

Major Changes Proposed In N.Z. Education

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every subject. All day the pupil is asking or answering questions, writing notes and summaries, making comments and suggestions. Without unduly interrupting concentration on the matter in hand, every teacher should try to increase the accuracy, fluency, and grace of the children's English.

SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES do not yet occupy the place in the curriculum to which we think they are entitled. Indeed, under the regulations at present in force a pupil is not required to study Geography beyond Form II or History and Civics beyond Form IV. Education in the future must be a process of gradually widening horizons, from the family to the local community, from the community to the nation, and from the nation to the world. Up to the School Certificate stage at least, and generally in the Sixth Form also, the course of every pupil should make due provision for Social Studies.

Aims

We consider the main aims of a Social Studies course should be:

(a) To assist in the development of individuals who are able to take their parts as effective citizens of a democracy. By an "effective citizen" we mean one who has a lively sense of responsibility towards civilised

values, who can make firm social judgments, and who acts intelligently and in the common interest.

(b) To deepen pupils' understanding of human affairs and to open up wide fields for personal exploration. To some extent this second aim is involved in the first, but we wish to make it clear that we think that the Social Studies course should not be regarded merely as a means to the introduction of pupils to social duties and responsibilities; it should, on the contrary, provide scope for, and itself help to create, individual interests of many kinds.

It is suggested that the three or four-year course in "Core" Social Studies should follow the lines indicated below:

(a) Study of the social life of the pupil's own local community and of New Zealand as a whole, in relation to the geographical environment and the historical background. What is suggested is an active kind of regional survey, undertaken for a social purpose; to find out how the community lives and is managed, and how it has come to be what it is, and to study where and how improvements are needed.

(b) Study of the social life of the major peoples of the contemporary world, in relation to their geographical environments and historical development (on the same lines as in (a) above). While special attention should be given to the peoples of the British Commonwealth, more than in the past should be devoted to those of the non-British countries bordering on the Pacific.

(c) Some schools now give courses in World History. We are inclined to favour a course in the history of Western civilisation, with special reference to British history, the

spread of Western influence over the world, and its impact on other civilisations. Special reference to the history of Britain and New Zealand and the growth of democratic institutions and ways of life.

GENERAL SCIENCE

WE are of opinion that every pupil attending a post-primary school should pursue a course of General Science, as a core subject, for three or four years. There are three major reasons for this decision. In the first place, the young adolescent has, as a rule, some popular knowledge of the nature of modern scientific research and shows an absorbing interest in its problems. Secondly, the world in which these pupils are living is a world conditioned by the achievements of science. Thirdly, scientific method, if widely understood, and if applied for civilised ends, is capable of making great contributions to human welfare.

Aims

The "common experience of children" in this country is rich and varied. Many of our pupils have lived in the open air in close contact with plants and animals; most of them have first-hand knowledge of motor-cars, electricity, and radio; in addition, the adolescent is conscious of the developing powers and skills of his own body. The young pupil comes to the secondary school with a little knowledge and much experience; we recommend that his course should begin by a reorganisation of this sporadic experience.

The following outline of topics is suggested:

- The earth in the solar system, and the solar system in space. The vast extent of geological time. The broad geological features of the pupil's immediate environment.
- The elementary chemistry and physics of the pupil's home environment.
- The soil and the atmosphere as supporters of life. The trees, shrubs, and flowers of the pupil's surroundings.
- A simple study of living things, with more detailed study of selected plants and animals.
- An elementary study of reproduction in typical plants, animals, and man.
- An outline of human physiology to correlate closely with the programme in Physical Education. An elementary study of nutrition, especially in its more recent developments.
- The methods and achievements of science and their more obvious effects upon human community. A glimpse into the technological development of the pupil's environment.

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS

DIFFERENTIATION between courses for boys and girls is permissible, and often, indeed, desirable. For all pupils the work should be practical and the immediate usefulness of the exercises should be evident. There should be extensive inter-relation of Mathematics with other subjects, as, for example, in the use of numerical and graphical methods to solve problems arising in Science, Social Study, Homecraft, and workshop activities.

Much of the arithmetic should be of a social and informational character, drawing its data from daily life in the home and at work, and from the newspaper, the Official Year-Book, etc. Simple accounts can be compiled to show income and expenditure; and farm and workshop activities may be used to give practice in the use of money and measures. The post-office, the savings-bank, National Savings Certificates,

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