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Indians, Czechs revise courses

Both India and Czechoslovakia have announced efforts to revise and modernize their teaching of physics. India will teach a separate physics course in junior high schools and revise its high-school curriculum. The Czechoslovaks are organizing a center for modernization of physics teaching.

Breaking with the past, many junior high schools in India are going to offer physics, chemistry and biology as distinct subjects. During the last 15 years these sciences were taught as part of a general science curriculum, but this pattern is rapidly changing. For the new courses, the Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training is preparing textbooks, laboratory experiments, teacher guides and film strips, all of which are to be tried out for three years in 25 Delhi schools. At the same time, a panel of Indian physicists are preparing materials for the high school curriculum, which includes three years of physics. The new physics text will include mathematical and technological bases that are not provided by PSSC materials. Physicists working on the book hope to create a blend of Newtonian with modern physics that can be taught with a minimum of orientation. Similar developments are proceeding in other basic sciences, particularly in mathematics.

The Union of Czechoslovak Mathematicians and Physicists is organizing the center for the modernization of physics teaching. The center is developing a program with new content and teaching methods that it will try out in several primary and secondary schools. Another project will bring new curricula for introductory physics to universities. The center seeks an exchange of information with similar groups active in curricula reform in other countries. Correspondence can be addressed to Prof M. Valouch, director, Center for Modernization of Physics Teaching, Maltéžské nám, Praha 1, Czechoslovakia. □



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