

Curriculum Advances

Knowledge Explodes

Curriculum is what's "happening" as each individual student confronts his school environment and learns to construct a world that has meaning for him. The knowledge explosion has made absurd any attempt to "cover" a subject or an area. Schools must teach the techniques of acquiring information so that each individual will have the capability of keeping up with the continuous change within the storehouse of knowledge.

As technology complicates existence, it also extends man's capacities. Therefore, every attempt must be made to avoid the barren approach of specialization; people have broader needs than mere information.

Curriculum should be considered a dynamic learning device, not a static plan. If this is done, the learner, i.e. student, can be viewed as an unique individual, not as just part of a bell-shaped curve.



Two young members of Farmington's first nursing arts class help with a handcraft group at a nearby nursing home. This is one of their duties as paid aides under the school Co-op Program.

Foremost among changes this year in Farmington are some in the graduation requirements and awarding of credits. The following policies were adopted to become effective with the 1970 graduating class: Six semesters of attendance in grades 10, 11, and 12 to be required. Fourteen credits required in 10 through 12, nine of which to be earned in the first two years. One full credit to be received for all courses that meet one period a day for a full year and one-half credit for all courses that meet one period a day for one semester. Additional credits will be awarded for courses that meet more than one period a day accordingly.

For Co-op students, two credit hours to be given for each school year, one for a summer session, a limit of four credit hours toward graduation to be placed on students' on-the-job work experience.

While grades will still be recorded for ninth grade work, credits no longer will be. This will allow all students to begin high school work on an equal basis giving them an impetus toward a fresh start.

An advanced course, Drawing and Painting III has been added to the art department.

German III will be offered for those who have completed the recently added German I and II.

Specific courses have been developed in home economics such as Advanced Foods, Advanced Clothing, and Housing/Interior Decoration. The senior home ec course is now available to both boys and girls.

Courses in food preparation and data pro-

cessing will be made possible in conjunction with the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College.

Stimulus Recaptured

Possibly the most significant change at high school level is the adoption of a new English curriculum. Last spring, a committee of five was appointed to study possible alterations in an antiquated program then in use. That committee developed into total involvement of the Farmington High School staff.

Twice a week with mounting enthusiasm they met to update course offerings. As professionals they were concerned about a continuing decline of student interest in the entire English area.

These educators feel that the new bill of fare, with modifications suggested by actual usage, should go far toward providing the stimulus which has been lacking.

Testing will be done among the low 25 percent of ninth graders to determine how many of them will need a basic English course as they start 10th grade. In order to bypass this course (Fundamental Skills) the student must get an 'A' on the test which will be graded by a board of high school English teachers.

The wide range of subjects available after this hurdle has been passed is divided into four groups. The first includes American culture, humanities, directed reading, reading improvement, mass media, and mythology.

Group II is composed of English literature to the Victorian age, English literature from Victorian to modern, introduction to Shakespeare, survey of American literature, American novel, dramatic literature and the theater, ancient or modern world literature.

In group III are essay writing, creative writing, journalism, and business English.

The final group comprises speech, forensics, debate and discussion, dramatics and stagecraft.

North Farmington introduced a new course this year, Rhetoric and Composition. This is an elective for advanced students.

More New Outlooks

A new breakthrough was made when it was decided this year to engage in shared time projects with Our Lady of Sorrows High School. As a beginning, a limited number of parochial students will attend Farmington High School for courses in industrial arts, Spanish, German, and art.

Toward the end of last summer, a nursing arts class was initiated by the vocational education department and exists in conjunction with the Co-op program to provide trainees for local

hospitals. The shared time experiment with the parochial schools will also give consideration to the Co-op program.

As a continuing group for the purpose of curriculum study and evaluation (among other things) a Professional Study Committee has been established. Their areas of concern will include: Elementary Curriculum, Pupil Evaluation Systems, Central Materials Centers, Professional Growth Program, Subject Area Coordinators, and Effective Scheduling of the Student's Day.

Personal Typing and Typing I have been added to the junior high curriculum.

Science courses, due to the adoption of new textbooks, will be made more specific. Rather than general science, Life Science will be offered in the seventh grade, Physical Science in eighth, and Earth Science plus biology in grade nine.

Home economics and industrial arts have strengthened their bonds under the shared title Practical Arts Exploratory Program. Basic changes include a 10-week minimum course to assist the student in selection of the area in which he will invest a full semester.

Sound Health Alert

At elementary level, the role of health studies is undergoing an "in-depth" analysis. Miss Minnie Zielke, director of elementary education, is increasingly convinced of a growing need, as new pressures materialize in the child's world, for an all-out effort to promote healthy bodies and healthy minds to withstand them. As machines threaten to take over many departments in education as elsewhere, "computerizing" the educational product to a degree, new and concentrated emphasis must be placed on enabling the child to face these demands with all the vigor at his command.

A pilot program is being carried on by a study committee to discover ways of weaving an ongoing study of hygiene in its most comprehensive sense into other areas of education. The compelling conjunction of health to science, social studies, physical education is readily apparent. Its connection with others may be less obvious but is no less real.

The tendency has been to relegate the subject of "health" to cursory textbook study and an occasional admonition to "Wash the hands before eating." The total topic deserves a much wider contemplation, Miss Zielke maintains.

At the conclusion of the pilot study, ways will have been discovered for supplementing existing subjects with closely related and pertinent health-oriented material. What is more, the teaching methods will be kept simple and natural but not time-consuming.



Earl Rossmark, director of vocational education, gathers information from Mrs. Berdie Coburn at Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College. They are discussing data processing equipment which will be available for use by Farmington high school students during the coming year.