

Heath Talks To Guilford Faculty

Douglas Heath, professor of psychology at Haverford College, spoke to the Guilford faculty in their first faculty meeting earlier this year. Last week's GUILFORDIAN contained the substance of his morning lecture in which Dr. Heath traced the major trends he sees developing in the attitudes of American College aged youth. In this article, Dr. Heath's afternoon lecture, in which he discussed some of the adaptations he feels colleges and college faculty should make in order to adapt to the increasing tendency of young students to feel alienated from their own impulses, from other people, and from the authority of tradition.

"The only real power that we faculty now have over students is in terms of the fact that we give them grades, and when we eliminate grades, as is on the way in many places, then much of the effective power that we have by which to influence and control students, we're going to lose," Dr. Douglas Heath, Haverford psychologist told the Guilford faculty.

Dr. Heath explained that because college youth have grown increasingly alienated from the standards of evaluation accepted by the faculty-parent establishment generation, college professors are going to have to use some force other than the authority of grades to compel students to take an interest in their education.

Heath suggested that the style of teaching through lecture only heightens passivity in students, a condition that has grown through years of watching T.V. and sitting in ordered classes in the elementary and secondary grades.

He suggested that the faculty consider using only fifteen minutes for actual lecturing and then breaking the classes into small discussion circles to break the monotony of long lectures. He also suggested holding classes in unconventional places and allowing students to set the style of the course.

Another suggestion was to allow the students to set the expectations of the course, i.e., to allow the students to decide before the course actually begins just exactly what it is that they hope to gain by participating in that particular course and to set standards by which they may evaluate their individual progress toward attaining that goal.

Heath complained that the popular teaching device of assigning independent study projects only enhances feelings of alienation in a generation that really needs to learn communication skills other than writing.

He suggested that teachers try assigning group study projects. Although group projects can be frustrating to students and faculty alike, Heath assured the faculty that this kind of frustration is a healthy one.

Healthy Atmosphere
Beyond the classroom, Heath had ideas for making a college such as Guilford into a strong academic community.

Heath said that the "major variable in a college is the atmosphere and the consistency of that atmosphere," and that atmosphere is set by "the quality of the expectations of the faculty."

Another variable is the quality of the relationships between peers. Heath reported that during lunch he had been told by one of the Guilford faculty members that the tragedy of our campus is that the Guilford campus is that "the students don't even know how to talk to each other."

Heath restressed the importance of the faculty in creating an "ethos" and setting the tone of the college. A college will be successful, Heath asserted, "only when the 'expectations' of the faculty are commensurate with the potential of the students."

Haverford Plan
Haverford College had initiated an experimental program called "the sophomore inquiry" which is an evaluation which takes place both at the end of the freshman year and at the end of the sophomore year.

During this evaluation, each student presents samples of his achievements over the past year to a board of faculty men not from his department and junior and senior students.

Heath said that the real value of the experiment was not so much as an excuse for faculty and students from different disciplines to communicate with each other.

Through the process of self evaluation facilitated by the sophomore inquiry program Heath said that all the members of the community are able to "see the process of learning and not just to be given the product of others learning."

Shotts Discusses Education

The GUILFORDIAN decided that the status of education and education systems was a worthwhile focus for an issue of the paper. It was only logical then to discuss these issues with Guilford's well known defender of truly relevant education, Claude Shotts.

Mr. Shotts, now the Director of Guilford's Off-Campus Seminar Program, tries to demonstrate what he means by saying "education is living." He takes groups of students into environments and situations in which existence itself and contact with people are true educational experiences.

The GUILFORDIAN asked Mr. Shotts what education really is. "Education is living in the here and now," he answered, "not just preparing for a life which may come, a vocation. It is stating problems and seeking solutions to them. It is meeting people and developing the skill of human relationships. It is developing oneself and seeking deeper understanding of one's emotions and one's inner nature."

"Education is also change -- change in a rapidly changing world," he continued. "It represents change in the learner and change in the teacher. It is a guide toward social change, leading towards a better society. It is the relinquishing of inappropriate concepts and developing new and more workable ones."

Education for Social Reform

"Education is a fundamental method of social reform. It enables one to acquire knowledge of a society in which there is injustice and human suffering, to quicken and inspire a human being to be concerned to seek justice and right the wrong. Not to so respond is to be less than human."

"In 1923, Professor George Counts told my education class at Yale that education must dare to build a new social order. This was forty-eight years ago. We all see that a new social order needs to be built--much more now than in 1923."

"The young people are all ready to build. Through the past few years we have seen around the world students responding to the need to establish racial justice, responding through tutoring the children of the poor, serving in Peace Corps, Upward Bound and other organizations, demonstrating and working against war, poverty and injustice."

Power Problems

Mr. Shotts then discussed the problems of the distribution of power in our society. "The power in our old disorder does not lie with these people. It lies rather with Congressmen, State Legislators, Board of Trustees, etc."

"In the membership of these groups, there are practically no women and no men under fifty years of age."

"This means that the decision making power of this nation and its major institutions is with old men who spent the sensitive adolescent years before 1940, when the forces that are now shaking the present world did not exist, and the social problems with which we are now concerned in a major way were not considered



photo by Clawges

problems at all.

Guilford Priorities

"A college like any other institution cannot state its meaningful priorities until its goals and purposes are clearly and definitely agreed upon by all who are concerned with its program."

"It is important for the decision makers of any institution to spend a major part of their time at meetings clarifying and defining its goals. Until this is done there is no basis for making decisions or evaluating the achievements of the institutions."

"Now if you ask me what should be the priorities of an educational institution, you raise the issue of the whole concept of the role of higher education in the 1970's."

"I would say that the whole cause for education, for higher education, lies with the student. The reason for educational programs and institutions is to educate those who are seeking education."

"The business of the institution is the total life of its students in the world as it is today and is going to be."

Specific Problems

The GUILFORDIAN asked Mr. Shotts what specific problems he foresaw for Guilford College.

"Guilford, like all small colleges, faces the problems of competition for students and increasing costs which are a threat to survival. An equally important problem facing all colleges is how to be relevant and effective in this rapidly changing society in which knowledge is exploding year by year."

"Humanity has reached a point at which it is overwhelmed by social problems. Decisions made or not made will determine whether there will be progress for man or the end of life on this planet. Survival should be a major concern of the educational institution."

"In the future, colleges will be more concerned about the problems of society than they ever have been in the past, because their survival depends

upon the survival of the society."

The Student as Nigger

Mr. Shotts was then asked about his impressions of THE STUDENT AS NIGGER (pages 4 and 5 of this GUILFORDIAN). He answered that the premises and the analogy were valid "in a general way. He (author Jerry Farber) points up certain trends and certain symptoms which indicate the conditions under which students are living."

"But I think in the last few years that we have seen a response on the part of students similar to the response of black people against conditions which existed for them twenty or thirty years ago."

"For example, the student's rejection of authority is a symptom of their denying their status as 'Niggers.' For students there are no longer closed answers. All questions are open."

"Students' reactions to codes of conduct demonstrate this. Their reaction to the authority of custom, the traditional patterns of dress and behavior are another manifestation of their rejection of that which in their minds is associated with the state of slavery which is brought out in the article."



Our colleges have only one problem - the lunatics are running the asylum... Too many colleges have become a combination pig pen and playpen because it disregards one immutable fact of nature - the inferiority of the college students to any other class.

- Al Capp

The Guilfordian

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