

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Grading perfection

High expectations steal children's time

The Jan. 25 issue of Time magazine wants to shock us with its revelation that kids are doing more homework these days.

An article in it chronicles the story of an 11-year-old girl who has to do math, a book report, fill out a map, and for reasons not disclosed, review an entire semester's worth of human physiology. Apparently, this is the trend all over the United States.

Time magazine is trying to tell us children are doing too much homework these days. A University of Michigan study used in the article cites that children between the ages of 9 and 11 are doing about 3 1/2 hours a week of homework. That's too much, huh?

No, quite the opposite. Homework is a necessary part of learning at a young age. It teaches discipline. It helps cognitive and recognition skills. It's also rumored to help children learn something every once in a while.

But somehow, this 11-year-old girl, along with plenty of other kids, just don't seem to have time to do their schoolwork and live a normal, healthy life.

What's the problem? Well, we're treating our kids more like adults, for one thing. Even Time points this out. Between sessions of homework, boys and girls are off learning how to be world-champion swimmers, or world-class pianists, or participating in one of what seems like a million activities.

It is a little bit of a problem. Is it a major one? Not necessarily. It's a good thing for children to be involved. But some parents take it beyond the level of normal involvement, and turn that into hyper-involvement. Their children must be in everything, all of the time. That eats into homework time and just plain living time.

Not only that, but many children, especially in middle- and upper-class schools, are expected to get perfect grades. Not just good. Perfect. And, if a child knows that, they'll spend hours and hours trying to get it right. The pressure put on them by parents and teachers is too much, too fast.

But overall, homework can be a good thing, because it gives children the rare opportunity to work on something by themselves and figure out answers by themselves. It's a learning process, through and through. But it's important not to drive children into the ground with demands of perfection.

In the end, Time magazine is wrong by saying there's too much homework. It's that we, as a society, are simply putting way too much pressure on children by forcing them to be perfect. Many of us were fortunate enough to not have that. Some of us suffered through it. Children need a break, but it shouldn't come at the expense of learning. It should come at the expense of parents' and teachers' egos.

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Lupo's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Striking a balance

I see Ms. Flanagan is again attacking women and this time she decided to pick on the lesbians. What's her "political agenda"?

Do we accuse English classes outside of the realm of women's literature as "overly promoting" a heterosexual curriculum? How about television? Do we want to accuse networks of forcing heterosexual viewpoints on its viewers?

If I take your viewpoint that the Women's Studies program is a "campaign outlet for the political advancement of the lesbian agenda" then maybe the entire rest of the university (those departments outside of Women's Studies) could be accused of being a campaign outlet to perpetuate the political status quo.

Lesbian literature needs to have its forum somewhere, and you certainly won't find much of it in the reading lists for most English classes. A few Women's Studies classes at the University level can, in no way, balance out the years of strictly heterosexual reading lists that adorn a traditionally "American" education.

Susan Kiene
junior
exercise science

Honor thy students

In response to the article "Neihardt to become honors-only," I would like to say that, as an honors student living in Neihardt, I am offended by this "new" policy. This is not to say that the reduction in non-honors students is something "new," as I was notified in a meeting with Ana Campos, Neihardt's residence director (This reconstituting of the population has occurred several times in the past). I refer to this as "new" due to the fact that most non-honors students living in Neihardt found the news shocking and are appalled by the thought that these rooms that have become their home in a time as short as one or two years are going to be taken away.

In my meeting, it was brought to my attention that the current problem arose from a shortage of rooms for incoming honors students. Rooms in Neihardt had been promised to honors students, who were then assigned to other halls on campus. Responding to this shortsightedness, it was decided that the best option was to speed up the slow removal of non-honors students from the dorm.

The title "honors student" itself has proven to be of little value in the long run as far as I can tell; many non-

honors friends that I have met here are just as intelligent, if not better students, than many honors students! What I am getting at here is that purposely disallowing these students to return to Neihardt in 2000 will not alter the environment here in any way; therefore, the only possible effects of this transition are negative!

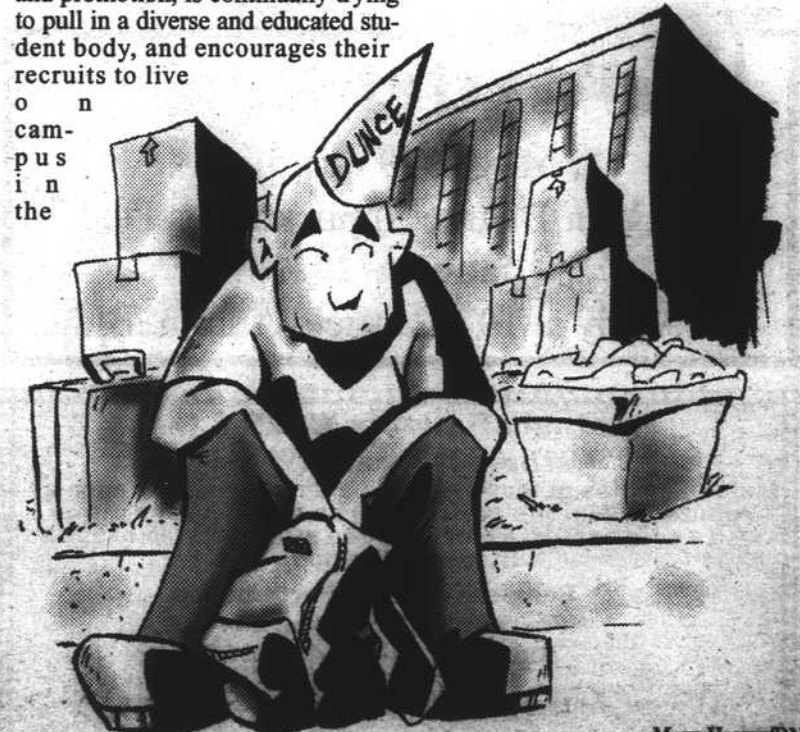
In conclusion, it would seem that this is not the best way of changing the balance of honors students here. Elsewhere on campus it is the case that upperclassmen are allowed the opportunity to return to their old rooms as long as they so desire; this is the policy to uphold, in my mind. Rather than denying these students that privilege, it would perhaps be better not to make promises that cannot be fulfilled. Over time, if the idea that honors and non-honors students should not mix remains the prejudice of University Housing, they should be more selective in who is allowed into the "honors dorm" in the first place.

Robert Glaubius
honors Neihardt resident
sophomore
computer science

Dishonorably charged

Much discussion has been produced in the Daily Nebraskan as a result of the announcement of a new honors dorm and the closing of Neihardt to non-honors students. Our general response to this controversy is one of disgust and anger. At a university that, through much advertisement and promotion, is continually trying to pull in a diverse and educated student body, and encourages their recruits to live

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Kevin Francis
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