

*Modification of Tompkins' Essay'
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THE INEXORABLE PRESSURES OF CHANCE

There must be times in the life of every woman student personnel administrator when she wishes that she might possess the courage of a Joan of Arc, the humanity of a Florence Nightingale, and perhaps the determination and scientific spirit of a Madame Curie. And there must be times, too, when she yearns to be nothing more than a Sleeping Beauty. Not only would both sleep and beauty be welcome, but sometimes it would be a relief just to awaken and find that changes had been accomplished--committee members had met and thrashed out their differences, plans had been laid, and students, faculty, alumnae, parents, and trustees had made their adjustments.

In this rapidly moving world, change is inevitable and it can be exciting, but it is rarely easy. One might, with profit, read the history of student personnel administration, imagining oneself as a Methuselah who lived through all of the changes in the profession of personnel administration. Imagine beginning an apprenticeship as an "earthly star" and practicing as a "decision maker." From the perspective of our orientation to the 1960's, we think of the changes made in the profession as welcome progress, but from our experience we know that change does not come about without work, frustration, and alternating pleasure and anguish on the part of those involved in it.

Change is occurring at a faster pace now than ever before in history. It is safe to predict that the young person starting in student personnel administration today will see more change in the profession, and indeed in all education, than we have seen in the entire history of American education to date. Much of the education of the future is easily predictable from the facts we have at hand today. Other aspects which will be commonplace tomorrow are sheer fantasy today. The changes in education, however, are occurring so rapidly that fact often intermingles with fantasy.

Since the historical perspective frequently provides the most objective way to analyze change, let us imagine ourselves living in the twenty-first century--in the year 2000. From this vantage point, we can look back on the civilization that holds us as participants. With the facts that are now available we should be able to make some reasonable, although not infallible, predictions of the changes that are on the way. To the educator of the twenty-first century, the history of education in the latter half of the twentieth century might read something like this, as education developed after World War II.

The decade of the 1950's is memorable primarily as a period of extremely rapid physical expansion. The first wave to swamp the educational boat hit the colleges when thousands of servicemen returned to college on the GI bill. Although the GI bill seemed ^{to} at most a patriotic gesture at the time, as we view it from the year 2000, we can observe its profound effect on education over the next 20 years. It was, of course, the forerunner of our present system of federally financed education toward which the first irreversible step was taken in 1965. In that year, a \$2-1/2 billion higher education act was passed, with \$70 million allotted for the nation's first government-financed college scholarships. The GI bill also brought a great democratization to the colleges, as men from all socioeconomic levels became, in many cases, the first in their families ever to consider attending college. By the mid-1960's, colleges that had once catered to the sons of the rich were establishing special programs to attract the sons of the poor; and now, of course, we have to be reminded that going to college was once related to the family's ability to pay.

The colleges of the 1950's were so busy expanding and handling the problems of sheer numbers that we remember them more for their contribution to vast physical plants than for their progress in educational ideas. But their problems

with size stagger the imagination. College enrollments doubled in the 15 years from 1950 to 1965, and they doubled again in the next 15 years. Thus, although colleges seemed to be bursting at the seams, they were accomodating an additional college population every 15 years. Virtually every college campus in the country had a hole in the ground for a new building and a fund drive going for the next one. In 1930, the average enrollment per college was 780; by 1960, it was 2000; and by 1970, it had jumped to 3000. But the majority of students did not attend the average-sized college; 75 percent of the students of the 1960's were to be found at fewer than 25 percent of the colleges.

It was primarily on the campuses of these large universities that it first became evident that the old ways of handling education could not be expanded indefinitely and that new approaches would have to be found.

The 1960's seemed to erupt--partly as a result of an overburdened system which could no longer meet new needs in old ways, and partly as a result of the tenor of the nation. The focus of the 1960's was on youth and on brains. The college student knew he had both, so why shouldn't he speak out? The values of those in business and in politics and in colleges and in high schools could be likened to the science which they worshipped. They were brash and sure of themselves, with the emphasis on action, innovation, individualism, and daring. It was a fast age, with little patience with contemplation and philosophy. In many ways, the students shocked their parents and teachers by growing old too fast. The collegiate life moved downward into the high schools, with parties and drinking and steady dating and sexual experimentation.

But drinking and sex had been around for a long time. Mothers and fathers and even grandfathers and deans had tasted these thrills in their youth and had come to their own decisions about these diversions. Although the older generation worried about the younger generation and their ability to handle these questions, they gradually began to recognize that the colleges could not be expected to provide insulation against an increasingly sophisticated world. Students were having to make important decisions at a younger chronological age, but they were probably considerably older in terms of experience with the world than were their parents when they faced the same kinds of decisions a generation earlier.

What did alarm parents and educators of the 1960's was the widespread appearance of a new thrill that was completely outside of their own experience. Almost no one over the age of 30 in 1965 had ever been faced with a decision of what to do about drugs. The very word had a frightening sound, and little factual information based on medical research was available. Virtually all of the students were aware that the possession and use of marijuana, LSD, and narcotics were illegal, but it was perhaps a sign of the times that this knowledge did not result in the feeling that marijuana was "wrong" but rather in the position that the society that made marijuana illegal was "wrong."

Students became concerned and articulate critics of society, and their college years were fraught with the far-reaching consequences of deciding whether to join society, or fight it, or drop out of it into a fantasy world of drugs and no responsibility. The majority, of course, joined it, and most contributed solidly in small ways to the improvement of society.

But a small minority were idealistic and impatient to bring about change. Although some educators described them as a "new breed" of student, there was ample evidence that these students, like others before them, reflected the

values which they had been taught by their elders. Their concerns were essentially those of the larger society; their confrontations and mass demonstrations were borrowed from the successful tactics of the civil rights and labor union movements; their chief weapon was the publicity provided by an increasingly effective mass communications media.

They fought for many of the social improvements that we are still working on today. Students were indignant that segments of their society considered a person's skin color indicative of his stature as a human being. They rebelled against the barbarism of a world that sought to settle its problems by killing people. They tackled the problems that they found in education with the same fervor, and they reacted in frustration to the anonymous, depersonalized, educational machine that was so terribly difficult to ^{Sound change} change. While college administrators ^{Sound} were finding the perpetual crisis atmosphere of those days extremely trying, it must be said that many students were working quietly and tirelessly without publicity to correct the social evils they saw.

Also working without fanfare were many educators who channelled their ^{P. Compton's "difficult"} energies to the slow search for solutions to the growing problems in higher education. Hidden under the surface of some of the more obvious educational problems was the fact that no one could agree on the measure of a ~~good~~ education — although many recognized an educated person when they worked with one. Until very recently, education was measured in units known as credit hours, ~~or credit units~~. A student earned a credit hour's worth of education by attending a class for a certain number of hours a week for a given number of weeks. When he had accumulated 120 or 128 of these hours, he received a bachelor's degree and ~~generally~~ was received into society as an educated man. In reading about this civilization, we find that educators knew, even then, that the credit hour was a medium of exchange and an administrative convenience and not a true

measure of education. They had adequate evidence that 120 course hours of college was not equivalent ^{for all persons or colleges} across people or across colleges. It was a common occurrence to find a student graduating from high school with more advanced knowledge than the graduates of some colleges.

Instructors of that period faced the rather difficult task of equating their courses to this standard credit-unit system. Sometimes they had to trim the course to fit into 3 hours a week for 15 weeks, cutting out things they considered important. Other times, of course, they had to pad and stretch. Nevertheless, it was quite universally accepted that 45 hours of classroom instruction represented 3 credit hours on the educational scale, regardless of the kind of instruction, outside reading, or level of difficulty of the course.

Another ~~considerable~~ problem of the credit-hour system was that because of this universally accepted measure of the educated man, students became entrapped in the fiction that education and learning were synonymous with grades and credit. They went to high school and college not for the purpose of being exposed to new ideas or broadening their appreciation and understanding of the works of man and nature, not to get an education--but to get enough grades and hours to add up to a degree. As a matter of fact, grades were so important in the 1960's that a number of practices developed which were antithetical to good education. For example, there was great concern about student cheating, in which the cheater received credit for ^{the learning which} ~~work someone else performed and ideas~~ ^{accomplished} someone else had ~~formed~~. The fact that a student who avoided learning with discretion could receive education credit ~~for the answers copied from another student~~ shows how little the traditional measures of educational achievement really measured education. Another common practice was to take "gut" courses--courses in which students were already proficient--to assure good grades which upped education credits but which left their education unaffected.

In fact, by the mid-1960's, the visible credentials of education had almost replaced education as a goal for students. Many students in high school and college felt that they could afford to take only courses in which they were already familiar with the subject matter. Only thus could they assure themselves the necessary grade point average to get to the next level of education. For instance, an engineer dared not experiment with a poetry course, because a poor grade would jeopardize his acceptance by the graduate school of his choice. Likewise, some very able students steered away from honors courses because they would be graded more severely, thus impairing their chances of attaining the next level of education. In other words, in education it was safer to stick to what you already knew and not fool around with trying to fill the gaps in your knowledge.

It is bewildering to us now to try to figure out just why this system persisted as long as it did. I suppose that the best answer was given in the report of the Harvard Committee of 1945 which described the credit hour as the "mechanism whereby courses of every kind are legitimized, put on an equal footing, and made available for tabulation." But, on the other hand, they noted that this standardization was the only alternative to complete chaos. Then as now, it was easier to specify arbitrary requirements for credentials than to define the goals of education.

But during the 1960's, these educational requirements became much more flexible, providing solid recognition of the fact that students differ greatly in their rates of learning. New opportunities were introduced at an unprecedented rate. For the superior high school graduate, there was the Advanced Placement Program, the four-year master's degree and the six-year Ph.D. For those from educationally deprived backgrounds, there were special precollege sessions. Even the

so-called average student gained new flexibility in his educational program. Independent study, once limited to superior upperclassmen, proved its effectiveness for average students at all levels of learning. Although the old idea of unit credits persisted, by 1965 the four-year progression through college was already ~~atypical~~ ^{typical} rather than typical. College transfers became very common in the mobile population. Some students dropped out of college to work or to spend time in a foreign country; others went to college ~~year-round~~ ^{twelve months} to hasten their graduation. Pressures on college facilities forced the nation out of its idea that colleges operated only nine months per year, and by 1980, the year-round calendar which we have today was established virtually throughout the country.

The new technology provided other flexibilities in education. High school and college students as well as adults could study languages in the new language labs where they could have the "teacher" repeat the phrase as often as they needed it. Research into how people learn had resulted in programmed instruction which provided a ~~tailormade~~ ^{tailor-made} program for the individual, and the focus was on what one knew rather than ~~then~~ how long it took him to learn it. The ~~time~~ ^{learning} units for learning became irrelevant anyway since by 1985 education was viewed as a life-long process rather than something one got and then had for the rest of his life. Although few were aware of the fantastic growth of adult education, the statistics of 1965 showed more than three times as many adults engaged in some form of adult education as there were students in the colleges and universities. Not only was constant learning required to keep up with the new knowledge necessary in the occupations of all educated people, but the shorter work week and the easy availability of educational resources made continuing education a ~~real possibility~~ ^{reality} as well as a professional necessity.

Thus, the first dramatic step in improving education introduced the practice of measuring what one knew rather than the pathway one had traversed in learning it.

The second great breakthrough in measurement almost replaced the first, when it became apparent that what one knew was not as important as how one used knowledge. A sense of social responsibility, maturity of judgment, and flexibility of mind were also factors to be considered in the educational process.

Personnel administrators had long been convinced and dedicated to the idea behind the rather trite phrase of "educating the whole person." They found themselves in a difficult period, however, in the 1960's, when the rallying cry of the colleges was "academic excellence." In the 1960's, measurement of ^{achievement in} academic subject matter was ^{reasonably} effective ~~in terms of~~, and faculties could define what they meant by "academic excellence." For many, however, it consisted of criteria such as high test scores for college admissions, large proportions of high school students going on to college, or large proportions of college students entering graduate school. As long as these measures served as the criteria for academic excellence, the role of personnel workers appeared to be somewhat removed from the direct educational strivings of their institutions. If the emphasis was to be the acquisition of knowledge, then the function of all other phases of school and college life appeared, at ^{best} ~~most~~, to be that of enhancing the classroom experience and, at ^{worst} ~~least~~, that of not interfering with it. What was left out of this system, of course, was a concern with ~~non~~intellective factors in education. The personnel administrators recognized their importance, but they couldn't measure those characteristics contributing to one's success as an educated human being; therefore they were at a loss to demonstrate to their faculty or themselves whether their programs added, detracted, or left unchanged a student's sense of social responsibility, for instance.

Furthermore, personnel workers found themselves in an extremely awkward transitional period. A highly visible shift in student concerns and energies from the campus to "the world" demonstrated to student personnel administrators ^{highlighted}

that their traditional functions were disappearing, but they had not yet really developed a clear idea of their new role in higher education.

The personnel worker had been associated with student activities; the student was under pressure to disassociate himself from activities and to put his time where it counted--on study and grades. The personnel administrator was concerned with legislation through student government; the student, on the other hand, had discovered the more rapid, more dramatic mass protest movement for bringing about change. The personnel worker was concerned with a vast network of on-campus activities; the student's interests were moving off the campus. Tutoring the disadvantaged, helping in voter registration in the South, protesting our foreign policy were the new student activities. The personnel dean was associated with social regulations; the student was newly concerned with academic affairs, faculty tenure, academic freedom, and curriculum revision.

In addition to these changes which affected all personnel workers, women personnel workers faced a unique transition problem. Bluntly stated, although the double standard was disappearing for the students, it was still operative among the older generation. College presidents ^{had become concerned} recognized that the needs of male and female students did not ^{require} differentiated services from separate offices of the dean of men and dean of women. However, they were not quite so sure that the designations "male" and "~~female~~" did not affect the administrator's ability to administer the total student program. Thus, the pattern throughout this changing period tended to be one of male domination--a male dean of students and a female associate dean. Now, of course, appointments are based on the ability of the individual to perform the job.

Gradually, as research knowledge increased and the concept of academic excellence broadened to encompass educational excellence, personnel workers

were returned to their rightful role as valuable members of the educational team. The extracurricular became truly cocurricular, and faculty and personnel administrators worked closely together to provide the experiences essential for the growth of the educated person. The cocurricular programs were seen as more than playing a supporting role for the academic; they had their own positive educational functions to perform. As they had discovered that all students did not learn academic subject matter in the same way nor at the same rate, so it became apparent that all students did not develop in other ways in the same learning environments.

Although we are still having problems in utilizing the advantages of the diversity present in American higher education, the educators of the 1960's were even less aware than we are of alternate models of excellence for institutions of higher education. The model then was the university, and many lost sight of the advantages of diversity as some two-year colleges struggled to become four-year colleges, four-year colleges wanted to offer graduate work and research and to become universities, ^{and} denominational and private colleges were having money problems and many became public colleges. Teachers colleges had already lost their distinctiveness and had become all-purpose state colleges, and many of these were pushing for university status. Prestige for the institutions of higher education lay in their research fame, and, thus, faculty were forced to a single model of educational contribution--"publish or perish." Publishing was the "open sesame" to faculty promotion.

Nevertheless, several factors combined to preserve the diversity of higher education: 1) Statewide planning commissions flourished in the 1970's, and they both helped and hindered. On the one hand, they helped in avoiding costly duplication of effort, but on the other hand they tended to feel uncomfortable with a high degree of autonomy on the part of individual colleges. This robbed

some state colleges of their vitality in educational innovation. 2) Students began publishing "teacher ratings" for all to see, thus faculty prestige with colleagues and administration could be achieved by pathways other than research and publication. Research on teacher effectiveness contributed to the ability to measure good teaching and thus to reward it. 3) The rapid rise of the community colleges with a self-conscious "mission" focused attention on other models of institutional excellence to serve the new kinds of students who were flocking to higher education. 4) The ability to measure student characteristics and college environments aided greatly in guiding the student to ^a college which could most nearly meet his developmental needs. Incidentally, establishing competence in this particular area contributed greatly to the professionalization of student personnel administrators during the 1970's. No longer was it possible to take a history professor who "enjoyed students" and make him into a Dean of Students. The field had a discipline and identity of its own.

This ability to measure student and college characteristics also had a considerable impact on what was euphemistically known in the 1960's as the "admissions problem"--characterized by a state of panic on the part of high school seniors, their parents, the guidance staff, and college admissions officers. It had many causes, not the least of which was the fact that the graduates of 25,000 high schools were trying desperately to squeeze into 2,500 colleges. But the trouble was that so little was known about the characteristics of the colleges and the needs of individual students that everyone wanted to ^{be} accepted by a relatively few "prestige" colleges. These select colleges had no real recourse except to require higher and higher test scores; they were unable to define or to measure any other characteristic contributing to educational promise.

Throughout this period, guidance counselors had helped greatly to promote some understanding of the fact that there were not "top" colleges and "lesser" colleges, but rather that students had different needs in colleges. For some, the vocational track of the junior college was the "best" college; others needed a small college with a close community atmosphere, and still others would find their greatest opportunity for development at a large university.

Thus, the problem became that of getting into the 'right' college rather than the 'top' college. The profit-motivated and responsible educators were equally quick to seize upon the idea of providing better descriptions of the colleges.

This emphasis upon matching student needs to college environments helped, but the admissions problem was not really a single problem but rather a number of problems, with multiple causes. As such, it also had multiple solutions. One of the more obvious solutions to the administrative headaches of the high schools, colleges, and prospective students were the central records agencies which were established as competing colleges began to cooperate. While the choice was still left completely up to the student and to the college, centralizing the records allowed the student to submit a single application and high school record on a common form for more equitable comparison by the colleges.

The other answer to admissions, of course, was the expansion of the college spaces available. Existing colleges doubled their size on the average, but the ever increasing demands for educational facilities required the establishment of 1,000 new four-year colleges and 2,100 new junior colleges in the 35 years from 1965 to the present. In the early 1960's--from 1961 to 1964--~~146~~ new colleges were founded. Most of these were junior and community colleges, and this movement changed the face of higher education considerably. Although we did not quite meet Alvin Eurich's prediction of the 1960's that the freshman and sophomore years of

the traditional four-year colleges would be abolished altogether as students attended junior colleges for their first two years, we do know now that it is the unusual student who goes away to college after graduation from high school. Most, of course, remain in their home communities until they transfer to upper divisions where they proceed to the master's degree. This has changed rather drastically the complexion of the student who is attending college away from home. She is no longer a 17-year-old youngster, but rather a 20-year-old, with previous college experience and, quite frequently, married and attending college with her husband. Dramatic as other educational changes have been, the personnel programs have changed as much as any other single aspect of administration.

It is somewhat ironic and perhaps prophetic for personnel work, where we still find reaching the individual, that the greatest provisions for the individual, as learner, were being established during the period when everyone was concerned about the loss of the individual student in the masses. The sheer size of the educational operation had convinced many that the student might as well learn to adjust to being an IBM card number, and that little individualization was possible in America's system of education for the many.

Now in the year 2 000, the lock-step of education is a thing of the past. Never has there been a greater range of opportunity for meeting learning needs of individuals. Students of all ages focus their attention upon learning rather than upon grades and credit; there is a new spirit of cooperative learning between teacher and student. The greatest range of instructors ever presented to the American student body is available at the flick of a TV switch--or one may study independently at the educational resources laboratories. There is now a new and much needed emphasis on the development of the individual personality as education once again turns its attention to all of the attributes which constitute the truly educated person.

But education in the twenty-first century is not utopia. The academic needs of the individual and the masses have been provided for, but we are now struggling to bring back the sense of community which once existed in high schools and colleges. The campuses seem too big and too serious now to work as a community on projects where men need one another.

Looking back over the years, we can trace the factors that contributed to our present ^{absence} of community. Although many have blamed size, this was only one aspect. More dramatic than the surge of enrollment has been the explosion of knowledge. The production of knowledge doubles about every ten years, which means that we now have more than 1,000 times as much knowledge as we had a century ago--to record, to sift, to store, to teach, to learn, and hopefully to use. Although numerous attempts have been made to combat the increasing specialization in academia, we still find that academic departments lack the ability to communicate with one another. The need for scholars exceeds the supply, and government and industry increasingly depend upon the specialists from college faculties, with the result that professors spend more time off the campus than on it.

Moreover, the mobility of the population has certainly meant that people form tenuous loyalties to any single place or institution. Gone are the old college traditions and the fraternities and sororities which helped to maintain them. To those of us who knew the 40's and 50's, gone also is much of the spirit of fun on the campus. While education is serious, it need not be grim; personal development, more often than not, takes place in an easier and more community-oriented atmosphere than we now find. But, once again, educators are turning their skills to the problems, and it is to be hoped that the educators of this century are as resourceful as those of the twentieth century in meeting the new needs of education.

I've talked of fact and fantasy in education, and, while my fantasy predictions may or may not come to pass, let me assure you that my views on changes in education are conservative. I count myself among the educators who, as a group, are known conservatives---at least as far as their own field is concerned.

The scientists' view of education in the year 2000 is much more startling. But then, they are used to scientific innovations, such as television, changing the habits of a nation within a single generation. The scientists are certain that by the year 2000, voyages to the moon will be commonplace, as will be inhabited artificial satellites. The Saturday Review of February 6, 1965, reports that serious scientists predict that by the year 2000, "knowledge will be accumulated in 'electronic banks' and transmitted directly to the human nervous system by means of coded electronic messages. There will no longer be any need of reading or learning mountains of useless information; everything will be received and registered according to the needs of the moment. There will be no need of attention or effort. What is needed will pass directly from the machine to the brain without going through consciousness." Were human beings to accept such works of science without passing judgment upon their value, personnel workers would, the scientists tell us, "be able to shape and reshape at will the human emotions, desires and thoughts...."

Perhaps my earthbound mind will not permit me to seriously entertain such a picture of the future. I am convinced, however, that the next 35 years will require undreamed-of changes of all of us, and we must be willing and ready to explore unfamiliar terrain. To the extent that we are aware of the potent forces shaping education, we may better understand our futures, and use our abilities to exercise judgments about the best direction of education for the future.