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ABSTRACT

Curricular and instructional issues are discussed in 12 articles by faculty of the Connecticut community colleges. Jack McLean examines the potential role of community colleges in international education, and Kerin Sarason proposes teacher self-evaluations to reduce faculty/administrator tension. Jean Burr Smith introduces methods of reducing math anxiety among developmental students, and Jim Wright considers the effect of the New Humanism on traditional, cognition-oriented education. The use of competency-based education in liberal arts and general education is discussed by Joan Gallagher prior to the presentation of Virginia Barrett Villa's poem, "Placement." Connie Palmer's description of a technique used in an introductory nursing course to help illustrate the medical implications of bodily fluid stasis. Jay and Shirley Stager describe an experimental course in which students experience an alternative life style at an isolated farm in Maine. Then, Ellen Strenski evaluates the vocational skills accruable through the study of literature, and Maria Stiebel describes the English as a Second Language program at Housatonic Community College. Finally, Donald Hughes discusses experimental techniques in psychology education, Madge Manfred examines composition courses in the context of a social science discipline, and Gary Van Voorhis describes the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counseling program offered at the Connecticut community colleges. (JP)

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COMMUNITAS

Journal of the Connecticut Community College Professional Staff.

1980

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The second issue of COMMUNITAS contains a variety of articles, including practical suggestions for classroom activities, descriptions of unusual programs, analysis of professional issues, arguments for new approaches, and, happily, a poem. This issue gives further evidence of the talent among our professional staff, talent which I think is unsurpassed in any other system, but which often does not find a public forum because of heavy teaching schedules, our students' need for individual help, and the demands of committee work, community service, and political lobbying to get support for our perennially beleaguered community college system. Despite the difficulty to finding the time and solitude necessary for writing, some of our colleagues have managed to do so, and I hope that the distribution of COMMUNITAS before the summer break will encourage more people to write up the articles that have been cooking in their heads for the last two years.

From my years of contact with colleagues in the system, I know that potentially we constitute the greatest help to each one another. Occasionally we may be inspired by the experts, but only the staff who work on a daily basis with the students can develop the meaningful suggestions for our student population. Furthermore, I believe that if we take the opportunity offered by COMMUNITAS, if we reflect on our experiences and share them in a spirit of friendly criticism, we will also find that we have the insights necessary to make significant theoretical contributions in our fields.

The responsibility of producing the second issue of COMMUNITAS has made me very appreciative of the accomplishments of its first editor, Paul Brown, who secured the funding, established a network of campus contacts, and stimulated the writing of many fine articles.

Madge Manfred

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Editor	Madge Manfred Mohegan Community College
Layout and Design Editor	Anna Lafferty Tunxis Community College
Campus Editors	Paul Brown Norwalk Community College Ray Cacciatore Mattatuck Community College Elaine Folkers Asnuntuck Community College John Kuchla Quinnebaug Community College Elizabeth Marafino Tunxis Community College Ray Marafino Greater Hartford Community College Michael Monte Housatonic Community College Margaret Owens Manchester Community College Kenneth Robinson South Central Community College Chris Rossing Northwestern Community College Richard Srb Middlesex Community College

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND CONNECTICUT'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by Jack McLean

International studies can and must become an integral part of the curriculum and the educational experience of community college students, teachers, and administrators. Why? Various studies including the new Carnegie Council Report on Higher Education, and the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, argue the case for international studies effectively enough, and I recommend them to you. I will make the case, however, on the basis of more personal observations.

The world, some observer noted, many cliches ago, is growing smaller and smaller. It's really not a very new idea; it goes back to at least a century ago when writers began to analyze the impact of industrialization and the revolutions in communications and transportation. Smaller, of course, really meant that people were becoming more aware that the world was an interdependent one. And interdependence, it turned out, really suggested a new awareness of national dependency. Dependency on what? On coal, on iron ore, on rubber, on tin, on copper, on gold, on markets and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, on oil.

The accepted wisdom of that age argued that the protection of these vital natural interests required "civilized" nations to seize and control other peoples and cultures in order to maintain political and economic stability against the rapaciousness of expansionistic rivals. Interdependence also meant learning enough about other cultures to control, what Rudyard Kipling called, these new caught and "sullen people."

Great empires and nations successfully monopolized scarce industrial resources and manage to avoid, at least until 1914, plunging into suicidal conflicts. But two devastating world wars and a world depression later the old order perished. Key decisions were no longer being made in

London, or Berlin, Rome or Paris, or Madrid. Not only did new power centers emerge in Washington and Moscow but those one time "sullen people" began to claim the resources within their frontiers and to experience the exhilarating sense of modern nationalism. Despots and dreamers, heroes and statesmen, began the process of building new nations, reviving old cultures, and struggling with the consequences of population growth, urbanization and industrialization. Today, we are living with the results and consequences of this tremendous shift in the post war alignments. We may not like the changes that have occurred but we must not continue to think about the world as though the changes had not occurred.

One is reminded of the stereotype of the aging British imperialist Colonel Blimp, sitting in the isolation of his London club, talking about an Empire that no longer existed and advocating military policies that were either absurd or mad. For men like Blimp the job of the educational system was to educate an elite to govern a glorious Empire. That era, however, had ended; they even closed the Colonial office in 1946. But attitudes and assumptions cannot be closed down as easily as the high doors of a once powerful institution.

We are also facing some seminal changes in the world order, and that's the rub. We must address the educational responsibilities associated with those changes. There may have been a time when one could boast that 6% of the world's population used 40% of its resources. But today those resources are the object of intense competition and possessor states are inclined to dream of modernizing their own societies and are less likely to barter away their riches and substance to enrich the lives of the 6%. That's a rather new reality. Some befuddled and angry citizens, politicians included, are

wondering what happened to "our world." Some statesmen, who ought to know better, are urging us to recreate the power that will restore the era now passed. Impatience and exasperation have even led to suggestions that we might have to take "our oil" if our vital interests were threatened. Our "vital interests" I would argue, require us to recognize new realities, and to educate our citizens about the aspirations, the assumptions, and the wonders of other cultures and values. That's not blue-sky one worldism: that's a requirement for adjusting to the realities of the late 20th century.

To be more specific, let us look at the current emphasis on jobs in education. In Connecticut one out of seven jobs is dependent upon international trade and, if Connecticut is to remain competitive, that percentage will have to increase in the future. The Governor's proposed trip to China adds credence to the belief that we must expand not only our export trade but also community awareness of China. One out of every four people in the world is Chinese. China possesses oil reserves that may match those of Saudi Arabia, and a market that is probably matchless. China also possesses one of the richest and oldest cultures in the world. Nonetheless, we continue to treat the study of China as being somewhat exotic and slightly irrelevant to the needs of community college students. Community colleges must assume some educational responsibility in this connection and recognize that our citizen constituents are badly served by curriculum deficiencies that by-pass economic realities in the name of economic necessity. Those jobs that we seek for our students are in a state whose dependence upon foreign trade is both substantial and growing.

To put the problem in another specific and alarming perspective, consider the recent findings of the prestigious Independent Commission on International Development Issues. The Commission, chaired by former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, highlights the growing disparities between developed (Northern) and underdeveloped (Southern) societies and the interlocking relationship of each bloc upon the other for food, scarce re-

sources, capital markets, and manufactured goods. The report notes that the North in this North-South confrontation, accounts for one quarter of the world's population but four-fifths of the world's income, whereas the overpopulated South has as many as 800 million destitute people and 30 million children under the age of five who starve to death each year. Those chilling statistics are late twentieth century realities. They are not simply demographic, or economic, or political realities; they are the stuff of nightmares, of enduring hatreds. The gap between rich and poor nations must be closed quickly, the report argues, because a widening of the gulf may result in a world wide economic collapse in the next two decades. The issues are, very simply but starkly put, survival issues. Addressing these staggering problems requires a tremendous effort to educate populations and to create a consensus on both the urgency of the crisis and the will to act.

Community colleges must play a key role in this education process because we have access to a major segment of the population in this society. The specific first step that I intend to fight for is an interdisciplinary "Global Perspectives Course" as the required course in the Social Sciences at Mohegan Community College. The course will emphasize themes such as food problems, population growth, fuels and scarce resources, modernization, interdependencies, and the nature of modern economic systems, and modern nationalism.

However, a course in Global Perspectives, no matter how well intended, will not suffice. International and intercultural issues and problems must become a focus of study throughout the curriculum and that includes Business, Science, and Community Education.

There are, of course, practical limits to what one can know or master about the labyrinthian politics of an ever changing world order. But basic themes and issues can be studied in a way that can result in a new awareness that may influence public policy decisions. Once again, the motive need not be the desire to contribute to a more humane or just

global society, such crusades are apparently unfashionable, but simply a recognition of what self interest and vital interests really are.

We've all read about an American Ambassador in Asia, still on assignment, who didn't know that there were two Korean governments, what the "gang of four" referred to, what Islam was, and who had never heard of Gandhi, Sukarno, or Ding Xiaoping. Inexcusable ignorance in an ambassador, we may all conclude, but we must not fool ourselves about what constitutes "excusable ignorance" for our citizen-students.

We can and must become leaders in programs promoting student and faculty exchanges. I anticipate that Mohegan Community College will take the lead in initiating such programs and that our students, and all Connecticut Community College students, will be able to enroll in inexpensive overseas programs by the Fall of 1981. Students will be able to enroll in programs of study in Egypt, Israel, Italy, England, Ireland and Denmark by that date and we shall move to provide opportunities in Canada, Mexico, and other Latin American states after that.

A few observations about foreign students studying in Connecticut is appropriate in this article.

While population figures in the United States, and in the Northeast in particular, indicates a significant decline in graduating seniors through 1995, the world at large will be undergoing explosive population increases. The educational implications of this situation have already been grasped by many institutions but not, alas, by Connecticut's Community Colleges. Community colleges are ideal entry level institutions for many foreign students and it's a safe assumption to say that we can, with a bit of imagination and work, begin to draw upon this foreign student population. Not every aspiring foreign student is destined for Yale or UConn or even Central Connecticut. We will not succeed in attracting foreign students, however, unless we are prepared to make the contacts and contracts that will allow us to compete with other institutions. Educating larger numbers of foreign students, most of whom will

probably come from Latin America and the Middle East, will require some adjustments at our colleges, and problems will have to be solved dealing with language proficiency, housing, and cultural adjustments. Experience elsewhere suggests that the process may be difficult. The effort is well worth it, however. It's not simply a question of practicality and of exploiting opportunities; the exchanges will contribute to mutual enlightenment, enriching both parties and helping to ease the transition into the last quarter of the 20th century.

International and intercultural education cannot remain a peripheral concern for community college educators because the issues involved go to the very heart of the crisis in modern global society. These same issues will severely test our political system, our economy, and our values and culture in the decades ahead. The question we must face is are we educating students who are sufficiently aware of the interrelationships between conflicting nationalistic and ideological ambitions and the competition for resources, jobs, and world markets. Are our students aware of the values and aspirations of societies that have, heretofore, been the submerged states and spear carriers in the drama of international politics? It is extremely important that students learn that that era is over. If the spear carriers in the old drama are suddenly seen in a new and threatening perspective it may be because we now have a new awareness of both their presence on the world stage and the fact that they are carrying more powerful spears.

The parts in the new drama may require new casting but that's a healthy development and not one that should frighten us. Victims of exploitive and contemptuous treatment can be dangerous peoples. The history students in this reading audience will remember Lord Macaulay's observation that the great books in Indian civilization would not fill a shelf in his library. What a pathetic observation we might now conclude. Let us begin, therefore, to address the issue of international studies in the community college and free ourselves, our students, and our culture from the debilitating and dangerous effects of contemporary Macaulayism.

FACULTY EVALUATION: FACT, FUN, AND FANCY

by Kerin Sarason

If there have been any innovations in administrative techniques and philosophy in higher education during the last two decades, such changes have been one of the best kept secrets of our time. The truth is that very few, if any, changes have been brought about or even proposed. The idea of Brownell of Yale that faculty-administration relationships should not be regarded as adversary but should be looked upon as a coalition towards common goals was suggested a generation ago and has yet to be put into practice. Other than that idea little thought has been given to administrative philosophy, and it remains vaguely as an uninvestigated assumption that permits someone with a title to assign rooms and class schedules, to require payroll cards due on Thursdays, and to set the date for exams and final grades. The advent of unions and the concept of governance may appear to be exceptions to the rule of inertia, but these novelties have not so much overturned as brought into focus conditions of faculty-administration standings that have long existed. In saying that, one does not minimize the value of governance and collective bargaining. They define the limits of power and privilege, and that is for the good. But to be realistic and often, as it will be shown, administrative proposals verge towards the dreamlike - contractual arrangements encite the quest for loopholes. Things often look better on paper than they are realized in practice.

The combination of the idealistic and the revolutionary in administrative ideas looms in proposals for the lower schools, the elementary and the high school levels; and radical among the proposed innovations on those levels is the concept of faculty evaluation. On the college level faculty evaluation has undergone little or no change in many years. Someone in

authority picks a number from one to five, or an adjective from excrementitious to excellent, and ranks the teacher accordingly. The day of ranking is the day of judgement. In the system proposed for the lower schools, verdict from on high is to be abolished. Evaluation is to be converted into self-evaluation. The method, briefly stated, is as follows.

On a designated day the teaching of a particular faculty member will be televised. Subsequently the tape will be played back in his presence and in that of his supervisor. The teacher is expected to comment. Here he points a strength - and unless he be like you and me, perfect - there he points out a weakness. The perception of a weakness will lead him to suggest remedy, e.g., "The portion on parthenogenesis needs visual aids," or, "The class might have benefited from their dramatizing the bathtub murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday." The supervisor says neither yea nor nay; he offers no criticism pro or con. His role might be called consciousness-raising. At best, he proffers a question somewhat like a psychiatrist in a non-directive analysis in which the response is left up to the subject. We may imagine the final setting between teacher and supervisor: no threat of dismissal, no counterthreat of lawsuit or filing of grievance - only an exchange of "Thank yous," a warm shaking of the hands, and probably a pedagogical quip, "Next time round tell the cameraman to get me in profile." and when the chuckles have subsided, there comes the "peace that passeth understanding." The academic swords have been turned into ploughshares.

Those of us in higher education, particularly those of us subject to legislative regulation, may regard this system, pleasant though it may be, as

more or less visionary. Would our no-nonsense legislators ever permit such an arrangement? The impulsive response is, "Never." But the studied response may be otherwise. Legislators are not all that conservative. Consider, for example, that remarkable law requiring all official stationery to be printed by the inmates of Somers State prison and by them alone. Call it Socialism if you will, but you can't deny that the idea is daring. And if you have had the experience -- as this writer has had -- of complaining to some assistant that the envelopes and letterheads you ordered some months ago had not arrived, you would have encountered a realm where administrative and subordinate harmony prevail. "The boys have a tremendous backlog" -- no criticism from on high, as you can see. "They've been working night and day" -- only praise, as is apparent. And this harmony has been achieved without rankings from one to five, without the applications of adjectives from excrementitious to excellent; and there are no squabbles about time cards being due on Thursdays and no disputes about personal leave days.

No doubt, the inmates are permitted self-evaluation; and all this is with legislative sanction.

Legislators, then, may prove no obstacle to innovation; they should be easily persuaded that what has been shown administratively effective for prisoners with may well work with faculty. The question is whether or not the new system of evaluation is itself valid. One of its obvious aims is to remove the element of subjectivity.

We all know that six witnesses to a crime will come up with six variations of the observed event. The purpose of televising the lesson to be appraised is to eliminate the differences of perception between the supervisor and the teacher -- one of the difficulties of the old judgemental system.

Presumably the camera will provide an objective basis -- not for debate or discussion, of course, but for reflection.

One passes over quickly the power of the camera, or the genius of the cameraman, to distort because there are other objections to be raised. One is that familiar to statisticians, the well-known Hawthorne effect. If the class finds it fun

to be on TV and if the class is simpatico to the teacher, that usually apathetic group may outdo itself on the very first take.

Statisticians do not have a term for the converse, a situation in which teacher and class, recoiling at the lens and lights, recreates the mood of a mortuary lacking customers. But even if the TV camera did portray events accurately and even if the participants swung to neither great highs nor depressing lows, one still has reservations about the comraderie that is assumed to exist as the teacher ponders his performance in the presence of his supervisor.

The theory behind all this is heart-warming. There is to be no relationship of inferiority, no suggestion of hierarchy.

Here is a meeting of equals, a meeting that exemplifies the democratic process.

The disturbing part of this pleasant vision is that the teacher trusts not the supervisor. He has, no doubt, dealt with this superior over some period of time and has come to understand that person's national reputation for arrogance, his local for insolence. So, in actual fact, we begin on a level of distrust. The supervisor may say nothing, raise no pointed question, or indicate by an intonation that something is wrong. The teacher will look for a shift of eyes, a quiver of facial expression to alert him to strategy.

Strategy may take the form of defending the indefensible, or placating by hinting a fault where no fault exists.

The proponents of this system are not unaware of such obstacles bred out of long-standing emotional static. The remedy offered is to train a new generation of administrators whose demeanor will inspire confidence. One of the methods used is to train students in a "Principles of Administration" course to talk things over with their professor. The professor actually incites the students to confer by lowering their grades on their weekly required papers. Pleasant conversation results in upgrading, and, presumably, these future administrators have the experience of negotiating on a level of equality. This system is not altogether foolproof. Some of the grades should have remained where they were, and students

whose work is first-rate are too outraged to bargain for justice.

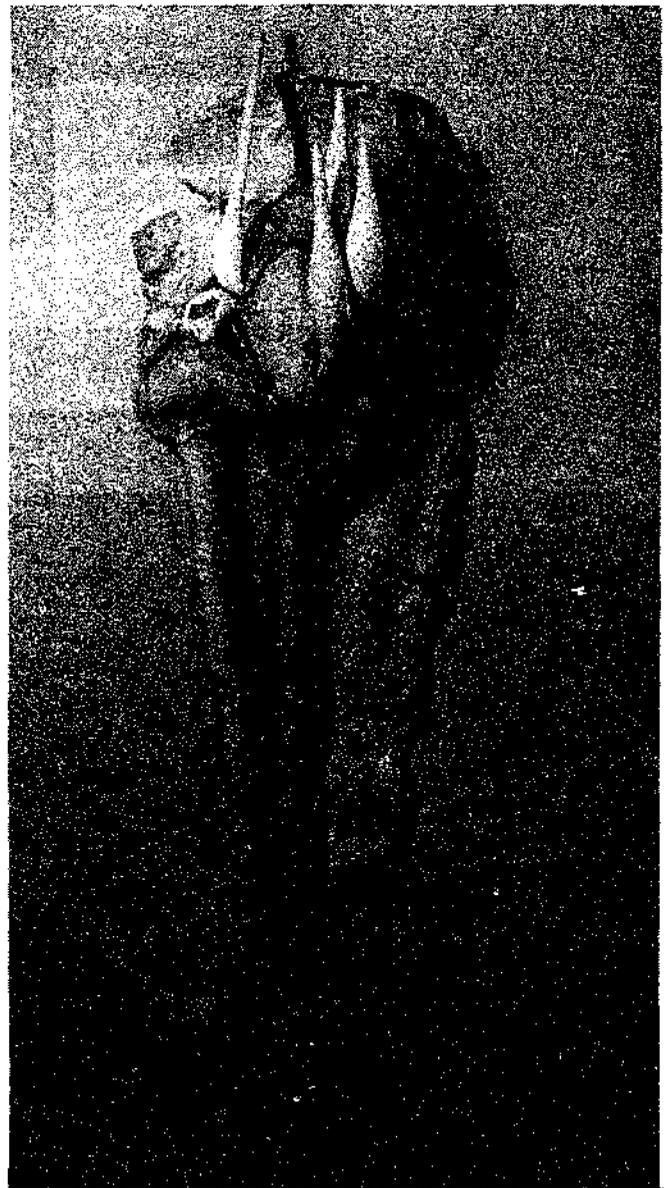
Whether this type of initiation into egalitarianism within the confines of a semester will endure for the years to come is highly debatable. One's skepticism is heightened by the character of the trainees themselves. The class this writer observed ran true to form for future lower school administrators. Ninety percent of the class was composed of the two groups that generally become certified administrators: defunct coaches and stolid personalities of the Bob Newhart-Buster Keaton variety.

The two groups may overlap to the extent that coaches may likewise be stolid, e.g., Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys. It appears to be a superstition that experience with a basketball crew or no experience with the range of human emotions somehow qualifies one to executive status. The composition of this observed class bears out that superstition.

Two things were notable. The professor was never challenged on any point he made in his lectures and only ten percent of the class comprised women and Blacks: future democracy indeed!

These proposals to convert faculty evaluation into teacher self-evaluation are being considered, it must be kept in mind, for the lower schools. They may never be proposed for the college level, but if they are some of the reservations expressed here may be applicable. On the college level we would begin with a certain advantage. Our administrators are not drawn from the athletic fraternity except for two or three jogging Deans, and we have only a sprinkling of the poker-faced in the higher echelons of command. It might be advisable to remind ourselves that the breaking down of adversary relationships between administration and faculty requires, at least, community of character and experience. We should expect, as we have, our administrators to have had classroom experience -- not just any such experience but the successful kind, so that we are not putting into power those with a built-in antagonism to the milieu and to the talents of the faculty. We should expect, as we have, our administrators to have evidenced some

skill in their subjects. We should expect, as most often we have, our administrators to be humane and not mere clods. There is perhaps no better way of putting it in the face of an innovation than to repeat the advice of a great statesman on being confronted with the promises of the French Revolution. He said, "I must see the actors. I must see the men." We would want to add, of course, "and the women, too."



"Sviluppo" Scorza. Polyester Resin, 48", by John E. Stevens.

ANXIETY REDUCTION IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL MATHEMATICS CLASSROOM

by Jean Burr Smith

In spite of a love affair with mathematics, which started for me at about age 7, I see mathematics as the primary root of all the evils which beset students in their search for a career, career change, or career updating. Mathematics with flash cards and insistence on the right answer fast which scares them at age 6 plus, mathematics that our culture insists is not for girls at age 13, and, finally, mathematics which turns out to be required for at least 75% of the careers when they are faced with making a career choice at 18 or 28 or 38.

Given the many math anxious students in our community college classrooms, it is important to develop a repertoire of techniques to reduce their fears.

First and most important is the atmosphere in the classroom. The math anxious are eager to share their feelings. In a small class this is very easy. In the large class this is not easy. In the beginning when my schedule allowed it, I had a psychologist come in and talk with my students about anxiety in general and math anxiety in particular. "How do you feel when you go to the dentist?" "How do you feel when you walk in this classroom?"

And two things always come out in the general discussion. At least half the class is sure that understanding math is impossible for them and that they don't like the answers in the back of the book: they don't want to check! Any time spent in helping them to relax is time well spent. As an analogy, I could never teach anyone to swim until the person trusted me, knew that I would not let go of them in deep water, and relaxed. Similarly, I cannot teach them mathematics until they are comfortable with me.

I stress from the beginning what I call math-by-committee, working together in small groups. I do this for two reasons; students are much more likely to ask questions or volunteer answers as part of a group, but more importantly, none of these students have ever realized that doing math can be a social experience. The first test of the semester is done by the committees.

I lay the ground rules the first day, passing out a very detailed outline. Homework is passed in and checked. Attendance is at the discretion of the student. Tests must be taken on the designated day, but retakes may be taken as often as necessary to get the desired mark. A student may be delighted with a C or take a test four times to get an A. At Middlesex we have a math lab where the students take their retakes. The possibility of retakes seems to reduce the test anxiety and by the middle of the semester very few are needed. They may bring any information they need to tests on a 3 x 5 file card. As I tell them, I am testing them on how well they use information, not on how well they memorize, and I encourage the use of hand calculators.

We do word problems constantly. No one at this level is taking a math course simply to add, subtract, multiply and divide. They need to be able to use these skills. Because we do problems every day, the students begin to look forward to them and do them first on tests.

From the beginning we emphasize that there is no best method. I write down any answer that anyone suggests and apparently have gotten very good at not showing preferences. Then we look at how each answer is gotten. We develop the idea that there are no wrong answers - only wrong questions. The student answers the question as he or she hears it.

It is the teacher's responsibility to discover the question the student is answering in order to reword the original question.

Thus with a variety of word problems we can discover individual strengths and weaknesses. Take these two:

1. A cube is painted red and then with six slices is cut into 27 equal cubes. How many have one side painted red? How many none?
2. A \$200 stereo is advertised at a 20% discount. Should I have the clerk figure the discount first or the sales tax?

Each of these will turn up several solutions, but they will also show which students can visualize, which prefer calculations, and which can do neither.

Usually in the second week we do the math reading test. This must be done in groups so that no one is made to feel ridiculous in front of the whole class.

At mid-semester I pass out the second math anxiety sheet and we talk about the good things that have happened and the things that are still not so good. As one student said, "I can do most of the examples now but I've never gotten one done first."

I give a standardized final at the end, and next year I intend to put multiple choice questions in the homework assignments and in the period tests. For many of them, these will prepare them for the selections in which their math skills will be recognized - for the jobs or job improvement - or in the Grad Rec, the MCAT and the LSATS for many of the non-traditional students.

I've adopted many of the ideas of colleagues:

1. Have the class appoint a dummy-of-the-week so that any one with a question he or she doesn't dare ask can write that question down and give it to the dummy-of-the-week for asking!

2. Give unsigned quizzes. You don't care who knows the particular piece of information, just want to know how many do. This will open your eyes to quiz anxiety!
3. Have the students mark questions on a test on an anxiety scale of 1 - 10. This is a good critique of your questions.
4. In taking tests, tell students to allow themselves 5 minutes to panic by the clock. Most people can't panic that long. Then look through the test, pick a question to try and fold the test so only that question shows.
5. As a change in attacking word problems, don't read it all through first - translate phrase by phrase into symbols, then fit the phrases together.
6. Have a naming day and give everyone who can name everyone in the class 10 points. Knowing names is extremely important, both for you and the students. As John Roueche says, "Many persons come to class sure of only one thing, their own name, and you must make contact early or lose them."
7. Use values clarification technique. For information on these, write David Blauer, Math Dept., State University of New York, 1300 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, New York, 14222.

One other effort we have made to deal with math anxiety is in working in a team. A counselor and math teacher meet with small groups in a series of 4 or 5 sessions. Here we do math only incidentally to help the participants become aware of their feelings, face these feelings, and decide what to do about them. This spring, we ran a pre-registration group helping students to decide whether they would dare take a math course next semester and, if so, which one.

In the first session, we talk about feelings and when and why the bad feelings started. During the first week they are asked to keep logs of good and bad mathematical experiences and we talk about these at our second meeting, listening for the messages they give them-

selves. The third and fourth meetings vary with different groups, but in each they have become very supportive of each other and each person involved has gone on to take a quantitative course if not an actual mathematical one.

This past year I taught a special class in New Haven, and out of this has grown my latest concern - a two semester math course for the highly verbal, non-traditional student, a course which I call Reentry Mathematics. In the first semester we emphasized the anxiety reduction, reviewed the basic operations in arithmetic and algebra, emphasizing the applications in word problems and introduced graphing. In the second semester we covered linear programming for decision making, probability for statistics and an intellectual understanding of the two operations of calculus. It was an unbelievably exciting experience, and I am convinced there is a population waiting for such a course.

In closing, let me quote from the conclusion of *The Hartford Courant* reporting on a workshop I had done with the elementary teachers: "Mrs. Smith says one way to help cure math anxiety is to take another math course and try to overcome old hang-ups." The reporter described his response to my suggestion, "I can't - I'm afraid some mean imaginary number in its fractional form will show up in a train A train B problem causing me to panic and reveal my ignorance to the whole class.

It's not math anxiety. It's stark unadulterated math terror."



Heirloom. Oil 48"x36". by Suzanne Howes-Stevens. Photo by John Stevens.

THE NEW HUMANISM IN EDUCATION

By Jim Wright

It is risky business to deny that one is "humanistic". At most it implies a certain disloyalty to one's own kind, and at the very least it connotes a coldness of heart characteristic of hermits, snakes, and other savage or misanthropic types. In academic circles, not to be humanistic is always bad. Depending on one's definition of the term, one may be painted as reactionary, overly religious, overly cerebral, uncaring, and uninterested in the arts or in interpersonal growth.

So much misunderstanding has been engendered as partisans cast a warm and caring "humanistic" glow over their quite various activities, that any shared meaning the term may have enjoyed in the past has been lost. Originally, philosophical humanism was concerned with values and ideals that were distinctly human as opposed to satisfactions that were either subhuman or superhuman. Humanists in theology maintained that, in the achievement of the good life, we must rely upon human values and human effort rather than dependence upon divine revelation or divine power. Literary humanists emphasized the enduring worth of great art, literature, language, history, and philosophy, all endeavors based upon the unique capacity of the human species to create symbols. Furthermore, philosophical and theological humanists shared the same dedication to the principle that the improvement of our own culture and character is our own existential responsibility. The variant form of humanism I encounter in education today does, I am sure, have its roots in this history. The "human potential movement" with its blend of self improvement and social service is surely an offspring of earlier philosophical humanism. However, its apostolic zeal, its attendant sectarianism, and narcissistic character mark it as a form of humanism that some of us "humanists" do not subscribe to.

The new humanism emanated in the 1950s and 60s from psychological sources, most notably from Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who insisted that research topics be meaningful in terms of human existence, i.e. "living fully now". It spawned a school of applied social scientists who choose to use their training in "helping" professions rather than cloister themselves in academic retreats. These all seemed noble and needed goals. Applied practitioners drew their nourishment from the more "academically" oriented sources, and although there was some discord between them, the symbiosis was recognized.

The applied school gained influence at the expense of depth in the "human potential movement" of the 60s. With its emphasis on intense individualism and the primacy of subjective experience, it provided a handy ideological legitimation for an anti-institutional, anti-intellectual, rebel generation. Its influence quickly spread into educational philosophy which was perceived as institutionally rigid and overly cognitive...not "humanistic." In education the word "humanistic" is a device used to discredit traditionalists and contains very little meaning. Its manifold expressions make a clear exposition of its basic assumptions difficult, if not impossible, although I feel that a few principles cross cut the variations so often that it is safe to list them.

ON SHARING AND CARING

The first and perhaps foremost assumption underlying the ideology of the new humanism is that traditional educational efforts have so over-emphasized cognitive criteria, that we have cultivated a cerebral being, acting from "the neck up," incompetent in the area of emotional relations, sterile, and abstract. What we should do, it is contended, is not deny at least half of what it

means to be human, i.e. the affective domain of emotional expression, self-revelation, compassion, fear, hope, joy, etc., etc. Can education, it is asked, dismiss this "human" dimension from classroom interaction and learning? Note "human" in reference to emotionality.

I do agree that traditional education has been rather one dimensional. Therefore, inclusion of such curriculum as human relations training, communication skills, and dialogical methods, linking the theoretical to the personal, are necessary and welcome. I think, however, that emphasis in the area of affect per se should be placed in the lower levels of education and only minimally included in higher education where the primary task is a cognitive one. Too many experimental and "alternative" schools have grossly over-compensated in the affective direction, downgrading "knowledge" (mind-people) and apotheosizing feeling and subjective experience (body-people). This dichotomy, based on a pop-interpretation of brain bi-laterality, is particularly banal. In effect, its advocates have committed the same error of denying "at least half of what it means to be human." The ability to know, to critically conceptualize, is the precious heritage of our species. Whereas affect, on a limbic foundation, is part and parcel of the entire mammalian adaptation. It is conceptualization, a neo-cortical phenomenon, that gives us distinctiveness and is responsible for our adaptive success. Schools and educational techniques that failed to apply thinking to feeling revealed their weakness and shallowness by their massive decline in the early seventies. To be sure, the so called cognitive/affective dimensions represent two essential sides to the same coin. More sophisticated methods incorporated affective techniques as a means to more effective cognitive learning.

Unfortunately, the value of affective techniques has been seriously enervated over the years by charlatanism, and other incompetent, cultish pop-psychological expressions, that have succeeded only in hastening the demise of some originally rather substantial ideas (Rogers) in a gushing self revelation and inappropriate emotionality that was

pretentious and self-righteous. The difficulty of testing a group leader's ability to accurately identify and facilitate "growth" in emotional domains like empathy, compassion, and intuition makes these techniques vulnerable to anyone with a self-professed claim to competence. In reality, many of the practitioners who are considered successful possess a charismatic ability to lead and a quasi-religious dogma, making them attractive to people for the same reasons that lie behind the proliferation of cults in contemporary society. The goals of the new humanism are noble enough and the truths are simple enough, e.g. "trust your own feelings," to attract those frightened away from the discipline necessary to the development of critical conceptual skills and consequent "knowledge." The nobility of purpose assumes critics to be morally on the defensive.

THE KNOWERS AND THE DOERS

Another basic assumption, and one that I strongly share, is that the "activist" element must be a part of the educational method. What I do not share, however, is the interpretation of how this is to be brought about.

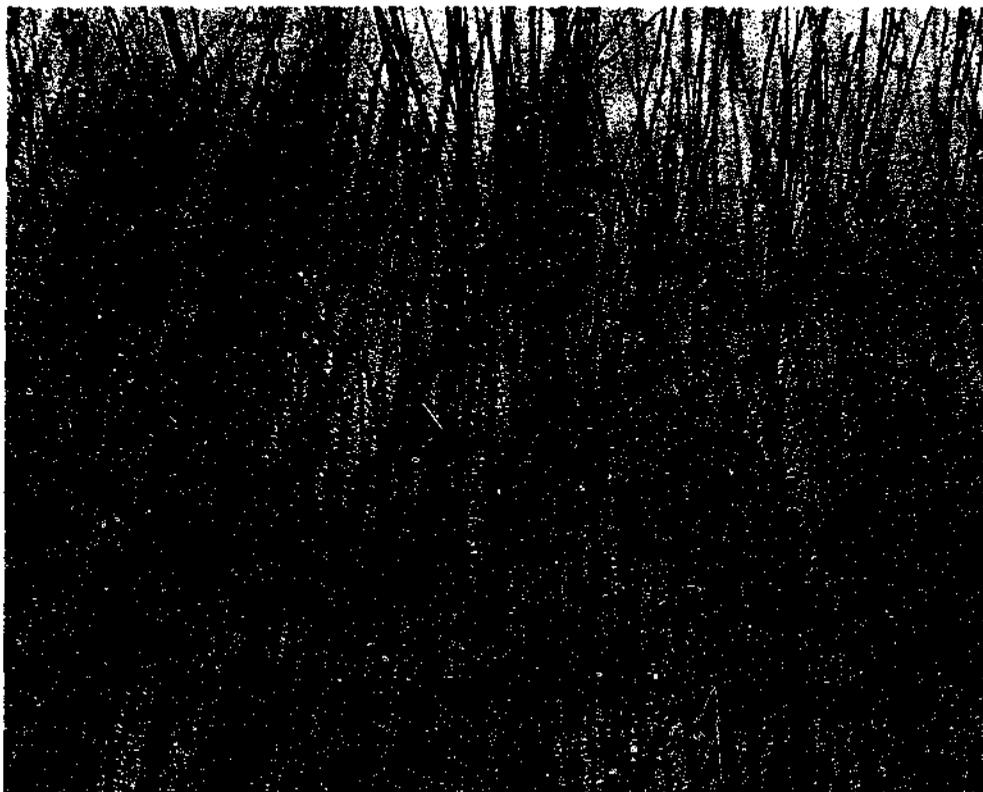
What is happening, I'm afraid, is reminiscent of the schism apparent today in Christian theology (the analogy is pointedly purposeful). The fundamental (charismatic) learning is in the direction of personal salvation, acceptance of Christ as savior on an individual basis. If enough people take the word into their hearts, social problems will miraculously evaporate and the millenium be nearer. The Christian liberals, on the other hand, view this narcissistic emphasis as obfuscating the real issues, social structural injustice, as they urge their congregations onward into social activism and human service.

What I fear most is that activism in humanistic education will parallel the fundamentalist leaning. Even if it is possible to get beyond the narcissistic elements, sharing and caring, interpersonal skills, etc. are necessary, but not sufficient, tools for the task of social change. It takes knowledge. Poverty for example, cannot be "counseled" away. It

in our community college who hunger for guidance and structure and need the prod of external sanctions. To constrain the former is an educational sin, to demand of the latter the immediate acquisition of these skills I find condescending and even classist. Those who flourish with self direction are those who have been nourished in it. This varies by social class level, and is deeply internalized in the socialization process. In order to offer opportunities to the academically insecure or ill-prepared, we cannot kid them, and ultimately disillusion them into thinking that self esteem, as well as academic and occupational success, is best served by culturally biased methods. Futhermore, although I am more than willing to experiment, I see no data indicating that self-direction, self-evaluation, or "facilitated learning" lead to heightened academic, occupational, or even interpersonal success at any class level. It seems, on the surface anyway, that allowing students to choose, self-direct and evaluate, is more "human(e)" and this latitude will bring forth the now

unconstrained human spirit, free from its fetters, toward intrinsically rewarding learning. If this happens at all, it happens to those who have already internalized the discipline and intellectual curiosity necessary to its acquisition. For those who have not, it could be irrelevant or even nightmarish. It could attract those, however, who equate the humane with the easy.

Perhaps I am guilty of some overkill in this discussion. I am not an enemy of sharing, caring, affect, or activism. Futhermore, self direction is to me the primary end of all instruction. It must appear obvious to the discerning reader that these are all qualities that I cherish, that led me to become a teacher first and foremost. But I am embarrassed by the shallow, cultish progeny of this new humanism. It strikes me as artificial and dangerously anti-intellectual. However, if kept in its proper perspective, I may yet regain a sense of substantial pride in professing myself to be a "humanist."



"Winter Light" by John Manfred.

takes a disciplined intellectual effort to discern the historical origins and structural foundations for its perpetuation (things often dismissed as unreal abstractions). We could, and should, more effectively combine theory with practice in our curriculum, but to suppose that running T-groups and counseling workshops is any more effective in easing the suffering of humanity than, let's say, an adequate theory of inflation, is a shallow assumption at best, and sheer stupidity at its worst.

I have been a ground level social worker both in and outside this country. I have counseled, run T-groups, and many of the other "nose to nose" interactions characteristic of this work. Yet in proportion to the contributions I may have made then, my current contributions as an instructor far outweigh them. I feel that by opening intellectual vistas to students I have accomplished more than I ever managed in seemingly more direct action in the mountains or in the streets. Compassion is not worth much, and is even very dangerous, without knowledgeable direction. And even on the level of individual psychological satisfaction, who dares to say that knowing is subservient to doing, or that learning and knowing for its own sake is doing nothing.

With reference to knowing and doing, the older ideas of Dewey's progressivism, and the newer methods of Paulo Freire are much more appropriate for our task in the community college than the new humanism.

ON FACILITATING SELF DIRECTION

The social disruptions and contradictions of the last few decades carefully nourished skepticism in this country in regard to traditional authority. In the classroom this expressed itself as an attack on what I call the "professorial." The stentorian professor, pontificating and spewing forth information to be arbitrarily ingested and regurgitated (a favorite word) on uncaring examinations was the object of scorn. The traditional lecture method, it was contended, failed to recognize affect, and exams alienated students from intrinsic curiosities as they forced memorization of instructors' biases. The three A's; anxiety, antag-

onism, and alienation were revealed as intrinsic results of traditional academic methods. It was time for the knight of humanism to intervene and release students from this cold estrangement.

Overstated as this may be, there are some glimmers of truth to it, but to assume that traditional "professors" did indeed discourage, by their methods or motives, creative thought, curiosity or wonder, or had no depth of concern for their students is an assumption made only by those prone to shallow stereotyping. Many professors do dare to challenge students by use of rigor to heights of understanding as yet unperceived. Rare is the professor who fails to recognize dedication and creativity in a student, and rarer still is the one who collars and stifles this student's opportunity to direct his own learning.

Self direction and self evaluation are legitimate and substantial concepts, relevant in educational method, but I question the assumption that one must not be a "teacher imposer" but a "facilitator" guiding the student to "what lies half asleep already," or that students only effectively learn what they choose (from present consciousness) to learn. Those of us who have had undreamed vistas opened by those who dared to "force" us to master ideas in a disciplined way, to precisely define, and to arm ourselves with conceptual tools with which we can later build mansions of our own design, know this for what it really is.

Facilitating is fine enough, and most appropriate in many places, but so are traditional methods. To open-mindedly experiment with group methods, dialogical encounters, and self directed learning, is something I relish, but to stereotype the traditional I despise. It is said that the Western world view encourages dichotomies, good-bad, black-white, etc. It is strange that we feel compelled to reject the traditional, or feel that we have to, as we accept innovations. We should recognize that healthy institutions offer healthy varieties, and avoid facile we-they factionalism.

There are students who need little direction and who are fully capable of the discipline so essential for learning success, but there are far more students

IS COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION THE ANSWER?

by Joan N. Gallagher

Open enrollment! Educating the masses! Is Competency Based Education the answer? What does competency mean when it is applied to a liberal arts or general education curriculum? Can competency based education be applied to these curriculums?

Competency, according to Meeth in "The Experience Curriculum", may be defined as "the state of having requisite abilities or qualities." A Curriculum is set of designed courses of experiences. A competency based curriculum is one where the competencies expected of all graduates are agreed upon and defined, and courses are designed to assist the student in becoming competent. If a curriculum is competency based, there MUST be a clear statement of the competencies and EXACTLY how a student may attain them.

The competency based design consists of three elements:

*Overall Statement
of
Competence*

*Level of Proficiency
Required*

Evaluation and Standards

*Experience Required in Order to
Obtain These Competencies.*

Therefore, to be liberally educated our traditional liberal arts curriculum emphasizes a series of subjects to be mastered; the competency based program emphasizes a set or series of skills and abilities for proficiency. The competency statement should contain one of the following terms: 1) Knows (refers to a body of knowledge that can be identified and defined) 2) Knows and can apply (is generally a higher level competency than one just reflecting the presence of knowledge and is used with "know", 3) Knows, can

apply and evaluate (is a still higher level of competency and generally indicates the ability to make value judgements based on the comparison of two or more concepts or comparisons of a concept with a standard). These guidelines are contained in "Competency Based Education" prepared by the Metropolitan Assessment Service.

We have to remember that we would then concern ourselves with the attainment of the specified competency and not necessarily a prescribed subject. A particular discipline/subject may require ten prerequisite competencies even before the new competencies can be started. Once the student is ready, it may take a series of six tasks in order to accomplish the required experiences. If the competency statement includes an application level, the process should include a description of how the knowledge was applied. The process by which competence was gained could include on-the-job experience, internship, independent study, tutorial and even volunteer work. This may take the student anywhere from a few weeks to possibly a few months to complete; whereas, this required course under the traditional method will take the full semester whether needed or not.

In a competency curriculum, Meeth claims our thinking will change as follows: "experiences substitute for courses, individual progress for grades, and proficiency for information."

We will also have to learn a new meaning for the term outcome. We have to state precisely through "behavioral or learned objectives" what the student must DO in order to be certified by the institution -- that is the outcome.

Educating the masses poses unique problems. Students come to us at all levels; yet, we have to either teach to the average student or we have to teach

to certain standards. The bright student will survive; the slower student will acquire one-half of the task sets; and the truly slow student will withdraw by mid-semester. All three students could have accomplished the entire series of task sets if we transformed the traditional uniformity of learning into a set of skills each student must master in order to be graduated from the program.

Essentially, the program has to be designed to encourage a student to develop at his own pace and in his own way. It is this criteria -- his own way -- that we must cope with at this time. We will have to write programs that will allow EACH student to learn in his own way -- traditional lecture, tape recorder, role playing, slide-tape, research, verbal or non verbal and so on.

The competency based program must produce a series of structured and interrelated experiences designed to produce learning in a specific field. Each experience must be designed to help the student reach certain goals; it has to be interrelated with the other experiences the student has chosen. Therefore, the faculty has to generally agree upon what competency based curriculum does for its students, but also determine for itself whether or not the institution is accomplishing its stated goals.

Our method of assessment of competencies is somewhat more difficult than traditional assessments in the classroom. Measurement (the process of quantifying) and evaluation (the process of attaching a value to a measurement we have made) are the two processes required in order to assure the quality of the assessment process.

Therefore our method of assessment must also change. 1) Diagnostic testing must determine the student's present level of skill and knowledge. 2) His progress, with detailed reinforcement and feedback, must accompan him through all progressions -- achievement of competence. He has to know what skills he has mastered in order to develop. 3) Both objective and subjective measurements are a very

difficult area to cope with. It is this area that requires written criteria, standards, and techniques for evaluation through many brainstorming sessions with your colleagues. Mistakes will be made; therefore, it should be noted that initial experimentation is also an essential criteria for the faculty when initiating competency based programs. At the present time Benjamin Bloom and David Krathwohl provide a basis for a coherent framework for the establishment of competencies and designs of experiences. We have been discussing the commitment required for faculty and students concerning the transition from traditional to competency based education. We now need to discuss another commitment.

The teaching commitment cannot be accomplished until we have ample classroom facilities, additional audio-visual materials, certified technicians manning the labs, released time for writing competency based programs, flexibility of scheduling, extension of time for financial aid programs, professional development monies, additional library facilities, change from grades to competencies, additional computer time - sharing, and more commitment to on-the-job training and internship programs. Essentially, more monies would be required in order to successfully commit ourselves to competency based education. Our traditional semester must be extended from September straight through May. Labs must be open from morning to late evening with a certified technician(s) available at all times. Various hardware and software must be purchased in order to accommodate the student's level of progress.

It is a very exciting concept and is working very well in the South and Canada. A commitment by those interested at the faculty level, as well as a total commitment by the institution and its administrators, is required and necessary. An initial training program for the student is also mandatory. If the student isn't oriented accordingly, the program will see defeat.

Can we commit ourselves to a

competency based curriculum that is
based on what the student learns rather
than what the teacher teaches?



Oil Painting 46"x48", entitled
LEAD WHITE. Artist, Robert F. Manning

PLACEMENT

by Virginia Barrett Villa

[Upon entering a Freshman Composition course at Greater Hartford Community College, in Hartford, Connecticut, a student must take a placement test to determine if he truly belongs in a Composition course or in a non-credit remedial course. The test is then subject to the scrutiny of two readers of the college's English Department (Humanities Division). If the two readers disagree on their judgement of the exam, the test is given over to a third reader who acts as a referee. Being a "third reader" can become a task which is, at best, unpleasant.]

I need a third reader.

It's the old story:

My content isn't bad, but my form needs some attention.

Concept-wise in fair condition, I suffer mechanically,

But not too much so.

True, I ooze disorganization.

And if only a hint of unity is here, can chaos be far behind?

As for development,

One would be gracious in calling it adequate.

Further, given a topic of my own choice, I can't choose;

there's really no thesis that I can bear to state

with any degree of assertiveness.

So it follows that support is lacking.

Or does it?

That's another thing: I am prone to long passages of incoherence,

am fruitful with fallacies.

On the good side,

my portion of potential might yield to proper tapping.

My ring of sincerity has had its admirers.

Though, in time of stress, like this, I tend to pretension.

Oh, yes, speaking of stress,

some things I communicate, as you can see, schizophrenically, in verse.

And worse.

I could run on and on.

And that's another problem, or two-

I am redundant, have no terminal mark.

But, to attempt conclusion:

On the other hand I compassionately pass,

on the other, ferociously fail.

Where's my scanning, skimming Solomon?

There must be a not-too-kind, not-too-cruel, not-too-busy

someone who'll be willing to seal a fate in a spare moment.

I need a third reader.

copyright, 1980, virginia barrett villa

RAINDROPS ARE FALLING . . .

by Connie Palmer

Raindrops are falling . . . Raindrops and puddles are, I think, a universal experience, and it is useful and fun to use such experiences in the teaching of nursing concepts.

Who, as a child has not lifted a face to the rain and stomped through the puddles and squatted to watch all kinds of things growing in an old rain puddle?

As an instructor of Fundamentals of Nursing or Introduction to Nursing or Basic Nursing, call it what you may, in an associate degree nursing program, I face the dilemma of presenting the course to a diverse class of students, including the eighteen year old just entering into a first college experience, sitting between the thirty year old who has just earned a baccalaureate degree in chemistry and the fifty year old licensed practical nurse who has practiced in that capacity for twenty years. How to present basic concepts so that the eighteen year old can easily grasp them and yet keep the more informed learners interested and help them to look at the facts they may already know in a new or different light? I try to look for a simple everyday life experience so each can have input in class discussion and can easily follow the nursing implications. It's starting to rain . . .

An important concept that one should grasp early in a nursing experience is that stasis of fluid leads to complications - and so to our raindrops -

Raindrops falling after a few hours collect in a dusty field, and when you slosh around at the end of the rainstorm, you see a muddy, murky puddle. But when the sun comes out and the winds have died down, and a few hours have passed, you go back to the puddle, and you can smile back at yourself in the mirror of the clear water of the puddle. What has happened to the muddy, murky puddle? Simply, the law of gravity has come into play, and

the heavy particles in the puddle have settled to the bottom when the rain-water was not disturbed but was allowed to remain still or static. Almost every student can tell why the mud puddle has become a clear pool of water.

Remembering the puddle - what happens then to the body fluids when they become still or static? Students who have knowledge of the composition of body fluids can pull from their information to draw parallels that even the neophyte can understand. Many know that when the blood is still or static cells fall to the bottom and separate from the plasma, that a clot or thrombus may then form because of stasis of the venous blood; in the urinary tract, when urine becomes static and heavy particles, such as minerals, settle out, stones or calculi may be formed. Blood clots and kidney stones are easily seen as complications in relation to health by all, but back to the puddle -

Two days have passed and the puddle is still there though a bit smaller in size, but what has happened to the clear, mirror-like puddle? It is again cloudy and murky and is now full of life - and why? Some students can explain that organisms have found a quiet home well stocked with food and water, and so they have multiplied until they have clouded the clear water. What happens then when there is a puddle in the lungs and the fluid is allowed to remain static? Organisms grow and the complication becomes hypostatic pneumonia. What happens when urine puddles in the urinary tract form?

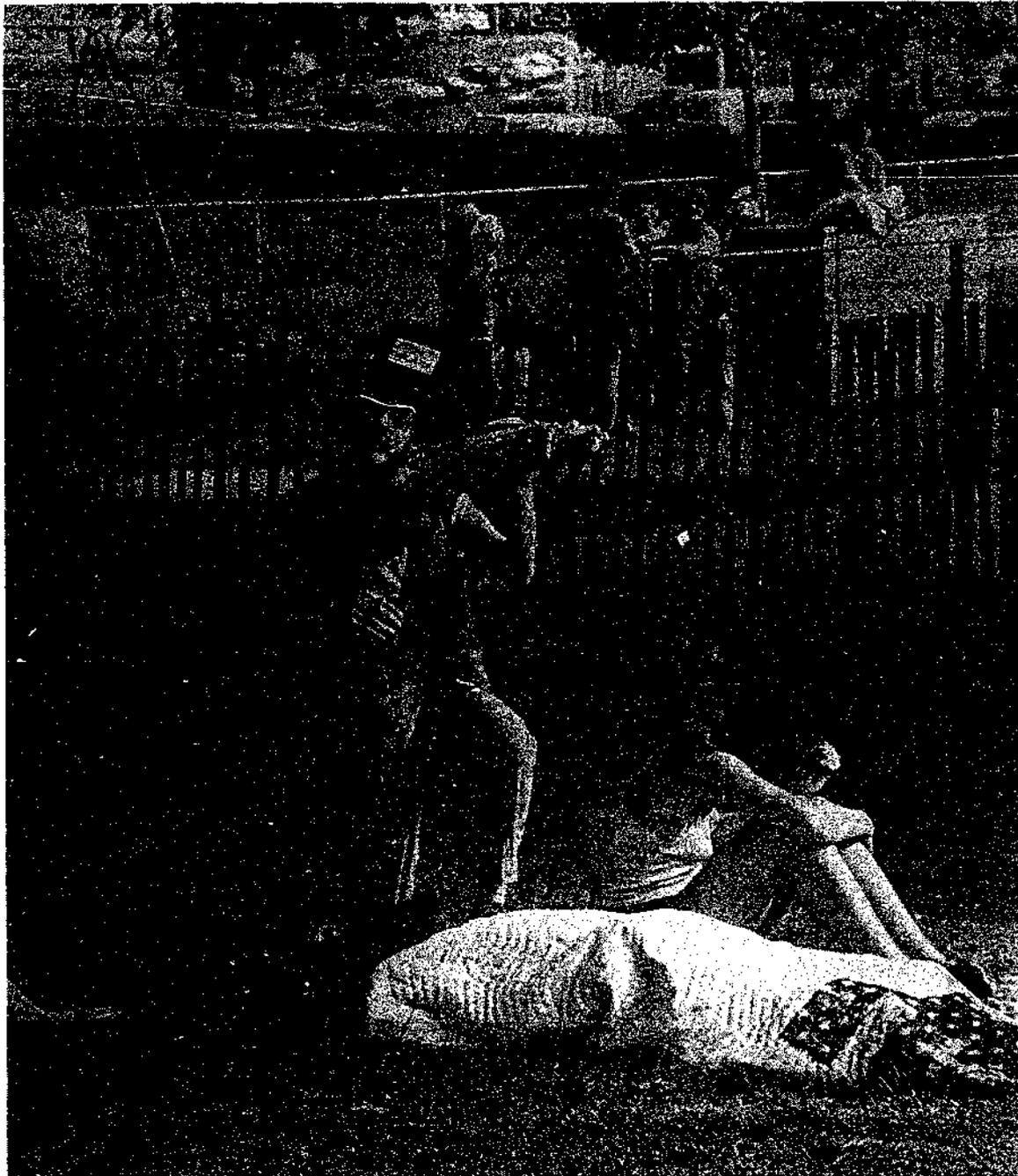
Pneumonia just from lying still - urinary tract infection - kidney stones - blood clots!!!

Why create the picture of a patient who is lying still in bed with a puddle in each leg calf, puddles in the urinary system, and puddles in each lung? If the student can see these puddles and

remember the saga of the raindrops and the mudpuddle, then a problem area in relation to health can be identified; the turning of patients and their ambulation, hopefully, will have real meaning.

A lot of learning can take place from looking at a mud puddle. The new student should be able to understand

that stasis of fluid in the body leads to complications, while the more knowledgeable student may never before have connected what happens to a mud puddle with health concepts. As for the instructor - it's always refreshing to walk in the rain and rediscover the mud puddles with the students.



"Unheard Melodies" by John Manfred.

DOWNEAST SEMESTER IN MAINE

by Jay and Shirley Stager

Since 1975 a unique experiment in experiential, inductive learning has been conducted during the fall semester at Manchester Community College.

Entitled the *Downeast Semester*, an acronym for Direct Opportunity With New Experiences and Societal Themes, this program enables twenty-five students to "drop out" into an alternative life style on an isolated farm in northern rural Maine. There the students study Utopian literature and Intentional Communities while they experience living in community for three months. They earn a full semester of college credits in psychology, philosophy, and social science courses taught by Associate Professor Jay R. Stager, director of the Downeast Semester.

What is it that draws students to this Hidden Valley where they will live for three months without the usual adornments of campus life? There is no television or stereo, no movie theater or local pub, no central heat, no cook or cleaning service, no way to skip classes without answering directly to the professor. There is no anonymity at *Downeast*. Each student is responsible to the others for behavior, attitudes, support or lack of it. It becomes very clear that no one is an island. Each has an effect on the others.

Some students come to learn about how groups can govern themselves and are eager to experiment with different forms of government. Some come because they want to escape the materialistic culture they have grown up in. Some come because they need to learn how to be independent of their families. But regardless of what reasons they give for coming, one thing is certain: they are about to begin a journey towards discovering themselves and each other.

As in any good fairy tale, the heroes

and heroines must meet and grapple with a monster of some sort or other, and the *Downeast Tale* is no exception. The first to make an appearance immediately upon arrival in September, is the Hobgoblin of Hunger. At once the students come face to face with the agreement they made when they signed up for the program: they will practice at least one month of vegetarianism. Fresh tomatoes, onions, lettuce and zucchini come from the garden daily, and they experiment with home-made whole-grain breads and cereals, and read *Diet for a Small Planet* and other vegetarian books.

But for many, a meal without meat is just not a meal. Attitudes and bodies take time to adjust. In an effort to actually bring home to them the full impact of what they are consuming, students tour a local Belfast chicken factory where the birds are processed from live feathered chickens to super-market poultry. For some this clinches the argument for vegetarianism. For others it merely intensifies the desire for meat.

The students also learn to use the available food co-ops, working with the Belfast Co-op and FEDCO, where their numbers and enthusiasm are welcomed. Even the most devoted meat-eaters survive the month and at the end vote to continue mainly vegetarian meals with fish or chicken added to the menu once a week. The Hobgoblin of Hunger is subdued.

Shortly after their arrival at Hidden Valley the students begin the ascent, one by one, to the Log Cabin which sits atop Ledge Mountain, overlooking Ledge Pond.

The isolated cabin, which was built at the camp over a period of three years by a group of young campers, becomes the arena in which the students will confront the Dragons of Loneliness and Solitude.

For three days he/she will come into contact with the natural cycles of the body, minus alarm clocks, watches, radios, running water, electricity, etc., and will discover how well one can keep warm and fed using a wood stove. Here, too, the student reads Thoreau's *Walden* and catches a glimpse of what Thoreau meant when he said, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Before the students leave the cabin to return to the larger community each one records there the impressions and experiences of this encounter with solitude. Most find this Dragon is indeed a friendly one.

Meanwhile, back at the main camp, students are sampling different religious styles presented by guest practitioners of various sects. As Alice, in *Through the Looking Glass*, is confronted with bottles which say "Drink me," so now the students are confronted by these guests who say, "Try my way."

For five days they follow the regimen prescribed for disciples of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, an Indian guru. They rise early for an hour of "dynamic meditation" conducted in the early morning cold. With eyes blindfolded, they hyperventilate, jump up and down, make loud chaotic noises and finally dance around the recreation hall, still blindfolded, to the recorded Eastern music provided by Sharbo and Adityo, leaders from the Ashram located in Robinhood, Maine. As the instruction and discipline continue through the five-day workshop, students find themselves battling it out with their own feelings of resentment, anger, wonder, fatigue, sudden insight, exuberance, and finally relief that it's all over. They will not adopt entirely the ideas they have been exposed to, but neither will any one of them be quite the same again, for they have learned much about themselves and about another style of living.

Other guest teachers arrive to share their "ways" of religious belief, and the

students become for a while Buddhists, Sufis, Catholics, Shakers. They try sitting meditation, prayer, spontaneous creative movement, singing, contact improvisation, the silence of a monastic community and fasting for three days. And through all this exposure they are learning a bit of what it actually feels like to be a member of one of these religious movements. They are learning first-hand by simulation and experience what other students back on campus are reading about in text books.

Not all learning is undertaken in this experiential way at *Downeast*. There are some "traditional" courses taught through textbooks, lectures, examinations, and term papers. American literature and general psychology are taught this way, and the students now find that they must grapple with a Hydra-Monster whose 21 heads clamor for more social intimacy while each tries to find sufficient time and space for studying. This conflict between each person's need to feel understood and accepted by every other member of the group and the need for a personal time for study and introspection continues throughout the semester. Some steps are taken to help students to deal with this problem. Schedules are arranged and rearranged to set up times for study groups to meet, for business meetings, gripe sessions and getting-to-know-you sessions.

Certain areas are designated as quiet rooms, certain days as study days, and the kitchen becomes the "social hall."

Weekend workshops are also set up with leaders trained in dealing with the problems of group dynamics. Here students learn communication skills, values clarification, how to handle interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution. Several times a week the group conducts a "Circle" in which one person sits in the center and listens as other members express their good feelings about him/her. In addition there is the "open seat" in which anyone who feels the need may confront any problem within himself and receive feedback and support from the group.

Each student maintains a journal during the *Downeast* journey. Here each is encouraged to record, in complete privacy, all impressions, feelings, dreams, disappointments, etc., in any literary style one chooses. Some use poetry, drawings and even music to record those intense feelings elicited by their experiences in the program. Journals are checked, not read or analyzed, for consistency of entries. Some choose to share their writings, and therewith the unfolding of their souls, with others in the group.

As the conquest of each demon and the unfolding of the mysteries of the Self and Others continue, the usual barriers to intimacy are broken down. Members of the *Downeast* Community look to one another for support and approval. They learn to communicate honestly and openly about both positive and negative aspects of their lives and personalities. They learn to trust. When problems arise, as they do in any community, students struggle to talk freely and personally. Issues on feminism, drinking, smoking, sexuality, drugs, intimacy, are the subjects of symposia where each member is encouraged to voice an opinion as the group attempts to reach a satisfactory position.

As the heroes and heroines of our tale journey together toward self-awareness and personal responsibility, they must also complete the many "Herculean" labors heaped upon them in the process of living together. There is a government to be formed, wood to be chopped, classrooms and living quarters to be cleaned, meals to be cooked and dishes to be washed, animals to be fed and cared for, and personal issues to be met and resolved, all of which require endless time, energy, cooperation and patience.

Cooperation! How do people live together cooperatively in community? Here is the core of the *Downeast* Semester. Throughout the ages, Man has longed for the ideal community - a Utopia - an Impossible Dream - a Camelot. *Downeast* Semester provides the opportunity for the students to study together the attempts which have been and are being made at

establishing Utopia as they also attempt to establish their own temporary Utopia at Hidden Valley during September, October, and November. While the community does seem to fall far short of the ideals which individual students bring with them, still it is successful in providing a meaningful opportunity to experiment with these goals.

As they work to set up their own community and to study about others through written materials, the students also visit people in the area who are experimenting with alternative lifestyles. They meet their neighbors in Montville who have left the cities for a simpler, back-to-the-land style of life. They talk with Helen and Scott Nearing, visit the Shaker Community at Sabbathday Lake and small communal farms like Twitchell Hill.

As a final project for the semester, each student is required to study intensively one of the functioning contemporary communities and to visit and be involved in the life of that community. This year, three students will travel to Scotland in December to participate in the Findhorn Community, one will go to Israel to live on a kibbutz and others will visit such places as Twin Oaks in Virginia, the Farm in Kentucky, Karma Choling, a Buddhist retreat in Vermont, the Shaker Community at Sabbathday Lake in Maine and Yogaville in Pomfret, Conn. Some completed this assignment by living for a time at the Renaissance Community in Greenfield, Mass. and Twitchell Hill in Liberty, Maine, during the course of the semester.

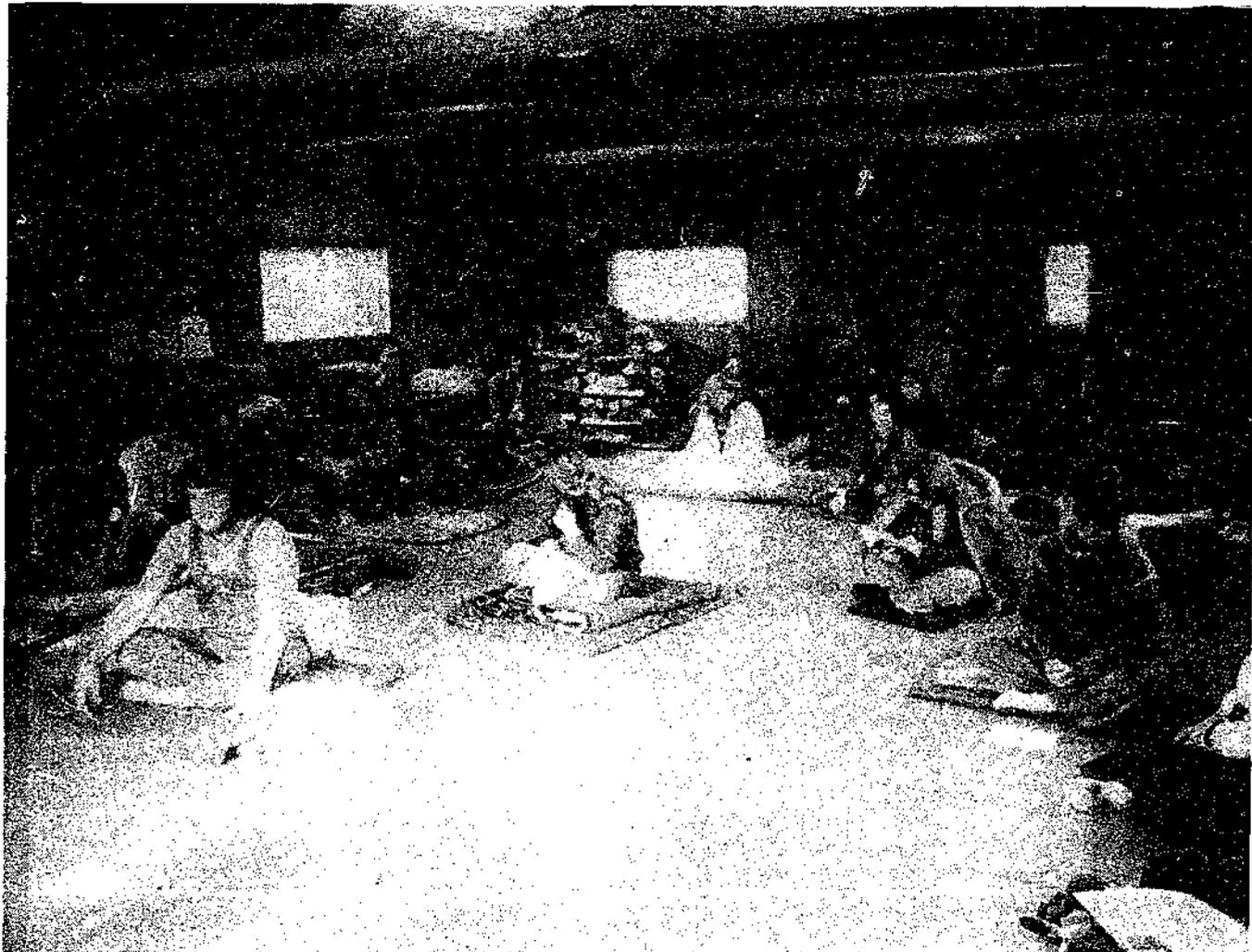
But all is not work in this real-life fairy tale. Even adventurers must have time for playing and sharing with the community at large. The students invited friends and parents for a weekend in October, Fall Foliage Weekend. They offered folk dancing and New Games, good food, warm fires, and plenty of singing for those who made the long trip to Maine to find out what *Downeast* is all about.

And on the last blustery Sunday in October the group boarded their blue school bus emblazoned with a white dinosaur and descended on the little Congregational Church in Freedom where they conducted the morning service, hands joined with the members of the congregation, encircling the tiny sanctuary. There seemed to be no doubt in any of their faces that this was indeed a worthwhile adventure in giving and sharing.

Most fairy tales have happy endings, but, of course, *Downeast Semester* has no

ending. It goes on with the adventures as they leave their little temporary experiment to return to "real life." They left on a rather appropriate day - Thanksgiving.

They may leave with that feeling of giving thanks for the experiences they have had, and armed with a bit of advice from one of the books they are required to read for the psychology courses: "I came... hoping to receive butter for the bread of life. Instead, in the end, I emerged with a pail of sour milk, a churn, and instructions on how to use them." (from *If You Meet The Buddha On The Road, Kill Him!* by Sheldon Kopp).



Downeast students "sitting" in meeting hall at Hidden Valley for one of guest lectures as part of the philosophy of religion class studying Tibetan Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christian Cults.
photo by Yolla Niclas.

TEACHING LITERATURE IS NOT A FRILL

by Ellen Strenski

No one disagrees that literature is a sublime monument to the human spirit, etc. etc. etc. But not everyone is aware that at the heart of responding to a literary text is a set of marketable skills, as well as aesthetic appreciation. Rerun: marketable skills. VOCATIONAL TRAINING! Certainly that is not the primary reason we teach lit., but it is one of several important justifications, and we ought to highlight it in a community college.

Big businesses claim they aren't interested in narrowly trained folk who can offer only specific skills that may soon become obsolete. According to a Mobil ad last year in the *New York Review of Books*, they want versatile, retrainable applicants who understand and get on well with others, and who are alert to new ideas. Studying literature can further some of these skills and qualities (caveat: if it is taught appropriately). One researcher claims, for instance, that

Fiction educates not in particular codes of judgement (eg. against racism or sexism), but in the sense of justice, so that a reader is capable of judging more fairly than he can when his own interests are at stake. After each fictional engagement, the reader's capacity for justice in real situations is stronger and more reliable.

Our moral imagination and sense of fairness, which restrain self-interest and make communal life possible at all, are "reinvigorated" by literature.

This line of argument might sound sinister - literature as an instrument of social control. But literature can also promote communal interests by energizing active readers. Literature "rehearses" the imagination in possibilities. According to another source,

students need a context in which they may simulate real life situations without many of the insecurities and immediate pressures of real life, a context in which they may engage in social experimentation leading to the discovery of more satisfactory human relationships.

And according to others writing about moral education, it seems that people are often not better than they are (kinder, more compassionate, understanding etc.) because alternative behavior has never occurred to them, alternative models have never been presented to them imaginatively, for instance in literature.

Personnel managers, indeed all of us, need people who can conceptualize problems in all their complexity, who are capable of more than biased, simple-minded approaches. Literature can promote this capacity for abstract thinking in readers, which it does through the medium of language used imaginatively. To render details of feeling intelligible, a writer continually struggles with expanding the capacity of language to communicate subtle nuances of shared experience.

Literature is a short cut to experience, amassing in the reader's mind and memory a range of complex associations with which to respond to and judge life experiences, thereby generating nothing less than the power of thought. For instance, one teacher reporting on the effects of developing students' agility in using metaphor, concludes, "Nearly all of the students perceived an improvement in the use of their imagination. They felt that they were able to generate ideas faster." These ideas may not be the most useful, illuminating ideas for any given problem, but we are all better off if people can generate ideas at all and

quickly, too, than not.

The study of literature can also be justified, of course, for its personal, psychological benefits. Psychoanalysts have long insisted on the allied value of dreams and fantasy, Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* being a notable example. Quite apart from fairy tales, however, we can identify two specific personal reasons, beyond entertainment, for studying the conventional academic curriculum: the building of self-confidence, and independence.

Literature builds self-confidence by defining the reader's sense of personal worth within a continuing historical tradition. Reading literature, our fear of being monstrously unique decreases as we see others suffer and survive. NOW and AAACP have warned about deforming stereotypes, but we are beginning to establish the significance of other positive, encouraging possibilities of literary models to support and reassure readers.

Apart from providing attractive models, literature can also benefit readers by energizing in them a sense of power. On a concrete level, in spite of book clubs and conglomerate take-overs of the publishing trade near to monopolizing a mass market, a reader can still exercise more personal control and responsibility over the means of nurturing the imaginative life than can viewers of electronic or film media. More importantly, and abstractly, responding to the imaginative models of character and motive in literature empowers us by exercising and developing our ability to understand ourselves and our place in the world, and to respond to others in ordinary life. Reacting to the characters and their emotions in literature, as authors maneuver and often surprise our sympathies and expectations, liberates us from being stuck in a routine of predictable attitudes.

This worthwhile knowledge derived from second-hand experience can still be very disturbing. Another study

concludes:

empirical or pragmatic justification of literature . . . seems to lie less in obvious behavioral changes than in cognitive realignments, shufflings, and questionings . . . peak experiences can be important in one's life even though behavioral or attitudinal changes may be minimal.

These "realignments, shufflings, and questionings" can be very unsettling and uncomfortable, but nonetheless welcome and essential for personal growth.

Literature presents models of human action which dramatize choices. Its compelling (and entertaining) force derives from language used imaginatively. Literature meets many needs, and its study is not frivolous. Literature can foster a reader's commitment to altruistic values and cooperation by dramatizing consequences of actions once removed. It can increase readers' abilities to grasp complex social problems by exercising their command of language and thereby developing their capacity for abstract thought. It can encourage readers to try to address, if not solve, these problems by increasing their confidence about sharing experience and facing change. And, of course, it can give pleasure, delight, and a satisfying sense of independence. Research has demonstrated the connections between responding to literature and these skills and qualities. It is now up to instructors to calculate these effects, modify their teaching, if necessary, in order to further them in students, measure them, and ultimately certify mastery of them.

E.S.L.: TRANSITION TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

by Maria Stiebel

In January 1978 Housatonic Community College hired its first full-time instructor in English as a Second Language. The college recognized the need for a special developmental English course for the ever-increasing foreign-born population in the greater Bridgeport area, many of whom find Housatonic the only accessible institution of higher education by virtue of its low tuition and its open admissions policy. During the past two years, more than two hundred students representing over twenty national backgrounds have benefited from the course.

Many foreign-born residents enroll in the E.S.L. course as part-time students; then, after gaining confidence in their ability to work in an academic setting, decide to matriculate in a degree program.

ESL 101-102, English as a Second Language I and II, is a two-semester intermediate/advanced level course offered by the English Department as part of its developmental English effort.

The ESL course grew from the Language Communications Skills course which prepares the general student for college level English composition and literature.

While both developmental courses stress language skills improvement, including vocabulary expansion and refinement of written expression, ESL focuses more specifically on those basic difficulties resulting from insufficient experience with the English language.

ESL cannot over a short period of fifteen or even thirty weeks take a student with "broken" English and make him speak and write with the proficiency of his American counterpart. However, the course can make him more sensitive to the various components of the language: sound, structure, vocabulary choice, general and academic usage. With increased sensitivity to such features of the language, an ESL student can become

a more efficient language learner outside the classroom, focusing on those problems that cause confusion or noncommunication. Such a student becomes more quick to notice his own mistakes and try alternate ways of expression; the art of paraphrasing is developed in spoken and written exercises. Use of synonyms and contextual clues, rather than dependence on bilingual dictionaries, is encouraged as the primary means of vocabulary development; translation takes a back seat to direct immediate communication.

ESL aims to be a practical and comprehensive introductory course. Considering the wide range of student backgrounds and entry level skills, provisions have to be made to accommodate students' immediate needs and long range goals.

The course is geared for students who have some basic comprehension, characterized by a minimal 1000-2000 word vocabulary. Special arrangements have to be made in the case of an occasional absolute beginners who lack the simplest conversation skills. Most students enter with a basic functional command of English which they have acquired by living and working in an English-speaking environment. About half of the students have studied English formally at some point, either locally or in their native countries. A number of college-educated immigrants also enroll in the ESL course for personal improvement, often with eventual job promotions or career changes in mind.

The course offers three credits and ninety hours of instruction each semester. During the first week students are grouped according to their general proficiency levels and are assigned a particular learning program which includes materials for grammatical review, reading and discussion, vocabulary development and listen-

ing comprehension, controlled composition and free writing. Students are expected to attend class six hours a week and spend an equal amount of time on homework, including activities in the learning lab and tutoring center.

Due to budgetary constraints classes are rather large, averaging thirty or more students. This has necessitated revision of the original course content and classroom approaches. The selection of flexible intermediate level materials for whole-class lessons, with more basic or advanced exercises for group and independent work, has been particularly crucial. In addition, weekly attendance in the learning lab and consultation with the instructor during office hours for individual homework review are required; and study sessions with tutors are encouraged.

As this is the first stressful academic experience for many of the students, study skills have been incorporated as an essential component of the course. Students have frequent exercises on listening/note-taking practice, paraphrasing and paragraph summaries, essay writing and English/English dictionary usage. Weekly quizzes on classwork and independent lessons, combined with regularly scheduled deadlines for written assignments, require students to develop systematic study habits. Those students who cannot keep up with the rapid pace have the option of taking the course over without academic penalty.

Advanced ESL students are encouraged to enroll in introductory math, business, or sociology courses concurrently with ESL. This arrangement affords them a further opportunity for exposure to English in an academic setting where they compete with American students, thus reinforcing and extending the language they are learning in the ESL course. Such developmental level content courses, which do not have an English composition prerequisite, serve as a transitional stage and provide an additional source of motivation; the pace and depth of these courses are not so demanding as to frustrate most students, and ESL learners get a more realistic functional measure of their current language proficiency in

relation to the comprehensive skills required for success in college.

Some recurring questions come to mind, and to these there are only tentative, approximate solutions. How does one conduct a large class of students with diverse educational backgrounds, languages, cultures, language proficiencies, motivations, academic needs and personal aspirations? How can one make the course accessible and beneficial to students who enter with weak academic or language skills and yet make it challenging enough for students with near native fluency who are already taking other courses with American students in various fields? How flexible can the classroom approaches and materials be? How can one incorporate continuity and progression into a course when each semester brings a change in the general student body and in class composition?

Typically about 30 - 50% of the first semester's ESL students continue into the second semester of ESL, while others discontinue their college education temporarily or permanently or else move into regular college courses. Student retention continues to be of concern to community colleges, but if twenty-five out of thirty students should persevere through exam week, the semester can be considered a success.

What priorities does the instructor establish? Fluency first, hopefully leading to accuracy, at last! Vocabulary development through guided and independent reading, reinforced by discussion and composition, is of primary importance for students hoping not just to survive but to be successful in college. A student can be expected to increase his vocabulary by about 2000 words per semester. Both graded and unsimplified materials rich in general academic or semi-technical vocabulary likely to be found in college lectures and textbooks are used. Cultural readings from "Yesterday and Today in the U.S.A.: an Intermediate ESL Reader" provide the basis for discussions of controversial topics while introducing the student to academic language not found on the street or in the cafeteria. Occasional articles from popular magazines also help increase cultural awareness and encourage expres-

sion of complex ideas in the second language.

Poems, plays and novels need not be excluded from the ESL class. Linguistically accessible literary masterpieces such as "Animal Farm" or "A View from the Bridge" are a welcome challenge to most ESL learners. Judiciously selected poems by Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, William Carlos Williams or Robert Frost can be fun and rewarding to students who need to gain confidence in their ability to approach more than simple prose; and occasional songs provide a change of pace from the more tedious reading and writing assignments. All degree students must eventually take English Composition and Literature and these are likely to be the most frustrating college subjects because of their sophisticated reading and writing requirements. The ESL course must then include activities to prepare students to cope with college English courses in addition to courses in other academic areas.

How far and how fast can students with limited English progress in college? One semester of ESL seems to be enough to give many students an introduction to general language awareness, as well as increased listening and reading comprehension, often enough to enable them to survive in an introductory level content course. Some students, however, choose to take ESL for one semester only and because of impatience or premature confidence take on regular college courses even full-time loads, against faculty recommendations. Some of these students manage to survive, while others drop out.

Those students who take ESL for two consecutive semesters can be expected to be more proficient, if not perfect, in their command of English. The skills established in the first semester are reinforced and expanded by additional practice the second semester. Such students are usually spared the trial and error experience and are better equipped to handle a regular college schedule the following year.

The success rate for ESL students would be diminished were it not for the cooperative efforts of the faculty and staff. Beginning with the Admissions

Office, the prospective ESL student is referred to the English Department for an evaluation by the ESL instructor. The student is interviewed and given a placement test consisting of a dictation and reading and writing sample. Appropriate courses, including English, are then recommended. The student is free to accept or disregard this advice. The English Skills Referral Office does a follow-up on all students recommended for freshman or developmental English courses. Those students recommended for developmental courses are referred to the Special Services Office, where they can take advantage of free counseling and tutoring assistance. Such supportive services are especially valuable in a community college, where students are often overwhelmed by an extra heavy load of personal problems, family responsibilities and academic adjustment. ESL students are also introduced to the learning resources staff, who are ever ready to help students with ESL materials in the library and language lab. The American International Club has been established specifically for ESL students and American students to come together and enjoy common social activities. The Student Senate has also been actively encouraging ESL students to become involved in student government and related activities. Administrators, counselors and faculty from the various departments frequently consult with the ESL instructor concerning the progress of ESL students. Thus, with the help of a dedicated English faculty and the cooperation of the college as a whole, ESL students at Housatonic can have a successful academic and social experience and realize their hopes of getting a college degree.

EXPERIMENTS IN TEACHING PSYCHOLOGY

by Donald Hughes

Psychology courses have attracted large enrollments for ten years at Mohegan Community College. This is due partly to required courses in some vocational programs. However, elective courses in psychology are also filled.

Many community college students have not encountered psychology as an academic subject before coming to college. The expectation of some is that psychology will consist largely of counseling, group therapy, and lengthy sessions in which they exchange views about life. In the first course in psychology they are confronted with something quite different. They must learn an extensive new vocabulary in a few weeks. They must undertake the study of human behavior as a science with the inevitable emphasis on research findings. For the subject to make sense, students must have certain knowledge in mathematics and physiology. Also, they must have an interest in theory formation, analytical thinking, and dealing with abstract concepts. Many students lack these interests and are disappointed that classes are not essentially opinion-swapping or therapy sessions, focusing on personal problems in daily living.

The difference in abilities among students is even more serious than the problem of unrealistic expectations. Each term the psychology teachers at this college face the challenge of how not to bore capable students with the slow pace of instruction required by low ability students and how not to frustrate the low ability students with extensive reading and writing assignments, something which adds interest to a course for capable students. It is too glib to claim that motivation is the key problem and once solved will eliminate the problem of ability difference. This difference is genuine and has been building in the lives of most of the students for a dozen years.

Not only have I agonized over this problem for half a dozen years but have

tried several techniques which I hoped would solve the problem. During that time the maximum size of the classes was increased twice and the library was unable to purchase necessary books and periodicals because of severe budgetary restrictions. These two things discouraged experimentation and forced me to limit my attempts to solve the problem to fewer techniques than I would have liked.

A teaching technique which seemed promising, the extensive use of study questions to guide students in their reading, produced better test performance by capable students and little improvement in the performance of low ability students. The low ability students tended to borrow the answers from other students, copy them, and then try to rely on rote memory and cramming to pass examinations. They frequently complained if the wording of the examination questions varied from the wording of the study questions. They often did not bother to read the text books, even the summaries at the end of the chapters, which often contained as many as half the examination questions in the introductory courses. This technique did not achieve its goal of making a significant difference in the learning of low ability students, but it did help many capable students assure themselves of an A instead of a B in the course.

By holding review sessions on the days before examinations I believed I could direct the students' attention to the highlights of the material presented in classes and textbooks and thus give them a clear indication of what to study for the examinations. Most of the capable students attended these review sessions, but few of the low ability students came. The sessions had to be scheduled late in the afternoon because of the other courses students were taking. This time proved to be unattractive to many low ability students because they had transportation problems or worked at full or part time jobs. Once more, a well intended technique

helped capable students but did little to improve the achievement of most low ability students.

Requiring written reports on articles or sections of books produced prompt, outstanding work by capable students and inferior work by low ability students. I felt obliged to teach the content of the psychology course, and the hours needed to teach a large number of writers how to write at a minimally acceptable level were not available. Written comments on their papers seemed only to reinforce an already poor self concept and a distaste for writing.

Using the principle that immediate knowledge of results is more likely to cause students to use examinations for learning purposes than is delayed knowledge of results proved to be more effective than the other techniques. The answer sheets for the examinations included textbook page references for each question. When an answer was wrong the letter or number designating the correct answer was written next to the incorrect answer. Answer sheets and copies of the examination were returned to the students the following class period. Students could immediately learn what was the correct answer and where in the textbook it could be found. Not only capable students but low ability students took the trouble to go through the examination carefully to discover exactly which questions they had missed, what the correct answers were, and where specifically the answers could be found. In the past, when examination papers were returned two or three weeks after the test, only the capable students looked at their papers carefully. This technique would probably be more beneficial if students took the examination, used a key to correct it immediately, and learned the correct answers and their location within minutes of finishing the test.

One persistent problem shows the concern of low ability students about their course grades. Following the last class meeting of the term each semester, several low ability students come to instructors requesting that since there are no failing marks at Mohegan, a grade of "No Credit" be given if the course mark is otherwise going to be a "D". When it is explained that this cannot ethically be done and the

only way a student can avoid the "D" is not to take the final examination, many do not take the test. They are not willing to try to earn a "C" by taking the final examination because they really have very little confidence in themselves. The stigma of D for dreadful is so great that they will give up the credit in the course and have only the meaningless "NC" on their permanent records. "NC" grades are not counted in figuring grade point averages. When the grading system handicaps an instructor in trying to help low ability students, the task becomes exceptionally difficult.

I suspect that like many teachers who choose to work in community colleges I have egalitarian tendencies and consequently it is difficult to assert the following, but no other conclusion seems warranted. After trying several approaches, which seemed promising, and discovering that they had little effect on the measured achievement of low ability students, I now believe that students must be separated by ability and ways provided for them to learn at their own pace. Individualized study usually is very costly, and therefore the practical solution is to offer the same courses in psychology for either one term or two terms. Unfortunately the label "tracking" is often used to describe this procedure. This label has a pejorative connotation, but labels like "remedial," "review," and "foundations" also have such a connotation and we get used to them. These three labels are applied to courses in the college catalog and are taken for granted as necessary.

A realistic amount of subject matter can be extended over two terms for students with low ability but given in one term for capable students. Low ability students usually have limited vocabularies, do not read well, and often do not know how to study. It is common for them to have a poor self concept and to lack motivation to work hard enough to overcome their ability limitations. In the one-term course, even if low ability students do try at the beginning, they will not earn grades that match their sense of effort. They have been in this cycle of beginning a new term with hard work only to discover it does not lead to good grades be-

cause performance is still at a low level as compared with capable students, and they just cannot break out of the cycle in such a short time.

From these attempts to help low ability students succeed in psychology courses came the realization that such students need a much longer time and much more individualized instruction and counseling to master the content of the course. Capable students can be taught the material in a psychology course in one term in classes of forty-five, but low ability students require classes of fifteen with the content spread over two terms.

What will be the results of such an approach? Instead of failure rates of thirty to forty per cent there should be rates of no more than ten per cent and these due to

primarily to low motivation rather than low ability. More individual teaching, more learning through films which take a lot of time to cover small amounts of material, more practice in preparation for and taking examinations, and more opportunities for building self esteem by having successes in less competitive situations would characterize the two-term course with limited enrollment.

The community colleges have been called revolving door colleges because of the very high attrition rates. Surely low ability students need some special consideration in our community colleges if they are being encouraged to attend. That consideration means extra time per credit and extra attention per individual.



"Young Musicians - Ecuador" by John Manfred.

STRENGTHENING COLLEGE WRITING: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

by Madge Manfred

I am not old enough to remember the golden ages when students reached college knowing how to write. From the time I started teaching over fifteen years ago there were students who couldn't write sentences, let alone create a topic sentence and develop it into a paragraph. Although I've never felt a part of the chorus lamenting the literacy crisis, I have taken the task of teaching composition to heart, experimenting with new ideas and adapting suggestions from other people, always hopeful that with just a bit more fine tuning I would perfect my approach. Guess what? I've finally decided that I can't do it alone. I'm tired of accepting sympathy from my colleagues in other fields; I want their help.

Academics like to place the blame for the decline in literacy skills on television. But the increasing reliance on objective tests, fostered by businesses like ETS, has contributed more than any other factor to the decline of writing skills. This charge, carefully argued by Thomas C. Wheeler in the *New York Times Magazine*, should make us all look carefully at the evaluation methods we are now using. English teachers must work not only at improving the teaching of composition in their own classes, but also at showing other instructors how they can help without sacrificing the content of their courses.

An interdisciplinary effort has begun at Mohegan Community College, where, thanks to a QUILL grant obtained by Ellen Strenski, we have been given some released time to work with social science teachers. At the invitation of our colleagues, we have spent time in their classrooms demonstrating how to improve reading

comprehension of chapter assignments, take better notes, present oral reports, write definitions, critical analysis, and essay questions, and prepare for exams by developing study guides. We have developed a series of handouts which present the principles and steps involved, and illustrate them with examples from the textbooks which students are currently using.

Some English teachers may object to linking practical writing skills with a content course in the social sciences because it threatens the legitimacy of Composition's own course content, such as rhetoric, linguistics, or literary analysis.

But regardless of the emphasis we prefer, chances are that some of our reading, writing and discussion topics involve concepts studied in the social sciences. For example, a few years ago a newspaper editorial on unemployment caught my eye as a good stimulus for a critical analysis. However, I recognized that although newspaper editorials are not aimed at an intellectual elite, my students would have trouble producing a thoughtful analysis unless they had some tools to work with. I located a second article which took a different view of the unemployment problem and invited the economics teacher to speak to my classes.

The result was that the students wrote fine papers, and the economics teacher expressed satisfaction that students were getting an opportunity to consider an important issue. From that time, I have worked at making the interdisciplinary connections more systematic.

Another set of objections may be raised by social science teachers. One is theoretical: should they neglect their responsibility to cover the content of the course in order to teach basic skills? The second is practical: Where will they find

the time to develop and then to read assignments that improve students' reading and writing skills?

To answer the first, it is true that time spent on teaching study skills, critical reading, and composition does cut into time that could be spent lecturing on content. However, the reaction of social science teachers at Mohegan is that it is time well spent. The students learn the content better because they are not learning skills in a vacuum, but are practicing them on history, psychology, or sociology. Even writing, which traditionally has been used as a means of evaluation, is another way of learning material. A moment's reflection will help us recall that the act of writing is truly creative in that we frequently gain new insights as we write about a subject.

Instruction in basic skills, including writing, does not have to require much extra work for the social science teacher.

If we view composition as a record of the thought process, then the textbook, as well as the lectures, can become models for the student. The instructor's job is to call attention to the process and then to design assignments which will enable the students to engage in it themselves. These assignments can be used as the basis of discussion or group work, even in large classes. There is no need to spend hours outside class correcting and evaluating the assignments.

The experience which Ellen and I have had this year convinces us that the task of improving literacy goes beyond the composition class. Yet we are sensitive to the fatigue felt by committed teachers whose efforts are frequently undermined by inadequate funding for the community college system. Nevertheless, we think improvements can be made that will not add to the already heavy load carried by our colleagues. Ellen and I are planning to put the materials we have developed into a manual for writing in the social sciences and we would be happy to share information with interested teachers at other schools.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE DARC

by Gary VanVoorhis

The DARC referred to in the title is the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor Program: a course of study unique in both curriculum and structure. DARC is the only degree program that is offered through all twelve of the system's colleges on a cooperative basis, with students from all the community colleges involved in obtaining education and experience that will lead, eventually, to positions as counselors in substance abuse treatment facilities. The cooperative structure makes it practical to operate a program that limits its total statewide yearly incoming class to thirty-five students. It does, however, make some significant demands on the administrators of the participating schools. The system colleges have shown an admirable flexibility in developing procedures to deal with both the application/entry and general operations issues. The current DARC Program is an offering whose format and structure deserve consideration as a potential model for systemwide programs.

The Drug and Alcohol program began as a cooperative venture between Manchester Community College and the State-operated Blue Hills Hospital in the early seventies. During this period the "Great American Drug Epidemic" was raging, and trained service providers were in heavy demand, with recovered addicts making up the majority of the "counselors" providing direct patient care. It soon became apparent that although recovered people had the desire to counsel, their skills, and thus their successes, were very limited. Program directors sought out the community college as a potential educational tool to upgrade counselor performance.

Soon after pilot courses were developed, a Federal grant to the University of Connecticut Health

Center created the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Training Center. Drug and alcohol specialists hired through the grant were given adjunct faculty status and taught specialty substance abuse courses that qualified as electives in a general studies degree program. Students took regular campus General Fund liberal arts and sciences courses to round out their degrees. The end result was a general studies diploma with substantial elective work in addictions. Although this met the immediate need for increased counselor skills, drug and alcohol planners were convinced that the addictions field would require a continuing source of well educated counselors. There was general agreement that full accreditation for the degree program should be sought.

In May, 1977, the (then) Commission on Higher Education granted accreditation to the DARC program. The accreditation specified that all colleges in the system, except Quinebaug Valley (who later opted to enter the consortium), would be eligible to award the DARC degree. It was stipulated, however, that accreditation was contingent upon Manchester Community College "sponsoring" the program and providing a full time coordinator to oversee program activities. The essence of the accreditation requirements was that the Community College System take command of the program and assure quality control of its activities. The control issue was summarily resolved when, in June, 1977, the Alcohol and Drug Training Center was defunded. No longer depending upon outside staff to provide the counseling specialty courses, complete operation of the DARC program was in community college hands starting from the Fall, 1977 semester.

The program itself is a sixty

semester hour degree that consists of thirty-four liberal arts and sciences semester hours and twenty-four hours of counseling specialty courses. The thirty-six hours of LAS work are done at the students' "home" campuses. The counseling specialty work is done in restricted classes with other DARC students at space provided by Middlesex Community College. These specialty courses consist of: Introduction to Counseling (Counseling 111), Group Counseling (Counseling 112), Addictions Public Health (Public Health 101), Biology of Addictions (Biology 158). Each of these are three semester hour courses. As well, students in their second year take field placement counseling Internships I & II (Public Health 251 & 252).

The four theoretical courses taken during the first year set the stage for the second year field work. The two counseling internships require a minimum of fifteen hours per week in an approved addictions treatment agency, as well as two hours in class. During the internship the student sits in on staff meetings and planning meetings, performs intake interviews, co-leads groups, and in most cases is afforded the opportunity to begin a small individual case load (under supervision). The positive value of the field work has been evident in both comments from students and in the responses from participating agencies. Functioning as a "quasi staff-member" gives DARC students an opportunity to see the real world of addictions counseling and has been cited as the most valuable portion of the program. During the life of the program, students have been placed in nearly every substance abuse treatment program in Connecticut. The continuing welcome extended to DARC students has reaffirmed the value of agency placement and the quality of student output. The Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, the state's official addictions coordinating and planning agency, has recognized DARC Internship experience on an hour-for-hour basis towards its credentialing

work experience requirement. The marketplace has also placed its seal of approval upon DARC graduates. The program has had substantial success in terms of graduates who have found jobs in the addictions field and who have acceded to positions of supervision and authority. DARC grads now oversee halfway houses, industrial programs, and live-in treatment centers across the state. As well, they fill many counselor posts in treatment centers across the state. Numerous graduates now go on to further academic pursuits such as B.A. and B.S.W. programs; some have received master's degrees in counseling.

Beyond its purely educational endeavors, the DARC program represents an innovative way for the Community College System to meet the educational needs of a unique, but limited, student population. Although post secondary education in the addictions field was important to enhance the Connecticut treatment system, the number of students that could be expected to seek this degree at any one college would be minimal. Besides the issue of small numbers, the DARC student group contains a special type of student. Most are adults (average age, 37.5 years) and most are seeking the degree as an avenue for mid-life career change. Many, but by no means all, of the students are recovered from an addiction or have had a direct experience by living with an addicted spouse or other family member. Almost every DARC student holds down a full time job, a situation that makes the field placement obligations of the Internships acts of great dedication. To deal with this particular set of circumstances, the structural design of the program was developed and implemented.

Rather than establish a single college to offer the program, thus forcing potential students into dual registrations, the program was implemented as a systemwide cooperative venture. Students could apply for, and enter, the program through any of the dozen community colleges. Non-specialty courses could be taken at the college through which

application was made in any order that met prerequisites and suited student schedules. Specialty courses are given at Middlesex Community College during the evenings, with each course meeting once per week. Each participating college establishes its own section for each of the DARC courses running in any given semester. This allows students to register for both "home campus" and DARC courses at the same time. One check pays the bill and eventual transcripts will show no differentiation between DARC specialty courses (that were held at the off campus location) and regular home school offerings. Since all DARC classes are General Fund, the registration of any DARC student applies toward the FTE quota of the participating institution. Instructor overhead is born by Manchester Community College, which provides "flagship" support for the program.

The coordinator responsible for the total Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor Program is housed at Manchester Community College.

Operating out of the Community Services Division, he monitors the various facets of the program and provides systemwide coordination services. It is the Coordinator's job to maintain communications among the participating colleges, interface with Central Office staff, counsel program students, and generally assure satisfactory program operation. All these tasks are complemented by DARC Liaisons on each of the dozen campuses. These individuals, appointed by the various college presidents, become local DARC representatives. They are the first line of communication for prospective students and provide guidance and information for those who enter the program.

The liaison/coordinator relationship assures that there is always a person to whom issues or problems can be brought for rapid resolution. If there is a problem regarding scheduling or grades at one of the colleges, a call from the liaison can get quick action from the coordinator. As information of

importance to DARC students becomes available, the Coordinator can utilize the liaison network to disseminate the data. Often, if a problem of local nature comes about, the on campus liaison can assist a student with an immediate solution. This process provides the most efficient and effective provision of educational service to the student body.

As in the case of any dynamic organizational entity, the DARC program is not without its inadequacies and problems. On balance, however, it appears to be meeting a significant educational need and assisting in the fulfillment of the Community College mission to provide academic service that is accessible in the broadest sense of the term.

Notes on the Contributors

Joan Gallagher, Assistant Professor of Secretarial Science at Housatonic Community College, received an M.S. and Sixth Year Certificate from the University of Bridgeport. She edits the newsletter for the Connecticut Business Education Association.

Donald Hughes, Professor of Psychology at Mohegan Community College, received his Ph.D. at the University of Colorado. He was the Director of Educational Research at Macalister College before joining the Mohegan faculty.

Madge Manfred, Associate Professor of English at Mohegan Community College, received an M.A. from the University of Connecticut. In addition to editing this year's issue of COMMUNITAS, she is conducting Mohegan's first study tour abroad: The Arts in Ireland.

John P. Manfred, teacher of English, Psychology, and Photography at Windham High School, received his M.S. from Eastern Connecticut State College. His work has been exhibited locally, as well as in Maine and Rhode Island.

Robert Manning, Coordinator of the Visual Fine Arts Program at Manchester Community College, received his B.F.A. from Pratt Institute and M.A. from the University of Hartford. He was a juror for the 1979 Greater Hartford Arts Festival and recently held a one-man show at Art Works Gallery in Hartford.

John J. McLean, Professor of History at Mohegan Community College, received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut. Currently he is on sabbatical, establishing an international education program for community college students. He is the recipient of two NEH Summer Fellowships.

Constance M. Palmer, Associate Professor of Nursing at Mohegan Community College, received her M.A. at Columbia University.

Kerin Sarason, Director of the Fine Arts and Humanities Division at South Central Community College, received a Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and has continued post-graduate work at Columbia University. A contributor to the first issue of COMMUNITAS, Dr. Sarason has also written for the *Connecticut Quarterly*, the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, and the National Council on the Humanities.

Jean Burr Smith, Associate Professor of Mathematics at Middlesex Community College, received an M.A.T. from Harvard University. The article on math anxiety which appears in this issue is a short portion of one which has been published by ERIC, Clearing House for Junior Colleges. She is the coordinating teacher at Wesleyan University's Math Anxiety Clinic. A two semester course, "Reentry Mathematics," designed and taught by Ms. Smith, was the subject of a movie made recently by Jason Films.

Jay R. Stager, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Manchester Community College, received an M.A. from Yale Divinity School and a Sixth Year Certificate from the University of Connecticut. He is the director of Hidden Valley Camp in Freedom, Maine and has just returned from conducting sabbatical research on cults and communes in the United States.

Shirley M. Stager, Co-Director of Hidden Valley Camp, received her B.S. from Millersville State College in Pennsylvania and is the director of the Community Nursing School in Vernon.

John E. Stevens, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Manchester Community College, received his M.F.A. from the University of Hartford and has also studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, Italy. A frequent exhibitor at Connecticut museums and galleries, he received the Best in Show Award from the Art Works Gallery in 1978.

Suzanne Howes-Stevens, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Manchester Community College, received an M.A. from the University of Hartford. Her work has been shown at the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Slater Memorial Museum, Womanart Gallery in N.Y.C., Art Works Gallery, and the Asylum Hill Cooperative Gallery. A recent one-person show at Arts Exclusive in Simsbury was highly praised by reviewers.

Maria Stiebel, Instructor of Developmental English at Housatonic Community College, received an M.S. from Indiana University. She is Chairman of Literacy Volunteers of Greater Bridgeport and an Executive Board Member of the Connecticut Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Ellen Strenski, Professor of English at Mohegan Community College, received her Ph.D. from the University of Reading, England. A former recipient of two NEH Summer Fellowships, she is currently participating in Yale University's Visiting Faculty Program and directing a Quill grant, "Applied Linguistics in the Social Science Classroom."

Virginia Barrett Villa, Associate Professor of English at Greater Hartford Community College, received her M.S. from Central Connecticut State College.

James L. Wright, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Mohegan Community College, received his M.A. from the University of Connecticut. A former Peace Corps Volunteer, Mr. Wright has also worked as a social worker with inner city youth. He was a featured speaker at the system-wide reading conference held at Northwestern Community College, March 1980.

Gary Van Voorhis, Coordinator of the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor Program centered at Manchester Community College, received his B.A. from Southampton College of Long Island University. He is the founding director of the Connecticut Alcoholism Counselor Certification Board, an associate consultant for Addictions Administration at the Connecticut Justice Academy and a member of the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council Scholarship Award Committee.

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