

Hates Stereotyped Curricula Teaching

WINNIPEG (CP)—If there's one thing a student can count on in Jerome Fischer's science class, it's a chance to express an opinion.

"I let them talk whenever they want, however they want, even if it may sound rude to

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an outsider, because I want them to express their own thoughts on a subject, not just tell me what they think I want to hear."

Mr. Fischer, 29, says he hates to see children taught through stereotyped, regimented curricula—learning facts but not understanding the reasons.

He applies these principles to his Grade 6 science class at Viscount Alexander School.

"Sometimes I even make them argue with me to get them started. And if they need to be brought under control, suggestion toward the group, never the individual, brings them back into line immediately."

During the first week of the school year, the class decides on a project, sets up work committees and begins working. The 1963-64 class found its chief

Interest in the study of reptiles and an iguana.

Most of last term's class became avid fish enthusiasts. Through their own efforts the students bought nine aquariums, raised fish and sold them through supermarkets to raise funds for purchase of equipment, grew fish food, dissected fish that died, made life-cycle history drawings of observations in these fields.

With one topic leading to another, they researched and explained to themselves the principles of osmosis, a Grade 10 subject.

One girl became an enthusiastic rock collector and was permitted to go along on a field trip with a university geology group.

By June the classroom was overflowing with fish, snakes, frogs, rocks, preserved birds, birds' nests, moths and butterflies.

"Familiarity with all these

creatures, viewed and handled each day, means the children retain the knowledge they learned because they understand it thoroughly."

Mr. Fischer carries his unorthodox approach into art classes. He uses tempera, a vibrant flat - finish water - base paint which allows mistakes to be painted over easily. And by blowing paint from the end of a straw a child is given the feeling of free-flowing lines and the exciting use of color.

A native of Stratford, Ont., Mr. Fischer attended teachers' college there, spent two years in the navy and later enrolled at the University of British Columbia under a navy-sponsored scheme. He worked for an insurance company, travelled to Europe and operated a drive-in restaurant before settling into teaching.

He intends to maintain a fresh approach to the profession. "I've got a lot of living still to do," he says, "and I

don't ever wish to become inflexible in outlook."

CLEAN SCENE

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