

## **Dept. of Education Annual Report**

# **Mathematics**

The curriculum in secondary mathematics was still in the process of change. Former courses did not always serve the needs of students, and some of these were revised while others were phased out and replaced by new courses. All students in junior high school were registered in the courses for that level, but the senior high school program was divided into three levels of difficulty. Of these, matriculation courses were most popular and received the best quality instruction, because they were usually assigned to highly qualified and experienced teachers. There were some weaknesses in instruction:

1. There was often a lack of correlation with junior high school mathematics.
2. The geometry section of Mathematics 10 was sometimes neglected.
3. Inadequate use was made of teaching aids.
4. Some teachers gave little opportunity for individual students to use their initiative.

However, such conditions were not general, and instruction in Mathematics 10, 20, 30 and 31 was usually effective. Unfortunately, the same was not always true of lower level mathematics courses often assigned to inexperienced teachers whose major fields of preparation were in areas other than mathematics. They often used a stereotyped textbook approach which proved ineffective. Mathematics instruction was strong where teachers offered individualized instruction, particularly when teaching at the point of error, but this was not always true in the lower level courses, where a lack of individualized instruction was noted.

Students were generally assigned to high school mathematics classes according to achievement in junior high school. In some schools, this assignment followed a rigid formula based on stanine gradings in Grade IX mathematics, but more often students were permitted to select their courses after counselling. In very small schools where only the matriculation program was offered, students had no choice but to attempt these courses.

There were few in-service education programs conducted during the year. The Mathematics Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association conducted some meetings, and some city teachers attended orientation workshops in the new courses. In larger schools, department heads met with their teachers to coordinate instruction, but the mathematics teachers in small rural centers had little opportunity to participate in in-service programs.