EXAMS

"Should M.I.T. abolish final examinations in the interest of progressive education to increase the effectiveness of its engineering instruction?" is the question we would like to place before the Institute, its administration, and student body.

All too often this topic is brushed a week or two before school is over and nothing can ever be accomplished at that late hour. However, this year at the very beginning of a school term, the publishers raise the issue before the faculty and students for serious consideration and discussion.

Each year as a professor outlines a course, he almost invariably comments that he does not like a final examination, but that it is one of the necessary evils of the system. If these statements have been made in sincerity we feel that it is a basis for intelligent investigation of the problem.

Without exception, everyone will admit that a final examination has more faults than just the fact that the students dislike to take them. It also becomes a matter of determining whether or not the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. It will be necessary to overcome the natural tendency to keep that which is already established, but any change would have to be considerably more radical than the adoption of a new system.

Many universities have adopted a system of having several comprehensive examinations during the term, depending upon the final to give a passing grade. Then the night before the exam, the traditional cramming session takes place, but two days after the exam the mind is practically as blank as before the cramming.

In order to make a passing grade, two days after the exam, the traditional cramming session takes place before the Institute, its administration, and student body.

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