

NEW CURRICULA

ESM at St. Vincent de Paul School, Calgary

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Mr. Hazelzet specializes in the teaching of science and mathematics. Comments from other teachers who have experimented with the ESM or any other series would be welcomed by the editor of this *Newsletter*.

ESM (Elementary School Mathematics) is a promising, relatively recent mathematics program specifically designed for Grades K-8.

Developed in the United States (Ball State Teachers College, Ball State University) by and under the guidance of experts in the field of mathematics teaching, ESM has received wide acclaim from those who have taught the program. Pupils also have expressed their enthusiasm for this fresh approach to the exciting world of mathematical ideas.

"Drill for the mastery of skills must be used carefully and, primarily, as a follow-up to the introduction of concepts which are approached through an understanding of the overall structure of mathematics."

The key word in this quote is "structure". No longer should the emphasis in mathematics learning be on the mastery of isolated facts. Rather, the pupil's attention is focused upon fundamental concepts which form a solid base for a logical and sequential structure in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to think rather than memorize!

ESM's stress on mathematical structure is at once clear from the kind of mathematical content it presents: previously thought-of isolated ideas and concepts as well as facts have been integrated, "put together", into meaningful (structured) wholes or relationships. As a result, a Grade IV pupil, for example, through ESM encounters content with which he, through programs other than ESM, may well deal in later grades. In short, the Elementary School Mathematics curriculum pushes the mathematical content down through the grades. However, it presents these "advanced" concepts in an understandable and meaningful way.

Although the program originated in the USA, it has been modified to meet the needs of Canadian elementary pupils. The informative and effective pictorial material as well as its accompanying text are Canada-oriented throughout. In Canada, ESM is published by Addison-Wesley (Canada) Limited, Don Mills, Ontario.

At St. Vincent de Paul School the teachers and pupils in Grades I to VI are enthusiastic about this new approach to mathematical teaching and learning. They would like to share their enthusiasm with you.

Noose Notes, ATA Calgary Separate School Local No.55