MATH OPTION TOPIC - GRADE VIII

THE STOCK MARKET

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This particular topic proved to be one in which most students were interested, as many of their parents had invested in the market at one time or another and some of the students had stocks of their own.

The study was begun by first constructing a list of objectives, bringing to light *what* exactly the students wanted to learn about the stock market. This took about 40 minutes and was done by first allowing 15 minutes or so for students to discuss their ideas with each other. The final 25 minutes were spent pooling all ideas and consolidating them into a list. Here is the list which we prepared:

1. What is a *stock*, and how are they put on the market?
2. To learn about procedures for trading shares.
3. To discuss how one's financial position influences the way in which one invests.
4. To learn how one becomes a stockbroker.
5. To be exposed to a broker's point of view on investments.
6. To learn how to read the financial page.
7. To learn how to decide between good and bad investments.

After constructing the list of objectives, we spent some time discussing which objectives were possible to achieve and what we might do to achieve them. This set the stage for our study. The following outline shows how the remainder of the study was handled.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST SIX CLASSES

1. Discussions (both group and class) were held regarding objectives 1 and 2. About half of each period was used for this purpose.

2. The other half of each period was spent by students on their graphs, both constructing them and keeping them up-to-date. The graphs were records of daily prices on stocks which students had selected to watch. The graphs were constructed on large sheets of brown wrapping paper and displayed on tack boards around the classroom.

3. A stockbroker came to the school to talk to my option group about the market. He and I had met previously to decide on topics for his talk.

Classes 7 and 8

Students invested $1,000 each in the market.

Classes 9 and 10

Charts were constructed to keep track of all transactions including brokerage fees.

Classes 11 -

Kept graphs started at the beginning of the study up-to-date.

Bought and sold shares if desirable.

Spent 10 to 15 minutes of each class discussing some aspect of the stock market.

Spent the last class selling everything in order to determine each student's financial status. A one dollar prize was awarded to the student who made the most money ($462).

The final class was held at Richardson Securities. We were given a brief talk by one of the brokers and then allowed to watch the board. Each student was given a piece of ticker-tape and a pamphlet about stocks and bonds to take home.

Time for the unit, in all, was about six weeks on the basis of 45-minutes per class, three classes per week.

Have you read?

COLLEGE PREPARATORY MATHEMATICS - PREPARATION FOR WHAT?

by Charles R. Eilber
published in *The Mathematics Teacher*,
61:1, January, 1968

Reviewed by Murray R. Falk, Past President, MCATA

The author begins by questioning the relevance of present high school mathematics curricula to the future historian, musician, English teacher, or articulate layman. The major purpose of any current mathematics course is to prepare the student for the next course. But what of the student whose interests and motivation favor the arts and humanities?

The author suggests that a partial solution is found in the recent increase in the number and variety of reference material *about* mathematics - materials which emphasize the historic, cultural, biographic, philosophic, artistic, and social aspects of mathematics. About 600 such references are listed in the NCTM pamphlet *The High School Mathematics Library* (1963).