

IN MY OPINION

BSCS Plus

As biology became established as a course for high schools, it was looked upon by more and more people, educators as well as scientists and parents, as an introduction to the broad field of biology.

It included the elements or principles of biology which would introduce the students to the expected content of botany and zoology or biology in introductory college courses. Many of the texts patterned the organization after some of the college courses which had a strong taxonomic base.

As pressures grew for making the biology course also useful to the noncollege bound student, many applications of biology such as health, nutrition, behavior, and conservation were incorporated into the course. Many of these ideas were also considered useful as preparation for living and vocations for the college bound student. Some texts were reorganized in recognition of the expanding objectives of the biology course, with less emphasis on taxonomy, dissection, and morphology. But all the texts increased in size to the point where complete coverage became almost impossible.

As college scientists undertook the job of modernizing the high school biology course through the Biological Science Curriculum Study project, incorporating new

findings, such as those in cellular biology, and designing the course primarily for college-bound students, many of the other goals for the course had to be abandoned.

Some of these goals and the information needed to support these additional goals are still valid for many people and therefore may have to be accommodated in other ways in the science program. Some of the material can be introduced earlier in the junior high school and upper elementary grades. It could be placed in an earlier biology course at the ninth or tenth grade with the new materials used as an upper level course after the students have had chemistry.

There is enough important material in the areas of health and conservation to construct separate courses for them, but few people feel this is the appropriate solution. Only a few feel that these are unimportant and should be abandoned entirely.

Perhaps the solution will lie in the direction of a reorganization of the K-12 science program, in identifying and weaving into the earlier years as much of the life-science information as possible, and in offering some degree of selectivity at the upper levels in the type of materials used for the various types and interests of students.

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