

# The Guilfordian

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Tell it like it is . . .

## Experiment in Elitism, (part 2)

*This is the last of a two part article about the Richardson Program.*

In the early part of this century John Dewey revolutionized educational thought by proclaiming that education is a process of living, not preparation for it. Since that time educators have searched for ways in which to make the classroom experience more "relevant" to the students' sphere. Or, failing this, they have sometimes even abandoned the classroom altogether, as in the Richardson Program.

To completely eliminate the classroom, however, these same educators have insisted that the students be "very special." Efforts to segregate the students, then, began on the basis of their capacity to perform. For, as most recognized, having "double-domes" and "dummies" in the same classroom (this democratic approach is still employed, of course, in public schools) leads inevitably to a clash over the speed at which the class should progress and also over the content of the material to be covered. The end result being that the intelligent students are bored, while the less gifted ones are frustrated.

Unfortunately, a small school's faculty resources are so limited that those professors who are best qualified to teach the "special" students are also the best the school has to offer elsewhere. This inevitably means that those students who failed to qualify are left to fend for themselves within the old structure.

This very same thing actually occurred on a smaller scale a few years ago in Chicago. There, an elementary school teacher faced her new crop of shining faces with their pencils clutched tightly in hand at the beginning of the school year. They had undergone IQ tests the week before and when the results came in she was given the names of six of her students who possessed "potential for intellectual blooming." What the teacher didn't know, however, was that the six students were selected at random with no attention paid to the test scores.

Eight months later, however, the students were given another IQ test and

Prof. George W. Albee of Western Reserve was able to report that the specially designated children "had made dramatic improvements. In the first grade, the average gain was more than 15 points; in the second grade, more than 10 points . . ."

Obviously what happened was that the teacher had acted in such a way toward those special students as to elicit more of their basic potential. Any failure to comprehend by these students was then treated by the teacher as a failure on her part, causing her to work that much harder to make certain they grasped the subject matter.

The Richardson Foundation's leadership training program, unfortunately, is laden with similar problems. These teachers will, if the students fail to comprehend, devote extra energies to them. For the students' lack of comprehension will be seen as a personal failure by the teacher. The end result of this kind of saturation education is that Guilford's other students will receive less attention from the professors best qualified to give it, and while they are training leaders in one sphere, in another they are losing them.

The point is not that a program of saturation education will not work for the Richardson Fellows . . . it will. The point is that the facilities of a small college are limited to such an extent that the other Guilford students cannot help but suffer.

Letters to the Editor of *The Guilfordian* should be turned into *The Guilfordian* office by 4:00 Sunday afternoon. Letters exceeding 350 words are subject to possible deletion. All letters must be signed, but under special circumstances names will be withheld upon request. Untyped letters are accepted.

## Quaker Pulse

### Too Damn Liberal

DEAR EDITOR: After reading the "Gutsell Amendment" editorial, a friend remarked to me, "The trouble with you liberals is that you're too damn liberal." Interestingly enough, his joking comment captured the essence of the disagreement between the liberals and the radicals at the meeting of the Reform Democrats the Thursday before last. We were too liberal to accept the radical insistence that all virtue lies entirely on one side and all vice entirely on the other. Liberals have a curious habit of objecting to views which stuff people and ideas into pigeon-holes, a habit which tends to throw both right—and extreme left-wingers into nasty fits of pique. We decline to regard Hanoi or Washington alternately as epitomes of viciousness and stupidity or as paragons of virtue. Moreover, we don't regard flexibility and compromise as dirty words. Thus the best that our extremist friends ever have to say of us is that we are wishy-washy; at the worst, we get simultaneously labelled pinkos and fascists. We console ourselves with the observation that in a democratic, pluralistic society, progress requires compromise and tolerance; consequently, we direct our energies toward achieving the most progressive solutions that we can realistically hope for.

To return to the editorial in question, I confess I am puzzled by the fact that the writer seemed more interested in directing a sarcastic personal attack at me than in explaining to his readers exactly what I wanted left out of the original resolution and why I wanted it omitted. Such a pristine example of an ad hominum argument is hard to come by these days. Perhaps his motive was to draw an outrage reply to spice up his next issue with. In any case, I enclose a copy of the resolution which I would like to have printed along with my letter so that Guilfordian readers may judge for themselves the effect of the "Gutsell Amendment" of the resolution. Incidentally, contrary to the publications of the editorial, I do oppose the administration handling of the War, and because of this I helped to organize the McCarthy campaign in Greensboro last spring. However, I have not decided to give up on the Democratic Party just because my candidate lost.

The attached copy of the resolution is the original version; the sections in brackets were the ones omitted by the Gutsell Amendment. In the case of the two "whereas" clauses, I felt that these were overly emotional and were based chiefly on opinion rather than on factual evidence. Incidentally, although I did not include this in the amendment, I felt that the sixth "Whereas" needed revision, since technically, both major parties and candidates have committed themselves to ending the War. The nature and degree of commitment may be open to question, but nevertheless, a commitment of sorts was made. As for the words "permanent," I felt that it made the position unnecessarily rigid. And as for the last sentence, I felt that there are at least some other issues besides the war which are at stake in the election, and that

on these, the Democratic Party's policies and practices are more viable than the alternatives. If I did not believe this, it would be pointless for me to continue to work as a Democrat, which I fully intend to do. The Reform Democrats can hardly hope to change the Democratic party if we remove ourselves from that party, yet this is in effect what we would do by making our loyalty to and interest in the party dependent solely on its behaving exactly as we demand on the War issue. Moreover, extremist ultimatums such as were strongly implied in the original of this resolution (and such as are apparently endorsed by the Guilfordian editor) rarely achieve their goal. ("Doves" ought to know this from observing the effects of U.S. attempts to deliver ultimatums to North Viet Nam.) Instead, the effect is usually the opposite—to stiffen the resistance of opponents and to offend people who might have been cooperative in other areas.

I hope that readers of the resolution as amended will give a fair hearing to his explanation of the Gutsell Amendment, and will also be open-minded enough to actually compare it to the Democratic Party's Viet Nam plank to see if the resemblances are as close as the editorialist has implied.

In addition to criticizing the amendment, the editorialist also seems to suggest that it was inappropriate for anyone calling himself a Reform Democrat to express an opinion that Mr. Humphrey might be preferable to Mr. Nixon or Mr. Wallace as a presidential candidate. Is this to be interpreted as a suggestion that the Reform Democrats might find a more congenial home with the Republican of the States Rights Parties? Or that in spite of the smallness of their power base that they try to form a fourth party? Or that they simply pick up their marbles and go home if the Democratic Party refuses to play according to their rules? Or is this an expression of the anarchist philosophy that one should boost the least worthy candidate in order to help create a situation which may hasten the demise of the whole system?

I feel that I must correct one misstatement made at the end of the editorial. Several members of the group do prefer Mr. Humphrey to the other presidential candidates, but to suggest, as the last paragraph of the editorial does, that the only, or even the main concern of the group is entirely incorrect and does a great disservice to those Reform Democrats who have worked and will continue to work within the party for such "changes in ideology and program" as, for example, a ward system for Greensboro. At this particular historical moment, I feel that the N.C. Democratic Party is ripe for progressive change by means of an infusion of new blood. If we make overemotional and extremist statements, especially about issues that we can't hope to have a noticeable effect on, we run a grave risk of uselessly aggravating party workers and officials who might otherwise cooperate with or at least not obstruct us in areas other than national policy. If we muffle this chance, we may not have another.

Marnie Gutsell