

Modular programming new method of learning

About 45 technology students are using a new and progressive method of learning.

Called modular programming, the method is incorporated into the math, chemistry, physics, electronics and electricity courses at the Brampton campus.

Using the process, students learn on an individual basis according to their knowledge of the subject, intellectual ability, interest and aptitude.

Here's how it works. A standard course of study is partitioned into a number of modules or mini-courses. Students complete their course of study module by module. Their progress can be assessed both continuously and on a short-term basis. After each module is completed students write a post-test, then proceed to the next unit.

The packages provide basic instructions to the student, and specify the concepts to be learned and the behavioural objectives to be achieved. Most packages contain a multi-media format. All the student needs is a set of modules, a text with instructions, audio-visual material and the teacher's expertise.

With this method, the teacher's job becomes even more important than before. Modular programming frees the instructor to deal with individual student problems and questions of real merit, since many routine questions are self-explanatory in the program. Frequent group sessions are held for problem solving.

An interesting example is Year I electricity. The learning packages were assembled by Jerry Wald, master of electronics at Brampton.

"This approach is particularly useful in electricity, as students come into this program with varying degrees of knowledge on the subject," he says. With modular programming, students can begin at their own level. With some extra effort, the weaker ones can catch up to the rest of the class. Wald says it allows flexibility and meets individual needs.

Another significant aspect of modular programming is that the multiplicity of mini-courses can generate many new programs of study. Students will eventually be able to "tailor" their own program depending on their individual career goals. Also, the short term duration of the modules permit "sampling" of different disciplines and provide the opportunity to make choices at various stages of each "personal" program.



Instructor Jerry Wald helps student with modular program in the electronics lab.

Ljiljana came back

It wasn't easy for Ljiljana Prisliger to shed her apron and go back to school.

After eight years as a housewife and mother she enrolled in the two-year Chemistry Technician program at Sheridan. "It was my husband's idea for me to return to school. But now I can look forward to getting a good job with more money." She says the atmosphere is better at college than in the house.

Her biggest fear about returning to school was the students—and how they would accept her. The Prisligers immigrated to Canada from Yugoslavia 13 years ago. Ljiljana said that back home no one worries about age, but she wasn't sure how Canadian students would accept her. For the first few weeks at college all the teachers and students helped her adjust to her new environment.



Ljiljana Prisliger operates spectrophotometer in instrumental analysis lab.

She says now the instructors are just like friends. "And I treat the students as adults and they treat me as an adult. The students even open doors for me."

Exams were another hurdle. She said she literally shook before a test, but now they don't bother her.

Mrs. Prisliger has two girls ages 12 and 8. They often compare marks and help one another with homework and housework. Her husband, who is also a chemistry technician, pitches in also.

A mother, wife and student at Sheridan, Ljiljana still finds time to study French. One of her daughters takes French at school and Mrs. Prisliger feels she can help her by taking it too.

Ljiljana enjoys being a student—and an 'A' student at that. Although her best subject is instrumental analysis, she enjoys electronics most and finds it relaxing. As part of the course she developed a household intercom system.

In Yugoslavia, Mrs. Prisliger worked as a pharmacy technician. With her educational background and experience, she was able to get advanced standing into second year of the Chemistry Technician program.

After graduation in May she would like to get a job with a pharmaceutical company. She would rather not work where her husband works, though. The Prisligers recently moved into a new home in Cooksville and one of Ljiljana's goals is to help her husband pay for the house.