

In the Middle Of a New Method

Exciting new methods of instruction are being tried in many high schools of the land. Wilbur Wheaton, '54, is right in the middle of one of these experiments. He is boys' vice-principal in Brockhurst junior high school in Anaheim, Calif.

We asked him for a brief explanation of the experiment work there and he came through with the following:

"I guess the difficult thing here is trying to explain flexible scheduling and team teaching in a few words—almost impossible. We are now preparing an illustrated lecture to cover the subject in an hour and a half; so you can see my explanation here will be inadequate.

"Our Brockhurst plan allows teachers to determine the time needed for each instructional unit as well as the method of instruction and the school facility best suited to the lesson. Student schedules change daily as teachers' plans change the master schedule.

"For example, take a team of social studies teachers preparing to give a unit on the Civil War. They decide

who will teach the areas of the unit, type of presentation—large group lecture, small discussion group, individual study—and the time needed. They then make out a job order requesting the size groups and length of times from one to four modules (a module is 20 minutes). The request is broken down to daily requests. From these the coordinator makes the daily master schedule. Students then use this to make their daily schedules.

“Students in about five minutes, first thing in the morning, complete their scheduling. Schedules are made three days in advance so that the office has proper time to make up class lists and handle other mechanics of the plan.

“Students carry six to nine classes with most taking seven. Electives are by elective agreement, students agreeing to spend a certain amount of time or time necessary to complete specified amounts of work. A student may complete a unit quickly and then shift to something else.

“We are quite excited about our work here and feel we have a great opportunity to learn and to develop educational practices of tomorrow. This project is sponsored by the Ford Foundation through the National Association of Secondary School Principals. We have been visited by top educators from here and abroad and are being encouraged to continue our work.”

With such enthusiasm the plan is bound to succeed. Wilbur finds time for six hours of work at U.S.C. and extra hours to be a USMCR battery commander in the Los Angeles unit.