STUDENT ENTERPRISE
This issue of Connect appears a little late. Reblocking of the house meant that copy and facilities were 'buried' for some time. But we can, at last, say we're now on the level again.

But the delay will also mean that the time between this and the next issue, our tenth anniversary issue, is shorter than normal. We aim to produce that issue in mid December, with a copy deadline of the end of November.

The tenth anniversary provides us with the opportunity to look back at the development of youth and student participation during that decade. We have asked people who wrote early articles in Connect in 1979-81 to reflect on changes.

That invitation is extended to you. What does youth and student participation take into the 1990s? Has its relevance changed? What are the major challenges today?

This issue contains a feature on the Student Enterprise program of Victoria's Country Education Project. We shall, no doubt, have further accounts in future issues. These provide a fascinating insight into the various ways in which 'enterprise' has been interpreted in practice. While some projects have reproduced big and small business structures, others have adopted a more collective approach. And while financial concerns may have initially motivated students' developments, their comments are clearly directed towards the learning involved, their relationship with community needs, and a recognition that students can, as they learn, provide something of value to that community.

Happy birthday, Connect.

contained in this issue are a couple of ideas for ways you can wish Connect a happy 10th birthday - and ensure it has many more.

We produce the newsletter under primitive conditions - typewriter, cut-and-paste on the lounge-room table etc - and would like to modernise its operation. At the same time, as we've said endlessly, subscription income barely covers the printing costs. So our wishes for a happy birthday include one fund to financially 'get our noses ahead' and a second one to develop some reasonable resources. Your support and practical wishes for survival into the 90s will be appreciated and acknowledged!

Roger Holdsworth
How important is it that students should feel that they can exercise some control over their education? How do teachers come to understand the relevance of their students' previous learning experiences? Or their home life? Or their hopes for the future? Or even, more simply, what they like or are interested in? For the purposes of this article, the issue is whether or not these questions have particular significance for teachers in working class schools. Do strategies which involve students explicitly and directly in decision making about classroom learning enhance students' educational and social learning?

Whatever the views of teachers, parents or others, students themselves have strong convictions about these issues and many believe that they should have greater opportunity than they do to influence what happens in the classroom. This could be especially significant in those schools in which there is a divergence between the teachers' social and educational backgrounds and those of their students. Evidence gathered in the Improving Students' Outcomes project adds considerable detail to this proposition.

In the Improving Students' Outcomes project, teachers from four Victorian post-primary schools and staff from the University of Melbourne Institute of Education (formerly Melbourne College of Advanced Education) worked together to document innovative teaching strategies, explore how they have been implemented (often with the support of Commonwealth special purpose programs), and examine the impact which they have had on students' outcomes. Although each of the four schools had a significant proportion of students from typically working class neighbourhoods, there were significant differences: inner urban, outer suburban, and country town; high, technical and technical high; low numbers of non English speaking backgrounds, high numbers of NESB students; STC, T12 or VISE Group 2 options at year 12 in addition to VISE Group 1. Two of the schools were involved with the Disadvantaged Schools Program while all four were Participation and Equity Program (PEP) schools and have undertaken some equal opportunity initiatives.

LEARNING/TEACHING STRATEGIES

The main distinguishing feature of the teaching and learning strategies examined in this project has been that they require and allow for considerably more student activity both in and out of classrooms, and for student involvement in the decision making about individual, group and class learning. This might occur within a
subject or topic framework that is initiated by either teachers or students; it might take a variety of forms. In some classrooms, there has been an emphasis on small group project work and conferencing amongst students; in others, students have had much greater flexibility in making a personal selection of subject options that would meet their interests and needs at that time; yet others have focussed on getting students into much closer contact with people and activities in the local neighbourhood, be they parents or other community members; and yet others have involved some kind of productive activity which might result in tangible goods or services. The implementation of the strategies has depended usually on the support of a committed pastoral care system and team teaching, whether in the classroom or in planning.

Why have they been developed? Put simply, the various approaches have been developed by teachers in each of the four schools to improve the educational achievement of students whose prospects in academic terms were generally poor. The specific developments at each particular school have arisen very much in relation to the specific ways in which problems manifested themselves. Several important principles have been identified:

a) the schools have been concerned to improve working relationships with and among students, as a positive approach to learning cannot be developed if students and teachers are engaged in conflict with each other;

b) students should know more about learning so that they will have greater understanding of why classes are structured in a particular way and how they might structure their own learning; and

c) students are more likely to acquire particular knowledges if they are encountered in a context related to their own experience and to major interests and concerns in their lives.

In each school, the teaching strategies have recognised the importance of matching particular approaches to learning with the needs and interests of individuals and groups. There have been contrasts in the orientation of programs and in the kinds of strategies that have been developed. An important example has been the difference between strategies which focus on individuals, and those which emphasise the group aspects of learning.

The individualised approach has operated at two levels:

a) great flexibility in subject choice, such that each student has a timetable which is independent of other students (an elaborate form of electives); and

b) classroom strategies which provide students with the opportunity to work on a topic in a manner which suits them at that time.

In the schools emphasising the individualised approach, a priority was placed on providing an educational program that could be tailored to meet the needs of each student. Pastoral and counselling support was a very important mechanism in ensuring some degree of continuity and balance in the pattern of subject enrolment and class activities chosen by each student. The major strength of this approach, according to the teachers, was the positive approach to learning engendered amongst students.

Some of the strategies reflected an emphasis on groups as being central to the learning process. The cooperative learning approach emphasised two dimensions:

a) developing the social skills that enable students to work in small groups; and

b) processes of negotiation to identify the task(s) to be undertaken by the group.

The cooperative approach has been reflected in school organisation, as the grouping of staff and students into teams or mini-schools was regarded as most important. Particular classroom techniques in which students form small groups to undertake specific tasks have been used systematically across a wide range of subject areas. One priority has been to develop a positive quality of relationships among staff and students. The strategies also allow students to work from their own previous achievement and to contribute as appropriate, in a context where they share the responsibility for getting the work completed. Students have to become more actively involved in determining the direction of the learning process.

STUDENT AND EX-STUDENT RESPONSES

Discussions with students, parents and ex-students revealed considerable support for these kinds of strategies providing certain conditions were met when they were introduced. These conditions included:

a) commitment to a decision-making process involving teachers, students and parents in which the proposal had been negotiated and the intent behind the initiatives had been discussed, or otherwise communicated;

b) acknowledgement of the complexity of many situations in schools - immediate reactions or criticisms sometimes obscure the underlying perceptions of
school practice and considerable care is required to understand the real concerns and responses of parents and students;

c) there is no substitute for direct experience - the most negative responses came from students who had never participated in an innovative program or classroom process.

Students and ex-students valued the opportunity to develop greater depth in their relationships with staff, opportunities for speaking in groups, learning to organise work, pursuing particular topics in depth, and learning self discipline. It was suggested by some students that teachers should take one period each week to negotiate with students about what should happen in the next week's classes. Some students indicated that they preferred negotiation to occur on an individual or a group basis, rather than with the whole class, because the latter could turn into a 'screaming match between students'.

Students liked participating in this level of decision making because it meant 'discussing a subject in order to try to get agreement'; it 'means people coming together in a positive way'.

'Both parties (teacher and student) decide which things to discuss and which topics to study and then out of the topics discussed they choose one.'

Ex-students valued the opportunities the school had provided for them to develop personal and social skills which had helped them in their jobs, as well as helping them to develop important skills (for example, in literacy and numeracy). Approximately half of the ex-students who were interviewed as part of the project had experienced considerable opportunities for negotiated learning, especially in the senior years. All of the young adults indicated, however, that they would have preferred schooling which included negotiation, group discussion and independent research. They saw it as being less competitive and pressured and hence they would learn and retain more skills and information.

'When you have to do the work yourself, you remember it more.'

'Discussions helped me to hear what other people thought about things.'

'I respected other kids' opinions more in discussions.'

'In STC you had to work on an equal level with teachers. That made it easier to talk to the boss at work.'

'You felt less of a dill if you had time to work on a project than when the teacher was standing over you.'

Other students who had undertaken the more formal HSC program saw that its greatest benefit had been forcing them to
develop good study skills and, especially, how to organise themselves. Some of the students who had undertaken the negotiated program felt that by contrast with the HSC students, they may not have used their time as well as they could have. The underlying benefit was greater ease and confidence in communicating with other people.

NEGOTIATED STRATEGIES AND EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

These issues have been considered in relation to the Institute of Education's own courses. This has led to several observations on the contribution that student participation in classroom decision making can make towards greater educational equality. It has been seen as an integral part of an overall strategy because:

a) it helps to overcome bias in, for example, the selection of knowledge, the choice of resources, particular learning patterns, and limited assessment criteria;

b) it can empower students, by making explicit the values and objectives of the curriculum. This can occur through encouraging students to engage in reflective thinking about what should be learned and how, and to work with others, thus developing self-direction and initiative;

c) learning about how to learn should be seen as part of worthwhile knowledge. Reflective thinking and questioning about the purposes and methods of subjects raises the quality of thinking and learning by those involved; and

d) it improves teaching. If learning involves a partnership between teacher and learner, students should have the right to question the value of a particular kind of learning and to state their uncertainties, doubts and failures in understanding, and to suggest alternatives in how a subject may be presented. They should be able to feel confident that the teacher can discuss these matters with them and that, through negotiation, teachers will reflect on their teaching strategies and their implications for student learning.

These propositions relate particularly to improving the intellectual attainments of students in a variety of educational settings. There is a clear implication, however, that students who experience this kind of approach to learning will be much better equipped to deal with the broader challenges that they will have to face vocationally, economically, politically, and in overcoming other barriers of inequality within the society. This is more likely to be successful where negotiation occurs within the educational settings as part of a shared, cooperative and public process, not just a private arrangement between teacher and student.

Bruce Wilson
Institute of Education
University of Melbourne

This paper was initially presented at the 'Child Poverty and Education' Conference in Adelaide, September 1989.

MATERIAL AVAILABLE

Local & Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can’t lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on (03) 489.9052:

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Voice (Bayside Student Action Group, Vic) September 1989.
Youthpaper (ACOYP, Vic) Vol 1 No 1, August 1989.
Between the Lines (Williamstown HS, Vic) June 1989.

OTHER SOURCES:

Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) Sept ’89.
NIE Update (ANPA, USA) Vol 15 No 6, September 1989.
Options (Youth Bureau, Canberra, ACT) September 1989.
The Student Enterprise program is designed to provide a practical program which empowers young people and provides the opportunity to 'learn by doing'. This is a concept which underpins the operation of the Country Education Project, which has the charter to trial new ways of providing educational opportunities to students in rural areas.

The Student Enterprise program aims to encourage students to show initiative and accept responsibility, to foster self-confidence and a co-operative approach to learning, to provide a 'real life' learning situation which draws on community expertise and to increase young people's understanding of aspects involved in establishing and operating a small business.

School groups participating in the program attend a pre-enterprise seminar early in the school year, receive minimal financial support, are visited during the year and give a report in November at the Annual Reporting and Presentation seminar. During the three years the program has operated, the most outstanding feature has been that, when given the opportunity, students can show responsibility, creativity, commitment and an enormous flair for innovation.

John Stafford
Director, Country Education Project
Victorian Ministry of Education

Connect asked the Student Enterprise projects of 1989 to write about the ways in which students were active participants in their education. Here are three accounts from Murtoa, Mortlake and Hawkesdale.

LEARNING THE HARD WAY
Mortlake High School

Our involvement with the Enterprise started way back in the heat of February and the start of the school year. We (the year 11 Accounting class of Mortlake High School) under the guidance of our teacher Mrs Cathy O'Keefe, decided to take up an offer from the Country Education Project to run a small business as part of accounting.

We sent back a letter outlining our interest and a couple of weeks later ventured down to Melbourne for a seminar to help get the business underway. Here we learnt how to plan our enterprise by placing it into a time frame of two terms as this was the time limit placed on the business.

As well as naming our company Spring-flat Enterprise, we also elected office bearers and allocated portfolios for each one of the ten of us, as well as deciding on what we planned to do, which in our case was complex. We divided our enterprise into three areas: woodwork products; health foods to be sold wholesale through the school canteen; and propagation of seedlings which, when ready, would be offered for sale to local farmers.

We returned to school and began to work out how much money we would need to get us started. With our Area Committee, which consisted of the three local bank managers, our Principal and Senior Mistress, we decided to apply for the
maximum grant from the Country Education project of $500, with a further $500 loan coming from our School Council.

The beginning of the Enterprise at the start of term 2 was not far away. Our woodwork directors (Bruce Goddard and Jayson Blain), together with the school woodwork teacher, organised items to be made, which we would offer for sale during the first half of term. The plan was to offer new projects for sale in four blocks spread evenly over the two terms for which the enterprise would run. The first two items were to be letterboxes and routed signs featuring the name of the desired property or house. In order to get the items made, we arranged for a group of 16 students to make them during a woodwork class running in term 2. Their wages were calculated on what a first year apprentice carpenter would earn for the same amount of time.

The same principle was to apply in the health foods area where Nicole Spooner and Jodie Melbourne were in charge. Together with the Home Economics teacher, budgets were planned for the first couple of weeks and types of food to be made were selected. With help from our area committee, we worked out our prices to sell the goods to the Ladies Auxiliary who, in turn, sell them at the school canteen. This idea was brought about due to the canteen changing over from junk food to healthier foods, so an opening appeared for someone to supply these foods - that's where we came in.

Finally things began to roll. Our woodwork employees began work on constructing mailboxes for sale. The first catalogue was distributed and the first orders began to come in for signs, so all was going well in this department.

In the health foods area, it was a different story. The canteen changeover was not as we had expected. Instead of muesli slice, it sold vanilla and apple slices as well as doughnuts. We found ourselves trying to compete with the famous Clarkes Pies company which was supplying the canteen. And naturally a kid is going to buy a doughnut instead of a piece of muesli slice, so we were not selling very much. To make matters worse, it was not very profitable for us or the Ladies Auxiliary, so after some discussion we decided to diversify our operation and terminate the health food business. Instead we would offer special lunches on a Wednesday. These were all hot foods, which ranged from hotdogs to lasagne. They were ordered before school in the same way as normal lunch orders would be done. As an added safeguard for success, we cancelled all pie orders from Clarkes on Wednesday - REVENGE! These were very successful, especially on cold days. Towards the end, we experienced a new challenger in the year 10s selling steamed dimsums. But after they sold some that were not properly cooked, coupled with Mrs O'Keefe spreading rumours about a dimsim poisoning scare, they soon fell by the wayside. Soup and
mint sauce were also sold occasionally throughout the year. Overall, a reasonable profit was made from this area.

The tree propagation was jinxed from the beginning. Only a few weeks before being ready for sale, a rabbit got into the Mini-Farm and ate off approximately 80% of the trees. At this stage it was too late to plant more, so we arranged another deal with the Mini-Farm, selling cut daffodils. This proved a good money-spinner, as there were hardly any costs involved.

Woodwork, although producing a profit of around $600, was an absolute disaster. If I were to list everything that went wrong, it would exceed four or five pages. However, I will enlighten you to a few incidents which occurred:

* mailboxes were made with no holes to put mail in or get it out;
* mailbox designs were significantly different to the style that we had been advertising, as stated by the teacher;
* there was poor quality work - students took no pride in their work;
* the school router (used for making signs) broke down;
* there was a failure to follow simple instructions;
* there was an inability to work to simple deadlines.

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**SPRING FLAT ENTERPRISES**

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**MORTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL**

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This year, in conjunction with the Country Education Project, the Year 11 Accounting class at Mortlake High School have started their own student enterprise. The enterprise allows them to actually run a small business, performing all the duties of small business management. The proceeds of "Spring Flat Enterprises" will go towards the Year 11 camp fund-raising.

With help and support from the Woodwork Department, we can offer for sale the following products:

1. **Letterboxes**
   
   These are made from 18mm thick treated pine which has excellent weathering qualities. The unit is finish with a clear varnish finish.

   "Unfortunately we have limited stock on these. Hurry now!"

2. **Carved Timber Signs**
   
   Each letter on the sign measures 10cm. The length of the sign will depend on the number of letters. However, the cost is fixed.

   Great for front gates and properties!

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Please complete this form and send to: "Spring Flat Enterprises*, P.O. Box 84, Mortlake, Ph: (055) 99 2204

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**ORDER FORM**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carved Letterboxes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carved Timber Signs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoping to be put on sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

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As a result, the students were sacked and the boys in the Enterprise took over production. However, we could not make any new products, so we concentrated on signs as well as filling orders for mailboxes and our latest product, winemakers. We purchased a new router to help us rout the twenty signs on order. We attempted to fix up the unwanted and ordered mailboxes and winemakers and are currently trying to sell them to Rotary for a craft market.

We are now in the process of liquidating the Enterprise and are preparing reports for the Country Education dinner in November.

Despite encountering many problems along the way, we achieved our goal: to learn the ins and outs of running a small business. At least we know what to expect if we ever open our own in later life.

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Stephen Blacker
Mortlake High School
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JACKLYND KITCHENS
Hawkesdale High School

It was primarily the promise of making some money that prompted us to establish our Jacklynd Kitchens Country Education Project enterprise. This promise was easily fulfilled but it was also a learning experience, which is perhaps more important.

The operation of Jacklynd Kitchens was included as part of our year 11 Home Economics syllabus, so we continued to do our set work as well as the planning, ordering and cooking involved in running Jacklynd Kitchens. This meant that we often fell behind in the set work, but Jacklynd Kitchens was running smoothly with only a few problems.

There are five girls in our Home Economics class, all of whom were involved with Jacklynd Kitchens. They are: Kym Cawthrey (President), Lynette Drendel (Vice-President), Claire Murphy (Treasurer), Denise Murray (Assistant Secretary) and myself as Secretary.

Even though Country Education Projects are student operated, we still had the assistance and guidance of our Home Economics teacher, Mrs Margaret Trotter. She was very helpful when it came to adapting normal recipes for large quantity cooking and doing our shopping.

Jacklynd Kitchens is no longer in operation (as the end of the year is nearing and this means an increased workload with the exams approaching) but when it was, we conducted four major ventures - fruit pies, chocolates and two lasagne ventures - as well as one minor venture - crabapple jelly.

All were very successful, with the exception of the chocolate venture. We did not make a very large profit on this due to not charging enough for them. Our inability to resist temptation also added to the loss of profit! Our costing for the other ventures was more thorough and we made good profits on all of them.

We received a great deal of positive feedback on our products as well as some constructive criticism. Overall, our customers were very satisfied with their purchase.

One of the problems that we encountered was that of late orders. We originally accepted the late orders even though it created hassles with the ordering and the quantities. Eventually we made a rule against accepting late orders to eliminate this problem, but we received some criticism from within the school concerning this rule.

Our Principal stressed the importance of accepting late orders as vital to our success as a small business. We stuck to our rule regardless - and we were a success.

Another problem we faced was completely beyond our control. In our fruit pie venture we used a package of ready-rolled pastry which we'd been told would make 75 pies. This would have been enough if it hadn't run out before we had even made 40. We made some pastry to help solve the problem but, in the end, we had to buy some more pastry and make the remaining pies the following week.

Overall, I think most of us gained something from the enterprise. We learnt the steps involved in the setting up and running of a small business, how to cook large quantities of food in a limited time and how to organise ourselves to work efficiently. We also learnt some business techniques such as marketing, advertising and the importance of presentation to sell our products.

The most enjoyable aspect for us was doing it by ourselves. If any student is looking for the opportunity to make some money as well as gaining an insight into the operation of a small business, then we would certainly recommend the Country Education Project to you.

Jayne Mahoney
Hawkesdale High School
PO Box 30, Hawkesdale 3287
DAMA DAMA
Murtoa High School

Victoria's Murtoa High School offers Active Learning Projects within its curricu-


lum, which seek to develop active and partici-

patory learning within a solid frame-

work of community involvement.

A Deer and Goat Farm (called Dama

Dama after the biological name for

fallow deer) has been established as the most

recent addition to these projects. Finan-

cial support has come from a Ministry

Technology grants, as well as from

Country Education projects and from

the School Council.

The aim of the project is to teach

students alternatives in agriculture, with

across the curriculum initiatives in Mathe-

matics, Science, Consumer Education,

Commerce, Social Education, Computer

Education and Home Economics. Curricu-

lum is currently being developed in these

areas.

The project has four fallow deer,

two bucks and two does, who are slowly

settling down in their new environment,

holding pens and yards constructed by

the school community. Three Angora

goats were also purchased.

The students are actively involved

in marketing and book-keeping processes:

buying and selling of the deer and goats;

in keeping breeding records, calculating

dietary requirements, construction work,

farm practices and learning husbandry-

skills. They will also be developing the

project as a tourist highlight.

The Deer and Goat Farm complements

the other Active Learning Projects at

Murtoa High School: the pioneer hut,

the newspaper, the year 9 enterprise etc.

Students are motivated by the fact

that the Deer Farm is the only one of

its kind in an Australian secondary school.

People are welcome to visit Dama Dama

and school representatives would only

be too pleased to accompany visitors and

answer questions.

Gavan Cramer

Murtoa High School

PO Box 146, Murtoa

Ph: (053) 85 2381


The following accounts by Gavan Cramer

and Kathy Curkpatrick provide more in-

formation about two of the Active

Learning Projects. They are reproduced

from the PEP Schools Resource Program's

booklet on 'Murtoa High School: An

account of three projects based on

the principle of active student learning

as organised within a subject based

timetable.' (1986)


The FARM PROJECT

By GAVAN CRAMER

Murtoa is a small town in the Wimmera wheatbelt

region. The High School services a relatively wide area,

including the 'major' towns of Murtoa, Rupanyup and

Minyip. It caters for 210 students in Years 7 to 12.

Students in this area also have access to the educational

facilities of Horsham, Stawell and Warracknabeal,

should they have some specialist need that cannot be

catered for locally. Student's homes are sparsely spread

over a wide area and in many ways the school provides

a focus for community interaction.

BACKGROUND

Impetus

By 1981 our staff had become increasingly concerned at

what was considered to be a general lack of motivation at

the year 9 level. Students were failing to see the relevance

of some of their studies.

One conclusion was that first hand activities and more

direct experiences needed to be integrated into the year 9

curriculum. Murtoa had a traditional subject-based

curriculum and no disposal of existing courses and

structures was envisaged. Modification by way of gradual

infusion was to be the starting point.

From a different direction, the limited interaction be-

 tween school and the community, in curriculum matters,

was seen to be a problem, particularly as a rich pool of

community expertise and resources were waiting to be

tapped.

A student-run farm as an all inclusive project to year 9

studies was suggested as means by which these issues

could be addressed.

Why farm enterprises?

Murtoa is situated in a wheat/sheep district yet at least

50% of the community are employed in service industries.

While many students do live on farms, it would be wrong

to assume that they all have an intimate understanding of

farming and managerial techniques.

Student-run farm projects meant the chance to con-

solidate valuable skills through the organisation of

enterprises considered important in the community. It

also meant the opportunity for students to apply the

theoretical knowledge gained by Science, Consumer

Education and Home Economics by direct and practical

involvement in the organisation of farm activities.
Educational Objectives
Many valuable discussions with TEAC consultants refined our educational objectives and the processes by which they could be achieved. The emphasis was to be on active and participatory learning within a solid framework of community involvement. It was to be the beginning of a negotiated curriculum within a traditional school structure and while the Farm Project itself was a particularly appropriate one in our community, it was viewed as the vehicle for the promotion of our goals rather than an end in itself.

A farm project could provide:-
* an extension of many topics in a number of subjects, e.g. plant and animal studies, the buying and selling of related products.
* a means by which students could gain personal experience in practical activities to complement the theoretical problem solving of consumer education classes.
* a renewed emphasis on student decision making and initiative.
* the opportunity for students to work co-operatively with teachers and community members at their own pace.
* a greater interaction between staff and the community.
* a sense of pride and ownership in students who would be responsible for setting up enterprises.
* an environment in which students were encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning and personal development.

Preliminaries
A successful submission by 3 staff members from Consumer Education and Science resulted in TEAC funding to help begin the Farm Project in 1983, and when the School Principal requested and received permisive occupancy of 10 acres of adjacent land from the Grain Elevator Board, the project was ready to begin.

Structure and Process
The timetable was organised to accommodate the project. For one half day per week, consecutive periods of Consumer Education and Science were blocked together at Year 9 and this meant:-
* all Year 9 could be called together for meetings and working bees.
* students in 9A could work with students in 9B.
* communication between staff involved in the project was enhanced.
* time consuming activities could be carried out.

A Farm Central Committee was established comprising 3 staff, 4 Year 9 students (elected by Year 9) and 4 community representatives (nominated by School Council). — formed sub-committees according to interest and friendships.

These sub-committees (suggested in the TEAC Submission) were formed to research and report on the construction and siting of these items:-
* fencing
* irrigation
* a storage shed
* a hot house
* sheep pens

Construction proposals had to include comparisons of cost, quality and the availability of products. Reports were to be given to peers and then to the Farm Central Committee for advice and approval. Because the sub-committee structure was duplicated in each of the Year 9 classes, the Central Committee had alternative sources of advice on which to base decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION

Class Work
Sub-Committee research of proposals was part of the core curriculum in Consumer Education while the Science course allowed time on a flexible basis for the implementation of proposals.

Extensive information was sought from local sources by direct inquiry, letter writing and occasional telephone contact.

Students kept accurate records of their research, conclusions and proposals, as well as details of activities undertaken as they followed decisions to fruition. Increasingly the Farm Diary began to include personal reflections on decision making practices, on managerial lessons and ultimately on the self assessment of student work.

Working Bees
When a proposal related to the purchase of fencing, shed, etc., was approved by the Central Committee, working bees were organised during and after school. Students involved in the proposal were expected to attend with appropriate tools and equipment. As the project developed, working bees for the maintenance of gardens, fences and gates had to be organised — the blocking of Science and Consumer Education classes proved beneficial as visible results of labour could be seen at the end of the afternoon's work.
Community Activity
From having very limited interaction with the school, members of the local community began to show a marked increase in interest and support. Those with expertise in areas of farming and construction were frequently called on for advice and assistance, and showed their willingness to be involved. This rapport between school and the community began to have a positive influence on student approaches to schooling.

Students' decision making and group co-operation were the underlying principles at all levels of the Farm Project as students made significant choices, researched proposals, documented experiences and implemented their decisions within a supportive environment.

By 1984, farm constructions were well on the way. Future farm work was to concentrate on enterprises rather than construction.

EXPANSION
Introduction of Student run enterprises (1984-85)

Minor Changes
A second submission to T.E.A.C. in 1983 provided funds to expand the farm project and offset expenses due to running costs (e.g. petrol). This submission was prepared by staff, students and community representatives.

The Farm Central Committee was expanded to include four Year 10 students elected by Year 10 as students who had begun the Project in Year 9, expressed a strong interest in continuing their involvement.

The Farm Project organisation in Consumer Education and Science classes was tightened:

In Consumer Education groups or individuals were to:-
* gather information (letters, phone, personal contact)
* write a proposal
* seek approval by Committee
* borrow funds from farm account
* set up and maintain enterprise
* record progress in diary
* record details of expenditure and income

Students were to continue with other topics when the above steps were completed.

In Science students had to design experiments related to their enterprise. As in Consumer Education, students were to work on other topics in the Year 9 Science curriculum when not working on the enterprise.

Groups or individuals were to:-
* propose an hypothesis related to the enterprise
* design an experiment to test hypothesis
* complete a contract form detailing the research
* set up experiment(s) on the farm
* regularly collect and record data in diary

Diary
As in the previous year, the Farm Diary was a crucial focus for farm work. The recording of data and information in the diary had been shown to be invaluable in helping students organise themselves, keep to deadlines, record encouragement and criticism, reflect on their learning as well as to plan enterprises. The diary also provided staff with a ready check on student progress.

By the end of 1984, the following farm enterprises and experiments were in progress:
* comparative studies of a variety of vegetables
* native plant propagation
* mohair production from goats
* poultry
* citrus fruits

The farm had become self sufficient on profits from the sale of vegetables, flowers, eggs and plants and the hiring of the farm rotary hoe. These will provide funds for the maintenance of enterprises.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FARM

Parents and Community
Active participation of, and co-operation between staff, community and students are the basis of the farm's development.

Since the first steps were taken to develop the farm project in 1983, parents and community members have supported and assisted the project in numerous ways.

In the past, parents and members of the school community participated in school affairs in a limited way. It was found that inviting local identities to share their particular areas of expertise with staff and students, increased the level of community involvement.

The following are some examples of this involvement:
* service on the Farm Central Committee as advisors
* attendance at working bees to demonstrate skills
* lectures from local business personnel to explain advantages of shopping locally and flour milling
* completion of large scale operations for students, e.g. grading land, sowing crops
* attendance at parent/staff/student evaluation sessions
* supervision of farm enterprises by a local during every school vacation.

To involve community members in the management of the farm, students contact members and seek their assistance and expertise in general and specific farm tasks.

Some community members who were initially critical of the farm project took on a more supportive role when asked to participate in farm activities; it is not easy to resist the requests of interested students.

Students
The farm is integrated into existing core subjects — it is not elective. It is considered that the manual, social and academic skills which have resulted from active student participation in their own learning are too valuable to benefit a few students only.

Student involvement in the farm project permeates all levels of farm operations and in particular, they have direct input into all decisions which they then are expected to implement.
THE FUTURE

At this time (the end of 1985), the farm is virtually self sufficient. It is growing not only in equipment and facilities, but more importantly, its steady growth provides a vehicle to promote more active and experience-based education for its participants.

Staff participation in the Active Learning Projects has increased from four in 1982 to eleven in 1983. Community involvement has also seen a steady growth. The Farm Project is held in high regard within the school, the community and by the numerous visitors who have sought information related to this educational project.

A Late Change for 1986

As mentioned earlier, PEP time release in 1985 has assisted in the monitoring and reflection of the farm progress. It was during such a session that staff discussed the need for changes to be made in 1986 to facilitate the development of enterprises. Observation of students at work indicated that a significant proportion needed more clearly defined parameters and more regular class/farm time.

The proposal which arose out of discussion was to cut Year 9 Science and Consumer Education time by half an hour per week and timetable a “new” subject called Year 9 Enterprises — for 1 hour per week. As well as providing regular “farm” related work and greater chance to monitor student progress, an added benefit will be that each Year 9 Enterprise class will be staffed by two teachers.

Staff

The staff connected with the farm consists of Year 9 Science, Consumer Education and Home Economics staff, who integrate “farm” topics into their curriculum, and personnel not continuously involved but who support the project. When specialist areas of expertise are required (woodwork, metalcraft, horticulture, construction) staff have willingly assisted. Numerous staff have helped supervise working bees etc., in their spare time.

The continuation of Transition Education Officers and the opportunity to observe results at first hand, meant the benefits of the teaching strategies employed in the farm were shared with other staff. Informal conversation, faculty, curriculum, and staff meetings encouraged this process. Staff have appreciated the benefits of student participation in the farm and have commented on the increase in student:

* pride in farm work
* feeling of ownership and sense of belonging
* co-operation
* skill development

The English faculty began to integrate the philosophy and practices behind this curriculum by initiating a student-run newspaper.

In spite of solid support, continuous evaluation raised issues which needed to be considered.
PIONEERS PAST AND PRESENT
— A SETTLER’S HUT

By KATHY CURKPATRICK

INTRODUCTION
For many years the teaching of Year 10 history had posed a real dilemma. The major questions arising were
“how do we motivate 15-16 year olds? How do we make their learning meaningful while maintaining their
interest, enthusiasm and endeavour?”
The answer to these questions came during the latter part of 1983 when Year 9 students who had been actively
involved in the establishment of the school farm (see previous section) suggested that their involvement could
be maintained by building a settler’s hut on the farm property. With this idea in mind, a submission to TEAC
was prepared to enable students to gain funding.
This project was to be a dynamic motivator intended to encourage students to initiate, develop decision making
skills, participate in co-operative learning situations and work as part of a team with parent and community
members. Students were encouraged to do research at the local level, interview local residents and examine the
remnants of old buildings, barns etc. to discover materials used, the methods of construction and specific
geographic locations.
The school administration was receptive to this project and at the end of 1983, a TEAC team assisted staff in
developing their ideas, setting their goals and working through the processes to set such a program in motion.
TEAC provided financial support to implement ideas. A most supportive staff and school community were
willing to work beyond the bounds of the timetable to enable the project to develop and progress. A very
supportive and interested local community offered their advice, and willingly gave their time to work alongside
students in the Project. A co-operative and supportive Shire Council gave eager support, while the assistant
Shire Engineer worked with students on the building site and responded to the many and varied requests over the
two year period. Our project began in 1984, and the pioneer hut was opened on November 8th 1985 in
conjunction with Victoria’s 150th anniversary celebrations. Students representing all primary schools in
the region took part in a Pioneer’s Day. On this day Year 10 students conducted workshops featuring
traditional crafts and skills. Another project based on the principle of active student learning had been completed.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
The main aims of the project were to:
* research early building techniques used in the Wimmera.
* locate existing early buildings within the area.
* collate data on existing structures with specific reference to materials used and the type of
  construction.
* draw to scale proposed construction and submit to council for building permit.
* Construct hut on school site.
The basic objective of the project was to create a dynamic, active and cohesive learning environment by:-
* small group work.
* ‘hands on’ experience.
* active decision making.
* co-operation with the local community.
* the breaking down of subject barriers.

IMPLEMENTATION
Timetabled Classes
In 1984 year 10 history classes operated as separate entities and were only timetabled together for one period
per week. A great deal of the time was lost in catching up on what was done the previous period and it caused
divisions in groups, as one group blamed another for their mismanagement. This was not overcome until mid-
1985 when students requested that both classes be timetabled simultaneously. With staffing changes this
was possible and all classes began to operate together. This enabled much more efficient use of time and groups
worked more cohesively. Friendships were strengthened while decision making became more active and involved.
Pioneers Past and Us was timetabled as History and the two year 10 classes were allocated two and half hours per
week.

Non-Timetabled Classes
In 1984 students voted to allocate some of their sport periods (2 per week) to working on the building site whereas in 1985, students chose to hold working bees after school and at the weekend to complete their tasks.

Decision Making Structure
The Central Committee was a crucial part of the structure.
Subject to school policy and the overall management of the Principal, the role of Central Committee was the
* implementation of the submission as approved by T.E.A.C.
* co-ordination of student sub-committees
* evaluation and ratification of spending proposals researched by student committees.
It was important to make the Central Committee representative and broadly based. It was comprised of:-
* parents — 2 representatives to be nominated by School Council and Parents Club
* staff — 3 representatives to be nominated by the curriculum committee.
* students — 4 students from Year 10 and 4 from Year 9 (4 boys and 4 girls) and
* the community — 2 interested members of the community sought by students, staff or council.

The Role of the Student Sub-Committees
A major part of student decision making took place in sub-committees. These sub-committees:-
* concentrated effort on particular aspects of the program.
* presented findings to class and amended findings/ recommendations to Central Committee.
Initially students organised themselves into:-
* mudbrick
* weatherboard
* drop log and
* split slab groups
Each group elected a group leader who represented them at Central Committee and a group scribe who was
responsible for the group diary.
All students were expected to keep a personal diary of their involvement while the scribe kept the group diary,
tabling such items as group activities and proposed
plans. This enabled a good flow of communication between students and teachers. Each week, students representing the groups would rotate the task of oral class reports, outlining group activities and proposals.

**CHANGES**

After the initial research and data collection was complete and students had made a class decision on the type of hut to be constructed, students regrouped into:

- foundations / floor
- walls, windows and doors
- roof lining
- chimney and
- restoration groups.

These groups remained for the resulting period.

Each group researched their major tasks, established a time sequence, costed decisions, sought assistance and then implemented their program.

**Management Committee**

Another change was the introduction of the Management Committee. This was formed after students experienced a great deal of frustration with the decision making process as initially all major decision-making had to take place through the Central Committee. It is interesting to consider the events which led to the formation of the Management Committee.

When students had collected sufficient information to make decisions within sub-committees, spokespersons would report to the class. When the class had ratified all sub-committee proposals, they presented these to the Central Committee for final ratification.

Students felt this was very cumbersome and extremely time consuming. Some problems were highlighted early in 1985 when the local builder was invited along to assist with decisions.

It was obvious that the demands of the roof groups were the only ones being heard and this was very much on a one to one basis. Other students representing other sub-committees sat impatiently, not involved and yet eager to have their requests heard and demands met. As a result of this meeting one of the students presented a submission to the staff requesting a Management Committee which would have power to by-pass Central Committee and enable students to be directly involved in the decision making. "The main reason for having a Management Committee is for the speeding up of construction of the history hut. The present system is clumsy as all requests must go to Central Committee. This has proven it wastes Central Committee's time. Trivial matters have been brought up at these meetings which would only take a "yes" or "no", but have to be given as a submission and blown out of all proportion. Decisions via the Management Committee would allow the progress of the hut to be quickened. It would also be giving more responsibility to students to run the project."

This request was agreed to and the new Management Committee was comprised of a student elected president and treasurer, a teacher, a vice-president or secretary, a photographer and a group organiser.

**STRATEGIES USED AND SKILLS DEVELOPED**

So far we have considered the decision making structure. The processes and activities involved in building the hut are best gleaned from this account of the skills developed during the project.

**Research skills:** students collected data from a range of sources. They investigated various building styles and materials, examined standing structures of ruins, took photographs of early buildings, interviewed early district residents and read diaries and journals. They also researched old newspapers.

**Data Collection:** students collected data in photographic, pictorial and written form and put their data into a report which was presented to the class.

**Communication Skills:**

**Oral Reports:** students developed their oral skills by presenting their reports to the class or Management Committee. A report on a mud brick hut went as follows.

"A mud brick hut would be inexpensive, easy to construct, but very time consuming ... the materials that would be required would be sky, clay, sand, chopped straw and cow dung. The amount of each depends on the type of earth that is available .....

**Written Reports, Letters, etc.:** A sample . . .

"Dear . . .

. . . I am writing to you regarding the mudbricks for our settler's hut. Unfortunately we have cleaned all the render off our bricks and now they have no protection . . .

We were wondering if you have a recipe for a sand or mud render which can be spread over our mud brick chimney . . .

**Personal Skills:** Students developed an ability to empathise with an historical situation during the course of the year. A student wrote about her role in the project: "this project has given me insight into the lives of early settler . . . their lives must have been very hard compared with ours. Coming into a strange unknown country and building their own hut . . . they built their hut from off the land. They didn't have their timber already cut to shape like we did . . . our settler's hut has given us an idea on what goes on in the real world. It gave us a chance to put into practice skills which we will no doubt need in the near future. For example skills of working together, communication skills, decision making skills, purchasing skills, letter writing skills . . . the list goes on!"
Social Skills: Students improved their social skills through social interaction, ie: communicating, listening and resolving differences. A student wrote, "the major decision-making... I have been involved in this year would have been through our personal recommendations... where all class members put forward their recommendations and at the end a vote is taken to decide the style, construction methods, materials to be used etc. The hardest decision to make in the recommendation was the type of roof... was it to be shingles thatch, slate or something else? Another controversial decision was about the type of uprights... I thought we should have pine; others thought redgum... after some hard arguing where each side put in their arguments for and against, I think we came up with the right decision - to have redgum uprights."

And another, "I think I have developed organisational strategies while working on the hut this year. I think I can now use my time more efficiently and in turn get more jobs done."

While others believed: "One area I found most difficult was trying to organise people to do allocated jobs... some people do one job for 2 minutes and then go to another one."

"I was in charge of the organisation of the tools we needed and the methods we used. I have made phone calls to certain people and private firms asking questions on certain aspects."

Manual Skills

Students used traditional type tools such as an adze. A student wrote: "The group work I enjoyed most was the actual physical working on the hut... although digging out the foundations of the settler's hut was hard, and downright frustrating when the plans went wrong, I found this group most rewarding."

As mentioned in the introduction, the hut was opened on Pioneer's Day, with year 10 students conducting workshops in traditional crafts. Research into activities such as butter making, candle making, bush dancing, rug making, peg doll making, washing, and damper making, and the teaching of these skills to primary school students complemented the research and activities required to build the hut.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED — LESSONS LEARNED

This extensive list of skills may be misleading. The following account of the problems encountered in the course of the year shows another aspect of the project.

The project was a learning experience for students, and teachers. How does one encourage real decision making, participation and involvement? Are there strategies or does it just happen? We discovered very quickly that it does not just "happen" and so we had to rationalise and begin to make things work. This did not take one lesson or a single strategy. It was a slow and gradual process... both students and teachers were involved in assessing, re-assessing and suggesting alternatives.

Group Work

Perhaps an initial error with setting up the various groups was allowing students to elect the groups in which they wished to operate — friendship groups formed. In some cases this worked well and students worked cooperatively by trusting each other. Such a co-operative group also used strategies such as a BBQ after finishing a working bee and this further enhanced working relationships. Consider this example: "the floor is now coming along quite nicely... the working bee ended about 5.30-5.40 and a BBQ tea was held... a few students became a little frustrated when digging the soil out because it was like clay and stuck to all the equipment. We just had to persevere with this." However one group which did not have much harmonious relations was the roof group. Possibly the group was too big, in any case, many students were reluctant to undertake the hard decision making and malaise set in. The problem was handled by the Management Committee in this manner.

"Members of the roof group came complaining to me (President) about their set up... their group was too large and they said that if they had a smaller group they would get more done and be more efficient. They stated that 50% of their group weren't participating satisfactorily."
The Management Committee called in the roof construction organizer to discuss the problem and the decision was made to split the group into two smaller groups to do separate tasks and work separately. One student protested about the Management Committee's decision and after consultation with him he was redirected to the other group. No other complaints were held.

The restoration group worked well under well-directed leadership however it was stated that "my main weakness in this project was not trusting or having confidence in my class mates. As organizer, it was my job often to allot tasks and on more than one occasion I did that task at home myself just in case the person hadn't done it." Peer group pressure operated negatively in one of the groups, with the result that students were hindered in their decision making, were reluctant to work in their own time and BBQs or lunch time activities were frowned upon. Students handled this in a very private way as stated in the student diary; "in some cases it was hard for me because the members of the group were not always willing to co-operate. Because they were my friends, I didn't want them to become too bossy, but somehow I did manage with this role, although not as well as I should have."

In each case in this group students adopted "ownership" of a particular aspect and set themselves a particular task which did not rely on the support and co-operation of others in that group.

However there were advantages in using the small groups and we attempted to improve the efficiency and involvement in the groups by:

* rotating the responsibility of the oral report, the newspaper article etc. around each member of the group. An oral report was expected each week and a written article for publication monthly.

* giving each student a particular job such as organizer, "scribe", equipment organiser etc. while all students were responsible for their weekly diary entries.

* scheduling half-an-hour planning time each week, during which students mapped out their week's work. Below is an extract showing the better organisations; "I organised work for our group to go on with on Monday. It was set as follows:

  i. finalise "wanted" advertisements for local newspapers (restoration group collecting artifacts!).
  ii. ring up Mr Finch, asking him whether he could give us some tips on restoration.
  iii. write a letter to Sovereign Hill, Swan Hill and Jeparit Museum asking them whether we would be able to visit them.
  iv. take a photo of butter churn for acquisition records.
  v. if all tasks are completed, we can do our research on building techniques."

Students were encouraged to solve problems within the groups and if this was not successful it was to be taken to the Management Committee.

Teacher Responsibilities
Students were not expected to carry all the responsibility. When projects became 'bogged down' teachers had a definite role to play.

It was important to assist students with decision making which would enable action to take place. Set dates and targets were most important. Students, like many, felt it was important to be working to a deadline.

It was also important for staff to meet regularly to assess the direction of the program. Teachers took responsibility for different parts of the program and needed to inform one another of difficulties etc.

Often class "gripe" sessions were held where students could express any grievance or put these in writing to staff unsigned. Sometimes groups had a gripe session to clear the air. This usually worked and strategies to overcome the problems were discussed. These sessions took place approximately once every six weeks.

These solutions may sound obvious yet we learned the hard way. It took time and experience to know when to apply pressure and when to allow students to solve problems. We had to develop confidence in the notion that a problem has a cause.

Students when encouraged to do so, analysed the causes and came up with solutions.

NEGOTIATED LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

Negotiated Learning
Each group set their own parameters for each skill-based activity. This was reviewed during the year in the light of the development of the project. Students color-coded their progress on their evaluation sheets, referenced each to their diary entry and then had it countersigned by the teacher. Students took great pride in this goal based assessment procedure, visually providing evidence of their strengths and the areas which required further development.

Assessment
Assessment of students was based on student self assessment sheets which highlighted:

* Ability to operate and develop decision making skills within and across groups.
* Areas of responsibility students had undertaken.
* Areas of initiative.
* Willingness to operate in a number of areas.
* Diary work and entry.

Evaluation processes.
Ongoing evaluation of the Pioneers Past and Present Project took place at various levels:

* Student Evaluation — students assessed their decision making, organisation, initiative and recording skills by using a diary and self assessment sheet.

* Group Evaluation — Groups assessed their progress by continuously reviewing their decision making, organisation etc. and suggesting various strategies and ideas for improvement.

* Management Evaluation — Management Committee also overviewed the workings of the group structure and the progress of the hut as a whole.

* Staff Evaluation — An ongoing evaluation was carried out by the staff involved, who discussed the progress of the project for an hour each week. The PEP team evaluated the Active Learning Projects as a whole.
Evaluation on Pioneer Day

On Pioneer Day the day the hut was opened, students worked with groups of 12 primary students ranging from 7-11 over a three hour period. Each group spent half an hour with each activity.

Students enjoyed themselves while teachers and community members also wandered in and around each group enjoying the activity and atmosphere of the day.

A letter received from a community member soon after the event stated:
"Congratulations on such a great day... you have all done a terrific job with Friday's activities to put the finishing touches to it. I must admit that tears welled in my eyes as Kathy was giving her little commentary. The visiting children obviously enjoyed their activities — I know one girl who did — she was also disappointed she didn't get to all of them.

Full marks for a job well done and congratulations again."

Of the Pioneers Past and Present Project, a student wrote:
"Over the past year I have learned to co-operate, to organise and have learnt about pioneers and how hard their life must have been...we also learnt about their hardships by experiencing them ourselves. It also gave me an idea of real life and how we can appreciate things through such activities as working bees. Overall it was a great year and I don't want it to end."

IMPLICATIONS

Advantages of student based learning projects.

It is important to analyse the success of this kind of project and these were the factors the PEP team considered significant ones.

Students in this project found the project to be extremely meaningful as there was a broadening of ownership of the curriculum. Programs were seen as meaningful to the school community as well as the general community.

* The teacher was no longer the sole-giver of the "good oil," but became the facilitator, the stimulator and the monitor of all activities.
* Students became responsible for their own decision making. This increased their self-awareness and therefore encouraged students to express opinions and relate these to their own ideas and preferences.
* Students began to relate better with all staff.
* Students were also encouraged to come to terms with their peer groups and to make decisions as a result.

Connect's 10th Birthday

The next issue of Connect marks our tenth anniversary - 60 issues in the last decade! We are inviting you to contribute in several ways:

1. Write for us

   We are aiming to publish a collection of reflections on the development of student participation over the decade. All contributions are welcome, and should be with us by the end of November.

2. Support us

   We are announcing the 10th Anniversary Connect Support Fund... with two parts. Firstly, it costs $1000 to produce each issue and we'd like to get ahead financially. Your birthday present could help us to do that. And secondly, we urgently need to upgrade equipment, particularly towards computerising records and art-work production. Your birthday present to our equipment fund could move us substantially in that direction.

   * Students moved away from text book learning and broadened their social skills of listening, communicating, resolving differences, giving and receiving support as well as learning to compromise with their decisions.
   * Students negotiated their learning and were encouraged to set realistic goals, work toward these and re-assess if targets had been set too high or too low.
   * The project enabled students to co-operate with a great number of people within their class, the local schools and the local community. Students worked alongside local historians, craft and trade people, staff, and a number of primary school students.
   * Students saw a purpose for written work via their diary or letters or in placing orders for materials requesting assistance.
   * Greater empathy for the life and skills used in earlier times, that learning to adze, lay bricks, use a cross-cut saw, make mud bricks and furnish the hut with appropriately dated furniture and artifacts, was developed.
J.S.C. TRAINING IDEAS:

ROLE-PLAYING A MEETING

The following play was developed for training days for students on Junior School Councils (JSCs) in the Preston/Reservoir and Clifton Hill/Northcote/North Carlton networks in Melbourne.

The play was intended to provide material for discussion of good and bad meeting procedures. The play was acted out initially by consultants, pretty much as written here (but with some enthusiastic improvisation). Students then broke into small groups to write lists of the good and bad things they had seen happening. These were reported back and accumulated on a board.

The play was then repeated, but with students calling out 'STOP' when bad practices were seen and suggesting changes in behaviour. This was hard to do, so students were gradually called in to replace or advise characters and change their role. The 'Conclusion' was written as a possible outline for an alternative end to the session.

This was then followed by a discussion in small groups about meeting procedures and rules, and then by a discussion of action plans.

Students ranged from grade 3 to grade 6. In one session, it was their first training day, in another, it was their third.

There's nothing absolutely fixed about the approach - we're still trying out training ideas, reflecting on them and learning how to run such sessions. We'd welcome you trying this approach and letting us know how it went, and also telling us about modifications you did or would make.

Contact the group of School Community Development Officers through Connect or directly to Mark McEuliffe, 72 David St., Preston 3072. Ph: (03) 484.3481.

THE PLAY

MUCKING ABOUT AT THE MEETING

Characters:

Interrupter, Bossy, Bumbler, Secretary, Chairperson, Good JSC Rep., Latecomer, Guest Speaker.

The audience has a set of minutes from the last meeting and an agenda for this meeting:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of last meeting
4. Business arising
5. Correspondence
6. General Business
   (a) Competitive Sport: Guest
   (b) School Camps
   (c) Other business
7. Next meeting

Everyone's talking and mucking about.

GOOD REP: Look, the bell's gonna go in a minute. Shouldn't we start? We're 20 minutes late and we should start.

CHAIR: Today's main topics are 'Competitive Sport' and 'School Camps'.

INTERRUPTER: Angela Dimitriopoulos nearly got killed on the school crossing last night. My grade wants to talk about the school crossing.

GOOD REP: I think we should put that under General Business. Let's stick to the Agenda.

BUMBLER: Agenda? Agenda? I haven't got a copy of the Minutes or the Agenda!

BOSSY: My Aunt's got a holiday farm at Shepparton where we can go for our school camp.

GOOD REP: But my grade (and the other grade 2/3) all said they wanted a school camp down by the beach.
BOSSY: The grade 2/3!! What would they know!? They probably just want to go swimming all the time!

BUMBLER: (to guest) What does your class think?

GUEST: I'm not a teacher. I've been invited here to talk about competitive sport.

BUMBLER: Oh, that's good. If we had better swimmers we could probably win the swimming sports.

SECRETARY: Should I write that in the minutes?

BOSSY: Haven't you been writing all this down? We've decided all school camps should be at my Aunt's farm. Write that down!

LATECOMER enters with noisy apologies, but makes no other contribution to the rest of the meeting.

CHAIR: Order! Order! Today we're also talking about 'Competitive Sport'.

GOOD REP: Didn't we say something about that at the last meeting? It should be in the minutes.

CHAIR: That's right. We've got the minutes of the last meeting ... here ... somewhere ... Has everyone got a copy?

BUMBLER: Coffee? ... Coffee? No thanks. Could I have an orange juice? And a piece of chocolate cake?

GOOD REP: Here it is! The minutes of the last meeting have recorded a motion which says: 'That the Junior School Council invite a guest speaker to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Competitive Sport'.

INTERRUPTER: That car nearly knocked Angela right off her feet! Great big red Commodore it was! But she's alright. She's at school today.

SECRETARY: Should I put that in the minutes?

GOOD REP: Isn't that why we have minutes? ... To keep a record of what's going on at the meeting?

SECRETARY: Oh well ... I dunno. I just write down whatever I can remember. You know ... a little bit here ... a little bit there.

BOSSY: Well, have you written down that all future school camps will be held at my Aunt's horse-riding farm in Shepparton? Go on ... write that down!

CHAIR: Did we really decide that? Who put the motion?

BOSSY: Oh, alright then! I move that we go to my Aunt's farm for our school camps. Alright? OK? ... Carried.

The meeting has descended into complete chaos at this point, with everyone talking together, about completely different subjects.

BUMBLER: So are we going to hold the school sports at your Aunt's farm?

INTERRUPTER: My father drives a red Commodore, but he wasn't anywhere near that school crossing. He works in the city!

SECRETARY: Should I write that in the minutes?

BUMBLER: Were we going to have a coffee or orange juice or something?

BOSSY: Horse-riding is absolutely the best sport!

GOOD REP: I can't stand it any more! Meetings are a complete waste of time! (storms out of room)

THE GOOD MEETING

At the end of this first run through, the students are divided into small groups and asked to brainstorm around 'Good Meeting Procedures Versus Bad Meeting Procedures' - they have to decide why the play represents poor meeting practice and where they will interrupt the replay.

The previous meeting is then replayed, much as it is written. However, the audience is encouraged to interrupt and make suggestions about how things should be proceeding. Ideally, students will step into the meeting, become part of it and alter the direction being taken.
CONCLUSION
In order that the play can be drawn to a conclusion, someone should be aware of a possible scenario:

CHAIR: If the Committee agrees, I'd like to suggest that we change the order of the Agenda. First of all, let's deal with the question of school camps. Bossy, do you have a motion you'd like to put to the meeting?

BOSSY: I move that all school camps be held at my Aunt's farm. Let's vote!

CHAIR: Don't you want to discuss it?

GOOD REP: It would be cheaper at the beach.

INTERRUPTER: It's too far to drive to Shepparton.

BOSSY: Come on. Let's vote!

CHAIR: Great confusion: the vote is lost.

The vote is lost. I suggest we really need more information and we should discuss this again next week. For that:

1. Bossy, will you provide us with details of how much it costs at your Aunt's farm;

2. Good Rep, will you find out about one or two beach camps?

3. Any other suggestions?

Now, let's move to the next item on the Agenda: 'Competitive Sport', and welcome our guest speaker.

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NEWS & REVIEWS

UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI PALERMO
FACOLTA' DI MAGISTERO
ISTITUTO DI FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE DELL'UMO

ITALIAN REQUEST

For a long time we have been collecting works about libertarian experiences and alternative experiments in pedagogy, in order to bring European themes and problems to Italy. In this way, through a working group, we intend to carry out research on theoretical hypotheses and to communicate proposals.

As well as books, magazines, working papers, reviews, interviews and so on, we think it is useful to collect visual works. It is our intent to organise a show or congress about European alternative and libertarian experiments in pedagogy, including videos, photos, audiovisual materials, records and so on.

If you have some works like these, we would be grateful if you could contact us with a summary of your visual works, so as to arrange ways, time and costs of this proposal which we intend to carry out about at the end of 1989.

I hope I hear from you soon.

Dr. Salvatore Vaccaro
Cattedra di Storia della Filosofia II
Istituto di Filosofia
Facolto' di Magistero
Universita' degli Studi di Palermo
P.zze. I. Florio, 24, 90139 Palermo, Italy

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YOUTH RADIO PROJECT

The Youth Radio Project will involve young South Australians in producing a series of programs for broadcast on JJJ FM, the ABC's National Youth Network which is coming to Adelaide in February 1990.

The project has been funded by the Youth Bureau of the Department of Employment, Education and Training, and is sponsored by the United Trades and Labor Council Executive. Over the twelve months to July 1990, Nicky Page will work with young people from schools, community projects, TAFE and other training schemes and workplaces.

Involvement will vary. Some young people will contribute recorded interviews; others will also work on scripting programs, sound mixing and final production.

As much as possible, the series of twelve 30-minute programs will be made by young people, although Nicky will be responsible for the final result, ensuring a uniformly high production standard.

Programs will give young people a voice, both in choosing the subjects for interviews and in being interviewed themselves.

Specific details on how different groups can be involved are being arranged individually, but in general the project officer is working with teachers, lecturers, youth
workers and so on to ensure that there is support available at all times. In many cases, work on the project will be an accredited part of course work.

Nicky is a qualified secondary teacher who has been working in public radio since 1981. She has run training programs at Triple M FM and worked as a freelance producer at 5UV since 1986, so has both radio production skills and experience in working with young people. An advisory group made up of mostly young people acts as a guide for the project officer. It includes students and representatives from the education department, youth projects, the ABC and unions.

The general aim of the series is to involve and inform young people about the transition from school to work, their legal rights and obligations at work, and the availability of work-based training. It will do this through interviews with young people speaking about their experience, and interviews by young people of others in the community chosen by those making the programs. The series producer will work with young people in groups, teaching the necessary skills and planning programs. There will also be support available for groups interested in contributing and recording original music or radio drama.

For more information or contributions to the program (not necessarily just from South Australia), contact Nicky Page at the Trade Union Resource Centre, Basement, Trades Hall, 11-16 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000. Phone: (08) 212 4291.

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By subscribing at a higher level, the following have helped keep Connect going. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following financial contributions since the last issue of Connect:

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**UPDATE: CHURCHILL CAMPUS, KURNAI COLLEGE**

In the last issue of Connect, Danielle McDougall and Jason Shields wrote about the Student Executive at Churchill Campus of Kurnai College in Victoria's LaTrobe Valley. Danielle has now provided the following further information:

**HOW THE EXECUTIVE IS MADE UP**

If you are elected by your homegroup to be the class representative, then you must pick the Student Executive subject. By having a representative, your class learns information about school-related subjects and your say is taken into account. Some homegroups don't have representatives as there is not much interest. In this case, that particular homegroup goes without a representative for a semester.

Student Executive is an elective unit that runs for only two periods a week. Hopefully a representative is selected for a homegroup before the day of course selection. This then avoids the problem of timetable clashes. Ultimately, it is the student's decision as to what class they prefer most.

If a student is not elected to be a representative, they can still benefit from Student Executive as there are a number of class places for those people in that situation.

The class is basically run by a president and two support teachers help out when needed. There are no more formal teaching times, as the students benefit more from actual meeting procedures.

Danielle McDougall

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**WRITE!**

We rely upon and welcome your letters and contributions. If there's something interesting happening, we want to know about it. Don't ask ... don't hesitate just sit down and dash off a brief (or long) description. If you have a photo or drawing, even better. We can't pay ... but we'll send you a free copy!
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