

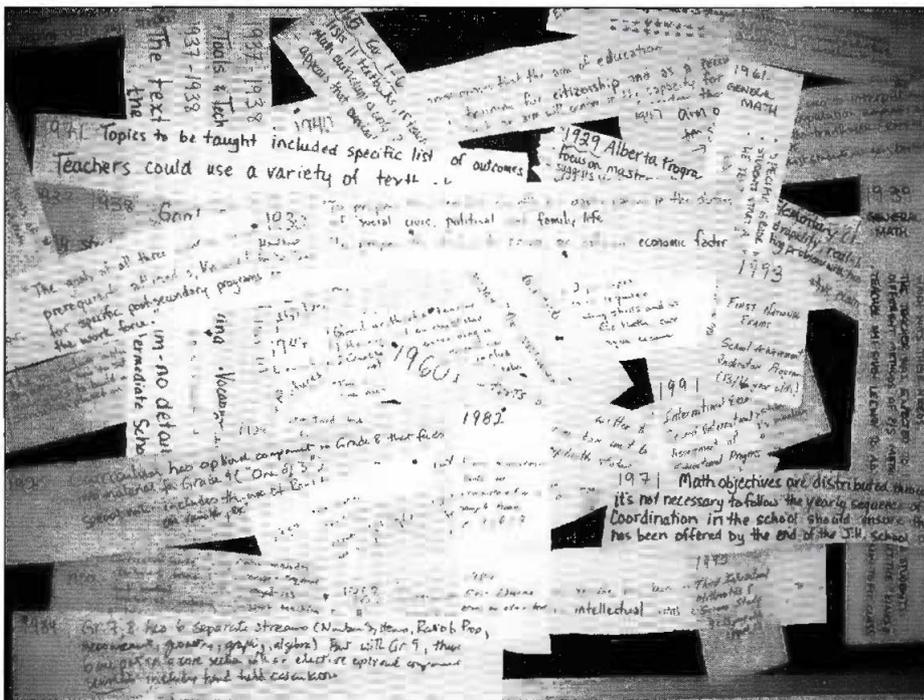
History of Mathematics Curricula Change in Alberta

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Mathematics curriculum reform is once again a hot topic of discussion among educators, parents, and concerned citizens. Practising mathematics teachers find themselves at the centre of those conversations with little more than their own histories to inform their response. Postgraduate studies provide an opportunity for teachers to investigate not only current curriculum but the history of curriculum, enabling them to be more fully prepared to contribute their professional knowledge to the debates about mathematics curriculum, teaching and learning.

In course work last fall at the University of Alberta, a group of teachers studied the history of curriculum change in Alberta from the early 20th century to the present. By creating timelines we were able to identify some patterns in curriculum reform. One

pattern was to review student performance in mathematics, call for curriculum reform, change the curriculum, review student performance, call for curriculum reform, change the curriculum ... With each review there was a concern that students “lacked something”—arithmetic and algebra skills, problem-solving skills, or the ability to apply their arithmetic and problem-solving skills. Not until we begin to understand such patterns will we be able to do anything about them. The bulletin board shown below gives viewers a peek into the mathematics curricula of Alberta’s past. Hopefully, it will remind us to ask ourselves what we really know of the past and how we can learn more about it in order to incorporate lessons from our history into today’s process of curriculum reform.



This bulletin board was created by the 2011 EDSE 540 class: Tom Asquith, Mona Borle, Carolyn Bouchard, Cathy Campbell, Simon Christou, Madeleine Escobar, Dan Vandemeer and Dean Walls.