



F INTEREST TO TEACHERS

Draft of Math-Assessment Standards Available

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has begun to circulate a working draft of standards for exemplary assessment of student math achievement.

The NCTM has distributed almost 20,000 copies of the 244-page document, entitled "Assessment Standards for School Mathematics," to math coordinators, teachers, mathematicians, and other interested parties.

An additional 10,000 copies have been printed and will be made available without charge to educators, parent groups, civic organizations, and others.

Developed by several working groups of educators, the draft document is built around six basic assumptions about the nature of effective assessment:

- Every student is capable of achieving "mathematical power."
- Evidence about student performance is needed for a variety of purposes, and the type and quality of evidence varies with each purpose.
- For each purpose, "information needs to be collected from multiple sources using a variety of methods."
- All evidence about student performance "must be considered as a sample of the evidence that could have been gathered."
- Teachers should be the primary assessors of student performance.
- During their schooling, students should grow in confidence and in their ability to evaluate their own progress.

Copies of the draft may be obtained from Portia C. Elliott, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1906 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091 U.S.A.

Home Study International Signs Agreement With Plato Courseware

Have you ever been faced with the challenge of teaching several students who were not able to keep up with the rest of the class, or one student who was so far ahead of everyone else that his or her boredom created discipline problems?

Through Home Study International, courseware is now available to parochial schools that

meets the needs of diverse student populations: "at-risk," remediable, mainstream, gifted/talented, and advanced placement. The mastery-based curriculum is also useful in assessment, instructional management, and performance evaluation.

Home Study International recently signed an agreement for exclusive rights to market PLATO among all parochial school systems. The PLATO courseware library has had a reputation for educational excellence for more than 25 years and is a benchmark for the effective design and delivery of computer-based instruction and management.

With curricula to address all major areas of instruction, PLATO provides the most complete and comprehensive courseware available today for young people and adults.

PLATO's new graphics and sound options make it one of the most attractive and stimulating learning tools available to school systems today. More important, the package price available through Home Study International makes this valuable resource affordable for church schools.

For more information, call your local conference superintendent of education or Home Study International at 1-800-782-4769. If you live outside the U.S. and Canada, write to HSI at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

Changing Standards Vs. Changing Teacher Behavior

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) reports that a pilot study of mathematics teachers from 121 U.S. schools in 11 states showed support for their new standards. However, the study found a wide gap between teacher support and practice. For example, 96 percent of the teachers agreed that students would learn mathematics better if they used objects to understand the concepts being taught. Only 24 percent said they were likely to use them regularly, however.

Most teachers agree that manipulatives are useful, and that real-life applications are a proper element of math instruction. They feel more strongly, however, that "students need to master computation before going on to algebra." Most teachers also support ability grouping.

The NCTM study suggests that promoting new standards is only part of the solution to low classroom performance. Teachers must be willing to

alter their instructional strategies as well.

For a copy of the new Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics, send \$25 to: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Order Processing, 1906 Association Dr., Reston VA 22091. Request item No. 398E1, ISBN 0-87353-2.

Benefits of Music Study Seen in Intellectual, Relational Skills

According to several recent studies, young people who study music and sing or play an instrument at an early age develop superior intellectual and relational skills.

Music is not considered a frill in Europe or Japan, as it often is in American schools. Many European elementary schools teach music according to the Kodaly method. In Japan toddlers are taught to play the violin or piano according to the Suzuki methods. The relationship of music to mathematics is well known. Mastering subtle math concepts while playing an instrument from an early age, followed by more formal study of math later on, has been shown to be extremely effective.

Children from many industrialized countries learn math from textbooks, as do students in the United States, but greater exposure to music and the other arts fosters greater intellectual curiosity, self-discipline, and creativity.—Reported by the *International Educator* VIII:1 (Fall 1993).

Cost of Treating Young Gunshot Victims Equals One Year at a Private College

It costs as much to treat a child for gunshot wounds as it would to send him or her to a private college for a year, according to a recent study by the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions.

The survey, which looked at 1991 discharge records from 44 U.S. acute-care hospitals, found that children's injuries from gunfire cost an average of \$14,434 per case that year, a few dollars more than the average per-year cost of tuition and room and board at a U.S. private college in 1991.

Roughly half of the medical costs were paid by Medicaid, a government-financed insurance program for those unable to pay, or were absorbed by the hospital.—Reported by *Education Week* XIII:15 (December 15, 1993). ☞