Teaching teachers

Students should not put up with bad lecturers. Maybe professors should be taught to teach?

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A growing unwillingness on the part of students to tolerate bad lectures is forcing universities to consider whether professors should be required to have training in teaching methods. At present, most professors have none. Whatever skill they have in lecturing they picked up by themselves. Consequently, there are poor lecturers on most campuses.

What are the causes of student dissatisfaction? Some academics argue that lectures are no worse than they used to be and that student unrest is fomented by a few troublemakers.

This view, however, ignores pertinent facts. First, the rapid growth of universities has created a situation in which persons are being hired to teach who would not have been hired a decade ago. Second, the size of departments makes it more difficult for the beginner to absorb the wisdom of elders about university teaching problems. Third, the size of some classes is so large that effective lecturing is hard even for the expert.

NOT UNREASONABLE

Thus, it is not unreasonable to suppose university lectures are, in general, worse than they used to be. Student disenchantment is probably justified.

Various remedies have been recommended. For example, many students have suggested lectures be replaced by tutorials. This suggestion has serious drawbacks. It would force the university to hire even greater numbers of incompetent or poorly trained teachers, because genuine tutorial teaching requires bigger staffs than teaching by lectures. Also, students who find themselves closeted with an un congenial tutor might long to be back in the more impersonal lecture.

Perhaps the most constructive suggestion has been to reduce the number of lectures students should attend. This would release the student to do more work on his own initiative. What he learns by himself is likely to be more thoroughly assimilated. When this is combined with some tutorials, a flexible curriculum and de-emphasis

on final examinations, the result should be better for students truly interested in receiving an education.

RECOMMENDED

At the University of Toronto such measures have been recommended by the recent Report on Undergraduate Instruction, and even prior to the report had been partially inaugurated by the department of philosophy.

While these measures are a step in the right direction, in the end they will be no better than the professors who adopt them. They do not go to the root of the problem: today's professors are for the most part so deeply enmeshed in certain hoary traditions that bad teaching is almost inevitable.

Two ancient evils account for much of the poor teaching and until they are corrected, no striking improvements can be expected. Indeed, if the shortage of professors continues, the situation, and the resulting student unrest, will probably grow worse. These evils are the failure of the graduate schools, which train professors, to encourage an interest in teaching, and the failure of university teachers to form professional organizations.

DISCOURAGED

In graduate schools, an interest in teaching is discouraged by the baneful influence of what U.S. philosopher William James called "the Ph.D. octopus." In a recent issue of the periodical *University Affairs*, G. C. Andrew, executive director of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, contrasted the fate of Ph.D. candidates in the social sciences and humanities. Whereas the scientists achieve doctoral degrees in from four to six years after the bachelor's degree, students in the humanities and social sciences take up to 10 years—and only a few finish.

Mr. Andrew says: "The chief reason for such a prolonged purgatorial period has been that the Ph.D. thesis frequently calls for not only the requisite scholarly qualities but an experience qualification beyond that attainable by people 24 to 26 years of age."

CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE

One crucial difference between the sciences and the humanities is that scientists put questions to nature in the form of experiments, whereas scholars in the humanities do not. Hence, high-quality research in the humanities and often

in the social sciences depends on the individual's maturity in distinguishing between illuminating and helpful questions and silly and useless ones.

While the scientist can get his Ph.D. and learn teaching techniques while he is still young, the scholar in the humanities and social sciences is too often forced to take teaching jobs while he is struggling to complete his thesis. He thus learns his ways of teaching during the time when he lacks the maturity his discipline demands.

As Mr. Andrew points out, the Ph.D. was not designed as the qualification for entry into academic life.

IRONIC SITUATION

The situation is ironic in that while graduate schools are producing Ph.D.s almost solely to fulfil a demand for teachers, these same graduate schools stubbornly refuse to face the problem of helping Ph.D. holders to become good teachers. Some professors argue that training in teaching would apply only to the one function for which lectures should not be employed — namely, for the mere transmission of information. This argument displays gross ignorance of pedagogy.

If universities are content to supply the demand for college teachers without training the teachers, it would seem that initiative for change must be sought elsewhere. The logical place would be a professional organization of university and college teachers. Unfortunately, Canada is far from any such organization.

NEGATES IDEA

Ontario has a Council of Staff Associations which by its existence negates the idea of a province-wide professional organization in that it perpetuates the autonomy of local staff organizations, which are weak and ineffectual.

On the national level, there is the Canadian Association of University Teachers, which in some ways resembles a professional organization. But it is hampered by the fact that in Canada education is a provincial responsibility.

In any case, the preoccupation of these bodies with the issues of salary and tenure without a commensurate preoccupation with professional standards suggests a desire for privilege without responsibility, which is unworthy of a truly professional organization.

One teacher's decision to leave his chosen profession

After spending four years accepting or complaining about everything in the Faculty of Education, some students actually do graduate and "become teachers".

One such person is Bob Boychuk who graduated from education in 1966 and is now teaching at Harry Ainlay Composite High School. Unlike most teachers who remain unquestionably stuck in the profession for 40 years, Mr. Boychuk has decided to leave the teaching profession.

The reason he gives is the same as that given by hippies or any of the other groups who have challenged the status quo: the conditions existing in our society are not permitting the right things to happen.

"I as a teacher am required to spend five hours out of six dealing with students in a high state of interaction,"

said Mr. Boychuk. "The students' attitude is one of rebellion and disinterest and probably rightly so, since he cannot really identify with what he is learning."

"Only a small percentage of the student population can really be interested in a purely academic pursuit of knowledge."

The teacher and the system are not flexible enough to be interested in the majority of the student population, he said.

"I feel I am not accomplishing anything as a teacher under the present conditions, so I am taking the easy way out."

Mr. Boychuk admitted the real challenge would be to remain and try to bring about a changing philosophy and system which would alleviate the present ills and be rigid enough so that the

present situation would never again occur.

To do this, he said, everyone would have to be made aware of the need for change.

"This isn't a problem," he said, "because most people are already aware of the need but nobody is taking it to heart."

After everyone was aware of the need and genuinely interested in doing something about it, there would have to be a movement toward increased student and teacher involvement in curriculum planning, he said.

"A reason for studying must be found," said Mr. Boychuk. The present philosophy of education talks about "creating" a self-disciplined, understanding individual capable of analyzing and coping with the problems created by an ever-increasing population

and ever-increasing amount of interpersonal relationships.

"But how can the teacher influence the child to become such a person?" asked Mr. Boychuk.

There is not enough time for interaction between pupils, teachers and public feeling. There is a definite lack of communication even within these groups.

"Within the teacher group, I find myself with no time contact with fellow teachers except at lunch time," he said.

The teacher is in the unique position in which he is directly capable of breeding the new ideas which would make society a more flexible entity, said Mr. Boychuk.

"But the lack of communication in the present system is allowing young teachers to drop out and not use their abilities to create change."