

The "curriculum buffs" like to refer to such considerations as "spiral approach" (apparently, this means that the subject is touched on again and again as the child moves through the grades, in accordance with some orderly master plan) and "scope and sequence" (which appears to mean nothing more than how much is taught -- and in what order). In spite of wise pronouncements, couched in such catch-phrases, it is noticeable that, with the exception of incidental and fleeting references on other occasions, Canada tends to be "done" -- once and for all time -- at one point in American curricula, and the same is generally true of the treatment of the U.S. in our schools. This would not be too disturbing if the "concept approach" were followed throughout the grades, with Canada and the U.S. getting their fair share of attention as "cases in point" at appropriate junctures. This is not the case, and thus the question arises of whether or not the concept approach to history and geography -- which seems to have so very much to recommend it -- can really be implemented in today's school systems. The experts might be asked to use the Canada-U.S. situation as a "guinea pig" for intensive exploration of the practical problems involved in such implementation.

Regardless of the extent to which it may be practical to recommend a "world approach", it is quite practical to recommend that geography and certain aspects of history be treated continentally. There is something almost indecent about the butchered map of the North American continent that adorns the walls of many Canadian or American classrooms. The only difference is that each country concentrates on a different segment of the torso. Surely it would be preferable if our nations were always shown on a map of the whole continent. How many Canadian children grow up with any real conviction that Mexico is as much a North American nation as is Canada?