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Science Notes - Interdisciplinary Course Example Available

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Interdisciplinary Course Example Available

Two teachers at Colchester High School in Colchester, Vermont, have made available their example of a successful, team-taught, interdisciplinary high school course titled "Science and Society."

Elizabeth Carvellas (science) and Lauren Kelley Parren (social studies) teamed up to create the course in order to help students develop critical thinking skills that would enable them to be technologically literate. The course is not a typical high school course in that there are no teacher lectures, no textbooks and no unit tests.

Students select the topics to be studied in brainstorming sessions and each student takes responsibility for research of one aspect of the selected general subject (i.e. one student may choose to study the effects of acid rain on a particular ecosystem while another researches the economic impact of acid rain prevention).

The authors of the unit report that several of their former students have said that the interdisciplinary approach helped them to be more successful in college and to become more politically involved.

To obtain a packet describing the program, contact Elizabeth Carvellas, Science Department Chair, Colchester High School, P.O. Box 31, Laker Lane, Colchester, VT 05446.

--S.A.A.

Scientific American Sponsors Series on PBS

Scientific American magazine recently began production of a new five-part science-related series for public television. "Scientific American Frontiers," underwritten by GTE corporation, airs on PBS once a month from October through February. Exact dates vary each month.

Hosted by Woodie Flowers, each hour-long show consists of four to five separate segments and includes such content areas as medicine, physics, biology, psychology/research and earth science. The first program (aired October 10) featured segments on roller coasters, hibernating ground squirrels, woodpeckers, research on human emotions and the youngest heart transplant ever filmed for television.

Educators may join a special network to receive supplementary materials for use in conjunction with the series. Participating educators have complete off-air taping rights in perpetuity for the "Frontiers" series so that they may build their own video library. By the end of the season, teachers may accumulate more than twenty separate segments for classroom use. In case of missed episodes, the network features a hotline which will put you in touch with other network members in your area who may be able to get a copy of the show to you.

For more information on the series or to become a member of the educators' network, contact the "Scientific American Frontiers" School Program, 10 N. Main Street, Yardley, PA 19067-9989, ph. 1-800-523-5948.

--S.A.A.