

# 'What could be more important?'

## Kids need human development course

By CORINNE ARATT

Dr. Marilyn Skully of Farmington Hills, associate professor of psychology, says that a course in human development be part of regular public school curriculum from the first grade on.

"I don't believe anyone could conceive anything more important," she raves such a course right along with reading and math and while she doesn't use the term "panacea" that's what her description of the results sounds like.

The idea is not unique with Dr. Skully. She credits the late Dr. Ralph Oermann with the idea which he not only researched over a long time, but also implemented in the Cleveland, Ohio, public schools.

"His studies show that from very early grades, there was a difference in the kids who had the course. Those who had it had less social problems, did better academically, were practically never found scapegoating, were less offended by criticism and had learned to give encouragement rather than criticism."

Human development, she says, is learning to understand ourselves and, in turn, each other.

"REGARDLESS of a person's technical knowledge, skill and professional experience, if he is unable to understand human interactions in his work, he can't be very successful."

Dr. Skully, a former school psychologist and newly-elected president of the Michigan Psychological Association, has a ready supply of stories and thoughts to illustrate her ideas.

"Unfortunately many of our teachers have not had adequate preparation in the area of emotional and human development."

"She says that most still focus on errors and when they do that they stamp out creativity."

"The technique of posting the perfect papers on the board is detrimental to both

groups—the students whose papers are posted and those whose aren't. The message is if you make an error you'll be punished. And for the child who always turns in a perfect paper, the work is too easy. Our gifted kids are usually neglected. Errors are extremely important. That's how we learn. Errors should be looked at and analyzed. They are (I'm stepping stones to learning... I suggested to one teacher

in an in-service training program that instead of marking eight wrong at the top of a paper, she mark 12 right. She had never thought of doing that.

"Emotions are extremely important to the cognitive process. All people experience the whole range of human emotions to one extent or another. We can't accept the differences in people if we haven't learned the similarities."



Dr. Marilyn Skully believes a course in human development is as important to a person's development as the traditional three R's. (Staff photo)

### It all adds up

## Dad figures in scores

By RON GARBINSKI

When Richard Frankel's oldest daughter attended North Farmington High School, she entered a math contest. He offered to help her review for the competition. Now, 12 years later, Frankel still is helping Farmington area students prepare for the Michigan Mathematics Competition. During this time, Frankel, who lives in Farmington Hills, has helped hundreds of students prepare for the test. In his spare time, he meets with students several times a week after school and reviews math.

"It all began when my daughter was in high school. She wanted to enter this math contest. I thought it would be to her advantage if she reviewed her math. So I asked her if she wanted me to help her prepare for the competition," says Frankel.

"Well, to make a long story short, she brought all her friends over and I wound up helping the whole bunch. Now, over the years, the review sessions have shown some interesting results."

**THE RESULT** is that Farmington area students are scoring high on the exam. This year, Alfred Jean of Harrison and Daniel Tsipasaki of North Farmington were the district's top qualifiers in the competition and placed in the top 100 of the Michigan section.

According to school officials, Frankel has done a "fantastic job" with the students. High school teachers are "extremely supportive" of his work and want him to continue with the refresher course. Frankel started the program at North Farmington and for years held it only at North. Two years ago, he was asked to conduct one session at North and another at Harrison. Students from all three high schools attended the sessions.

The program was offered to all students in the district so that the brighter students could have the opportunity to mingle with each other.

"Otherwise, students would only attend the sessions at their own school and wouldn't benefit from meeting students from the other schools who share the same interests," says Frankel.

But now he is back to conducting the sessions only at North, one after school and the other in the evening.

There are two sessions because all students cannot attend the afternoon workshop. Some students are involved in after school activities and find it difficult to meet at that time.

**"THE REASON** for this is that kids from other schools and kids who work or are on teams want to attend the sessions, too," he continues. "Both are exactly the same and are available to any Farmington area high school student."

The math test is given in two parts. Any student with at least three years of high school math should qualify on the first part, explains Frankel. There are 40 questions and a student has to score over 25 to qualify for the second part.

"The second part is more difficult and requires a lot more preparation in math. The problems are more sophisticated and this is where the men are separated from the boys," he adds.

"Only about three per cent of those who take the first part are able to take the second. Winners are decided on a combined score of both parts and those placing in

the top 100 receive awards and scholar ships.

Frankel starts reviewing for the test with the students right after the first week of school in the fall. In November, after they have taken the first part, these who feel they have a fighting chance to take the second section start preparing for the more difficult part of the competition.

"There usually are about 60 to 80 students who start the refresher course. By the time they start reviewing for the second part, there are only about 30 students left in the program," he says.

**FRANKEL**, who used to be a mathematician, says many students respond to the program taking an interest in the math tests.

"There are all kinds of reasons why these students take the course. Some want to do well on the test and others just want to improve their math skills. But no matter what the reason, many students are doing well on the exam. And that pleases us."



Scott Ramsey, a student in Eagle Elementary School, works on a Valentine which he will be giving to his favorite girl on that special day. Wonder who she is? (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

"The students have the ability and there really is nothing I can do to improve that ability. All I can attempt to do is help them prepare for the exam. I was interested in the kids of this school district back when my oldest daughter was in school and today I still am interested in what they are learning in the classroom."

Frankel has received support from teachers, parents and administrators. Over the past several years, students have scored high on the tests and many feel that the program has had a lot to do with their fine performance.

Students in the program are quick to point out that they had a lot of fun in the course.

Students from every grade level are in the refresher course. Sometimes it may be tough for sophomores or juniors because they lack the required math preparation. But by the end of the program, students say they are better prepared to meet the competition.

In the early years in school she envisions a psychologist teacher working with the youngsters about things that happen every day in their lives—fights on the playground, arguments at home or in their relationships with their friends.

"They would learn to find solutions other than violence. The other guy always has a point of view and you can always understand it if you take the time to find out. The children would begin to feel safe with what they feel."

She foresees many objections from parents—particularly fathers.

"We have particularly crippled a large segment of our society saying that boys shouldn't cry. A lot has been written about that."

"We say that boys shouldn't feel pain, sorrow, regret or tenderness. For instance, in one study, 100 per cent of the men objected if their sons played with dolls. This is the trouble with men who can't give care, can't give emotional love, can't even love—they are emotionally crippled, they can't give love to their wives."

She says that a few years ago some of the men rebelled. That's what the coffee houses were all about. The men were saying we will read poetry, we will smell

a rose and that was a healthy reaction."

"DO YOU realize," she asks, "that little girls have far more freedom than little boys? Little girls can dress up in boys' clothes, they can play with dolls or soldiers or trucks. They can play baseball and climb trees. Little boys can't dress up in girls' clothes. They can't play house. They can't play dolls. They can't cry when they're hurt."

"And then when they become men, we fault them for not being able to love. I wonder if this isn't why women can endure more physiological and mental stress than men. We give them a broader base. We need to free our little boys. The only doll the fathers in the study would ever allow their sons to play with was GI Joe. The message comes through—men kill women love."

She thinks about this statement for a moment before asking, "Can you see what would happen if this were a curriculum in the schools? The public would fight. It's too threatening to men because they would honestly believe it would harm their boys."

Dr. Skully is certain the danger of women becoming more like men and vice versa is a myth.

The differences are there and they are here to stay.

The vast improvement she describes would be internal happenings.

"I'm sure to be understood and to be able to understand somebody else. After all that's what our lives are made of. The important thing to all of us is what happens to us unperceptibly."

"We want to know if we are valued if we are understood if we are loved and appreciated. If we learn to understand ourselves, we learn to understand others. There are common denominators."

"We can say to someone I understand you. I haven't experienced your hurt, but I know what hurt is. Or I understand hope. I don't have your kind of hope but I know what hope is."

Dr. Skully has a bachelor's degree from Hardin Simmons University, a master's from Michigan State and a doctor's from Wayne State.

Her husband Roger, also a psychologist in private practice and on the staff of Mercy College with her, is completing his Ph.D. in gerontology.

The couple have three daughters—Habeth and Greta, both students at Mercy College and Colleen in junior high.

## Private schools celebrate Catholic Education Week

Farmington parochial schools are using Catholic Education Week to demonstrate that they offer an education with a difference. Sister Gloria Lerro, principal of Our Lady of Sorrows elementary school explains.

"They're doing a marvelous job in the public schools," she says. "We can stress a God atmosphere."

Unlike public schools, parochial schools are able to stress religious values in every class, she says.

Students can go to any public school to learn to read and write," she says. Catholic Education Week is an attempt to explain why people choose Catholic schools, she continues.

Our Lady of Sorrows and its sister school, Beahan junior high school are having open houses between 9:30 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 12, to allow parents

to walk through the school and observe everyday activity.

"WE ARE trying to let people know their money is being well spent," she says. After presenting a slide show about the schools' daily activities last Sunday, the faculty realized that "each day something exciting is happening," Sister Gloria Lerro says.

Sister Ann Ramsey, our junior high school principal, is doing fantastic things," she says.

Both schools have rising enrollments and a waiting list. The schools will only accept children who are entering the first grade or students who are transferring from out of state schools. This policy would exclude students who are trying to avoid busing in Detroit.

There aren't any plans to close Catholic

schools in Farmington. Our people are looking ahead to the next five years," Sister Gloria Lerro says.

The schools stress unchanging moral standards, the existence of God and the purpose of man, she explains. The role of parents in a child's education is also recognized.

**DISCIPLINE** is tighter than in a public school and the child's freedom is limited. We don't have the problems the public schools have," she says.

Teachers attend conferences and work shops to keep up with the teaching techniques in the public schools and to keep abreast of new trends.

Although teaching methods have changed, the children have remained the same, she says.

"I think children are children no matter where they are," she says.

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