

# Where Is The Emphasis In School?

The Miss Student Teacher contest has probably been forgotten by most students now. It was before exams and mid-semester break and the snow. But several questions about modern education and especially about the attitude of our Salem education students were raised which should not be forgotten or ignored. And every teacher must answer them, not just the three representatives on the stage.

As Dr. Lewis, in his role of grand inquisitor, pointed out, the emphasis in education seems to be away from the academic to the social. In assembly and around campus we hear more about "helping Johnny to adjust to his peers" or "teaching him to know himself — his strengths and his weaknesses" than we do about teaching him math or Latin or reading.

Now this lack of public discussion of the academic phase does not necessarily mean that our future teachers ignore subject matter. Most of them seem to accept the course material as an understood part of teaching. What the trend of the discussion does seem to indicate, however, is a shift in emphasis to group adjustment and the shoving of subject matter into a secondary role.

This criticism always brings the rebuttal, "But you have the WHOLE child and you can't ignore everything except his brain." Well, of course, we have the WHOLE child. We have always had the WHOLE child. The debate is over a matter of emphasis—whether you emphasize the academic or adjustment.

After all, just how far is the teacher responsible for helping a child to adjust? Besides trying to correct any dangerous anti-social tendencies, such as stealing, lying, or sadism, and besides trying to correct discipline problems which disrupt a class, how far is a teacher responsible? Isn't there the danger that the teacher will find herself "playing God" to help children to adjust to her ideas of what is best?

And assuming that a teacher decides that her primary duty is to help the child to be well adjusted, what would be her purpose? Would it be so that the child would feel happy and secure? If we believe many philosophers, these are unattainable goals to begin with. Is it to prepare him to get along well with others in his future vocation? Unless a worker is so maladjusted that he disrupts the whole office, isn't the employer's primary con-

cern for how well the employee knows his material and does his job? In the great competition for good jobs, an employer would certainly give preference to a man showing emphasis on good training (academic) rather than on sociability (adjustment).

Too often the teacher's purpose, intentionally or not, seems to lapse into wanting adjustment for its own sake because it is the popular idea. Everyone emphasizes that little Johnny must be well adjusted so we unquestioningly think he must be too.

This major emphasis on the adjustment of the student also raises the interesting question of adjustment to what? Adjustment to the other children? Children adjust to each other naturally. Adjustment to the teacher's idea of what is right for her students? Again we run into the danger of the teacher "playing God" and setting up an inflexible standard of what is being well adjusted. This leads to the danger of adjustment coming to mean conformity. If this becomes the meaning of the term, then we sincerely hope that the teachers fail in their aim.

Many of our most creative people have been remarkably illadjusted. In art, music, literature and other fields we find that Van Gough, Listz, and Coleridge were not "well-adjusted". Perhaps the fact that they were ill-adjusted was a stimulus to their creativity — compensation they call it in Psychology 102. We are not sure that it would have been advisable for their teachers to see that they were well adjusted.

Any careful consideration of modern education leaves any teacher with several decisions to make. They must decide whether the major emphasis should be on the academic or the social. They must decide how far they are responsible for a students' adjustment, what is meant by that term, and what the value of adjustment is.

The decisions of which we are speaking can not be a superficial decision of what would sound good to the education department or in a formal philosophy of education for a job application. It means deciding what your responsibility is and what you think that an education should put in first place.

The **Salemite** will be glad to publish any replies from students or professors, who are inside or outside the education department.

## Should Salem Tradition Of Junior Senior Banquet Be Continued In '61

Traditions, traditions — Salem is full of them. We hear about hat-burning and tree planting and Christmas vespers. And around this time of year we also hear complaints about the traditional junior-senior banquet. The juniors like the seniors, but earning the money for a formal banquet is often difficult. In the past it has cost approximately \$600 for one evening—\$600 that it has taken 8 months to raise.

As the graduating class became a little larger every year and the money became harder to earn, students began to question the advisability of having a junior-senior banquet. The class of 1960 was ready to change the tradition, but they got Dave Brubeck for a concert which made approximately \$1200. The present senior class had considered changing the tradition, but no place could be found large enough to accommodate the number of people involved for another type of event.

And now the juniors are again debating this annual question of whether or not to have a banquet.

The main point in having a banquet seems to be that it is a sacrosanct tradition. "All of the classes before us did it, so we must too", some juniors feel. "Everyone expects us to have a banquet, and people will think that we are cheapskates if we aren't willing to spend the usual \$600. After all, last year's class did—they can change next year." say some juniors privately.

But the junior class for the last 2 or 3 years has been saying "Let next year's class make the change," and still no one has. If the ban-

quet is not a good idea, then someone has to do it, and this year is a good time to do it. The Class of 1962 which changed Rat Week to FITS Day should be accustomed to making difficult and controversial changes.

A change at any time will have some opposition and some support from both the senior and the junior classes. The main question therefore seems not how many would oppose any change, but how worthwhile the banquet is. Is it really worth \$3.00 extra for class dues and working all year to raise the necessary money just for a party for ourselves? We think not.

Seniors realize that they will be missed next year by their friends in the Class of 1962; and having a banquet, though it is a nice gesture, is irrelevant. The seniors are already honored by the Christmas banquet and a dinner given by Dr. and Mrs. Gramley; the junior-senior banquet is just another good dinner. Although it is a good dinner, is it worth \$600? We don't think so.

The same amount of money could be used for a scholarship in the name of the senior class and have a lasting and valuable effect. This certainly would be better than squandering the money on a party. If the juniors still want to honor the seniors with a party, a picnic or a tea would be much less expensive and still mean just as much to both classes.

Juniors, consider this antiquated tradition carefully before you decide to continue it. Is the banquet worth \$600? If not, then why leave it for next year's class to change? Do what you consider best and not just what you think people expect you to do.



## Beyond The Square

By Dean Major

Have you ever been tortured? How many times have you had to flee from your country and hide yourself, an exile, in a land far from your own? By this time I imagine you are ready to throw down your paper in disgust as you exclaim: "Is she crazy? What gives?"

What gives? I wish we Salemites knew! Few of us have suffered any torture beyond having "four quizzes and a term paper due before Christmas," or beyond the agonies of waiting for that all-important phone call, or of being able to buy only one of the two dresses we wanted. Do you realize just what this means, just how free from torture our lives have been in comparison with the lives of students in many parts of the world?

We at Salem have heard charges again and again that "You are becoming ingrown; you have no concern in international affairs." Yet these charges have simply rolled off our well-clad Villager backs.

How long can we continue to ignore this challenge? What are we to do when confronted by an Algerian youth, also a student, with lines of sorrow etched into his face, who says simply, "I do not know what will happen tomorrow. Probably I shall never be able to return to my country."

This student, Rashid Benaoumeur, who is now studying at the University of North Carolina, recently spoke to a group of students from Salem, UNC, NC State, Davidson, Randolph-Macon, Sweetbriar, and other colleges in this area. To this ivy-league, cosmopolitan group he told the tragic story of his people and his fellow students. In an informal session Rashid sat quietly in his chair, facing us, and leaned thoughtfully against its back as he tried to make us who had known nothing but comfort understand the plight of Algeria.

Rashid displayed no emotion, merely stated the facts. However, these facts both horrified and shamed his audience. For example, we learned that there are Algerian students all over the world—except in Algeria. No Algerian is allowed to continue his education beyond the most elementary level; therefore, these students have been forced to flee their homeland and seek knowledge elsewhere. And of these students, 25% are held in concentration camps in France. Is this the same France that saw the horrors of concentration campus under Hitler, this France that now has seven concentration camps in use within her borders? Those Algerians not in concentration camps are in constant fear for their lives, for of the 12,000,000 people that were once in Algeria, 1,000,000 have perished in recent years. Not satisfied with pursuing the people within their nation, one group has organized LA MAIN ROUGE, its sole purpose being to kill those Algerians studying in other lands. "I do not like to speak of torture," said Rashid, "but it is part of the everyday life in Algeria."

What can we do about it? Plenty! Shall we Salem girls board the next steamer for Algeria? No, that is of course absurd. The real absurdity, however, is that Salem girls—supposedly well educated—know nothing and seem to care less of life in the rest of the world. How far beyond that white fence have you looked lately, Salemite?



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