

Illiteracy raises its ugly head at STU

In 1978 anybody who wishes to be part of our society has to be able to spell, construct well structured paragraphs and complete essays. However many people cannot spell, use the proper punctuation, use the proper grammar — least of all an essay.

It is generally agreed that this problem is very serious. Colin Norman's illiteracy study The Queen's English states such facts as: 2.5 percent of freshmen

beginning their studies at Queen's are 'literate', at Guelph many of the students (freshmen) took the "College English Placement Test". Of the 72 percent that entered over a quarter fell in the category of having the possibility that they "would have serious difficulty in coping adequately with university level work". A further 40 percent had problems needing some help.

It is believed by most Ontario universities that the students preparing for university have not got the abilities in language that

they would have had 10 years ago. Something is being done about this though. One leader in this field is UBC.

What is the situation like at St. Thomas? Many of the students here also are lacking in language skills.

Of all the questionnaires sent out 32 were returned. From 18 faculties the level of literacy was "lower than what (they) would consider a minimum standard for university students". Another 15 believed it was "barely accept-

able". Many admitted that they drop a textbook from the course because the students did not have the skills to understand that level.

Many faculty members thought that there were solutions such as setting higher standards for teachers and others favoured a remedial program.

The greatest thing revealed by the questionnaire was that many faculty members took it seriously. Many of them wrote out long, useful ideas on what could be done.

From the test two things were obvious. One, the average student from St. Thomas is worse than three or four students entering college. The other thing was that after the 75 percent of St. Thomas students below this level, 35 percent were in the lower overall 18 percent.

Students in all four years were tested. This seems to indicate that students at all levels who are not as capable in these skills as they should be. The conclusion is apparent: St. Thomas faces a grave language problem as do most other universities.

What can be done? Any course of action taken at St. Thomas has to be applicable. If the level of teaching was raised in school the level of capabilities does not necessarily have to rise in students. The causes are many and varied. Not all the problems arise from the schools although a good many do. One thing is obvious we are going to have to live with it.

The effort has to be done on a large scale and has to be organized. A number of questions come up such as should the course be credit or non-credit, one term or all year, optional or mandatory and should it be taught by

specialists or regular faculty members.

In order for the program to be effective, it must be part of the courses, must be the concern of all departments and everyone of the professors must be included.

The course offered by St. Thomas must consist of small sections having no more than 20 students and taught by professors from all departments.

Of the freshmen 80 to 85 percent should be involved in this course. There should be one of writing 100 set aside for foreign students whose native tongue is not English.

The average student could gain from this course. They could even raise to the acceptable level. An examination would be made available to all students. Only a small fraction of students would take the test though. This would ease the task of the administration.

The testing for the course is fairly easy. The student will be given a topic or topics and required to write an essay on it in limited time. The essays will be graded by more than one reader.

The university should go to the Higher Education Commission, the New Brunswick government and other sources for money for this program. Even if the money is not available the university should go ahead.

Originally the responsibilities of the students' abilities to write were laid on the English Department. This has been a past mistake. However English teachers teach literature and its studies.

Perhaps freshman year should be the final year of preparing for university instead of the first year of an education at university. This would greatly increase the capabilities of our students.

Queens Park rally 7000 turn out for protest

Burn Baby Burn! Seven thousand students demonstrated at Queen's Park on Thursday, March 14. The Ontario Federation of Students has called it the largest student demonstration in Canadian history.

The "Ryerson" reported that "dozens of buses disgorged students who jammed Convocation Hall and spilled out into King's College Circle in an attempt to hear a pep talk and to receive their instructions from student leaders inside.

The demonstrators were organized into a half-mile long column which circled the entire Front campus and then marched three abreast to Queen's Park to join the crowd of well over a thousand which had already spontaneously

gathered there." In spite of the bewildering turn out, Premier William Davis did not appear to speak at the demonstration.

Harry Parrott, the minister of Ontario's Colleges and Universities, said that the Premier could not attend because he was "engaged in other duties".

"I will not show up because I was not invited" Parrot further stated.

Allen Colombeh, spokesman for the Ontario Federation of students, said that students "didn't want to listen to him (Parrot). People have heard what he has to say a million times, and he really doesn't have anything to do with government policy."

"Why listen to the dummy when you can hear the ventriloquist,"

The march on Queen's Park was the united effort of several of Ontario's Universities with the largest contingents from Ryerson, U. of Toronto, and York.

Students of Queen's, Waterloo, Trent and Carleton also participated in notable numbers in the OFS organized event.

The demonstration was staged in protest of cutbacks, increased tuitions and decreased student aid.

Cutback protests have been staged across Canada and the occupations of various offices, (including those of University presidents), and other university buildings, have to date occurred in Laval, Montreal, Toronto, Ryerson, Waterloo and at a host of other campuses.

Yearbook on schedule

Up the Hill 1978 editor Ann Langereis said in an interview Wednesday night the yearbook will be well within its May 8 deadline for its first 48 pages. She said the book would be 240 pages and based on the theme Friendship.

Sales were around 700 to date, she said, and she hoped this would reach 1,000 by the end of the term. Last year 1,000 were ordered and about 800 sold.

The book costs \$6.00 or \$7.00 if mailed home, and would cost \$5.00 more if it weren't subsidized by the student union.

She said this year's book promised to be good, but she had harsh words for people critical of the 1977 book.

"A lot of people complained about pictures which they said were reruns, and they weren't," she said. The book had to be sent back to the printers because of a poor printing and layout job at the printers in Winnipeg. Also, some material was pulled because the yearbook didn't send the copy-rights along with it.

Langereis took over as editor in the middle of the term after Peter Fullerton, a third year education student resigned. He was editor last year, the two had been co-editors.

"I don't think co-editors will ever work, really," she said. She said, there were "too many conflicts," and Fullerton decided he had had enough. "It worked out that way, he was sort of it the year before."

A co-editor stepped down last year, leaving Fullerton in charge.

She said the yearbook staff was considering asking the student union to include the price of the book in student fees, as this would reduce the price of the book around \$4.00 and it would break-even proposition. However, "That's the main thing, they'll say,

I'll be paying for a book I don't even want."

"I hope the colour section will be quite good," she said, and sports and residence reports were coming in, but the book was still "weak in poetry."

She emphasized she had no quarrels with Fullerton and didn't blame him for any problems with the current book. Although she

said there were layout problems, she was quick to add, "he had a lot of work to do, you know... it just didn't get done," particularly when he was left at the end of the term with a lot of the book left undone.

"They were new and I'm new this year, and I'll probably get the book back and realize a lot of mistakes."

RUSSIAN CLUB FILM

Fredericton Russian Club presents *The First Circle*, a film based on the novel by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and directed by Alex Ford. Show time: Thursday, April 6th, 8 p.m. Place: Edmund Casey Hall auditorium, STU. Admission: \$1.00. Members free.

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Students

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year to come, Dean the biggest problem is that there should be a basis on student load of less.

University should become "student oriented," stated that there is a lack of communication between students and that it is to work towards the situation.

will not be Dean of the year, Dean Smith any plans for next year, the office of the students.

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the only time the can have a feasible

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