

3-1-1972

## The Bullfrog Pond: Experimental Education Issue, Vol. V, No. 10

Grand Valley State College. Thomas Jefferson College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/bullfrogpond>

---

### ScholarWorks Citation

Grand Valley State College. Thomas Jefferson College, "The Bullfrog Pond: Experimental Education Issue, Vol. V, No. 10" (1972). *Bull Frog Pond*. 35.

<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/bullfrogpond/35>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Thomas Jefferson College Publications at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bull Frog Pond by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

FOR, LO! THE WINTER IS PAST  
THE RAIN IS OVER AND GONE  
THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH  
THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME  
AND THE VOICE OF THE BULLFROG IS HEARD IN OUR LAND



THE BULLFROG POND

Vol. V No. 10

March 1972

EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATION ISSUE

T. Dan thought these letters would be of interest to TJC students, faculty and all concerned.

\* \* \*

Dear Dean Gilmore:

I have just read your letter on behalf of Mr. John McNaughton, an applicant for admission to the Law School, together with the other letters and his course evaluations. Your letter and the others are helpful ones, but I wonder if you would mind if I made a comment or two on the course evaluations? I am happy to say that we have been able to offer Mr. McNaughton admission, and so my comments relate primarily to the future.

I should start off by saying that I was happy to see the evaluations. I recall having some difficulty in getting them for Mr. Patrick B. Walsh, who is currently in his second year, and without them of course the Thomas Jefferson transcript is of little assistance. I did, however, note the possibility of a few problems with the Grand Valley evaluations. One of them is that with the very small program that you have at Thomas Jefferson there seems to be a risk that students will be cast in various roles. You, for example, write on behalf of Mr. McNaughton that he has done his "usual high level job". One can be somewhat skeptical as to what sort of evaluations Mr. McNaughton receives after he has established himself as a high achiever.

The other problem which I have is the seeming reluctance by the instructors to truly evaluate student performance. Time and again the evaluations consist of long statements by the applicant saying "I have read thus and so", and the instructor saying that John did read thus and so and his enthusiasm was a great help. It seems to me that not only graduate schools, but also students would be helped by

in various roles. I would like to point out however, that in the departments where I have taught prior to coming to Thomas Jefferson College, where a grading system was used, I found that the same risk was present; That is, once a straight "A" student - always a straight "A" student. So I wonder if you are not pointing out an inherent flaw in any system of evaluation, not specifically the TJC model.

I am in 100% agreement that it would be helpful to students if instructors would take the time to make the objectives of their course more explicit, and at your suggestion I have written to Antioch College requesting sample evaluations. If this format could be helpful to us in clarifying and evaluating student performance, I assure you it will be adopted. I agree with you that the statement of these objectives would be especially appropriate for courses which bear unusual or topical names. I would like to point out again, however, that a summary description of course objectives would probably be helpful to you in considering a traditional graded transcript. In order to implement plans in line with your two criticisms, I would like to ask your permission to publish your letter in the TJC "Bullfrog Pond", our biweekly in-house publication. I think it would be most helpful for students and faculty to be aware of your criticisms so that precautionary measures might be taken - especially in those cases where students are planning to enter future graduate or professional programs.

I am delighted to hear that you have accepted Mr. McNaughton into your program. I'm sure that he will be one of your best students and will eventually make a significant professional contribution. Again, let me express my sincere thanks for taking the time to comment on our program. Hopefully, such lines of communication will eventually lead to a lively communication between

a slightly more explicit statement by the instructor as to the objectives of the course and the degree to which the student fulfilled them. Antioch College, which proceeds under a philosophy somewhat similar to that of Thomas Jefferson, provides a much more critical set of evaluations than the students of Thomas Jefferson are currently getting, and I would suspect that the students at Antioch are more helped by their evaluations. I certainly am.

It might be particularly helpful to set out the objectives of the instructors, when so many of the courses bear unusual or topical names.

As I have said, it seems clear that Mr. McNaughton is a man we want and I only hope that he will retain the enthusiasm and the drive which he has displayed at Thomas Jefferson College when he is confronted with the law school education on which he had been planning for so long.

Yours faithfully,  
Matthew P. McCauley  
Assistant Dean

\* \* \*

Dear Dean McCauley:

Thank you for taking the time to write a penetrating and, I suspect, accurate criticism of Thomas Jefferson College's course evaluations. It is a rare occasion when a representative of one of the graduate or professional schools takes time to make constructive comments on our system of evaluation.

In attempting to remove some of the aversive controls over student behavior we have run the risk of creating other problems inherent in a non-competitive evaluation. One of these risks, is that students are sometimes cast

the experimental colleges across the nation and graduate and professional schools. There is probably much we can do to assist one another in attaining our mutual goals.

Respectfully yours,  
T. Dan Gilmore, Dean  
Thomas Jefferson College

---

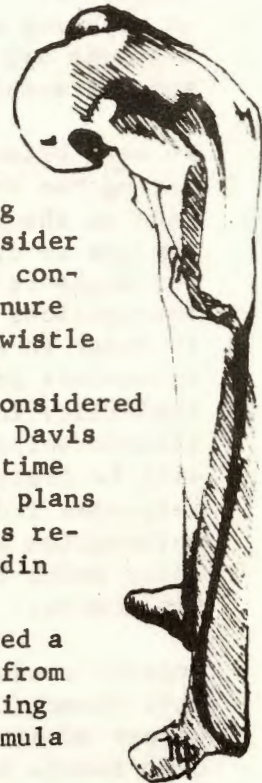
Faculty Personnel Committee Minutes, March 1, 1972, 9 a.m., 142H

12:01 Motion was passed to offer a contract to William Harrison (Anthropology).

12:02 The following motions were made and passed: (1) A 2-year reappointment for J. Diller, R. Efron, R. Shechtman, & R. Vas Dias. (2) A 3-year reappointment for C. Loizeaux. (3) Reappointment for 1973-74 and 1974-75, and the granting of tenure, to C. Wilson; but did not consider his promotion at his own request. (4) A contract for 1973-74 and the granting of tenure to Earl Heuer. (5) Promotion of M. Birtwistle and D. Klein from Assistant to Associate Professor. (6) That H. Haggard not be considered for promotion at this time. (7) That G. Davis not be considered for promotion at this time since he is on sabbatical and his future plans are uncertain. (8) The faculty recommends reappointment of Messrs. Birtwistle and Rodin for 1973-74.

12:03 SALARY DETERMINATIONS: The faculty passed a motion calling for elimination of merit from its salary formula. Methods of determining longevity with respect to the salary formula were discussed.

12:04 ANNOUNCEMENTS: (1) There will be a Conference on Experimental Colleges at Charter College March 17-19th. (2) Faculty will hold a workshop on the evening of March 14 and during the day on March 15. Details to be arranged by T. Dan Gilmore and Earl Heuer.



## FINAL REPORT

on

### A SURVEY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS FOR TRANSFER OF JOHNSTON COLLEGE ACADEMIC RECORDS TO UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

This survey was conducted in a unique manner and consequently the results are not easily standardized. The results are in two main forms: 1) the general observations and recommendations which are presented in this report; 2) the specific responses of each school which are appended to the report. The second set of results are the more objective. The first set are tailored to meet the aims of both the survey and Johnston College and are the perceptions and ideas which have occurred to Ed Williams and the author upon examination of the second set of results.

We were primarily seeking enough positive responses to strengthen our position and to provide external affirmation of the viability of our form of evaluation. Another aim was to discover what specific problems and attitudes our students will encounter in seeking admissions to other institutions and to engage in a dialogue with these schools in order to arrive at mutual solutions for these problems. An obvious product of this is an increase in Johnston's visibility in the academic world and the development of relationships with key people in those institutions which will be fruitful for future contacts. Also, the specific responses from each of the schools surveyed will provide information which will enable our students to make decisions about which institutions will be most receptive to Johnston applicants.

Another product emerged in the course of the survey: a more clearly defined role for Johnston College as a developer of alternatives and strategies in higher education. Over twenty percent of the schools reported that they have been receiving other ungraded transcripts and some noted that this appears to be a trend in higher education. They

cited many practical problems in the use of written evaluations. If Johnston College can develop solutions to such problems and make our system of evaluation viable externally as well as internally, we can do more than encourage change--we can offer alternatives that are as highly developed as the existing structures, thus making it easier for schools to adopt these alternatives.

To generally summarize the responses to the survey, 90 of the institutions surveyed are willing to use our transcripts in admitting a student to their institution without grade and unit translations. This is out of a total of 99 responses by telephone and/or letter to the survey of 120 institutions. With 76 of those 90 schools, adaptations in procedure will need to take place which will require cooperation between administrators of both schools, but these are relatively minor problems and these schools indicated a willingness to solve them as much as possible. The breakdown of these responses according to the kinds of institutions surveyed is as follows: 1) Undergraduate schools: 43 of 48 responses; 2) Graduate schools: 34 of 36; 3) Medical schools: 6 of 8; 4) Law schools: 7 of 7. It must be stressed that because the questions were not categorical and because admissions procedures vary widely from school to school, most of the responses are detailed and qualified. This means that a school may be willing to accept our transcripts, but in some cases the procedural problems could prove insurmountable or non-existent depending on the individual and his transcript. Thus, a reading of some or all of the individual school responses will provide a broader context in which to view the statistics.

The following discussion of problems and criticisms is presented in view of the generally favorable response described above. It must be emphasized that the major difficulties with our transcripts are not due to flaws in our system, but to the rigidity of admissions processes that function in terms of grades and competitive rankings and break down when confronted with material that is not



easily reducible to numbers. Three schools stated specifically that our transcripts were better than any other ungraded transcripts they have received (none stated otherwise) and twenty more made positive comments on our evaluations such as that they are well-done, detailed, honest, and reflective of deep faculty commitment and close relationships between students and faculty. Twelve schools made critical comments, but all of these were about evaluations that did not measure up to our own standards. The two most valid and frequently repeated criticisms were that the evaluations are often too long and that occasionally there is more concern with personal growth than academic growth when both should be considered equally. These criticisms emphasize the fact that we must re-define and adhere to our standards for evaluation.

The problem of length is the main difficulty for the larger undergraduate and graduate institutions. There has been a sharp increase in applications to these schools in recent years and an even larger increase for law and medical schools. The current financial woes of higher education make it impossible for these schools to increase their admissions staffs. Thus many prefer the grading system because it makes it relatively easy to eliminate applicants without the requisite grade point average. However, it is not that easy to deal with a Johnston College transcript; it takes time and careful consideration.

Another difficulty for some institutions is interpretation of our transcripts. Our criteria and concerns are foreign to them and are not easily translatable into terms they are accustomed to. The cover sheet of our transcript should, to some extent, seek to make our criteria and concerns clear. However, we did not intend for them to be easily translatable and such responses are an affirmation that we have succeeded in creating a form of evaluation that cannot be reduced or oversimplified. None of the criticisms made or problems raised by other institutions were intended to or able to

undermine the basic validity of our program as one where the learning and growth of the individual student are of central importance. In fact, thirty schools made highly encouraging comments about the Johnston program in general and encouraged us to continue our program and experimentation. In some cases the person interviewed gave this encouragement despite their institution's difficulties with our transcript. Only three of the respondents questioned the validity of our system of evaluation. The main problems arose from those institutions that are more concerned with competitively ranking a student's academic performance. These were primarily graduate schools which agreed to accept our transcripts, but said they may rely more heavily on Graduate Record Examination scores in the absence of grades.

The general conclusion is that Johnston College is on the cutting edge of change in higher education. We are not so radical that we are unintelligible to the educational world; we are succeeding in this aspect of our program and that is recognized and applauded by other schools whether they have yet followed suit or not. On the other hand, we are one of the first schools to implement written evaluations, so it is still new and confusing to many people. We must not allow this to frighten us into giving up our system if we expect to gain wider acceptance of it.

For these reasons the primary recommendation of this report is that we cease to provide grade and unit translations for our transcripts. Our willingness to do so in the past only indicated to other institutions that we are not really convinced of our program, thus they do not take it seriously. Our statement on our present transcripts that we will translate if necessary has been repeatedly cited by schools requesting such translations. There is no reason for us to supply them with ammunition to use against our own system. The recommendation that follows from the primary one is that, because the Johnston program cannot be translated into conventional terms, students should be discouraged from

transferring to other institutions. It should be strongly recommended at the time of admission to Johnston that the student plan in terms of the four-year program of Johnston because the maximum benefits can be realized only in the whole of the program. As re-inforcement for this, we can meet a greater variety of student needs and discourage transfers by developing a transient program whereby students could spend a semester or more at an institution which specializes in an area in which the student is particularly interested.

Our primary area of concern would then be graduate, law, and medical schools. We must keep in mind that not all of our students will wish to enter such institutions so we should not sacrifice any aspects of the Johnston program for the sake of pleasing these institutions.

There are two additions to our transcript which are recommended by a majority of the graduate, law, and medical schools surveyed. The first is a one or two page summary evaluation to be attached to the student's final transcript. This could be written by the student's advisor and approved by the student and the Graduation Review Committee. The second recommended addition is some form of class rank. This should only be implemented if it can be arrived at in a manner consistent with the Johnston College program.

In order to strengthen and maintain our position we must give constant attention to the quality of our evaluations. We need to clarify our criteria and adhere to them, giving particular attention to equal and integrated treatment of personal and academic growth.

In sum, these recommendations are all directed toward strengthening and expanding the Johnston program. The results of the survey have confirmed the value and viability of our program and have offered no overwhelming reasons for abandoning or

even compromising our system of evaluation. The problems presented can be overcome if the two institutions involved are willing to work together to develop solutions and we can do so despite those institutions that are not willing to sacrifice efficiency for more humanistic education. What is most important is that those involved in Johnston College are fully committed to our system of evaluation and the philosophy and practices it represents.

Cynthia Williams  
October 28, 1971

\*\*\*\*\*

PAPER DRIVE! PAPER DRIVE!! PAPER DRIVE!!

Help the Prime Merry School-Start saving your newspapers NOW. Then call Connie Jones at 895-6525 during the week of April 22-29 for pickup. (Or drop your papers off at the school.)

\*\*\*\*\*



You Can't Try a Grad School on for Size  
by Pat Efron

Many of you at TJC are transfer students. Many of you are now beginning to look toward grad school as a continuation of your educational process. A warning: before you waste your time, energy, and hard-earned bread, get your head ready for what you'll meet there. Dropping out won't do either you or your chosen department any good; transferring before you have obtained at least one advanced degree is impracticable, and usually doesn't help anyhow.

The graduate school is one of the least innovative sorts of educational institutions we have. It is a highly structured

highly status-conscious place. Its basic unit is the Department (based on subject area: English, Math, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering), and every department is run bureaucratically. Its funds generally depend on 1) how prestigious its subject matter is; 2) how many "top flight" professors who can garner lucrative government contracts reside in its ivied corridors; and 3) on its "productivity" -- that is, its ability to consistently provide well-trained, channeled manpower for the society. Generally, departmental power resides with the department head, prestigious full professors, heads of special programs and editors of journals. However, if you are a graduate student, the powerful person you will contact most often will be the head secretary. Some advice: Be sure she likes you -- she is powerful.

When you enter a graduate school you may be requested to take a general competency exam in addition to those tests you have already completed. This will be used to determine where you need help the most. Shortly after the first quarter you will be expected to choose a major professor to "work under." He is like a tutor, only usually plays the heavy more often. Spend the first quarter finding out from older students who is a reasonable major professor. Changing major professors, while not technically difficult, may be a sticky social situation, especially if you have further required courses under the guy you switched from.

Classes are strictly categorized. Attendance is usually required, and where it is not, your grades may still depend on it. Even "small" papers are improperly foot-noted or untyped at your own peril. If you don't know how to use the library reference section quickly and effectively, get your first three credits in a library course. The graduate school, before anything else, is a professional school, and you are expected to be professional in your behavior while you are participating in (undergoing?) professional training.

This all may sound pretty awful to some of you, but I think graduate school rarely harms anyone. The student who is intent upon profession, prestige, and publishing gets his training in it; the student who is looking for more education in a subject area he likes can get that without having his values and goals radically changed - provided he knows what they are and provided he can retain his sense of humor.

You may be subsidized as a graduate teaching assistant. Usually this means teaching the foundation classes in your area (such as English 101 or Sociology 100) under the direction of a professor in charge of the program, and sticking to a strict syllabus (usually uninteresting). Since no undergraduate in his right mind enjoys taking these required courses, it's hard to stimulate students. I know one guy who, in the midst of one lecture on English composition, hopped on top of a desk and walked the width of the room on the desk tops. No one blinked. But then, this guy was a cynic. Usually a little enthusiasm and a few liberties in changing the syllabus - or even being more supportive than dictatorial - will help a lot. If you as a teacher are for the students, they may risk enthusiasm for you.

I would say that the most important characteristics of any TJC student intending to go to graduate school - to survive and learn from graduate school - are a good sense of humor, a sense of personal balance, and the ability to understand persons who have different values and goals rather than be threatened by them. These qualities will keep you sane and get you through to whatever comes next in your life.

-----

13:00 FACULTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES, March 8, 1972

The Committee adopted a pay scale for 1972-73 and adjusted individual salaries that were out-of-line. It adopted the scale as the basis of future salary determinations with the understanding that everyone will get a minimum step raise and there be a maximum step raise established.

12

\*\*\*\*\*

# "Open, Alternative, Experimental"

## Elementary Schools in This Area

(Far Out Utopias With Pizzaz)

### A Comparison

Written by Greg Cox in accordance with the TJC Teacher Education Information Center.

This is a comparison of the four alternative elementary schools in this area. They are Kentwood Little, Prime Merry, Children's School and Climbing Tree. For the sake of space I shall refer to them as K.L., P.M., C.S., and C.T.

In all fairness to C.S. and C.T., I have visited them only once this year. While I volunteered my time once a week to K.L. for four times and P.M. six. So if I write in more detail about K.L. and P.M. that is the reason.

Joy, Sally, Bruce, staff K.L.- Jo and Chris, staff P.M.- Judy, Martha, Keith, Holden and others, staff C.S. While Sue, Dave and others, staff C.T. All of these people were staff at C.S. last year. Most felt a need to start a new school. I hope to capture those needs on paper.

The first thing that is noticed upon arriving at any school is the building. K.L. has the largest one with the most rooms. It is definitely the most interesting from the outside. It is situated in a wooded area looking something like an expensive A frame log cabin in the middle of a forest. P.M. on the other hand is the smallest. It has one large room. On the outside it looks like a long white garage. In fact it was once used as a boat marina and bait shop. C.S. was one of the former Calvin College buildings. It looks much like a typical school on the

outside. Being the second largest, it has approximately five rooms. C.T. is the most typical looking. It is a brick two room country school building once used by the Rockford Public School.

On the inside K.L. has the most elaborate "noisy" room where kids are allowed to run, play, do their thing. The room has a jungle gym, ropes used for swinging and climbing, inner tubes used as swings etc. One large room where art happens. A large "see queues" room in which programmed instruction takes place -- a montessori type learning experience. A large academic room with puzzles, games, math materials, science materials, reading materials. It has the most academic materials of all the other schools combined. P.M. contrastingly has one large room where kids are allowed to run, play, scream. The room is sectioned off by book shelves into a math area, reading area, science area with the largest area being art, and an aquarium with a very large and horny chameleon. The school has few books of science or math. There are lots of fiction books for the kids to read. P.M. has no play area materials such as ropes, swings, etc. Kids make use of the space by bringing in their toys or else using their imaginations to accomplish their happiness in the form of making what they want or just pretending. C.S. and C.T. are very similar to each other in the sense that they have a quiet and noisy room - quiet room or rooms used for academic stuff, noisy being aggressive play. They do not have the elaborate play materials of K.L. Both have books for children to use at their leisure. However, they are not the academic games, puzzles, materials which K.L. has, which the kids can use at their leisure also. The schools are subject to change of course, with all of the staff wanting to experiment with their own arrangements. However, I believe I can draw these general conclusions about them. K.L. is the most formal and organized inside. Children's paintings are allowed only in the art room. The rooms are all much tidier than the other schools' especially



C.S. and C.T. Contrastingly P.M. has kids drawings hanging anywhere and everywhere. C.S. is the most informal and untidy. Kids have written on the walls so that wherever you go it's like sitting on the john reading graffiti. Some of it was quite good and interesting. One day clay was tracked throughout the school. Learning and play areas at C.S. are much less defined than the rest especially K.L. Both C.T., C.S. and P.M. have a less formal academic area than K.L. There is a place for everything and everything in it's place at K.L. K.L. definitely has the most structured building layout with P.M. next followed by C.T. with C.S. following far behind in structure.

Next some statistical information about the schools. K.L. has children of 3, 4, 5 and only one 6 and 7 year old. They are licensed only as a nursery school. However in the near future they hope to get elementary certification. They have approximately 30 kids with all but the six and seven going half days, some 5 days a week, some 3, some 2. P.M. has 12 kids going all day ranging from 3 to 8 years of age with the average being 6. They are certified as an elementary school. C.S. has 25 kids mostly 9, 10, 11, 12 year olds with a few 6 and 7. They are accredited as an elementary school. Also they are the only free school that has been in existence for more than one year. C.T. has a fairly equal number of 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 year olds with approximately thirty kids in all.

K.L. cannot accept teacher aides or student teachers as of yet because it isn't accredited. C.T., C.S., and P.M. can all accept aides and student teachers. It would be best for anyone who is interested in aiding or student teaching at one of these schools, to get acquainted with the staff and school first.

Tuition at K.L. is from \$600 - \$900 depending upon how often the child comes. Obviously all the kids

come from upper - middle class backgrounds. There are plans to get foundation grant money to provide scholarships for lower income families. P.M. tuition is \$500. However, all of the parents do not pay this since the families pay what they can afford. Hence children are from different economic backgrounds. The same type of policy is true at C.T. and C.S. Thus all the schools except K.L. have financial difficulties.

K.L. as I have said is much more academically material oriented. Joy Davis feels these materials are vital to a child's learning experiences. Jo and Chris of P.M. feel this is less important. They agree with Judy of C.S. that children can make their own learning materials and experiences out of scrap materials available. Dave and Ann at C.T. feel much the same way since specific academic materials were not that prevalent.

The children at K.L. are much less challenging, more cooperative than the kids at the other schools. This may be because they are younger or it may be the different environment. There is more freedom at C.S., C.T. and P.M. since children are allowed to do pretty much as they please. While the kids at K.L. are more subtly controlled. More aggressive and more precocious behavior is allowed at C.T., C.S. and P.M. According to Joy Davis this behavior is less allowed because she feels this helps the child to adjust to the outside world which may frown upon such behavior. But the staff at P.M., C.S. and C.T. look upon aggressive behavior as alright as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of adults. For example, Joy has the children say excuse me after burping, say please and thank you, and has the child ask the adult for something in a polite, restrained way. While the staff at C.S., P.M. and C.T. don't care how a child asks for something as long as the adults feel they have a right to say no. Also children make use of the outside community environment at all schools except K.L. I would have to say

the environment of K.L. hence the children are more controlled and restricted than kids at P.M., C.S. and C.T.

Indication of this controlled environment is the fact that of this writing they have decided to accept volunteers no longer. They feel that any person coming just once a week as I did disrupts the school thus the environment. They have decided that the children have to make many adjustments for this new person, who comes into their lives only once a week. I can't say that I was disruptive myself but that is now their policy. P.M. only requests that you call first and make a commitment to come at least one more time after the first. C.S. has no requirements whatsoever - just come when you want to and stay as long as you like. No call in advance is necessary. C.T. asks only that you call first, but there are no requirements as to how long you have to stay.

Another indication of a controlled environment is that K.L. has no meetings whereby children decide policy and rules. Staff decide all policy. Children do not get together to discuss the issues of the school. While at all the others, school meetings are held for this purpose. At C.T. they are a regular part of the day. Before school begins both kids and adults bring up their gripes, issues, and ideas -- anything which is important to them. They will then discuss these things at the meeting. If a child has a squabble with another child or adult it is brought up with the whole community discussing it. This has also been done at C.S. and P.M. but not on a regular basis

All of these schools afford the child much more freedom than the public school. The child is allowed to play or study when he wants to. In many ways they are allowed to pursue their own learning experiences in their own way and in their own time. I found it to be a valuable and enjoyable experience.

If you wish to get in touch with these schools, here are their phone numbers: K.L. 532-3866. P.M. 677-1801. C.S. 452-8082. C.T. 887-8771.

I hope I have given you an idea of what to expect in these schools. But really the best way is to go and find out for yourself. I hope I have provided a spark for you to do so.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rich called this morning from North Dakota to talk to Danny. Discovering he wasn't in, he asked me to tell him what I thought of TJC. He caught me completely off balance (it was 9:00!). I muttered vagaries about being happy and attempted to hang up, certain he was not paying long-distance rates to exchange pleasantries with a faceless stranger. Sensing my dilemma, Rich changed the subject, "Tell me about Dean Gilmore. What's he like? What do you call him, by the way?"

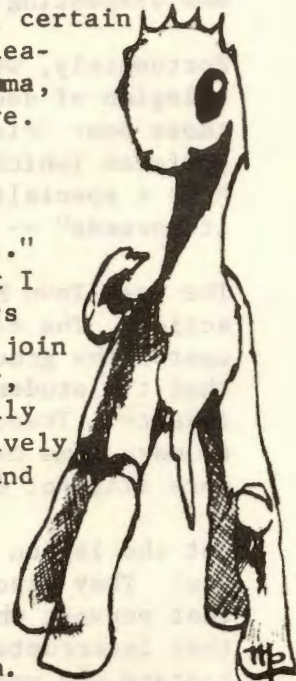
"Danny."

"You're kidding!" He sounded pleasantly suprized.

"No, everybody calls everybody by their first name..."

Thinking about it later, I realized the point is that I am happy here-as happy as I have ever been. (Visitors comment on our idyllic existence at TJC-most of them join us, if they possibly can.) The name business is minor, but it is indicative of our lifestyle. We are a family here; affectionate, expressive and (well, yes) positively reinforcing. When we speak of love we are sincere, and our love is genuine. I think college, ideally, was created as an opportunity for the individual to be freed for four years of study. TJC and places like TJC are designed to re-establish that concept. Here I've slowly begun to rediscover the joy of learning-an attitude generally destroyed in the present system.

Betty Friedan recently wrote: "What we all need, wherever we live, is a community where we can be free from our isolation, where we are encouraged in creative activities we enjoy, and where we can cooperate instead of compete..." Someone should tell her about Jefferson...



## Who's Running This College? or The Newest Dirty Word

Wait! Don't everybody run away. Don't be afraid. If we snigger quietly enough, not even your best friend will know what we are talking about, even if it is dirty.

Now anybody can talk about shitting or damning. But we are here to talk about the dirty word of all dirty words, namely p...r. Be descreet, please.

What is p...r? Loosely defined, p...r means doing what you want to do, which is degenerate enough. Worse yet, in the hands of unscrupulous characters, p...r means doing what you want to do and even taking others along with you. Ugh! How disgusting!

Fortunately, we at TJC have a loyal band of Christian moralists, a legion of decency, ready to seek out and destroy p...r and those poor friends who are hooked on p...r, wherever p...r surfaces (which is all over, of course). These moralists even have a specialty student p...r. "Snuff it out fast, before it spreads" -- that's their motto.

The last Town Meeting was a good example of the moralists in action. The devil was there, in many disguises. One student wanted the group to get organized. Wicked! Another suggested that the students send a representative to peek in on the faculty. Treacherous! A third student even wanted the students to make some decisions. Now, I ask you, can you imagine a more flagrant desire for p...r than that?

But the legion of decency stopped them, Thank God. You know how? They discorporated the meeting, that's how! Every time that pervert who wanted things organized opened her mouth, they interrupted. They simply ignored the p...r hungry bastard who was worried about the devine faculty, and as for the decision - desirer, well, they laughed him down. Of course, they knew better than to try to reason with p..r seekers. The legion of decency isn't about to take chances with the devil.

Now, the reason I want to talk with you is this. Promise not to tell? Frankly, sometimes, I like p...r. I like to control my fate. I even like, sometimes, to take you along with me. I like to make decision, sometimes. Do you (ever)?

I'm beginning to think the legion of decency are the real perverts around here. They think p...r is always bad. How can that be? Is sex always bad? Shitting? Besides, even if they don't like p...r, they use it. They certainly made decisions for me at that Town Meeting. They controlled their fate, as well as yours. If that isn't p...r, what is?

Maybe we should get together. Quietly, we can whisper to each other about p...r and our desire for it. Maybe we can get the whole subject out into the open, where the legion of decency will have to battle the p...r seekers in an honest manner. Maybe, one day, everybody here at TJC will be able to have some p...r of their own, or at least those who want it.

So pass the word. P...r is not evil. Not always. Not now. Shhh!

Ron Efron

---

Cover photograph by Robert Ceo; who also provided the cover and center photos for our End-of-Hibernation issue, No. 8 in February.

---

This was postmarked East Lansing/March 2...

[Bullfrog Pond-1

Today I met a member of Students for McGovern who gave me a handbill carrying the slogan "Make America Happen Again". I asked him when he thought it had happened. He replied "Once in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For about a month."

"When?"

"Sometime during Jefferson's administration."

It must have been.

Ed's note: The following is an abstract of Cam's article for the Redland's Conference that Danny, Don and Roxy went to. It is condensed to the basic points.

Seasonal Seminars at TJC -- Cam Wilson, Jan. '72

### Teaching

I started out with the White Man's Burden of helping students learn how to handle freedom.

But to hell with that -- same as to hell with getting them motivated, getting them interested, getting them to participate. To hell with helping them, being nice and being relevant.

Last spring I drove with two boys to a wrecking yard and saw them transform before my eyes. I don't need to teach people how to use freedom effectively. They know how, all of them, I need to demonstrate that this class is a free situation. When a person experiences (the subjective feeling of) freedom in Seasonal Seminar, he taps into all that ability, interest and confidence he usually leaves at the door.

I am not going to talk about Seasonal Seminars to start.

From the beginning of my teaching career, I wanted to be present in class as Cam. However, I always saw myself as Teacher. Unable to shake this role, I finally gave up trying to and set about learning to be personal in it. I did it unconsciously.

A) I've come to welcome the collapse of the classroom mono-dialogue into several small-group conversations. The traditional format of All-Share-Follow-One-Conversation is a recipe for boredom. Any group bigger than three has spontaneous break-ups. To me these signal momentum and excitement, not disintegration.

B) People enter Seasonal Seminar with very explicit expectations. It took me three quarters to learn that our first order of business is to talk about them so that

we can minimize false assumptions.

My comfort with all kinds of expectations is a powerful, though unspoken, signal that it is indeed a free situation in which each person can determine his own activity. This comfort is very different from the stance of "Do what you want to so that I don't have to engage with you."

C) As soon as I become conscious of a limitation I do put on the class, I make it known. I hope to become aware of it before the test is put so that I can avoid wading halfway in and then turning back.

D) Even in Seasonal Seminar, which has the freest imaginable course structure, the teacher is inescapably the leader in class. My task is not to get out of leadership but to fulfill it.

The difference in how it goes is made less by conscious statements of intent than by "unnoticeable" behaviors. For example, I've learned to use "I" instead of "we", "we" instead of "you", "you" (specific) instead of "you" (indeterminate) and "I want to" instead of "does anyone?"

E) I've learned the essentiality of response to a person's suggestion or question. It doesn't matter who responds but, if people are to continue suggesting things, a response other than silence is necessary. Silence does not, as almost everyone seems to assume, convey "no". It conveys indifference.

F) One of my worst habits has been to press for commitment to suggestions too soon. I failed to distinguish between speculative "wouldn't it be nice to's" and suggestions of real intent. While it's an error to force commitment to speculation, it is important to follow through on real intents.

G) In Spring Seminar 71, I learned to go with what is instead of stalling for the sake of absentees. We who are present, if only one, are more important than those who are not, even if 20.

H) Lastly, I've learned to be present in class as a person with my own desires, interests and dislikes. That sounds so simple and I found it so hard. All my self-imposed role-expectations worked against my being there just as me.



The more I center in my universe, the less I need centrality in theirs. It gives each of us a better chance to come home and we can only gain from it.

### The Seminar

(Here was the text of the course description.)

Seasonal Seminar has evolved rapidly in its short (three terms) life. The single main variable is the group-orientation of its participants. In Spring Seminar 71, nineteen of the twenty-two participants were primarily group-focused.

In Fall Seminar 71, the orientation was sharply different. Five of the twenty-two participants were primarily group-focused. The remaining seventeen went their own ways, singly, or in pairs.

At this time ( $\frac{1}{2}$  into the term) Winter Seminar 72 closely resembles Fall Seminar 71 in terms of participants' group-focus. Five of the nineteen members attend almost all of the course meetings, the others are oriented primarily toward their own activities and sporadically attend meetings.

In class, the six of us are still evolving our style. (New material: We have moved from the classroom to my office and we have asked people not to visit us during the class hours. Communication and seminar identity are up noticeably.)

Seasonal Seminar's function in TJC has shifted significantly from my original intent of a year ago. It has filled a then-unseen need in the College. Originally, I saw Seasonal Seminar as an opportunity for new students at TJC to get their feet on the ground in the context of a closely-knit group. It continues to serve this purpose but for only about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of its enrollees.

Beginning with Fall Seminar, upper classmen and new transfer students already familiar with college, signed up for the Seminar much more than new students. They have taken it as an opportunity to shape their own work without reference to class meetings, long-range plans and detailed accountability.

How many people take the Seminar more than once? When a person joins Seasonal Seminar, he obtains first priority in enrollment for two succeeding terms (a total of three). So far, about 25% of the Seminar's participants have enrolled for a second term and 5% have signed up for a third.

When asked to rank their reasons for joining Fall Seminar 71, participants cited "therapeutic" reasons (getting it together) and intellectual studies as the two most important ones. Least important was using the seminar to hold down an outside job. Travel and play were important secondary uses to which the seminar was put.

The resistance to ranking was fairly high or at least vocal. In addition there was a sense of their having to justify their behavior. (New material: I know this involves projection on my part. I think what that means is not that I felt the need to justify and they didn't, but that we both did.) I think the defensive response is inherent in the classroom situation as learned in the USA. The best that can be hoped for is open expression of the feelings generated as we work through to a mutually satisfactory way of generating data for the record. If there isn't time to work through these feelings while generating the information, I think it is more productive to leave the data unborn.

While writing this article, I realized how the Seminar's function at TJC has evolved to include providing independent people an open structure. In addition, I've realized a new sense of teaching. On the one hand, I teach directly through sustained contact with individuals in Seasonal Seminar, Special Studies and in office conversations. On the other, I teach by "not-teaching", by providing an environment where people can think and do with minimal reference to outside authority. It's an opportunity for us to explore our abilities within major pressure not to goof up. In doing this, almost all of us discover ability and attributes we didn't know we had or sensed only vaguely. How obvious, that it's as valuable for me to back off as it is for me to come on.

#### Feedback

(The remainder of the paper is statements from Seminar members which have also been condensed.)

The whole atmosphere was so relaxing. It made it easier to do all your things, too, all your outside things, like your job and other things.

--Michael

The most important thing that I got out of Spring Seminar -- on the whole it's learning that the way to do things is just to do them. It seems like I used to just sit back and do the things in my head but I'd never get out and try to put them into action. It seems like this is the first time I learned that you've got to take some initial steps and start gathering information and take action and the whole thing evolves. You can do it and it's not that hard.

--Jim

I'm more comfortable at TJC. A lot more enjoying what I'm doing and doing what I enjoy. This term I was able to go into Detroit when I felt like it. I went over to Detroit and did a couple weeks of pottery. I went over to the library, poked around, picked up what I wanted to, listened to a lot of music. I wanted to do that. I've been able to make friends with some people.

--Dave

We didn't have a set discussion where we knew what we'd be talking about in advance. We would just get there and sit around and after about ten minutes we'd just kind of get involved in conversation. By about 12 o'clock we covered about 4,000 miles. I learned how to listen better, learned how to talk better, learned to have patience better.

--Michael

During the play, when we first got together, and we said "Okay, we're going to do a play." It seemed fairly distant to me. So I figured "That's cool, let's do it," you know. Then we started planning on it and working on it right away and I was sitting there going "No, Wait, Stop! It's too fast!" I really had a strong feeling that we were

rushing into it and that I couldn't do it. I didn't even come for about a week, you know, to get involved in it because I felt like I would feel really bad and embarrassed because I couldn't add anything. Then I just started forcing myself to come. Everybody made it real easy. Now I feel a lot more comfortable with myself and like I have something to say. Even though I didn't do this much, maybe if I take the seminar another term I'll be a lot more productive than I have been lately.

--Bob

I think that I've learned as much out of class as I have in class and the thing that I've learned is that -- well, I've always had this big separation between life and school, and life and learning, and it's not that way. Two or three weeks ago I left and went to my home and I was living there. And I've never been able to read before. I mean, you know, sit down and read a group of books that I've been interested in, and that's what I've been doing. And I'm really glad for that because I've just learned how to read, I've learned how to learn. I've never been able to do that before.

--Jac

It was an experiment; it was feelings and emotions and learning from myself and other people. I was always afraid of groups before. I'd never join anything. And I didn't know anyone when I first came here. Now I feel like I know people in this group which really means a lot to me.

--Nadine

I was having a hard time relating and talking about problems with other people. I decided that the only way I could do it was to get away and try to understand where I'd been slipping. I think the greatest thing about this term was when I at the beginning took a month off and went up

to a cabin and I just started to understand where my knowledge is at. There is nothing that I've learned this whole term except the fact that I can just begin to understand little notions of people and how people are human beings before they are anything else.

--Joe

I don't plan to take this next term. It was just so totally involving. Next term I want to have time to myself again. I've decided to take courses I never thought I'd ever take because of the experiences I've had this term. Like acting and dancing.

--Karle

I'm so much more peaceful than I was before. I've got some kind of faith in people or something, and a lot of guilt and other bullshit has just faded away. I don't press anything anymore, at least not as much as I used to. When I think about it, it was the neat and the bad times I had with the other people that did it. I finally realized that Spring Seminar is a way of life, that there's no difference between education and anything else. I feel like I aged about 10 years in 2 months.

--Steve

---

AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF EXPERIMENTAL  
PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Conducting an analysis of experimental programs and institutions is something like attempting a study of the nice people in Chicago. You know a few, and your friends know a few and beyond that it just isn't clear where to draw the line. And when you get them together, you begin to wonder -- at least about the ones your friends suggested. You can't possibly meet them all, so you send them a questionnaire knowing full well that so many checked numbers may not get you very far in understanding what it is to be nice.

With these difficulties in mind, a special seminar at Johnston College prepared and distributed a survey questionnaire to over 300 colleges and universities in order to gather comparative information on numerous institutional aspects of experimental education currently in operation in the United States. In order to somewhat reduce personal bias, a request was made that the questionnaire be completed by a three-person team -- preferably a student, a member of the faculty and an administrator. Sixty-two completed questionnaires were returned in time for this preliminary analysis, 37 per cent of which were answered by a team of three. Thirty-four public and 28 private institutions or programs were represented.

The following is a brief report of the initial analysis. Other than comparison of private and public programs, no cross-tabulations have been completed as yet.

### Distinctiveness

A majority of respondents considered their institutions to be significantly distinctive, at least relative to most institutions of "higher learning". Program or subject emphasis, evaluation procedures and governance or system of organization were the most predominant areas. Only a few indicated a distinctive student body or faculty. Respondents were asked to describe briefly the three most distinctive or significant aspects of their institutional programming. If the responses to this question are indicative of the current state of experimental education, it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that (1) there are few radically (even moderately) new forms or methods of education currently in operation, and (2) so-called experimental programs are remarkably similar. Categorized fairly simply, current experimental programs can be described as emphasizing, in order of popularity, (1) individualized programming and independent study, (2) off-campus learning of various types, and (3) interdisciplinary programs, often combined with a problem orientation and team teaching. The fourth largest category was simply "close

relationships between faculty and students". This may be educational, but it is hardly innovative -- unless perhaps our respondents were referring euphemistically to cohabitation in one or more forms. I noted interesting programs on a 4 x 6 card and still had room for a grocery list. Most respondents rated their distinctive programs as quite successful. There didn't appear to be a correlation between the type of program and its success rating.

### Educational Emphasis

Educational innovators may be chucking the large multiversity, but they appear to be replacing it with the minimultiversity. Assisting both students and faculty in doing-their-own-things is apparently a major value for the modern experimental institution. Many felt they strongly emphasized "Providing resources for aiding students in whatever they want to pursue". According to respondents, this emphasis will probably be increased in the future. There were other indications of this inclusiveness of pursuit. Of 590 answered items, a de-emphasis of any general area of educational focus was mentioned only 7 times.

While all educational orientations listed were rated rather high, the most emphasized areas were (1) Encouragement of creativity and creative expression, (2) Development of personal growth and self-understanding, and (3) Development of interpersonal and communication skills. Least emphasized were "Preparation for graduate school" and "Preparation for vocation". Most likely to be increasingly emphasized in the future were (1) Relating education to action, (2) Providing resources for aiding students in whatever they want to pursue, (3) Development of interpersonal skills, (4) Encouragement of creativity and (5) Providing exposure to the world outside of an academic context and contact with other cultures. Again, preparation for graduate school or vocation was not strongly emphasized.

### Learning Structures

The learning structures most emphasized by the responding institutions include independent study and (somewhat more so

in private institutions) off-campus learning and team teaching. Least emphasized were lecture courses, undergraduate student-taught courses and credit by examination. The latter two, plus utilization of technological hardware as well as independent study and team teaching were viewed as likely to receive increasingly emphasis in the future.

### Evaluation Procedures

Seventy-five per cent of the institutions reported using more than one method of formal student evaluation. (This was up to 84 per cent in public institutions.) Some system of grading is still the predominant means of evaluation, but written evaluations pass/fail and credit/non-credit are also popular. Only five programs or institutions reported using no formal system of evaluation.

Faculty members have sole responsibility for student evaluation in 1/3 of procedures utilized and consult with the student and/or class in 1/4 of the cases. Joint faculty-student evaluation accounts for only 17 per cent of the total. Almost all of the public institutions utilize the credit hour in some form, but only half of private institutions do.

### Governance

Governance systems were difficult to classify because of different styles of reporting, but the trend, it appears, is toward more active involvement of students in major policy decisions, though in many places this is limited to committee assignments. The majority of institutions employ some type of council, senate or assembly (sometimes in the form of town meetings) usually combines with a committee system. Separate faculty and student governing bodies are still noticeable but not predominate.

### Personnel and Social Climate

Student populations in our "sample" averaged over 90 per cent white, and faculties over 80 per cent male. Student attrition is somewhat difficult to compute but ranges approximately between 20 and 30 per cent.



Relationships among students, faculty and administration appear to be quite good on nearly all campuses. Conflict was rated low and morale high. Student and faculty political activism is generally low to moderate.

### External Relationships

Institutional support from the local community is generally rated rather low by the respondents, but then, faculty and student participation in local community activities as well as the participation of local citizens in on-campus activities are also rated low. The off-campus world, it appears, is viewed primarily as a place for academically-oriented involvement. Participation in cooperative programs with other academic institutions is rated very low, but this is viewed as increasing appreciably in the future.

### Institutional Development and Change

Groups considered to be most supportive of innovation are (1) students, (2) faculty, (3) boards, and (4) "parent" institutions (when applicable). Considered least supportive are (1) graduate schools, (2) parents and/or alumni, and (3) community groups. Governmental agencies were rated neutrally. Both accreditation procedures and availability of financial resources were viewed as problematical.

Institutional mechanisms for assuring ongoing innovation are nearly non-existent. In one college the charter is rewritten every year and another has resolved that "should we ever fill more than one file cabinet, we shall immediately disband the entire operation." (It's non-degree, non-credit program.) Nearly all of the others depend entirely on their current "spirit of change", their general chaotic state or a strong faith in the innovative characteristics of their personnel.

Have experimental institutions become significantly more conventional since their inception? Respondents believe

rather strongly to the contrary. Only a few reported becoming more conventional since opening (or within the past 10 years). A majority believe they have become more distinctive, especially in terms of their most innovative programs.

So, despite problems and constraints, there appears to be considerable optimism about the future of "experimental higher education" in the United States. Whether or not this report will contribute to that optimism is open to question...but hopefully, not questionnaires.

Daniel E. Gilbertson  
Faculty Fellow in Sociology  
JOHNSTON COLLEGE  
University of Redlands

January 1972

---

MEISTER ECKHARDT MET A BEAUTIFUL NAKED BOY -for TDG & BFP

He asked him where he came from.

He said: "I come from God."

Where did you leave him?

"In virtuous hearts."

Where are you going?

"To God."

Where do you find him?

"Where I part with all creatures."

Who are you?

"A king."

Where is your kingdom?

"In my heart."

Take care that no one divide it with you!

"I shall."

Then he led him to his cell.

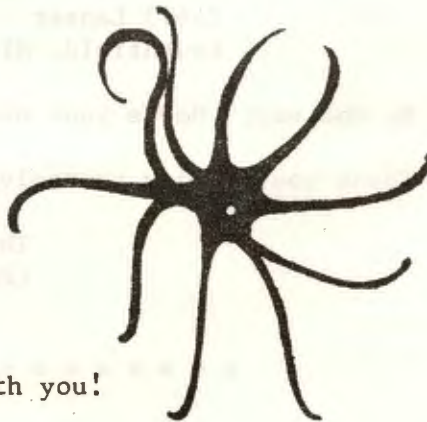
Take whichever coat you will.

"Then I should be no king!"

And he disappeared.

For it was God himself -

Who was having a bit of fun.



-Bud

32

Dear Mary and everybody:

We've been sitting here 45 minutes trying to figure out how to thank you all for everything you did for us while we were visiting TJC. Everyone was so helpful and kind. But it is stupid to sit here complimenting and complimenting. Just knowing that you're going to have us as part of TJC is compliment enough! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

We also have a few favors to ask of you: 1) We were wondering if you could send us a copy of the Bullfrog Pond every once-in-a-while so we can keep up on what's happening? 2) We were also wondering if you could send us a copy of the spring classes when they come out? 3) We were also wondering if anyone knew any organic forms where two of us could apply for this summer?

We're giving Mr. Miller's (our co-ordinator) address at Southfield High in case you're able to send us anything. (Please!): Mr. R. Miller  
Southfield High School  
24675 Lahser  
Southfield, MI 48075

By the way: How's your new health food center?

Thank you. Enjoy yourselves.

The Southfield Kids  
(Pam, Linda, Peggy, and Barb)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Reflections on Redlands

I suppose if I had known about or had attended previous experimental college conferences my expectations for the

Redlands Conference would not have been so great. But my expectations were with me and it was a hard let down when I realized they would not be met -- at least not at this conference.

The experimental college conference at the University of Redlands was not experimental or innovative, or in the least way different from a (boring) business conference discussing the future of plastics in dinnerware.

The conference was extremely structured in its format which consisted of small groups meeting throughout the day to discuss problems which had been talked about at previous conferences -- and which ended in the same way, with no new ideas or answers.

I was very surprised to find the attendance at the conference consisting mainly of administrators and faculty with a shockingly low number of students. On the second night of the conference the students had a meeting to discuss why there wasn't more students there and why those that were there seemed to be unwelcomed. This reminded me of meetings that take place at non-experimental structured schools where the students are always united against their faculty and administrators for more student rights. Somehow it all seemed strange to be happening this way at an experimental college conference.

I would attend another experimental college conference but only on the condition that we could find some way to break down the barriers of formality and structure. Perhaps then the participants would find it easier to discuss ideas and develop friendships that would lead to a unification between the people who are involved in experimental education.

Roxanne Harley

Judy has asked me to comment on three topics - Experimental College Conferences, The Disbanding of the R.C., and My General Feelings About the Future of TJC.

Conferences: I attended the Nebraska and Redlands Conferences. The Nebraska Conference was good because it gave me a chance to spend a significant chunk of time with about 25 TJC people. I especially enjoyed the TJC party the first night when a part of me came through that never comes through in Lake Huron Hall ; Rooming with Cam and seeing what he's like first thing in the morning (he's just the same only sleeper); and spending a really beautiful two hours with Merrill Rodin, Jerry Diller, and Cam Wilson in our room waiting for our plane after the conference was over. In short, the Nebraska Conference gave me the opportunity to experience other sides of TJC people. Most of what I saw was beautiful. I wish we had more time and opportunity for that kind of experience here at TJC. It's sad in a way that we had to go to Nebraska to do it.

Redlands was better organized and the food was much better. The Redlands people had gone out of their way to make people comfortable and I appreciated this. I have never seen and probably never will see such a clean experimental college. I led two discussion groups which seemed to work well, and the panel discussions between Dressel, Newcomb, Huntington, and Newell were entertaining. I didn't feel as much a part of the Redlands Conference but I'm sure some of this feeling came from my awareness of the presence of "Big Guns" and my problem dealing with authority figures.

Did I learn anything at these conferences that could be of help to us here at TJC? Not really, I met some damn nice people (e.g. Al Wight and Ken Freeman) who inspired me by their dedication to educational change. I discovered there are lots of experimental college of one kind or another across the country and felt less lonely. I met some TJC people at

a deeper level. But, if the real purpose of these conferences was to disseminate useful information it didn't happen. Not that the material we dealt with wasn't interesting - it was. But, it wasn't useful; Each experimental project in the country seems to some extent to be on its own trip. I don't think we've found that common thread that holds us together yet, and, I guess I hope we never find it.

I believe there's some aesthetic beauty and probably some real practicality in remaining naive and out of the empire building, political maneuvering power structure. We've managed to do a few things here at TJC simply because we did not know they were impossible to do. We've succeeded so far because we've been willing to listen to each other and to treat one another as human beings in spite of our disagreements and differences in direction. I came away from the Redlands Conference feeling my naivete' had been tainted by "professionalism", "sloganism", and the old "Let's get the dirty bastards that are oppressing us" routine. I wanted to get back to TJC where I could talk with people like Tiny Reinhart, Maggie Luebke, Betty Ryan and Jeff Brown and we could help each other and all end up winners rather than playing the "for me to win, you have to lose" games.

I don't think I'm going to go to any more conferences. The Commons Room will serve the same function when I can find the time to be there and others are willing to meet me there.

The Disbanding of the RC: Personally I don't feel that this is too big of a deal. The RC was not a group of power freaks. One of the problems that people other than power freaks have is that power can't work in a vacuum. Thus, when an institution or group is functioning reasonable well and individuals within the group are

getting pretty much what they want out of it and the day to day "nuts and bolts" procedures are being taken care of, the people who don't need power for their own ego trip simply aren't too interested in keeping it. From my point of view, I trust TJC students enough to know that when they are oppressed they'll properly exercise the power that's theirs. I know this because I know them as people and because I know they have done so in the past. I believe that the reason the RC found it easy to disband itself was the fact that there simply wasn't all that much to do and from my point of view there is nothing wrong with that. Yes, I believe it would be good if we could get more organized, if we could listen to each other, and if faculty and students could communicate at deeper levels. But, I don't believe that will occur in the setting of a Town Meeting or a Representative Committee Meeting. It will occur between you and me and between you and you, anyplace, any time, when you and I want it to occur. I want to use what power I have only when I'm being oppressed. I want to organize special groups when the ends of the individuals within that group can be met better by doing so. I want to experience community with other people because we have come together to work on a mutual and real problem. (I'm convinced, for example, that Danny Ritsema and I could come into community much easier by his trying to explain his mathematical proof of God's existence to me, than over several years of encounter group games.) Many other uses of power, group organization and community seem to me to approach being mere sociological dildos. The Representative Committee disbanding, people at the Town Meeting acting silly and not taking their "great gift" of power seriously, Bah Humbug! I know the people at TJC, and I know that when and if the crunch comes they will not be the crunchee.

#### Future of Thomas Jefferson College:

I don't know exactly why Judy has asked me to comment on this but I think it's fun to fantasize about. At the

present time I think Thomas Jefferson College is the healthiest it's ever been. It has a fine bunch of students, who for the most part are turned on, creative and intelligent, and an equally capable faculty. There's a diversity of backgrounds and interests among faculty and students and a healthy feeling for the need of personal as well as intellectual growth. The new unit next year will consist of seven new faculty who are fantastically exciting people and 140 new students. Consequently, the size of the present unit will be reduced to around 250 students. This "devison experiment" could be one of the most exciting things that's ever happened at Jefferson. I'm convinced the resulting interchange between the two units is bound to be profitable for both. I also feel that the reduction in size of each of the units is a good thing. I, for one, can't wait to see what ideas the new people are going to come up with. Other exciting things in the future include, Cam Wilson's development of Seasonal Seminar, the evaluation of the pro's and con's of the Floating Seminar, Don Klein's continuing work in creativity, Jerry Diller and Ron Efron's course on Community, Jerry Diller's book, the development of Stage 3 by Birtwistle, Bob Shechtman getting it together with music students (maybe it's corny but someday I'd really like to see a TJC Glee Club), Lee Kaufman's conversation to an administrator, John McNaughton's acceptance to Law School, Norm Peterson's acceptance to graduate school (we hope), Robert Vas Dias' second National Poetry Festival coming up next summer and the publication of his new book next month, the possibilities of Earl Heuer's going to India as an exchange faculty for a year, Merrill Rodin's developing a greater appreciation of philosophy among TJC students, the fantastically rapid development of the dance program by Christine Loizeaux, Dan Andersen's science lab, Jeff Brown's work on the Drug Counselling Program, and my own relization that B. F. Skinner is not necessarily right or wrong but is definitely offensive as hell and that John Lilly's new book, The Center of the Cyclone, may result in some real fundamental changes in my own life... I'm sure



that each of you could add your own list which would not overlap with mine at all. (I have said nothing about the new people for example.) There's simply a lot of good, high energy, high value, deeply felt things happening at TJC and as to the future of those things I think they'll increase in quantity and quality. That's exciting. Like riding on the tail of a comet and if the comet should eventually burn out, I won't regret taking the ride. Yes, I know there are problems each of us perceive according to our own needs. One of my needs is to keep as many doors open as possible for everybody in TJC, the faculty and students included. Another is to see that we continue to facilitate more than just intellectual growth at TJC. A third is to make sure that we allow for truly significant intellectual growth to occur when the need is felt.

I spent most of last year working to insure that at TJC people would be treated as people with dignity and respect, and I think to some extent that goal has been accomplished. The one biggest problem as I see it now is to devise ways to insure the possibility of high quality intellectual growth when it is needed, i.e., to keep all the doors open, not just some. If we are willing to work towards these goals with patience, constructive criticism and a little bit of reverence for the fact that we are human beings, I think we're going to have an exceptionally fine college in the very near future. This belief helps me to transcend some of the "nit-picky" problems that come up day in and day out and to hold on to a real sense of excitement about our future. The future is "then" but the excitement is now!

- T. Dan

\* \* \* \* \*

Report of the Academic Affairs Committee, 7 March 1972

The Academic Affairs Committee approved approximately 200 Special Studies for Winter term, 1972.

About 60% of these (120) could be called "academic" studies because in them a student explored an area of knowledge (like personality theory, logic, homosexuality, or science fiction).

This category seemed to serve two broad purposes for students: it allowed them to learn a subject they couldn't learn in a seminar or it allowed them to pursue the subject further than they could in a seminar.

The remaining 40% (80) could be called "experiential" studies. Some of these consisted of learning skills (like silkscreening, yoga, agronomy, piano technique, and animal tracking); others consisted of self-exploration (like self-generated curriculum or studying ones own interpersonal interactions); the rest integrated job experiences with learning (like crisis intervention, probation officer, raising ones daughter, or teaching dance).

Both the "academic" and "experiential" categories contained a number of impressive studies. Those that we considered exceptional had one or more of the following qualities:

- 1) the topic was unusual
- 2) the study had been clearly thought out
- 3) the subject was explored in depth, and good use was made of available resources
- 4) there was a unique approach to the subject

Both categories also contained unimpressive studies. The ones we considered least valuable were those which did not clearly indicate that the students activities would constitute a learning experience, either because they were

- 1) ordinary everyday activities
- 2) not reflected upon
- 3) not bounced off anybody (shared, criticized)
- or 4) uncreative and unimaginative.

Surprisingly, there were more unimpressive studies in the "academic" category than in the "experiential". But even so the unimpressive studies were far outnumbered by the impressive ones.

Academic Affairs Committee:  
Earl Heuer  
Diane Kohn  
Merrill Rodin  
David Schuchman

\*\*\*\*\*

FROGS - TODAY THE POND...TOMORROW THE WORLD

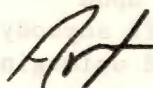
Dear Editor:

Thanks for the February number of the Bullfrog Pond. The best evidence of my gratitude, I think, is to respond in kind, so here are the most recent issues of a biweekly chronicle issued from this typewriter to various friends around the country at more or less regular intervals.

The piece on "Environmental Cues" seems to be full of good ideas. Do you mind if I xerox copies of it for one of my classes?

Look forward to seeing your next issue.

Cheers,



Arthur B. Wenk

SOME NOTES ON EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGES OM AMERICA  
by GOODWIN WATSON

"Experimental Colleges in America." An overview by Goodwin Watson, Professor Emeritus of Social Psychology and Education at Teachers College, and Distinguished Service Professor at Newark State College.

Responding to contemporary pressures, most experimental colleges embody certain common features. They are trying, in President Kerr's words, "to seem smaller as they grow larger." They are concerned for General, Liberal Education. They move away from a proliferation of specialized courses toward larger interdisciplinary units. They try to restore prestige to teaching to offset pressures toward research and publication. They encourage independent study and experiment with new technologies for aiding learning. They revise the calendar to use all the year. They cultivate campus communities, but also carry students out into the field of practical affairs. They are world-minded, and often provide for experience abroad...

Another problem with Utopias is that they are works of art. At best, they achieve a remarkable balance, integration and unity. Hence, they are resistant to alteration. Their creators try to preserve them entire, and see further change as destructive. Experimental colleges almost inevitably encounter the problem of how to keep adaptable without losing coherence and unity...

A college which conveys the public image of being experimental and different exerts a magnetic attraction upon students who have not succeeded in more conventional institutions. In some cases, the student's difficulty does lie in outmoded curricula and procedures, and the experimental college releases unprecedented growth and achievement. There are not a few other cases, however, in which the difficulty lies in the rebellious student, and these are fated to repeat on the new campus the same mistakes which brought previous failures.

A legitimate concern of the administration of any new-fangled sort of college must be its fascination for the misfits, off-beats and ne'er-do-wells among both students and faculty. Perhaps some of you, during workshops, can suggest screening procedures to differentiate the potential high-achievers from the perennially dissatisfied.

A different sort of problem arises from the attitudes of students who are too much the conventional dependent type. An account of one of the earlier innovations at Parsons College reported: "Often the student who most needed (the tutorial workshops) failed to show up." Many other colleges have found that students for whom faculty set aside hours of individual counseling, value it so little that they neglect to appear. Given opportunity for independent study, some students feel no inner challenge to read, to explore, to think or to learn; they revert to the time worn tactics for getting maximum credit for a minimum of work.

The Massachusetts Committee for a New College reported as a result of a pilot experiment: "The most mistakable result was the illustration of the extraordinary hold that the standard course system had on the minds of students and faculty, and the remarkable lack of sophistication of the normal college student when faced by an unstructured learning situation."

Experiments with independent study have shown that most students don't learn well unless they have been given rather thorough preparation and unless plenty of feedback is built into the study process.

Experiment like Meikejohn's at Wisconsin or New College at Columbia University's Teachers College, which have been carried on within a larger institution continuing its business as usual, have to encounter unexpected hostility from the parent university. The innovations of the experiment unit are seen as implicit criticism of the established practices on the surrounding campus. Out-group faculty become defensive and belittle the experiment. Out-groups students make

fun of the more earnest experimental novitiates. In both of these instances, rejection within the university played a major role in terminating the experiment...

The larger community is only too ready to attribute addiction to LSD and sexual laxity to any unconventional youth group...

### Blindness of Idealism.

Aggravating all the preceding problems is the special blindness of idealism. Possessed by a vision, the creators of experimental projects keep their wagon hitched to a star, and easily disregard bumps on the highway. The promoters of a new scheme seldom build in feedback mechanisms to alert them to minor breakdowns. Their faith in "the cause" easily triumphs over the data from any evaluation research they may tolerate. The pride they feel in their achievement keeps them insensitive to the mounting discontent. The problems which have been disregarded occasionally culminate in an explosion; more commonly make-shift adaptations accumulate in a creeping regression from the experimental ideal.

### Regression.

Most experimental colleges are more distinctive in their first few years of operation and become less so over a period of time. The dream accommodates to hard reality; faculty, students and parents gradually infuse into the new enterprise the expectations and habits they have acquired elsewhere. Even faculty members who are drawn to the project because of its innovations, bright with the residues of traditional operation.

Regression is due also to the dilution of the enthusiasm and dedication of the pioneers. Later additions to the faculty do not share the initial commitment. Indoctrination of new members becomes rather a formality, and the familiar methods as well as the familiar course contents, re-emerge.

The distinctiveness of the original experiment declines also as other colleges undertake related projects. An innovation of ten years ago may have become common practice on many campuses today. To be on the frontier is a thrilling experience, but one can't build a stone mansion there. The frontier keeps moving.

It has been observed that the great years of an experimental college are its first ones. Whether it eventually regresses, becomes static, or dies, the participants in its early creative efforts enjoy a great educational experience. Maybe our quest for the highest level of student and faculty involvement would lead to experimental colleges whose life is limited to seven or eight years to be followed by death and possible reincarnation. It is interesting to note that the Meiklejohn experiment, Black Mountain, and New College at Columbia University - all lasted about seven years.

The alternative is a model rather different from the Utopian College, designed once-and-for-all to provide enduring excellence. The emerging model follows a principle of successive approximations. Last year's solutions are carefully evaluated and corresponding improvements proposed for next year. Each subsequent program takes better account of all the dissatisfactions with the present. A self-renewing institution need not lose the comprehensive, integrated, holistic quality which distinguishes designed colleges from those composed of piece-meal reforms and patches.

We do not yet know just what social structure will best facilitate the self-renewing college. Almost surely, there will be some person or bureau devoted to continuous work in research and development. There will be a general climate of mutual trust encompassing administration, faculty and students, so that ideas and feelings are frankly expressed and fully respected. From time to time the participants will need to examine and perhaps re-create this climate. There will be general understanding of, and skill in using,

processes of problem solving, which include diagnosis, invention, and appraisal. Instruments will permit charting curves portraying periodic evaluation by students, teachers and administrators. Search for possible improvements will be systematic rather than sporadic. Resources for innovation within the college will be utilized fully, and there will be constant scanning of developments in other institutions. No single change will be introduced, however, without full consideration of how all related activities may be affected. Each successive approximation is not introduction of reform in one item within the system, but a redesign of the whole system to incorporate desirable changes in an integrated whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

TJC ADVANCE and DESIGN FESTIVAL, May 1972...What I'm envisioning is an artistic-design structure event in conjunction with the Spring Advance. There's money being spent to rent camps when we could be using it to create our own shelters of many different varieties at low cost and on a permanent basis. This doesn't mean that TJC should go on a group campout (although there may be merit in doing so). There are campgrounds with showers, flush toilets, and electricity all over the country. All we need to supply is shelter and cooking materials. I propose that we construct a "Temporary Experimental City" old, new, and imaginative architectural designs for an interesting and stimulating environment. After the first event, any others TJC wished to have could be done so at a minimum of expense because the shelters would be all ready to go (anywhere). Future Advances would only have to charge for food since shelter would be already paid for. The whole affair would/could/should/ be an extremely creative, high energy experience for all, both those who build structures and those who live in them. Furthermore, this new, stimulating environment could serve to revitalize the Advances and make them into real community gathering tools which they have, for the most part, failed to be in the past.







THOMAS JEFFERSON COLLEGE  
GRAND VALLEY STATE COLLEGE  
ALLENDALE, MICHIGAN 49401

NON-PROFIT ORG.

BULK RATE

U. S. POSTAGE

PAID

ALLENDALE, MICH.

Permit No. 1

Lovebaugh

