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George Fox College

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"I therefore desire that you may double your diligence in your offices, in doing that which is just, true, and righteous; so that you may excel and exceed all . . ."

Journal, George Fox, 1689

Integration In Education

BY DONALD McNICHOLS, DEAN

What Is Integration?

During recent years college educators have become acutely aware that our core of individual studies blurs the student's vision of the total pattern of knowledge. Each year as the young person progresses through grammar school, high school, and then college, he faces a curriculum that is composed of individual subjects. Particularly in college each subject is taught by a specialist, so that the student sees only fields of study which seem far removed from each other. Subject fields appear as a self-containing and separate aspect of knowledge.

The mastery of individual fields has long been emphasized and is of particular importance during this century with its needs for specialists, but it has been demonstrated that the lasting value of a college training for the average graduate is derived more from general knowledge, *i.e.* an understanding of the universe, man, human relationships, and God than from the accumulation of specific data. In other words, it is the basic understanding gained from examining a broad core of courses that provides the young person with the comprehension necessary to become an alert citizen.

Specifically the problem is this, how can the student be

made conscious of the significance of his individual fields of study to each other and to the broader aspect of knowledge? Knowledge must be broken down to small, manageable units for mastery; this is the only way it can be approached. But the process must continuously relate the parts to the whole, which in brief is the objective of integrated education. Thus in a thoroughly integrated curriculum the boundaries which separate traditional subject fields are largely ignored.

An Experiment in Integration

At present this problem is being recognized as centering in method; therefore, its solution has been sought by adopting a method of instruction by which relatedness of subjects is kept before the student.

Some colleges have attempted to realize this objective through the Sophomore Integration Course. This required course largely replaced the Survey of Literature by dividing the course into divisions of a few weeks each with a different subject being taught during each division: literature, music, art appreciation, history, *et cetera*, according to who organized the course content. Usually the divisions are taught by an instructor from the department represented, to insure competent instruction. Reports from this program indicate that it is making an impact upon the students toward the desired orientation; however, they question if the program goes far enough when restricted to a single subject program.

How Is George Fox Meeting the Need for Integration?

To follow the pattern of the integrated curriculum is certainly too extreme for a conservative college such as George Fox, yet we seek to accomplish something of this goal. Rather than destroy the traditional subjects, we prefer to present these subjects as parts of a larger whole. In the field of literature, for example, there is the expression of idea through an art form that employs language for its medium of expression.

When it is adequately pointed out, the student quickly sees that art is art whether it assumes the form of a figurine, a landscape, a musical composition, or a sonnet. Provided thus with a basic tool of comprehension, his own investigation will lead him to discover relationships as he unwinds the threads of learning thus better to inspect the great pattern of knowledge.

The small class invites informality and permits frequent exchange of ideas between student and professor. In such a setting the teacher unconsciously communicates attitudes toward the subject, and often these attitudes thus gained are more influential in shaping the attitude of the student than the subject itself. A great danger accompanying this situation lies in the tendency of the teacher to relax from a professional attitude toward his subject. After all has been written, the fundamental answer to the question, "What is an education?" is that it is the process of developing an attitude and a method. Briefly, this attitude is one of objectivity without skepticism; it seeks to be impartial in investigations, tolerant in respect to persons, and devout toward God. That educational experience most capable of producing this outlook must be one which gives the young person an acquaintance with his world.

Of such is the program of George Fox. Her graduates are expected to demonstrate proficiency in a single field, yet they must see the location which this field occupies in the great classified scheme of human acquisition that is identified as knowledge.

George Fox College subscribes to a conservative curricular philosophy. Its curriculum is best classified as adhering to a general education program. Breadth of learning experience is sought through group requirements within the freshman and sophomore years; this includes a year's sequence within a single subject from the social science, literature, and science groups respectively, and a second year's sequence from one of these groups to be completed on the sophomore level.

Thus our program of studies follows a core-curriculum classification more completely than any other single plan. We possess the advantage of a small faculty so that continued orientation to the total task is relatively easy to maintain. Still as in all great undertakings, improvement must be the watchword for the daily task. Continuously the staff must look toward the goal for its inspiration, not to the present operation.

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Perhaps you would like to know the story behind this new bulletin venture, if so here it is in few words. One day in June, Harlow Ankeny, the public relations director, came

into my office and I said, "Harlow, I have been dreaming of a bi-monthly bulletin devoted to discussing current problems in education in order to articulate our own program. From the Dean's office must come the leadership to decide in a specific way what the educational objectives of the school are, then to direct the curriculum and instruction toward accomplishment of the goal; then it is important to tell our friends what we are doing." He agreed with enthusiasm, so here is the first issue. The responses received will be most interesting and profitable.

CALENDAR

- September 8 - 10—Faculty Preschool Conference.
12—Dormitories open to Freshmen.
12 - 15—Freshman Orientation.
16—Registration for all Classes.
Student Body Mixer, 8:00 p. m.
17—Classes Convene.
First Student Christian Union
Prayer Meeting, 6:45 p. m.
18—Coeds' Big and Little Sister party; Mixer for Men, 7:30 p. m.
19—Faculty Reception in Honor of
new Students.
November 3 - 7—Christian Emphasis Week.
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