

Coed health and physical education

During one of last year's teacher in-service days, the physical education teachers in the junior high school met to discuss plans for implementing new state requirements for coeducational physical education classes. Prior to this regulation the classes were separated into groups of males and females, with the men and women faculty members planning activities for his or her groups only.

Another aspect of the state regulation required two separate periods of physical education per pupil per week. In the past, two periods had been scheduled back to back, providing one double period of physical education each week. Now each student has two separate periods per week.

The new program not only meets state requirements, but also offers junior high students a broader range of activities. Students now have a choice of the physical education activities in which they will participate and may even indicate their choice of teacher for an activity. Comments made by teachers and students indicated the new elective plan is exciting and challenging for both teachers and pupils.

It has also been possible to modify the health education program. Previously, health classes had been scheduled three periods a week for ninth grade students only. Careful study of the junior high program led to the recommendation that health should be offered at least one period per week to children in the seventh grade. The schedule now provides health for seventh graders once a week and for ninth graders twice a week. It was thought that many topics of modern health education are extremely important for youngsters entering seventh grade. Many of the health concepts also correlate with the life science program offered the same year.

Health and physical education teachers work as a team. Each class period during the day there are three teachers scheduled for physical education and one teacher scheduled for health. Three gymnasiums available indoors and numerous fields and courts laid out and lined outdoors make it possible to offer a wide variety of activities. Students select from a balanced list of activities including lifetime sports, individual sports and team sports.



Boys and girls become a blur of activity during a coed volleyball game.

Junior high years are experiential years for children involved in the process of growth and change. To give students opportunities to experience as many different activities and sports as possible, teachers have planned their program on a 3-week experience schedule, offering as many different activities as possible during the 36-week school year. Although this would appear that 36 activities are offered during the year, some activities will be offered two or more times to accommodate the numbers of students who select a certain activity and to be able to offer the activity on the beginner and intermediate skill levels. It is expected that as many as 30 elective sports and physical education activities will be offered. To make the choice and selection of activities equitable for all students, a rotating alphabetical system has been developed. During the first three weeks of the year, children whose last name begins with the letters "A" through "H" are given first choice of the three activities being offered; those whose last name begins with the letters "I" through "P" have second choice, and those whose last name begins with letters "Q" through "Z" have third choice. During the following three weeks, the "I" through "P's" have first choice, the "Q" through "Z's" have second choice, and the "A" through "H's" have third choice. The next three weeks the first choice goes to the "Q" through "Z" group, second to the "A" through "H's" and the third choice to the "I" through "P's". Then the entire process begins again and will be repeated twice more during the remainder of the year.

Some of the very positive aspects of this type program are obvious to parents, students and teachers. A youngster selects the sport or activity he or she likes or is interested in learning and participates in the activity for a short period of time. The majority of students are in a particular class because they have chosen to be there and are more interested in the activity than if it were compulsory for them. The pupils who find themselves in an activity of their third choice often find the enthusiasm of those who selected it as a first choice rather contagious and begin to enjoy an activity which heretofore had seemed uninteresting to them. Numerous students have commented that they had not expected to like a particular activity but now hope that it can be scheduled again sometime during the year.

There is almost no incidence of students coming to class unprepared or attempting to be excused from the class simply because they don't like it.

In many cases the strength, height and speed of the female students making quicker and more competitive games possible. Boys who were learning field hockey for the first time were astonished at the endurance needed to compete during the game's twenty-minute halves. Youngsters who have established good relationships with a certain teacher may now elect that teacher in his schedule.

There are obvious advantages to the program from the standpoint of the teacher also. A teacher can request to be scheduled for those approved activities in which he or she is strongly motivated and enthusiastic. The teacher's enthusiasm is vital in motivating interest and helping students acquire skills. It is also possible for a teacher to motivate students moving beyond introductory lessons by offering intermediate level skills. Because there are three teachers scheduled during each class period rather than two, classes are

smaller, and activities which require a low ratio of teacher to pupil can now be offered. A few of the new activities include golf, Hatha Yoga, intermediate gymnastics and folk, square and modern dancing. In traditional team and lifetime sports children in smaller classes can be offered individual help, more turns and additional attempts, and more advanced drills.

Consumer education

The course "Consumer Education" is relatively new to many students as compared to English, mathematics, or science. It was first offered in the Dallas School District at the Jr. High level in 1973.

The instructor, Mr. John Bancala, believes that in today's world the importance of consumer education cannot be overemphasized. This is especially true in a period of ever-declining purchasing power.

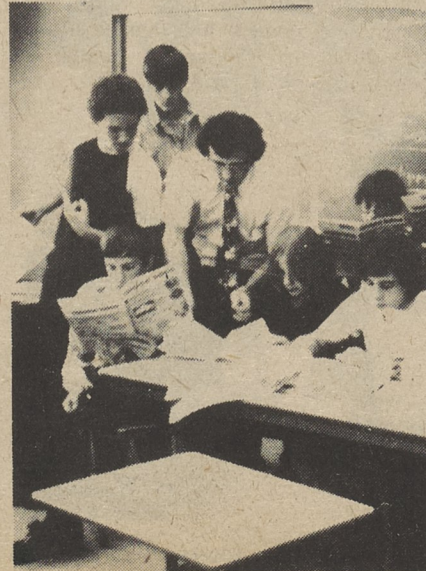
"Many students are being cheated during their school years," he says. "Some schools fail to provide instruction in real-life problems. Students are given few strategies for dealing with the political economy as consumers and citizens."

"Although many students spend a large part of their lives being involved in consumer activities, actually, most students are taught very little that will help them deal effectively with the marketplace. They know little about the insurance, credit, or banking industries. Students are not taught how to handle their own money or to protect their own health. A majority don't even know how to deal with their consumer rights."

Consumer education creates meaningful interaction between students' school experiences and their out-of-school lives. It brings the world to the classroom and the classroom to the world.

Consumer education helps students learn to avoid the pitfalls, to analyze their own consumer behavior, and to deal effectively in their everyday consumer transactions. It also enables the student to regard himself as a responsible consumer-citizen and to see the alternatives that are, or should be, open to him in the marketplace.

Armed with the skills and understandings that are essential to good citizenship, the student can improve the quality of his own life, and at the same time help to establish a pattern of consumer determination and consumer justice that is important to the well-being of our nation and world.



John Bancala, consumer education teacher, and students

Primary prevention



Primary Prevention Program staff and Dallas educators cooperated to pilot parent-teacher discussion groups at the Township School. Seated left to right: Mary Dixon and Marty Baylan, Primary Prevention; Marilyn Klick, Dallas Township Kindergarten teacher. Standing: James Calderone, Primary Prevention; Doris McCain, Dallas Township Kindergarten teacher; Gloria Whitman, Dallas Project H.E.L.P. Director, and Bob Santos, Primary Prevention Program Director.

The Dallas School District, in cooperation with the Primary Prevention Program of the Community Mental Health Center in Wilkes-Barre, sponsored a pilot six-session parents discussion group program on school entry, entitled "The Transition From Home to School." This program was offered to mothers and fathers of in-coming kindergarten children at the Dallas Township School, beginning the week of August 25th and ending the week of October 6th. Parents could select a Monday or a Wednesday evening group, both of which met weekly for an hour and a half at the Dallas Township School. Co-leading the Monday evening group were Marilyn Klick, kindergarten teacher at the Township School; Teddy Berlatsky, social worker from the Family Service Association; and James Calderone, a social worker from the Primary Prevention Program. The Wednesday evening group was co-lead by Doris McCain, kindergarten teacher at the Township School; Marty Boylan, social worker from Catholic Social Services; Myrna Bookbinder, a social worker at Jewish Counseling Services; and Robert Santos, the Director of the Primary Prevention Program.

Approximately forty mothers and fathers from the Dallas Township School expressed interest in participating in the group discussion program, which included such topics as: the influence of school entry on the entire family, normal feelings and concerns of parents and children related to beginning school, ways that parents might facilitate the child's positive adjustment to the school environment, and helping to create a home climate conducive to developing a positive sense of self-esteem.

Planning for the program began during the summer and was lead by Dr. Linford Werkheiser, Superintendent of the Dallas School District, and Robert Santos, Director of the Primary Prevention Program.

Also involved in the planning were Dr. Richard Shipe, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Gloria Whitman, Project 306 Director; Jerry Wycalis, Principal at the Dallas Township School; and the group co-leaders, comprised of the two kindergarten teachers at the Township School and social workers from local family service agencies.