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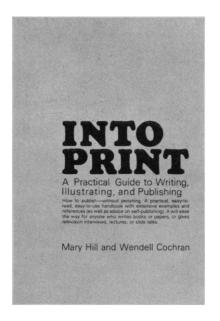
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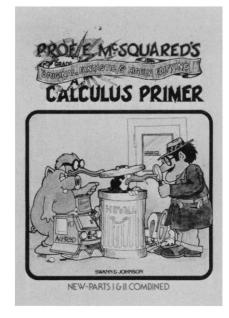
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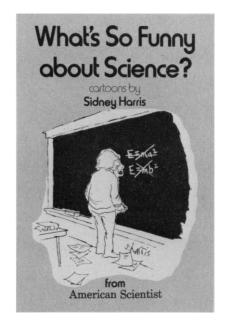
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31 March 1978

Volume 199, No. 4336

SCIENCE

LETTERS	Plant Science: Research Orientation: W. S. Hillman; Computer Therapy: The "Love Letter Analogy": D. Schmidt; Teenage Pregnancies: L. V. Klerman and J. F. Jekel	1390
EDITORIAL	Back to Structure: A. Etzioni	1393
ARTICLES	The Tokamak: Model T Fusion Reactor: D. Steiner and J. F. Clarke	1395
	Engineering Limitations of Fusion Power Plants: W. E. Parkins	1403
	Nature and Nurture in the Development of the Autonomic Neuron: R. Bunge, M. Johnson, C. D. Ross.	1409
NEWS AND COMMENT	East Coast Mystery Booms: A Scientific Suspense Tale	1416
	Livermore and Los Alamos: Another Look at the UC Link	1418
	Briefing: The Quick, the Dead, and the Cadaver Population; Contrary to Fears, Public Is High on Science; Britons are Nobeler, Americans Nobelest	1420
	New Review of Nuclear Waste Disposal Calls for Early Test in New Mexico	1422
RESEARCH NEWS	Warm-Blooded Dinosaurs: Evidence Pro and Con	1424
BOOK REVIEWS	The Spirit of System, reviewed by C. Limoges; Major Patterns in Vertebrate Evolution, D. B. Wake; Precambrian of the Northern Hemisphere and General Features of Early Geological Evolution, J. Sutton; The Solar Output and Its Variation, W. C. Livingston; Statistical Mechanics, W. G. Hoover	1427
REPORTS	Recent Biogenic Phosphorite: Concretions in Mollusk Kidneys: L. J. Doyle et al	1431

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Imbrian-Age Highland Volcanism on the Moon: The Gruithuisen and Mairan Domes: J. W. Head III and T. B. McCord
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Peyote Alkaloids: Identification in a Prehistoric Specimen of <i>Lophophora</i> from Coahuila, Mexico: <i>J. G. Bruhn</i> et al
Production of Antibody to Tetanus Toxoid by Continuous Human Lymphoblastoid Cell Lines: V. R. Zurawski, Jr., E. Haber, P. H. Black
B Lymphocyte Antigens in Sicca Syndrome: H. M. Moutsopoulos et al
Endosteal Marrow: A Rich Source of Hematopoietic Stem Cells: J. K. Gong
Myosin: Immunofluorescent Localization in Neuronal and Glial Cultures: F. Roisen et al
Genetic Mapping of Xenotropic Leukemia Virus-Inducing Loci in Two Mouse Strains: C. Kozak and W. P. Rowe
Specific Opiate-Induced Depression of Transmitter Release from Dorsal Root Ganglion Cells in Culture: R. L. Macdonald and P. G. Nelson
Opiate Peptide Modulation of Amino Acid Responses Suggests Novel Form of Neuronal Communication: J. L. Barker et al
Cellulose Digestion in the Midgut of the Fungus-Growing Termite Macrotermes natalensis: The Role of Acquired Digestive Enzymes: M. M. Martin and J. S. Martin
Hormonal Basis for Breeding Behavior in Female Frogs: Vasotocin Inhibits the Release Call of Rana pipiens: C. Diakow
Sustained Release of Alcohol: Subcutaneous Silastic Implants in Mice: C. K. Erickson et al
Δ^9 -Tetrahydrocannabinol: Antiaggressive Effects in Mice, Rats, and Squirrel Monkeys: K . A . $Miczek$
Compulsive, Abnormal Walking Caused by Anticholinergics in Akinetic, 6-Hydroxydopamine-Treated Rats: <i>T. Schallert</i> et al
Intraspecific Defense: Advantage of Social Cooperation Among Paper Wasp Foundresses: G. J. Gamboa
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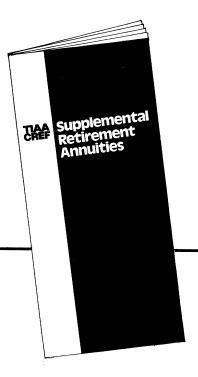
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COVER

Simultaneous demonstration of catecholamines and neuropeptides-rhesus monkey supraoptic nucleus. A technique for the simultaneous demonstration of monoamines and neuropeptides was used to visualize catecholamine varicosities (blue) which appear to contact the soma and dendrites of a neurophysin-containing neuron (orange). The method is applicable to numerous neuropeptides, including GnRh, vaso-pressin, somatostatin, and others (about ×750). See page 1461. [T. H. McNeill and J. R. Slakek, Jr., Univer-sity of Rochester School of Medicine, Rochester, New York]

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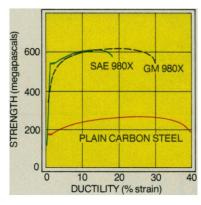
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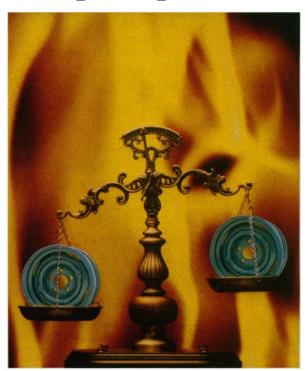
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Back to Structure

There can be little doubt that the movement to return to a more structured curriculum on the campus is gaining momentum. Far less clear is the overall implication of the recent return to more required courses, more requirements per course, greater reliance on grades, and so on. Does it simply reflect a return of the pendulum, which swung far into left field during the rebellious 1960's and early 1970's? Or will the main result be an even greater confusion of purposes, a mix of anarchy here and requirements there, with standards differing widely from department to department, tightened up one year, loosened again the next? Or will a new synthesis arise out of the thesis of rigid codes and antithesis of unbounded liberties, a new approach to higher education, clear in its purpose but not without opportunity for change, neither lax nor formless?

That the trend is away from anarchy is evident from top to bottom. In terms rarely used in nearly two decades, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Ernest L. Boyer, has strongly challenged educational practices that were until recently viewed by many as either "liberating" or "necessary" so as not to alienate the student body. Boyer bemoans the fact that "on the vast majority of campuses, required courses have been dropped, and the ones which remain reveal a staggering incoherence of purpose." He is equally critical of the intellectually undemanding way in which requirements for courses in humanities might be met by "twelve nights of Marx Brothers and the aesthetics of 'Casablanca' " and "a natural science requirement . . . by doing work for a season in the Galapagos." For undergraduates, Boyer defines as essential a required course in Western civilization, a course in communications ("to master the written and spoken word"), and courses aimed at developing the capacity to understand and criticize.

The students are not far behind. Although the majority (50 percent) of a national sample of undergraduates would have abolished grades in 1969, by 1975 this position was favored by only about one out of three undergraduates (32 percent). Only 19 percent of the 1977–1978 freshmen endorse this position.

Many universities are "restructuring." A 2-year study of the undergraduate curriculum at Harvard seeks to "balance" the "legitimate claims of individual interest and aspiration" with the need to ensure that those who graduate will be properly educated. It seeks to move away from random selection of courses by students, and instead to specify course load requirements and course combinations that make sense. The Amherst faculty rejected a proposal to endorse the system of electives that arose in the 1960's. Expressing dissatisfaction with the absence of a "shared educational purpose," it voted 78 to 25 to form a core curriculum. Stanford is reported to have established a new Western culture requirement. City University of New York has replaced open admission with minimum requirements in reading, writing, and mathematics. Similarly, California State University and Colleges voted in March 1977 to require all students to take an English placement exam. The University of Wisconsin reportedly began testing juniors for writing proficiency in fall 1976.

While the retreat from curriculum anarchy is clearly under way, it is much less obvious where it will end up. Colleges are not highly planned entities with powerful "steering mechanisms," able to set and stick to a consistent new course against all opposing currents. The tendency is to compromise, to gradually blend the new (or renewed) orientations into yesteryear's fashions. Adoption of rigid, mostly required rather than elective, lockstep curricula is most unlikely. The main alternatives are having a patchwork of requirements here and sizable pockets of disorganization there, or making a systematic effort to define where structure is needed and where free choice and opportunity to define new directions are called for.—AMITAI ETZIONI, Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, and Director, Center for Policy Research, Inc., New York 10027



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