

How Important Are Grades?

SAM NEWLUND

There is no accurate, concrete method of measuring academic achievement. It certainly cannot be done by issuing grades at certain intervals throughout the course of our formal education. This practice, it seems to me, has certain limited values, but its importance is greatly over-emphasized by students, and even by instructors.

It has been suggested that grades should be of two degrees only, — passing or failing. Whether this is the solution or not, the suggestion is based on the idea which I consider important; we have achieved in a particular course only in proportion to the good we have derived from that course. The letter grade means absolutely nothing unless the course has added to the vast store of knowledge and experience which go into the making of an educated person, and into the making of a secure existence. After all, the whole issue centers on one question: What are we in school for? We are not

in school for grades. A "B" average will not necessarily make us certain of a good job. Neither is a "B" average proof that we are educated.

It seems to me that letter grades have but three minor functions to perform. Aside from these functions they could be dispensed with altogether. In the first place they tell that we are either passing or failing. Secondly, they provide a goal to work for. Were all students mature enough to work only for personal achievement, this function would be unnecessary, but such is not the case. Lastly, grades provide a permanent record of our scholastic achievement which can be referred to by schools and by prospective employers.

One thing could be done under the present system. Instructors could actually conduct "campaigns" to decrease the importance of grades. They could minimize the significance of an A, B, C, or a D and emphasize personal achievement as the prime goal of education.

The Attack

WILLIAM E. LAYCOCK

A slight salt spray came over the bow and dampened my face. There was a fresh breeze and I could see whitecaps on the rolling blue sea. It was the Pacific ocean and I was standing on the bridge of the U. S. S. Bashaw, a submarine of the United States Navy. The mighty ship pitched a little, then a slight

roll. I looked over to the Officer of the Deck. He, like I, was slightly tense. The radio message had said a Jap tanker was coming through — right here where we were! I scanned the horizon again for the seemingly thousandth time looking for that tell tale trace of smoke from her stack. No sign. Above me on the "A

frames" the lookouts strained their eyes, but still no sign of our prey. Overhead the soft blue sky was dotted with fluffy, fleecy tufts of white clouds which stretched as far as the eye could see. The silence was interrupted only by the bow of the ship piercing its way through the sea. Suddenly, "smoke bearing 030." We immediately changed course towards the smoke. As if from nowhere the Captain appeared on the bridge. At last we had found what we were seeking — the tanker. What next? We closed the target. When we were in danger of being spotted, we submerged. Like a coiling snake preparing to strike we tracked the target. Soon we were within range, and soon we would know if our training had been in vain.

"Make ready the bow tubes," ordered the Captain. We did.

"Stand by one!"

"Fire one!"

"Stand by two!"

"Fire two!"

This continued until six torpedoes were off towards their mark. Will they miss? Then as if in answer to a prayer came a thunderous boom. Then another. We could relax now, we had two hits and the tanker, unescorted, was on her way to Davy Jones's locker. Another day, another ship. Now for the grand finale — the victory feast. This is where the cooks really shine. Later I went to bed, wondering — how long before the next? Will we be depth charged then? Will we be the victors again?

A Typical Little Boy

ANNE SELLERS

Tumbling from a bright school bus, a tousled-headed boy shoots imaginary bandits as he gallops up the driveway and into the house. He illustrates the typical school boy of eight or nine returning from a day in school.

His pent up exuberance pours forth when he relates to his mother the events of the school world. He shyly describes an argument with a school mate, but enlarges upon the account if a flicker of interest is noted in the listener's eye. A coveted trinket is proudly withdrawn from a bulging pocket for exhibition. As he spys the ice-box, a growing hunger assails his stomach, and giving a slam to the door, he appears bearing the rudiments of a sandwich and a bottle of milk. After choking down the light lunch, he struggles

through the detested change of clothing.

An ear splitting shout marks his charge through the door in search of new adventure. He charts unknown seas on his apple tree deck sailing far beyond ordinary horizons.

When the maternal voice summons him to dinner, he becomes an ape swinging from limb to limb. His fondness for water is in the same category as that of a cat. He dabbles his grimy fingers in a few drops of water and emerges with a gray ring about his face; although, he is reprimanded when he runs the gauntlet of inspection. At dinner, his plate is amply filled with meat but leaving a small section for vegetables. These are swallowed intact. Teasing presents an amusing past-time at the dinner table; therefore, he reverts to facial