

NEW LOOK IN MATHEMATICS: HIGH SCHOOL SPEED-UP INCLUDES COLLEGE COURSES

(Editor's Note: The following article, which deals with mathematics curriculum at South High School, is eighth in a series concerning what is being taught in the high school classrooms of Torrance. Previous articles have discussed home economics, English, social science, advanced placement, boys' physical education, girls' physical education, and speech curriculum. Subject of the final article in the series will be science curriculum.)

By RONNIE SAUNDERS

"Education is like agriculture — Different soils require different crops." This quotation from Plato prefaces the curriculum outline followed by members of the mathematics department at South High School.

And rightly so. Because the program which has been offered at the high school this year has geared four sequences of study to four types of student: those who plan to complete their education at the high school level, those who plan to go on to college; would-be science majors; and gifted students planning careers in mathematics and physics.

Results of the accelerated math program at South High are currently being studied by a district-wide committee set up to recommend curriculum improvement for grades seven through 12 throughout Torrance. Included in the committee are members of the district instruction staff, a number of consultants, assistant principals of instruction at the four high schools,

and principals and teachers of several elementary schools.

In addition to examining the setup at South High, committee members are looking at new pilot programs throughout the nation which have attempted to update math courses and are evaluating new textbooks and materials. Torrance teachers are taking courses in modern methods at nearby colleges.

Efforts will culminate in a workshop this summer at which time committee members will come out with a new curriculum to be adopted citywide this fall.

Four Years Available
According to state law, all high school students must take one year of math; and those planning to go on to college need two years.

In the pilot program at South High, needs of the former group are met in the

general mathematics class taught in ninth grade. College preparatory students are offered the opportunity to take four years of math: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, and trigonometry. In addition, during summer school they can study number theory, solid geometry, and sets and logic.

For science majors a similar program is available. However Algebra II and trigonometry are combined in the junior year, and mathematics analysis offered to seniors.

Accelerated students planning to major in math or physics may complete high school algebra while still in eighth grade and are offered geometry and college-level algebra in their freshman year. By the time they are juniors, they are doing all their math on the college level, taking calculus in tenth grade and choice of theory of equations or selected topics in the twelfth grade.

own speed; and receive credit for each course completed regardless of the amount of time it takes to complete it.

Advanced placement exams for entering freshmen at college determine at what level the student will begin his college math studies. It is conceivable that a math major at South High may complete four years of high school and four years of college math before high school graduation. If he does well in the college advanced

placement exams, he could begin his college math studies on the graduate level.

In an effort to keep up the knowledge explosion in their field, math teachers at South High are making use of all new instructional devices. Such things as overhead projectors and teaching machines are in everyday use.

Under the overall direction of Haig Marashlian, vice-principal in charge of curriculum, mathematics department members include:

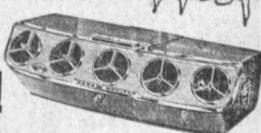
Alan Moore, chairman; John Conway and Gilbert Johnson, accelerated program; Gene Dockter, advancement of eighth grade students; Howard Shoen, Algebra I; and Gary Ballancee, Lee Davis and Neil Griffiths.

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MODERN LEARNING methods in mathematics are explained to Jan Ruebsamen, a pert South High junior, by instructor Stephen Saporita. Accelerated program provides college-level instruction for high school students in one of four phases of new math program. Results of programs are being studied by special districtwide committees.

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