

schools

Top teacher

Franklin educator stimulates students' thinking

By ANNETTE H. JONES
Daily Journal Staff Writer

A Franklin Community High School biology teacher has been chosen as one of the top teachers in the Indianapolis area by Indianapolis Monthly magazine.

Laurence M. Lynch, 53, who has taught four years at Franklin, was nominated by Principal Walter Vanderbush in response to the magazine's search for exceptional teachers.

The magazine sent approximately 500 nomination forms to public school principals in Marion County and seven surrounding counties to find the best teachers.

"I was very grateful and appreciative for myself, and because the media has taken the time to acknowledge my profession," Lynch said Tuesday. "I'm very humbled."

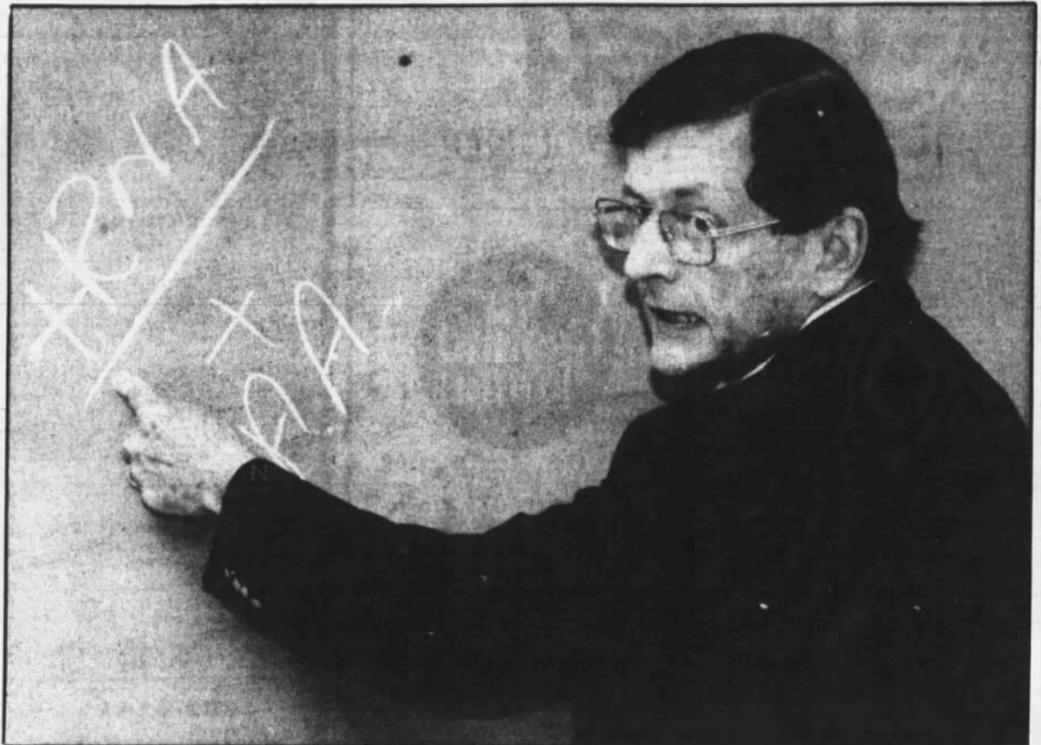
"There are others who are just as competent, if not more so," Lynch added.

A teacher for 18 years, Lynch has taught at Morristown High School and Latin School. Although he has taught Latin and English and served as athletic director at Latin School, Lynch says he particularly likes teaching advanced biology. He sees biology as a blending of several disciplines — chemistry, physics and mathematics. These are the tools that help the biologist understand the life processes, Lynch said.

Hands-on lab work is the rule in Lynch's classroom, where beginning biology students are trained to use microscopes their first day.

Lynch's teaching methods foster independent thinking, according to the article in the April issue of Indianapolis Monthly. "His method is not to lecture, but to stimulate inquiry," the magazine says.

Outside of school hours, Lynch is



STAFF PHOTO BY RICHARD G. BIEVER

BIOLOGY TEACHER Laurence Lynch stimulates discussion in his advanced biology class at Franklin Community High School Tuesday. Lynch has been chosen as one of the top 10 teachers in the Indianapolis area by a monthly magazine.

the coach of the school's academic teams. Lynch said in the article that he motivates his team members by telling them that studying is never easy, but that the "joy of learning is a reward in itself."

Vanderbush said that while he has several teachers he considers extraordinary, when it came to decid-

ing on one to nominate he thought Lynch would be the best candidate.

Lynch had been selected as one of four top teachers at Franklin by the staff to be a "master teacher," Vanderbush said. In the master teacher program, educators from other schools visit classrooms to observe teaching methods of those considered master teachers.

A panel of 10 education specialists, including experts in education at Purdue, Indiana and Butler universities and the University of Indianapolis and officials from the Indiana Department of Education and Lilly Endowment Inc., sifted through the ballots to find the 10 teachers they thought were the most extraordinary, as well as 10 runners-up.