WHAT DO I DO?

"What do I do Monday morning?" has been the catchcry of those seeking and advising on classroom practices - for the last two decades at least.

The demand for classroom strategies is growing stronger, too, with factors such as increased retention rates (why exactly are we here?), rapid changes in economic, social and educational climates, and constant external demands on schools, all potentially leading to a sense of bewilderment. So easy to just pull out that textbook; so easy to get trapped into the same routines. What do we do on Monday morning? We need answers and models.

Connect starts from the assumptions that answers and models do exist and that they're already there, in place, being tried, learnt from, changed, re-trying. Connect starts with a belief that it has a place to share and resource that learning.

We also, admittedly, have a suspicion of the short-term 'Monday morning' syndrome. "What do I do?" can easily lead to the stop-gap, the performance, the bank of disconnected spectacles. That's not education but theatre. Connect is interested to share the longer-term approaches - Monday morning, Tuesday, the next Monday, next month - that build an active process of classroom collaboration between teacher and learner, around content and processes that are seen as meaningful and worthwhile by both teacher and students.

In that sense, "student participation" is a "verb", not a "noun". It is an approach, not a course.

In 1989, we would like to explore some ways of improving our support for teachers and students who are committed to and active in increasing the participation of students in their education. That might mean offering resources to work alongside classroom projects, to resource workshops, to help with documenting and sorting out the scramble and rush of exciting and frantic practice.

This issue includes some of that experience, from Australia and overseas. It also asks for your response to the directions Connect should take. Already, for the next issue, we have material exploring directions for programs in the area of School to Work transition and Social Justice, and for Primary School student decision making.

Many thanks to Bruce Wilson and others for ensuring that Connect has continued so admirably in 1988. Bruce's active involvement with Connect will continue this year (between all his other commitments) and we have vowed that our other, organisational challenge is to ensure that Connect never again has to rely solely on the energies of an individual!

Roger Holdsworth

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Cartoons on pages 8 and 19 by Simon Kneebone; courtesy YACVIc.
Photographs on pages 6 and 9 courtesy ANSS.

Cover:

The peaceful southern Appalachians, home to Foxfire - see page 20. Photograph by Roger Holdsworth.

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WHAT'S THE STORY?
work education, skills development
and accreditation

Much has been made in recent times about the importance of students developing skills that give them the best chance to be flexible within a rapidly changing workforce. This view is held by those who believe that education is inextricably linked to the economy. The basis for this argument is that what is taught in our schools will lay the foundation for an economically competitive Australia. The benefit of this will be improved productivity and profits that will result in a higher standard of living for all Australians ... or so the story goes.

Many educators find the economic argument too limited. Skills need to be developed by students that help them understand and adapt to a rapidly changing society. Work and economics are just a part of the total life picture of any individual. This argument recognises that students are increasingly faced with complex sets of social pressures and relationships, some of which, if not properly understood, are potentially damaging. Family crises, drug abuse and unemployment are three graphic examples that illustrate this point. Educating about work is important, but in the context of its place in the whole life of the individual.

I don't believe that the above two positions are mutually exclusive. Skills can be developed by students, that foster productive participation in both a rapidly changing workforce and society generally. These are called transferable or generic skills. Transferable skills are those that empower people to participate successfully in a variety of contexts. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is relevant to most work and social situations. Other skills that can be described as transferable from one situation to another include: the ability to work cooperatively in groups or teams; the ability to solve problems; time management; maintenance of high self-esteem etc.

Understanding the importance of these skills is not new to most teachers. Curriculum policy documents are riddled with statements like: 'develop self-confidence', 'be able to work in groups', 'develop life skills', 'develop initiative', 'be able to communicate effectively' and so on. Many would also claim that these policies are being put into practice in their mainstream curriculum, or in more adventurous youth-action and experience-based learning programs. I have no argument with this.

What I am contending is that there are still significant gaps between policy, practice and students being able to articulate what skills they are developing. There is a relationship, I believe, between what students have understood they have gained in their studies, and how teachers evaluate, give credit for and report on their curriculum. Students are often involved in some powerful learning experiences in schools, usually experiences that foster the development of transferable skills, only to have them ignored, given mere cursory mention in a report or be evaluated on the basis of something completely different.

To illustrate this point, I am going to relate a story of a student from a Melbourne western suburbs technical school, involved in a community volunteer program:
Fuzz’s story....

Fuzz, an active fourteen year old, expressed an interest in participating in the school’s community volunteer program. The project that Fuzz was interested in, was working for one afternoon a week at a local spastic centre. Fuzz’s pastoral care and English teacher was delighted. Here was a chance for Fuzz to channel some of that year 8 energy into something worthwhile and productive.

Luckily, or so the teacher thought, the afternoon available to Fuzz coincided with a double period of English. This meant that there would be no problem having to negotiate with another teacher to have Fuzz released from class. Fuzz’s English teacher felt a little guilty when several others expressed concern that Fuzz was not released from their classes. Perhaps they wanted to get involved in the project?

The task was set.

Fuzz organised the parent permission forms, telephoned the centre ... only after the teacher advised Fuzz on how to use the telephone. The teacher was surprised that Fuzz was so nervous about this, taking it for granted that everyone could use a phone. Fuzz carefully worked out what had to be said on the first visit, made the travel arrangements and began the project.

Time passed. Lunchtime in the staffroom.

"Wait at the door and I’ll see if she’s there. I said: wait at the door!" one teacher said, in a state of coffee withdrawal.

"Didn’t anyone teach you to knock?" another said, gliding past and disappearing onto a card table.

"Err, I did, and ..." replied the nervous and perplexed student to the empty space where the teacher had been.

Fuzz’s teacher was deeply immersed in a game of 500. Somewhere between a six spades and a ten no trumps bid, a teacher (one disgruntled at missing the opportunity for Fuzz to be released from their class - as if seeking revenge for past tricks lost) asked, "How’s Fuzz going down at the Spastic Centre?"

"Good," was the reply. "Fuzz’s writing about it this afternoon."

Another score was recorded on the back of a Ministerial Memo.

Later, in the classroom:

“What’ll I write?” asked Fuzz, then whispered, "I hate writin’!"

"Write about your experiences at the Spastic Centre."

"We’d write about stuff like that?"

"Of course you are," the teacher said encouragingly.

Little did Fuzz know that this was the Grand Plan – to write about the Spastic Centre – real life, meaningful experiences of Fuzz. Can’t get much more relevant than that!

“How’ll I start?"

The teacher, always well prepared, had worked out the reply beforehand.

“What about if we get another student to interview you about your experiences and you can tape the interview? You can then write down what you said from the tape. Later, you can go over it, add things you may have forgotten to say and make changes until you feel that it’s right.”

Fuzz agreed and the writing process began.

What did Fuzz like about the Spastic Centre?

Fuzz was impressed by the Spastic Centre. The workers there treated Fuzz like an equal. Fuzz was able to have a coffee in the staffroom anytime and chat with fellow workers about the job and life in general.

What did Fuzz learn at the Spastic Centre?

Fuzz learnt how to communicate with people with speech difficulties using a communication board. Fuzz learnt about the social and physical difficulties of people with cerebral palsy.

Fuzz solves a problem for the benefit of another!

Fuzz was talking to a young person with cerebral palsy. BMX bikes were the craze. Fuzz’s friend was able to ride a BMX with training wheels, but would dearly love to have the experience of flying over a ramp like other kids. This was a particular passion of Fuzz’s - he knew how good it felt. Fuzz’s mind ticked over. Eventually, after a few minor bruises to Fuzz, a ramp and a safety system was invented. Fuzz’s friend experienced that flying feeling.

The teacher was knocked out by what Fuzz had experienced. Fuzz completed the piece on the Spastic Centre, with perfect punctuation and spelling, after only three drafts.
The learning that took place in that Spastic Centre was seen as important to Fuzz's development. However, Fuzz was only assessed on that one piece of writing. It was acknowledged that Fuzz completed the required amount of writing; it was acknowledged that Fuzz's writing was improving; it was acknowledged that Fuzz could write about experiences. However, in terms of reporting what Fuzz had learnt, the skills that were being developed at the Spastic Centre, all Fuzz's report said was: "Fuzz has developed a sense of responsibility by doing a great job at the Spastic Centre."

At no time was it stated explicitly that Fuzz was developing communication skills and was able to apply these skills in a number of different contexts - with peers in the interview situation, with adult workers and with the disabled. Nor was it stated that Fuzz was developing and applying problem solving skills (the invention of the ramp), demonstrating initiative (again, the ramp), developing organisational skills (organisation of and preparation for the project) and displaying the development of team skills (working well with co-workers).

The point of all this is that there is a responsibility on the part of teachers to not only provide the opportunity for students to develop transferable skills, but also to identify them, acknowledge and give credit for them. Having done this, it is important that students understand what skills they have gained, how they can apply them in a variety of situations and can articulate exactly what they have gained, to others.

Give thought to this next time a student sitting across from you in a meeting, speaks at a School Council.

Peter Blunden
Inner Western School Support Centre
Western Metropolitan Region
Victorian Ministry of Education

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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR**

**LOCAL YOUTH INITIATIVE GRANTS 1988/89 FUNDING**

An announcement from the Minister For Youth Affairs, Mr Neil Pope, MLA.

As part of the Victorian Government's program of support to young people the Youth Affairs Division is making available grants for local youth initiative programs developed for or by young people. Grants are available to young people's clubs and organisations, to workers with young people, community agencies and local government. A maximum grant of $2000 is available. This is the second of two funding rounds to be offered during the 1988/89 Financial Year.

Preference will be given to those applications which meet one or more of the following criteria:

a) meets a demonstrated community need;
b) involves young people in the planning and management of the project;
c) involves socially, culturally and/or economically disadvantaged young people.

Applications close 10th March, 1989.

Application Forms and Guidelines are available from

**YOUTH AFFAIRS DIVISION**
7TH FLOOR
80 COLLINS STREET
MELBOURNE 3000
PHONE: (03) 6556372
ANSS: First National Secondary Student Conference
Eaglehawk, Canberra; October 1988

For three days, 45 students from every state and territory in Australia, participated in Australia's first National Secondary Student Conference, in workshops that were facilitated and organised by secondary students.

The Conference participants discussed issues such as the relevance of curriculum, education on the political agenda, and student participation in the classroom.

Together, the students critically analysed what and how they learn at school. From these discussions, they have produced statements and recommendations. A report of the workshops will also be presented to the Commonwealth Government.

This was a true example of students participating in their education!

The Government's Social Justice Strategy states:

... A key aspect of the Social Justice Strategy is to enhance the capacity of people to have a say in decisions that affect their lives ... A central aspect of this is employee participation in workplace decisions.

If students are going to be expected, in the future, to participate in decision making in the workplace, they need to be equal partners in the decisions that are made about their education.

In order to gain the necessary skills to participate effectively as adults in their future workplaces, students need to have the opportunity, support and resources to enable them to take an active part in decisions made in their classrooms, schools, states or territories and nationally.

Social Justice in education should mean students negotiating their curriculum, helping to formulate school discipline policies, being part of state or territory and national school reviews.

Education involves not only students but also members of the broader community. Teachers, parents, population groups, employers, unions and other community agencies should all have input into the development of educational policy and its practical implementation.

If, as the government says, education should become more relevant to the present and future needs of students and
society, then it is essential that all of these groups are involved in decisions made regarding education. Through their involvement with the Australian Network of Secondary Students (ANSS), state and territory networks and the National Youth Council of Australia (NYCA), the young people attending this conference also developed a knowledge of political structures and processes.

It is important to note that students' ongoing involvement in and attendance at this conference were possible because of the ongoing support and encouragement from families and schools. For many students, this support is not present. Social Justice in education should focus on redressing this and providing the opportunity for more students to experience the level of education that students such as I have been involved in. To be truly equitable, every secondary student should have these opportunities.

All of the issues that were discussed during the conference are important comments on the state of education in Australia today.

If the government wants to make education more relevant and give students the lifeskills which will help us be effective and worthwhile citizens in society, then they need to commit more financial and human resources towards student participation at all levels of educational and personal decision making.

Jayne Pilkington
ANSS - ACT

This outline of the ANSS Conference is taken from the address given by Jayne Pilkington to the National Youth Congress in Canberra.

Most of the ANSS Conference took place in workshop sessions. Student facilitators have provided the following reports of some of these workshops:

NETWORKS

Increased Skills

The idea of networking is both simple and complex to grasp. Most people, when asked the meaning of the word 'network', will mention links, contacts etc. 'Network' is confusing also because it is something we do when we talk to others, exchange information etc, as well as being something in itself, such as a network of students.

First off, this workshop group discussed what participants saw as networking:

* linking organisations
* working together
* helping each other
* stronger voice
* support
* organisation and cooperation
* building structures of people
* understanding each other
* communication
* smaller group forming large group
to deal with issues
* a service to students
* sharing resources and contacts
* participation between bodies
* an organisation where not only student input is needed, but teacher, principal, faculty seniors etc input is also needed

Why set up a network? What is the purpose/aim of the network? Who benefits?

WHY?

* common problems to be dealt with
* an organisation has more power than the individual
* awareness and liaison between whoever is involved
* pool resources
* support and information
* to achieve action

WHAT?

* to implement ideas and give advice
* to support, aid, communicate, inform

WHO?

* everyone involved
* anyone who has anything to do with the issue concerned
* initiators and people who turn to the network
How to set up a network?
Because networks are based on the idea that people communicate, exchange ideas, share information and tasks, the skills needed to network successfully can be referred to as 'people' skills or social skills. Because no-one is really a hermit, everyone has these social skills. Some people do better than others but it's mainly a matter of confidence.

The workshop facilitators introduced three forms of behaviour: passive, assertive, aggressive - to illustrate how behaviour can affect the workings of a network and therefore communication between people. These situations were then role-played.

Finally there was a discussion of who can be involved in a network and how to build up contacts. How networks operate at different levels - local, regional/state, national - was also discussed. The workshop then did a spot of networking itself, by exchanging information about the where and hows of setting up their state or territory networks and the contacts used.

Lizzie and I were pretty nervous about the whole thing. We both spent heaps of time (modest aren't we!) preparing, and know the effort was worth it. It was hard to get people to communicate their ideas all the time, but we all learnt heaps and received many positive comments afterwards. We had a great time (especially during the role plays) and were happy with the outcome.

Becky

PARTICIPATION

Motivation, Communication, Support

Again and again, apathy is identified as a big problem area - something that prevents wide participation by students; something that frustrates students trying to get others active. But apathy is a symptom of what's happening, not a cause.

Groups and individuals have found that they need to build the motivation of students, to improve communication about what is happening and why, and to develop support and resources for increased participation.

This workshop asked some questions and brainstormed around them:

What motivates students to become involved?
* a belief in what you're doing and in yourself
* possible opportunities
* encouragement from others

* seeking change
* concern
* self gain

How can we motivate others?
* involve them
* point out the rewards to be gained
* use enthusiasm as a tool
* encourage
* alert them to the pros and cons of a situation
* alert them to the consequences if they aren't motivated
* be optimistic
* sell your view
* develop tactics
* be truthful
* show what's to gain; show results.

What is communication?
Exchanging thoughts, ideas, opinions or simply information. This is done by:
* telecommunications: telephone, TV, radio, media, fax
* correspondence: letters, notes, memoranda, posters
* sign language
* body language
* face-to-face contact.

It's vital for effective student participation that we develop contacts and be able to relate what we learn to others.

**How do we communicate effectively?**

To enhance communication:
* have respect for other people's opinions
* listen
* convey your message clearly and simply
* advertise
* know what you're talking about
* use all available resources
* make good eye-contact
* have a positive/objective attitude
* maintain effective and interesting conversation.

**How do we develop resources, contacts and support?**

Accumulating resources, contacts and support is essential for effective student participation and can be achieved through effective communication.

Suggestions included:
* remember names, faces, places - write down addresses and phone numbers
* use initiative in seeking resources - identify the extent of resources you can obtain from organisations around you, ANSS, etc
* introductions are important - opportunities exist here at the Congress

Support: as students involved in student affairs and participation, we require much support from those around us. Identify your own capacity; delegating things is vital.

**Conclusion:**

This workshop outlined the basics of effective communication and accumulation of resources and support. It was agreed that motivation, communication and support are all vital for student participation. The final message was:

You have ample opportunity to try out these suggestions. Success may not come immediately, but work to develop your skills in these areas.
In the Classroom

This workshop dealt with the conditions needed to enable effective student participation to occur in a classroom.

Student participation is important at various levels of a school: in what subjects are taught (curriculum), whether an oval gets built (structures), how many teachers the school gets (organisation), how you get marked (assessment), what the rules of the school might be (discipline) and more.

All of these bigger issues have an effect on what happens daily in the classroom.

Recommendations:

When in the classroom, students felt the following features to be essential for student participation to operate:

* Relationships between students and teacher should be cooperative. Even thought the roles of a teacher and a student are different because one is there to teach, the other to learn, it doesn't always work like this. Learning and teaching can happen for both. It's OK for students and teachers to admit that they 'don't know'.

* For this to happen, the teacher/student ratio is important. Discussion, exchange of information and learning for teachers and students happens more effectively in small groups rather than 30 students to one teacher.

* Small groups also enable teachers to try out new and more exciting ways of conveying the information they have to students. Remember - teachers don't stop learning just because they are teaching.

* What is taught and how are crucial because who wants to learn about something that they don't see as relevant to their lives or interesting. Maths at McDonalds can be fun and relevant, just as outings and camps are means of learning and teaching in an environment different to a classroom.

* Negotiation allows the class, with the teacher, to design a course which enables the students to learn about the subject so that they can own it and thereby develop confidence. The teacher's responsibility is to provide a framework for cooperative learning and approaches to the study of this subject that generate enthusiasm. Negotiation is about communication between students and teachers.

SRCs: Practical Use of Skills

The perfect SRC representative is:

* able to communicate
* motivated
* responsible
* self confident
* good at listening
* cooperative
* respectful of majority opinions:
* tolerant, respectful, patient
* determined
* organised
* informed and aware of events that happen around the school
* aware of where to obtain resources
* flexible and adaptable

The perfect SRC has:

* commitment
* members
* equality - equal representation and treats everyone equally
* a constitution (very important!!)
* good management and strong leadership
* good networking - communication with other schools, states etc
* support from the Principal/teacher (but not management).

The SRC Constitution includes:

* aims and objectives of the SRC
* clarity (no big words!)
* an ability to implement the constitution
* membership rules
* provisions for changes to be made
* voting rules - nominations to become representatives; how decisions are to be made
* quorum - how many
* finance - balance, treasurer's report
* accreditation

Advantages:

* learning experience
* meet people
* student involvement
* initiative

Disadvantages:

* absence (when doing SRC activities, your teachers mark you absent)

Specific problems SRCS face:

* commitment, motivation
* lack of student participation
* lack of organisation
* lack of money

Regular problems brought to the SRC:
* social
* smoking
* uniforms
* lunchtime (too boring)
* toilets

How to get skills:
* practise
* listen
* follow others' example

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**CURRICULUM**

The curriculum of the school is not just what is learned; it's also how you learn and the school structure in which you learn.

Teachers and students, parents and children, big kids and little kids - education is very linked with questions of power and roles. Do students have rights? Who says? What are rights anyway? If you have rights, do you also have responsibilities?

This workshop tackled this difficult topic and arrived at a series of statements:

Students need to have access to and understanding of their rights and responsibilities. There needs to be some type of enforcement of rights.

These rights would include:
* the right to a good education, free from discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour and creed;
* the right not to be singled out for punishment that is detrimental to a student's health and well-being;

Increasingly, students are being asked to do more and more as participants in educational decision making but often they are not given adequate support, assistance, time or recognition for their work.

Schools need to ensure that students who participate in educational decision making are not disadvantaged by their activity. Currently, students may have to choose between regular school work and their work for and on behalf of students in school communities.

**Roles, Rights, Responsibilities**

* the right to complain about a crooked teacher or to query their ability via the Principal;
* the right to have a say in the contracts that concern their education;
* the right to privacy;
* the right to have problems, whether large or small, taken seriously;
* the right to have access to a counsellor.

Similarly, student responsibilities would include:
* the responsibility to respect other people's (including students') space;
* the responsibility to make sure that all students have the same rights;
* the responsibility to respect other people's right to an education;
* the responsibility to respect the laws and rules of the school;
* the responsibility to respect teachers' rights;
* the responsibility to catch up on work missed due to extra-curricular activities and illness.

**Accreditation**

The glamour of being an ANSS or SRC or state representative is far outweighed by the hard work (voluntary) and time commitment you make.

Most of the students who attended the ANSS Conference have been actively involved in student participation activities during their school time. The issue of accreditation can be achieved within the school setting and beyond.

Forms of accreditation:
* homework/assignment extensions
* SRC work to be incorporated into school tasks
* period allocation
* referrals/references made available to students
* recognition and acknowledgement of activities
* financial support
* support through access to resources

Strategies:
* promote awareness
* stay involved
* be committees, productive, active

Promotion:
* address students
* newsletters, newspapers
* community groups
* posters

Period allocation - in which to pursue student participation activities:
* use of free periods/sport
* use of reading time
* use of one unit subjects (NSW)

SRC incorporation:
* good communication with teachers
* English: promotes good public speaking
* Legal Studies/Social Justice

Who to approach:
* Teachers
* Boards of Education
* Principals
* ANSS/YACA etc
* Regional Directors
* State Directors

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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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**OTHER WORKSHOPS**

In addition to these accounts, there were also workshops on:

**Networking:**
- ANSS Background and Structure
- ANSS Relationship Through Networks
- ANSS Charter

**Student Participation:**
- Student representation at all levels

**Curriculum:**
- Future of education
- Relevance of curriculum

**Stress Management**

**Assertiveness Workshops:**
- held in conjunction with participants of the National Youth Council of Australia (NYCA)

**Social Justice Workshops:**
- held in conjunction with NYCA.

Streams included:
- Education
- Health
- Law
- Employment and Training
- Housing

**Issues:**
- Education on the political agenda
- Tertiary tax
- Discrimination and disadvantage
- Assessment procedures/tertiary entrance

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**SCHOOL STRUCK**

A full report is being prepared for the Commonwealth Government and this will contain information from all workshops. This will be available through School Struck, the newsletter of the Australian Network of Secondary Students. For copies, contact ANSS at PO Box 1108, St Kilda South 3182 Vic. Phone: (03) 537.1833.

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**HELP!**

With this issue of Connect you will find a subscription form.

Connect needs to build a solid base of subscribers to survive. The most reliable subscribers are those who have an interest in and commitment to the practice of youth participation in education.

You know these people.

You know someone - a fellow teacher, an active student, a consultant, an SRC, a youth group - who is NOT currently a subscriber.

Please use this form. Pass it on to them. Tell them how useful Connect is, how much you enjoy reading it. Tell them how little it costs to bring that enjoyment into their life. Encourage them to subscribe! Give a gift subscription.

Please - we depend on you ... again.
NATIONAL INQUIRIES

Two inquiries at a National level should interest those active in supporting student participation.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training is undertaking an inquiry into "factors affecting student participation in post-compulsory education and training, particularly those which affect Year 12 retention rates." The Committee is particularly looking at the role of school curriculum in encouraging students to complete post-compulsory schooling, and also at the influence of factors such as attitudes to schooling (amongst others). Enquiries to Allan Kelly on (062) 77.4571.

The Schools Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training is consulting at a national level on a draft statement of "national goals for schools". Responses are invited by mid-March 1989. Contact Ms Jan Trehrella on (062) 89.3500.

BROTHERHOOD PROJECT

Basile Varghese is the Education Officer at the Brotherhood of St Lawrence in Melbourne. Basile is particularly interested to make contact with schools interested to develop some active learning and student participatory approaches to curriculum around social justice, poverty etc. Contact the Brotherhood at 67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 3065 or phone Basile on (03) 419.7055.

ACT STUDENT DESIGNS LOGO

A student at the Reid College of TAFE has designed the logo for the Australian Curriculum Studies Association's Curriculum '89 Conference to be held at the Australian National University in July.

Melissa Webber of Red Hill, won a competition held to design a logo that would be used to promote and identify the national conference on the future of Australian curriculum. Her design, based on the conference theme "Which Way for the Curriculum?" using arrows and a stylised map of Australia, was selected by the Curriculum '89 Conference Planning Committee as most appropriate to represent its aims.

A series of workshops will be organised and papers presented on issues such as:
* Girls and Mathematics
* Accountability in Education
* Student Assessment
* Parent-Teacher Partnerships
* School-Industry Links
* Student Perspectives of the Effectiveness of Year 12

The Conference will be held at Burton and Garran Hall of the Australian National University from 6-9 July.

For more information, contact Jim Cumming (DEET) (062) 83.7777 or John Dash (ANU) (062) 49.2892 or write to the Committee at PO Box 1333, Woden ACT 2606.

Over 300 participants are expected to attend the conference which will feature speakers from around Australia representative of students, teachers, administrators and the wider community. In addition, a
Cool Day For Kids

In August 1988, the Kyneton and District School Community Development Program Network held a Cool Day for Kids - a skill development day for student councillors. As distinct from many others, this day mainly involved students from primary schools - Metcalfe, Kyneton, Tyliden and Lancefield Primary Schools and Kyneton Technical High School.

The report of the day is a full and fascinating record of a highly successful day. As well as the program and stimulation material, there are details from each school about student council achievements (from posters the schools made), outlines of workshop results on "conflict resolution", "decision making", "problem solving", "listening skills" and "questioning skills". Both student and adult participants contributed evaluations.

"Won't the two who pulled out before we came, be pipped when they realise what they missed?" said one participant. We hope to carry more information next issue, but in the meantime, contact Clare Claydon, Kyneton and District SCDP Network, Kyneton Tech. High School, Epping Street, Kyneton 3444.

The Maze

Unravelling the Maze is a training manual produced by South Australian students to help students participate in making decisions about their future.

Secondary Organisations

Students, like people from any other walk of life, have the democratic right to have a say in decisions which will affect their academic studies and lives. Often this is ignored by school administration and the Government who want students to be passive recipients of education - "good" kids who will obey without question. The most recent and obvious example of the Government's ignorance towards student response is the introduction of the Tertiary Tax. Despite heated student rallies and demonstrations against its introduction, the infamous and exploitative tax was included in the 1988 August Budget. Students collectively face a real threat. If ever there was a need for the unity of students, it is now.

Bearing this urgency in mind, 50 secondary students met at Flemington High School and conducted a student forum which resulted in the inauguration of the Student Regional Reference Group. This group consists of 12 secondary students from six school support centre areas in the Western Region.

From this group, three representatives are elected to sit as part of the students in the Western Region of the Regional Board of Education which is like a mega school council for the region. Essentially, it is an attempt to unite all the S.R.C.'s in the Western Region to form a strong and collective student body which will fight to maintain and enforce student rights on behalf of all secondary students in the region. This is the first step for secondary students to actively ensure that their voices are heard loud and clear. Some of the issues being discussed by the group include the right of secondary students to demand an assessment of their teachers' professional competence, student welfare policies, Anstude regulations, smoking rooms and the recognition and strengthening of S.R.C.'s.

Although this mega student body has only been established recently, we believe that if we fight the system from within, along with our more radical counterparts who fight from outside, we will one day succeed in establishing a free and democratic educational environment, where student rights and equity are upheld.

The manual was published by the State Council of Students (SCoS) with funding from the "Parents and Students in Schools" Committee and PEP.

Unravelling the Maze provides comprehensive information, techniques and ideas for developing students' role in decision making. It covers basic leadership skills and strategies for motivating students into action, communication and group skills, roles and responsibilities of active students, a guide to training aids, and how to gain credit and support from adults.

Contact SCoS, 4th Floor, Education Centre, 31 Flinders Street, Adelaide 5000.

MAV Kit & Menu

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has produced a Youth Participation Kit covering areas such as "Why Youth Participation?", "Real Power/Influence", "Case Studies", "Planning Guidelines" and more. This can be used by itself or as a companion to the video "Making Youth Participation Work".

The MAV has also reprinted a kit developed by young people in Footscray in conjunction with the City Of Footscray Youth Development Officer. "Youth Action and Power: A Menu for Meetings" is an easy to use folder of sheets around separate topics: "Formal Meetings", "Being a Good Representative", "Motions" and so on.

The whole kit, consisting of both the above, is available for $10 (includes postage) from The Secretary, Municipal Association of Victoria, PO Box 7082, 416 St Kilda Road, Melbourne 3004.

If you are interested in participating and assisting, please phone (03) 346 1630 after 3.30pm.

Terry Wu, University High School.
Member of the Inner City Student Reference Group.
In 1989, Connect enters its tenth year of production. It enters that year in a rather precarious financial position, but also with a renewed commitment to sharing and supporting information about youth participation in education. But where is Connect going? And how should it proceed? In the first half of 1989, we'll be undertaking a review of Connect directions and structures. We'll be thinking and talking about content, style, costs, work structures and so on.

We want your views on Connect. What is important to keep? What is necessary to change?

We have tried to outline some of the issues below - openly and honestly. We've left space for your comments. We want you to help us with your responses. Please complete, detach and send in the form, as soon as possible. We want Connect to be a bigger, better and more useful newsletter. With your commitment and our commitment, we can achieve that!

1. CONTENT

Connect has included long and short articles, concentrating on practical questions. It has also included reviews and listings of resources available, as well as lists of publications received by Connect. We've tried to balance information about classroom participation and school governance - not always successfully.

What is useful to you? What do you want to see more of? Is there anything we should drop? Is there anything missing that should be included?

We're aware of an apparent bias towards secondary level education. This mainly reflects a lack of contributions about and from other areas, such as primary education, but may also be a result of our own backgrounds and contacts. How can we overcome this bias?
In recent years, there's been a substantial decrease in the number of articles describing practices. Does this mean that there's been an actual decrease in such student participation practices? (Why?) Or does it mean that people aren't writing about what's happening? (Why not?) Or does it mean that practices are now so ordinary that no-one sees a need to write about what happens everywhere, everyday? (Really?) How can we encourage, support, assist more documentation and sharing?

2. READERSHIP

When Connect started at the end of 1979, it was mainly directed to teachers running and supporting student-participatory projects and approaches. The workshops in 1980-81 (largely student attended) and the later growth in active SRCs, expanded the readership and many students and student groups subscribed and wrote. Connect has tried to write simply, directly and actively for students and teachers. Is this the correct direction?

For a while, there was a big increase in subscriptions through institutions - school libraries, SRCs etc. Recently, (with the end of PEP money?) these subscriptions have not been renewed as frequently as others. At whom should we direct content, style and subscription requests? Are there others (groups or individuals) who should be chased to subscribe?

3. CENTRALISATION

Connect is a national newsletter. But with Connect based physically in Victoria, without travel money, it is natural that our immediate contacts dominate the newsletter. How can we shift this state-centrism? How can we encourage more information and subscriptions from throughout Australia?

One suggestion has been for the establishment of a National Advisory Board, with a small core of dedicated Connect supporters in each state, who would represent the newsletter, gather articles, sell subscriptions, distribute copies at conferences etc. What do you think? If such a structure were set up, would you be interested to be a member?
4. WORK LEVEL

Connect has been put together for ten years by one or two people - typing, layout, distribution, administration etc. That's been unpaid. It's already a pretty big job and, if we are to grow, it will become impossible. In 1989, we are intending to have a two-day a week unpaid position, but this may not be feasible in the long term. What is the best way to handle the work involved? If Connect continues to be produced in Victoria, should we develop a production group? Would you be on it?

5. FREQUENCY

Connect is officially published six times a year. Often we can't keep to this schedule, organisationally or financially, so publish a double issue. How often should we publish? When? A smaller Connect frequently or a larger Connect less frequently?

6. STYLE

Connect has always been typewritten. While this is at least partly a financial decision, it also maintains an 'accessible' style - it aims to convey the message that anyone can and should write, without the need for a 'finished' and 'polished' article. But it often doesn't look as 'professional' as other magazines and perhaps attracts only the already committed. For example, in Britain, Lib Ed decided to change to a more 'glossy' style to reach a wider, less committed group of subscribers. Should we change Connect's style? How? Should we type-set? Should we chase up computer-based desktop publishing options? Do we need more graphics? How can we get these? Do we need an attention grabbing cover?

7. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Connect started with less than 50 subscribers. It grew to around 600 but has recently declined to under 400 - PEP again? To be financially viable, we may need over 1000 subscribers? How can we increase subscriptions?
As noted above, subscriptions from education institutions (school libraries etc), while encouraging of an organisational commitment, seem not to be as useful (to us in the long term) as a subscription from an active and committed individual - student or teacher. But individuals retire, graduate, get burnt out, take long holidays. Where should we aim subscription information?

8. FINANCES

Connect has never had a grant from government or foundation to support its publication. It has totally relied on subscriptions, selling back copies etc. Because subscriptions have never met costs, donations have always kept us afloat. It has always been teetering on the brink of financial disaster. Ten years on a shoestring!!

We enter 1989 over $1000 in debt! A decline in income, and increases in printing and postage costs have brought the brink that much closer. While we can 'trade our way out of debt' with the support of personal loans and donations, is there any other way to proceed?

Subscriptions increased from $5 to $10 in 1986. It is important to keep subscription costs accessible to students, student groups and those on low incomes. And every subscription increase means a drop in the numbers of subscribers.

9. THIS REVIEW

Are we asking the right questions? Is there anything else we should be considering? Is there anything else that you are burning to tell us?

OPTIONAL:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Please remove these pages or photo-copy them, respond to any areas you wish (add extra pages if necessary) and mail your responses to:

CONNECT
12 Brooke Street
Northcote 3070 Vic

as soon as possible.
The following section of Connect provides a partial glimpse of groups around the world supporting, resourcing, advocating and organising in areas of interest to youth participation in education. Some, such as the now defunct US National Commission on Resources for Youth, have been at the forefront of specific support for youth participation while others, such as Foxfire, have led the way in specific forms of educational projects.

Many of these accounts and collections of resources were gathered during 1988 in an extended world-circling trip. Let’s be clear: this was a holiday! But we did manage to make contact with various groups and collect some interesting examples. In other areas, we were restricted by significant language barriers. For example, we would have loved to bring back an interview with the Spanish school student movement, widely reported as actively involved alongside teachers and parents in a national education strike. And passing through as ‘travellers’ is not conducive to obtaining analytical insights.

We are, however, left with the impression from the English-speaking countries at least, that Australia stands at the world forefront in action and thought on youth and student participation. Many we talked with looked to our experiences with hope and a certain amount of envy.

We hope that the following material directed particularly to access to some international resources will interest you and be useful in your hopeful and envied work!

Roger Holdsworth and Pat Thurgood

PS: Want to see the photos too?

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N.C.R.Y.

The National Commission on Resources for Youth in the United States played an essential role for many years: documenting youth participation projects, producing resources, providing analysis and provoking practitioners and theoreticians to think about the issues. Unfortunately, when funding became scarce in the early ‘80s, the Commission suffered badly. First, it shifted from New York to Boston to be hosted by the Institute for Responsive Education and then ceased to exist at all.

Even the NCRY files on cross-age tutoring, health, law, advocacy etc projects have largely vanished, and the IRE now holds just a few of the NCRY publications. We managed to get a copy of all the existing ones and now hold the following documents which can be used at Connect:

Youth Participation: An Everyday Affair
What Kids Can Do
Youth Participation in Documenting Youth Employment Programs
Learning from the Field Experience: A Guide for Student Reflection in Youth Participation Programs
New Roles for Early Adolescents
Youth Participation in Health
Towards Excellence: Developing High Standards in Youth Programs
Youth Into Adult: Towards a Model for Programs that Facilitate the Transition to Adulthood
The Foxfire Fund, Inc.

In 1966, during his first year of teaching ninth and tenth-grade English in a 250-pupil high school in the Appalachian Mountains of northeast Georgia, Elliot Wigginton helped his students found a quarterly magazine that they named Foxfire. The magazine struggled for years to stay afloat. In 1972, a selection of articles from the magazine was published in book form by Doubleday. The Foxfire Book has long since passed three million copies in print. It was followed by additional volumes (Foxfire 2 - 9) in what has become an open-ended, continuing series. All royalties from the sale of these books go to The Foxfire Fund, Inc. to fund other activities it now sponsors within the public high school and the surrounding county. Now the numerous educational activities that take place under the sponsorship of the Fund are generally acknowledged to constitute one of the most dramatically successful public high school projects in this nation, having been featured in every major national newspaper and magazine, twice on NBC’s “Today,” as well as ABC’s “Good Morning America.”

This success has attracted teachers interested in implementing similar programs in their schools, and our staff and students have responded by conducting workshops in nearly every state and helping to start over 200 projects. Elliot Wigginton has now written a book for teachers, Sometimes A Shining Moment, which details the experiential philosophy that underpins every aspect of our work. Coordinated by staff member Hilton Smith, they also teach courses through regional universities and colleges; award immigrants that enable teachers to implement units of experiential curriculum they design; produce, publish and distribute case studies of those units for other teachers to share; conduct intensive week-long residential workshops at Foxfire’s center; and produce a newsletter, Hands On, as a forum through which teachers exchange news, ideas and information.

Foxfire Magazine

Foxfire is a lichen that glows in the dark. It is also the quarterly magazine that remains the cornerstone of our project.

The contents of the magazine are drawn from the indigenous Appalachian culture from which the students who edit it come. Tape recorders and cameras in hand, these high school students fan out into their surrounding communities in an effort to document the once self-sufficient culture that is their roots. Many of the resulting articles are vehicles through which grandparents who remember...
demonstrate once again, step by step, such nearly forgotten skills as blacksmithing, planting by the signs of the Zodiac, log cabin building, cooking on a fireplace, hide tanning, spinning and weaving, and the making of such once-essential items as coffins, shoes, banjos, flintlock rifles, fiddles, soap, and home remedies. Other articles are simply monologues in which fascinating mountain elders recount, through tape-recorded transcripts, their lives, experiences and philosophies.

In the process of preparing the results of their interviews for publication, the students involved learn not only the language arts skills they must master, but they also become engaged in a personal, vital confrontation with their own heritage.

Quarterly publication.
1 year at $9.00
2 years at $16.00
3 years at $20.00
Back issue list (No charge)
Categories for contributing subscribers:
Patron Subscriber: $15.00 per year
Supporting Subscriber: $20.00 per year
Sustaining Subscriber: $30.00 per year
Lifetime Subscriber: $1,000.00
(includes a subscription for the life of the magazine and all Foxfire Books, etc.)
A donation to help the work of the Foxfire Fund, Inc. is tax deductible and automatically includes a one-year subscription to the magazine.

Foxfire Music

Some of these shows are concerned with the folklore in the Foxfire books. Others are concerned with more contemporary subjects. A typical lineup includes features such as a conversation with Bob Vickers, a man who had been involved in Rabun County government for over sixty years; a demonstration by Peter Gott, a master log cabin builder, who shows how to hew and notch a beam by hand; local jazz and bluegrass concerts; and specials designed to keep the community informed of activities within our high school, such as the use of computers or changes in the curriculum. Copies of all the tapes we produce for cablecast are placed in the public library for use by its patrons.

Foxfire Press

The Foxfire Press, organized in 1982 as a new division of the Foxfire Fund, Inc., is the expression of our desire to establish a major regional publishing house in the Southern Appalachians. With this new venture, we now have the freedom to devote entire volumes to extraordinary individuals, or to expand upon single traditional or historical topics. We can also vary the size, format and design of the books considerably—all things we cannot do with the Doubleday series itself.

Books of national interest are distributed by E.P. Dutton through a generous and unique publishing contract that formalizes Dutton's willingness to teach our staff members who operate the Press the skills of book design, marketing and advertising. These skills in hand, the Press will also begin publishing and marketing, on its own, books of purely regional interest.

As always, our public high school students are involved in all that this new venture entails. Through daily classes at the high school and summer jobs, students are helping to create our new titles. Some of them, simultaneously, are carving out their future careers.

Foxfire Television

Working out of a student-designed studio in Clayton, the space for which is donated by our local cable company, and out of an editing facility in our high school, we produce quality programming for the local cable audience. Our brochure describing all upcoming shows is mailed regularly to cable subscribers.

The Foxfire String Band, made up of high school upperclassmen, performs four days a week during lunch hour at local restaurants. The Foxfire Boys, made up primarily of recent graduates, plays throughout the region. Recently, for example, they performed at the Knoxville World's Fair and the Grand Ole Opry.

Foxfire Boys

A recently completed cassette tape of bluegrass and gospel songs performed by the band formerly known as THE FOXFIRE STRING BAND.

THE RABUN COUNTY GOSPEL SINGING CONVENTION. Selections from seven years of field recordings of the local gospel singing convention. Shaped note singing with piano accompaniment and rousings up-tempo melodies.

Price each...$6.98

Christian Harmony

Selections from seven years of field recordings from the Bowah and the Dutch Cove Christian Harmony Singings. Unaccompanied shaped note spirituals performed in the old-time style.

Price each...$6.98
Community Development

The consistent migration of our best and brightest young people out of our county has concerned adults here since the turn of the century. Thus it has long been an objective of Foxfire not only to nourish these young people while they are in high school, but also to help create a climate here that will encourage some of them to return after further schooling.

One step in this direction has been our organization's work as a catalyst to secure the necessary funding and management personnel to implement an entity that will provide economic solutions to area problems such as inadequate housing, unemployment and lack of job variety. In August of 1983, with the help of an economic development consultant brought in and paid by Foxfire, our organization was successful in obtaining a $251,000 grant for Rabun County through the Emergency Jobs Bill for a housing rehabilitation project. During the same period, we obtained a second housing rehabilitation grant for the county, in the amount of $225,000, through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

Business Affairs

The day-to-day business affairs are an essential part of our organization. Every six months, students in our classes work with their instructors to draw up a budget for their division. They estimate what their income will be; decide what equipment, supplies, and travel money they will need during that budget period; then they add the salaries required to run the division. The completed budgets for every division are then submitted to the entire staff and the board of directors for examination. If cuts are required, the budgets are returned to the classes for the necessary revisions and the programs are altered accordingly.

How You Can Help

The books, magazines and record albums our students produce are absolutely vital educational tools, for it is through the act of laboring to create quality end products that our students not only learn the basic academic skills, but also derive justifiable assurance of their competence, ability, and self-worth. In turn, the income from the sales of these products supports nearly all of the activities of our organization. Therefore, the simple act of purchasing a magazine subscription for yourself, your local library, or a friend brings pleasure to the recipient, and helps pay for the film, tape, and equipment the students use.

Each time you purchase one of our books, we receive a percentage of the purchase price and the ripples of that action on your part are felt throughout our organization, for it is that income that funds such things as the $35,000 we give each year in the form of college scholarships to our students, and the $30,000 we expend each summer in a jobs program that puts some thirty of our students to work over the summer months.

Because the income from products is unstable and unreliable, however, we have also created an endowment fund. Backed by a $300,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, every three dollars donated to our work generates another dollar of support from NEH and endowment income, year after year, that we can count on to support our activities.

You can help, therefore, by purchasing our work, by donating specifically to the NEH Challenge Grant fund, or by donating specifically to activities such as the scholarship or summer jobs program.

We'll make your donation go a long, long way. Need proof? Foxfire magazine began in 1966 with one teacher, 140 kids, and $440 in donations from businesses and residents of our little community. It has since grown, step by step, into the operation you have just read about. And we haven't even started.

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK
SOMETIMES A SHINING MOMENT

Ken Macrorie wrote in The Washington Post, "This book could help change our understanding of school as significantly as Rachel Carson's Silent Spring helped change our understanding of the environment." Since its release in November of 1985, Sometimes A Shining Moment, by Foxfire's founder Eliot Wigginton, has received two prestigious awards. In April of 1986, the book was chosen to receive the Kappa Delta Pi Education Honorary Society Book-of-the-Year Award for 1985. In May of 1986, it won the W. D. Weatherford Award for outstanding writing about Appalachia.

The book is divided into three sections. The first tells the story of the beginnings of Foxfire. In the second, "Wig" describes his educational philosophy that has evolved as a result of the work he has done. In the final section, "Wig" gives a detailed account of what happens each day in his grammar-composition course. In doing so, he shows how his philosophy is applied to the classroom. He also gives other teachers ideas as to how to incorporate the same educational philosophy into their own work.
Foxfire Book Series

Learn of our heritage with instructive articles on the people and traditions of Southern Appalachia. Includes chapters on building a log cabin, home remedies, moonshining and planting-by-the signs “passed from generation to generation.”

Hardback at $17.95 Softcover at $9.95

House raisings, corn shuckings, candy pullings, weaving, wagon building, and midwifery— all a part of living in the Southern Appalachians. This heritage is preserved with instructive articles on the people and their traditions.

Hardback at $17.95 Softcover at $9.95

Continue the tradition with the third successful book from Foxfire, with chapters on cattle raising, banjos and dulcimers, butter churns, wild plant foods, and interviews with the older generations of Southern Appalachia.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $9.95

Capture the glow of past generations and welcome the people of Appalachia into your life. Let them show you fiddlemaking, cheesemaking, horse trading, berry buckets and gardening.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $9.95

Let Will Zoellner entertain you with his hunting stories. Then he and others will tell you about blacksmithing and iron making. Follow gunsmith Hershel House through the process of making a flintlock rifle.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $9.95

Wooden locks and keys, homemade shoes, toys made from wood, corn stalks, apples, and cucumbers, and other affairs of plain living are found in the sixth book of the Foxfire series.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $9.95

THE CHURCHES ARE NOT LIKE THEY USED TO BE,” said E. L. Presley. These intriguing articles capture the flavor of Southern Appalachian faith healing, camp meetings, snake handling, shaped note singing, and other traditions of mountain religious heritage.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $10.95

“T believe he’s gonna be gon-goo eyed” laughs Mr. Meaders as he creates a face jug. Discover the art of Southern folk pottery, mule swapping, and candlelighting in the Southern Appalachians.

Hardback at $19.95 Softcover at $10.95

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM FOXFIRE

Albums:
North Georgia Mountains. Our first Foxfire Album in the contemporary series. Eight original songs by Joyce Brookshire ............................... $7.98
It Still Llives. 16 selections of traditional music, stories, and riddles by instrument makers .................... $7.98

Books:
I Wish I Could Give My Son A Wild Raccoon. Paperback ........................... $4.95
Cabinbuilding: Three Women. Play script ................................. $2.50

Newsletter: Hands On: Newsletter of Cultural Journalism. Published quarterly. One year subscription ....................... $4.00

NEW RELEASE

Foxfire 9 completes the best-selling Foxfire series which has sold over 7,000,000 volumes. Topics covered in the book range from a fully-photographed and documented section on wagon-making to a profile of five early general stores, the people who operated them and pages from the ledgers they used. Other chapters include the story of a Catawba Indian potter and her unique way of firing pottery in a pit in the ground, and the dismantling and reconstruction of a fifty-foot-long two-story dog trot house. There are also chapters that feature the scientific explanation of Foxfire, the organism, as well as new material on quilting and home remedies.

Softcover - $12.95 Hardback - $19.95

Foxfire Boxed Tri-Sets

The Foxfire Book, Foxfire 2, and Foxfire 3 Softcover - $27.85
Foxfire 4, Foxfire 5, and Foxfire 6 Softcover - $20.85
Foxfire 7, Foxfire 8, and Foxfire 9 Softcover - $34.85

From Foxfire Press

THE FOXFIRE BOOK OF TOYS AND GAMES. Reminiscences and Instructions from Appalachia. A joyous collection of instructions for indoor and outdoor games, dolls, homemade board games, playhouses, and toys. No expense--or electricity!--necessary. Here are all the instructions and diagrams you’ll need.

Hardback - $29.95 Softcover - $14.95

THE FOXFIRE BOOK OF APPALACHIAN COOKERY: Regional Memorabilia and Recipes. All but forgotten techniques of cooking in a fireplace or on a wood stove. The 330-page cookbook contains unique recipes such as fried quail, angel flake biscuits, vinegar cake, cry-baby cookies, and much more. The book is filled with stories of the old days in the words of the people who lived then. This cookbook is a source for both pleasurable reading and good cooking.

Hardback - $22.50 Softcover - $14.95

AUNT ARIE: A FOXFIRE PORTRAIT. The folkloric biography of the mountain heroine featured in the first several Foxfire volumes. This delightful book is filled with previously unpublished material from this legendary woman--wonderful stories, recipes, witticisms, herbal cures and dozens of memorable photographs.

Softcover - $9.95

Future Publications:
The Foxfire Book on Winemaking - Available
Cabin Building with Peter Gott - In Progress

THE FOXFIRE FUND, INC.
P. O. Box B
Rabun Gap, GA 30568
Connect holds a substantial range of the Foxfire publications, as well as similar magazines and journals from throughout the USA. As well as copies of the Foxfire quarterly magazine, we have volumes 1 to 9 of the Foxfire Book series, Aunt Arie: A Foxfire Portrait, The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery, I Wish I Could Give My Son a Wild Raccoon, Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience, Cabbagetown: Three Women (playscript), their music albums and tapes: North Georgia Mountains, It Still Lives, The Foxfire String Band, The Foxfire Boys, Christian Harmony and The Rabun County Gospel Singing Convention and copies of the Hands On quarterly newsletter. All these materials may be examined at Connect - we’re loathe to lend them out.

We hope that we can bring you some exciting information from Foxfire in the near future!

We also have, from Salt, a copy of their collection: The Salt Book and of the "how-to-do-it" guide: You and Aunt Arie. Similarly, Bittersweet magazine in Missouri produced Bittersweet Country.

盐
Cape Porpoise, P.O. Box 1400
Kennebunkport, Maine 04046

The student oral history magazine Salt began at the high school in Kennebunkport in Maine, USA. After many successful years' publishing, Pamela Wood (the advisor) and the Salt Board recognised the need for a similar project directed specifically within tertiary education. Thus Salt in its present form, trains older students in documenting and presenting their community and in ways of running such programs in a variety of contexts. Salt is now based in a house in Cape Porpoise, Maine and our visit with them left us with a number of recent copies of Salt, as well as the following description of their program from their brochure:

The
THREE SALTS

Salt Educational Programs
Salt conducts regional field studies programs in the summer and fall for college students from Maine and across the United States. It also offers a July program for teachers and advanced students who wish to engage in field research and/or learn publication skills. A special fall regional studies program is designed for part time or commuting students.

1.

Academic credit for the programs is awarded by the University of Maine system. During the eight week summer semester, students may earn 12 credits; during the twelve week fall semester, 15 credits. Participants in the July program earn six credits. The special fall regional studies program also awards six credits.

Courses range from The Oral Interview to Writing and Editing for Publication, from Photodocumentation for Publication to Independent Research to Tasks of Publication. In addition to the resources in Salt’s archives and modest working library at Salt's headquarters, students and staff have full borrowing privileges to the library at the University of Southern Maine (500,000 volumes) in Portland.

Staff for the educational programs is composed of visiting professors, guest lecturers and the participating journalists and other professionals who produce Salt magazine. The teaching staff is as interdisciplinary as the makeup of the student body.

Salt Magazine
Taskmaster for students and teachers who participate in the educational programs is Salt magazine. Hailed for its articulate and sensitive portrayal of Maine’s people, both in words and photography, the magazine demands a high level of artistry and perception from those who contribute to it.

2.
Through Salt magazine, Salt reaches the people of the culture that it writes about and reaches students. The magazine is the axis of the exchange of knowledge between Maine’s people and Salt students and staff. Here, Salt displays and returns what it has learned to an audience that is its subject matter. Here, Salt shares cultural studies of present day Maine.


The magazine is supported by subscriptions and memberships, by newsstand sales, and by corporate and individual contributions.

Since the founding of the organization in 1973, Salt has roamed the territory of Maine gathering material. Fishermen in Cape Porpoise, mussel aquaculturists rubbing against lobstermen in Tenants Harbor, Penobscot Indians of Indian Island, storytellers from Beals Island, Greeks in Biddeford-Saco, the art of making ships in a bottle, tradition and change on the blueberry barrens—these are but a few of the stories and issues that Salt has explored over the years. They suggest, but do not complete the work Salt does in all of its areas of concern—teaching, publishing, preserving.

Salt Archives of Folklife

Through its efforts to document and record the lives and work of Maine’s people, Salt has developed a large, significant, and irreplaceable collection of tape recorded interviews and photographic negatives. Its archives are one of the major repositories of these resources in New England, housing over 800 hours of tape recorded interviews and over 100,000 photographic negatives. Subject, place name, and personal name indexes are available for the interviews.

A comprehensive catalog to the collections is nearing completion.

Citing the importance of the archives, Joseph Hickerson, head of the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress says, “I have followed Salt’s work since its inception and know the value of these materials—to students, scholars, and to future generations of Down Easters. Our philosophy has been to see such significant collections permanently archived in two locations—a regional facility and a national repository. I applaud your efforts in seeking that goal.” The ultimate goal for the archives is to house the originals in a fireproof wing in Salt’s Center in Cape Porpoise, Maine, with copies at the Library of Congress. The Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation has donated $12,000 toward the protection of the archives in fireproof storage in Maine.
Purpose

Salt seeks to challenge a young generation to document, publish, and preserve—through words and photographs—the vitality and traditions of a changing Maine. The purpose is simple in theory, complex in practice. Three supporting arms are at work. One involves teaching college students the skills and understanding to interview, record, and photograph the lives of Maine people. Another involves publishing the magazine, Salt, with the finished articles and photographs of students and staff. And a third involves preserving tape recorded interviews and photographic negatives of Maine people in an archives.

To give an example of the purpose in practice, Lynne Hallett, a student of Hampshire College in Massachusetts, studied at Salt during the fall semester program in 1985. For her field research, she conducted a series of interviews with students and their teachers at a one room schoolhouse on Cliff Island in Portland Harbor. The interviews led to a finished article, "One Room School of Today," that was published in issue number 27 of Salt magazine. The tape recorded interviews along with accompanying photographic negatives became part of Salt's archives.

Support

Salt is a private, non-profit organization, legally incorporated in the State of Maine. Its operations are supported through student tuitions, individual memberships in the organization, subscriptions to Salt magazine, and contributions from private foundations, corporations, and individuals.

Private contributions are crucial to the success, continuance, and development of Salt. They have provided for scholarships to allow needy Maine students to attend Salt’s educational programs. They have purchased computer equipment to facilitate the management of magazine and educational program mailing lists. They have helped provide archival quality storage facilities to house and preserve Salt’s irreplaceable collection of tape recordings and photographic negatives. They have bought books for Salt’s library. And they have brought visiting lecturers to aid in teaching Salt’s programs.

Membership in Salt is open to everyone interested in the purposes of Salt. For information, simply call or write Salt at its Cape Porpoise headquarters: telephone (207) 967-3311 or write Salt, P.O. Box 1400, Kennebunkport, Maine 04046. Questions regarding contributions in support of Salt can be answered at this same location. So can questions concerning the Salt endowment fund. All contributions to Salt are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For the purposes of gifts or bequests, Salt’s legal name is Salt, Inc.

Location and Hours

Salt is located in the center of Cape Porpoise village on Route 9 in Kennebunkport, Maine. The village continues to function in large part as a fishing community. From Salt’s simply designed Greek Revival headquarters can be seen the village’s post office, grocery store, church, hardware store, and Wayfarer Restaurant. The center of Kennebunkport is located three minutes away, and Kennebunk five minutes more. The City of Portland with a population of about 65,000 is 40 minutes to the north. Boston is 90 miles to the south.

The Salt building is open throughout the year from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. More often than not, staff and/or students are working there earlier and later, and also on weekends.

For more information about Salt and any of its programs, please contact us at (207) 967-3311.
Professor Art Pearl has been a long-time supporter and advocate of youth participation, particularly in the area of education. He is a Professor of Education at the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC), author of such books as The Atrocity of Education and The Value of Youth and president of the Santa Cruz School Board. We recently heard that Art has been re-elected to the School Board, with the largest vote ever recorded.

The following is drawn from his election material:

**Excellence**

*Excellence* is providing students with the range of schooling experiences that prepares them to be knowledgeable and responsible citizens, to lead productive economic lives, to be sufficiently aware and connected with a community that enables them to live free of drug and alcohol dependency and to relate to others in ways that are personally and socially constructive.

*Excellence* is encouraging every child to aspire to whatever he or she wants to be.

*Excellence* is challenge, and excitement, and discovery. It is feelings of accomplishment and hope for the future. *Excellence* is feelings of attachment to schooling and a commitment to intellectual growth.

**Community Involvement**

Education must be of, and for, all the community. Every segment of the community must be encouraged to participate in every important education decision.

Schools must be responsive to the widest range of community. Our alternative schools need to be sustained and tailored to meet particular needs.

Students need to be encouraged to participate significantly in decisions that affect their education.

Our school should have that kind of multi-cultural and bi-lingual education that gives each student an equal chance for success and at the same time enhances cultural awareness for all.

An atmosphere must be sustained that encourages everyone to bring concerns to the Board knowing they will be respected, heard and given answers.

"Education needs leadership today like never before. The community must work together to provide support for quality education. Teachers need encouragement to teach, students need adequate facilities and the community deserves the benefits well educated students provide."

—Art Pearl

**VOTE for ART PEARL
NOVEMBER 8TH**

"Excellence is much more than high test scores."

More ....

We also met with the (US) National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools at a regional conference in New Hampshire and exchanged publications. While in the UK, we met with the British Youth Council (BYC) and picked up some of their kits, and met with members of the Somerset-based Give Us a Say in Things (GUST) group.

We’ll report on all of these groups in the next issue of Connect Global.
The rise and fall of alternative schools

Why did the free schools of the seventies fail? Could they ever have been a viable alternative to the state system?

Leadership

The whole issue of viability does not end there. The vast majority of free schools failed to develop an effective teachers' co-operative. In fact most of the schools, despite not actually having a head, were effectively led by one or two people. The style of leadership was essentially charismatic, and where the leader remained for a long time, as at Kilquhanity, the institution appears to have survived. But charismatic leadership lacks structure, system and continuity. Instead it tends to be influenced by intuition and the mood of the moment, thus being unpredictable and unreliable. In these circumstances when the leader goes what is there left to sustain the initiative? If free schools are to be viable as alternatives they have to develop a strong co-operative with skills, strength and organisation.

Finance

Thatcher, Monetarism and the new orthodoxy are convenient scapegoats and whilst it would be true to say that the last seven years have witnessed a stifling of both alternative debate and development it is too easy to just blame the Tories for the problems that have afflicted the free school movement, especially as the last three years have witnessed the emergence of some new alternatives, namely the Steiner schools and the small school movement. Finance stands at the heart of the issue. Summervill, Kilquhanity and White Lion all have a relatively strong financial base. Kirkdale does not, and interestingly is on the brink of closure itself. This was exactly the situation that many of the urban schools faced earlier, as they had been forced to rely on grant support and occasionally community support, both of which often evaporate quickly. Experience seems to suggest that if free schools are to be a viable alternative they will either have to be fee-paying or they must gain state funding in advance. However, there are other possibilities. One is already being developed in Steiner schools, where parents pay what they can in cash, goods or labour. Further, it is worth remembering that many libertarian schools abroad, and in London before the first world war, have been financed by trade unions, a source never really explored by the free schools.

Intake

It is important to realise that the attenders at most of the urban free schools were truants. Only rarely did the schools make real inroads into the local community. This is in no way to underestimate the positive experiences that many children went through in the schools. However, the free schools did not set out to be libertarian truancy centres, and the fact that they developed on such lines made them marginal in the same way that the fee-paying rural retreats were as a result of their essentially middle class intake.

Philosophy

And so to philosophy. Generally the free schools were characterised by a belief in the individuality of the child and by a desire to challenge the traditional authoritarian nature of structure and relationships in schools. However, any consensus really ended there, not that that in itself is necessarily counter productive but it did prevent the emergence of an actual movement with some sort of national federation or network. This would have been important if only as a support system. However many of the schools experienced significant internal conflicts. Some conflicts were over finance and intake, although the most significant were about pedagogy. Schools like Frensham Heights 'straightened up in the face of adversity, abandoning school meetings and other libertarian practices. Similarly, in the urban free schools, after the early carefree days, many teachers and parents found themselves arguing for a more prescriptive curriculum. In general, many of the free schools lacked a cohesive philosophy.

Parents

Every free school has tried to encourage and develop parental involvement. A laudable aim but not without its problems. Free schools developed in the first instance for children, in many cases they were eventually taken over by parents, and much more importance was attached to parents being involved in decision-making than was attached to children doing the same. If free schools are to be genuine alternatives then they have to enfranchise their children at every level.

Conclusion

Free schools have much to offer. Their size, their community base, their belief in the autonomy of the individual child, their search for an alternative pedagogy which places learning in the hands of the learner, all give us some sort of idea about the kind of schools that could exist in an alternative society. However, what of the here and now? If free schools are to exist then they should be as an alternative to, and an alternative for, the state system. They should be small, strong and well-planned, with a coherent philosophy. Many of the 'free schoolers' of the 1970s believed that they were beginning a school revolution, and whilst it is impossible for libertarians to deny anyone the right to set up a school, a small number of practical working examples are of infinite value to a larger number of essentially symbolic failures.
In Leicester and Bristol in the UK, we met up with members of the Lib Ed collective and exchanged copies of magazines. An early statement from Lib Ed outlined its views:

"Schools and colleges use their authority to define, to grade and to discipline, in order to transform the learners into the sort of 'products' the state demands. In contrast, Libertarian Education sees education as liberation. The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what they should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we must need to learn are the things we most want to learn. The liberated learner controls the process - no longer the victim."

The current editorial statement from Lib Ed says:

One of the roles of Lib Ed magazine is to examine the way this society educates its members. Schools obviously play an important part in the process of manufacturing docile people for the shop-floor, office and market-place. So much of our space will inevitably be devoted to analysis of schooling. However, schools, because of their very nature, do allow some scope for libertarian teachers to have an influence counter to the ideology of the school. Lib Ed exists to publicise and encourage this work.

As well as forming an analysis of how things are, we want to discuss how a non-patriarchal anarchist society might educate, and to offer examples of existing alternative education projects which may give some clues, even if only to what should be avoided.

But school is only one of the agents of conformity, and, certainly, plenty of learning takes place outside of school. Part of our role, then, is to look at non-institutional learning, particularly at, for instance, the media, from which we learn to have 'acceptable' attitudes and opinions.

Finally, the most difficult task must be to suggest ways of changing what is into what might be. We welcome the active participation of our readers!

In recent issues, Lib Ed has carried articles on Information Technology, White Lion Street Free School, Special Education, Sexual Harassment, Drama, Black Children in Care, Literacy in India, and a special issue on Health, Sex and Sexuality. Copies of Lib Ed can be obtained from The Cottage, The Green, Leire, Leicestershire, LE17 5HL for 5 pounds stg.

The article on the left, on British alternative schools, is taken from the Spring 1987 issue of Lib Ed.

The 'lead-in' cassette provides an overview of the other five, under the title 'Radio Resources'. The substantive tapes provide information on: Community Radio Abroad (with Australian examples), Interviewing, Editing, Scriptwriting, and Community Radio UK.

Each cassette includes both substantive information and practical exercises for a 'hands-on' approach. For example, the tape on 'Editing' has information about: why edit?, ways to edit, examples of bad edits, the ethics of editing, and then provides several sources to be used as exercises for editing. The tape finishes with an example of an edited interview.

These tapes would be invaluable for use in practical media classes and in training sessions for students producing programs. For information about availability and cost (each has a face value of 5 pounds stg, but international postage may push prices up), contact:

RELAY Media Training,
C/o Caroline Mitchell,
26 Eve Road, Bristol BS5 6DG, UK.
Alternatives in France

Experimental schools have probably for ever existed in France. Of these, the oldest is undoubtedly the one created by Celestin Freinet at the beginning of this century in Vence (in the south of France). Freinet died in 1966...

Though about 20,000 teachers are making a practical use of his pedagogies within the National Education, the School in Vence remains actually the only Freinet School to be officially recognised ... and it is still classified as experimental!

We also have a Décroly School, near Paris, but its closure is constantly impending because of various pretexts.

Among private schools, we know about 30 Montessori schools, 10 Steiner schools and 15 Education Nouvelle schools (the first one was created by Cousinet et Chatelain).

Moreover, we can always find about 30 schools or groups, scattered, completely different from one another, ranging from 5 to 50 pupils, mostly created after 1968. Some of these disappear, other ones arise, but their numbers remain approximately constant.

Nevertheless there can be seen, over two or three years, a slight rise in the creation of such schools, due to initiatives from former teachers or educators or sometimes from parents.

What is surprising is that there are not more of those, since nearly everybody agrees on the fact that teaching is in a pitiful state...

On the other hand, French laws give parents the right to teach their children themselves, or to bestow this responsibility to an individual or a group of their own choice. Practically, nobody knows or uses this possibility.

However, it seems to us that the number of parents practising home schooling is increasing either for political reasons or for practical ones (as, for example, remoteness in rural zones).

Two books have been issued recently, and a journalist friend is preparing one, with about 100 interviews of parents who have withdrawn their children from school.

Within the National Education, the most recent experimental schools (four) were created in 1982, with a socialist government, but they still don’t have any official status: they operate as annexes of ordinary colleges.

During the last decades, many experiments were attempted, affording good results ... and also weighty reports, which are still sleeping inside some cupboard of the National Institute for Research on Pedagogics (INRP).

Most teachers also own in their personal library, all the books that can be found on the Crisis of School, the Death of School, the Society Without School, the Way to a New School etc.

They all know, by fame, Summerhill, the College in Oslo and the College in Copenhagen... But actually, there doesn’t seem to be any collective will to really change something...

We have been publishing a magazine (Possible) for 12 years now, in which we account for present and practical experiments in France and elsewhere, in the sphere of education for normal children as well as for children with special difficulties.

Last year, we did publish a new issue of our Directory of Different Schools which presents every school or place of education where a non-classical teaching is given, either private or state-run. It got a great success and people manifested a great interest in it. We took part in several TV or radio broadcasts and wrote numerous reports for newspapers. And many friendly journalists help us and get our information published, including in newspapers of a national audience.

As a result, we receive a huge quantity of demands, visits, letters, telephone calls, but we can only give what we have: information about what actually exists!

We are trying, too, to induce teachers and parents to work together to create new and different schools.

Roger Auffrand
Agence Informations Brèves
29 rue Davy, 75017 Paris, FRANCE
Ph: (1) 42.28.71.64

ncacs

This article is taken from the National Coalition News (Vol 12 No 38 - Summer 1988) of the (US) National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. There will be more information about the NCACS in the next Connect. Meanwhile, contact Jerry Mintz, 417 Roslyn Rd, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577, USA. Ph: (516) 621.2195
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) 489.9652:

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:
Rave (Winlaton, Vic) Nos 35, 36, 37 (1988)
Focus (Hobson's Bay Secondary College, Vic) Spring, Summer 1988
Stop! Press Play (Melbourne, Vic) Spring, Summer 1988
School Struck (ANSS, St Kilda, Vic) Oct 88

OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:
Foxfire (Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA) Vol 21 No 4 (Winter '87); Vol 22 No 1 (Spring 88)
Noun (Vermont, USA) Vol 10 Nos 1, 2 Summer, Winter 1988

OTHER SOURCES:
SCIP Newsletter No. 4
Network News September, December 1988
Collective Notes Nos 35, 36; Oct, Nov/Dec 1988
Options (DEET, Canberra, ACT) October, November, December 1988
Bush Telegraph (VCYAN, Vic) V 1 No 2 88
World of Work Newsletter Nos 7, 8, September, November 1988
Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission Newsletter Vol 3 No 6, November 1988
In Future (Commission for the Future) Nos 8, 9, 11; April, July, December 1988
Communication Research Trends (UK) Vol 8 Nos 3, 4; 1987
Training Update (YSTU, YAC Vic) Nov 1988
Youth Issues Forum (YAC Vic) Vol 3 Nos 1, 2; May, Dec 1988-Jan 1989
NIE Update (ANPA, USA) Vol 14 Nos 1-8
Media 3 (Rusden, Vic) Nos 31, 32; 1988
Cool Day for Kids (Kyneton, Vic)
National Coalition News (National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, USA) Vol 12 Nos 36-38; 1988

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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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Pat Thomson (Prospect, SA)
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Connect Staff?

CONNECT is hoping to have one or two days of a staff position available throughout the year. This will mean the allocation of time to produce CONNECT, to carry out administrative work and to advertise, distribute and develop the newsletter.

Initially it appears that such a staffing position would be unpaid, but propositions are being developed that would provide limited funding. This arrangement will mean that material that CONNECT holds will become more accessible, that discussions and work can take place on that tentative article you've been planning and that CONNECT may be only a phone call away. Messages can always be left on the phone recorder at the number below.

It is possible that CONNECT may be able to offer consultancy services during this time. Charges for this service will assist the publication of CONNECT. This could assist schools, teachers and students with in-service and training days, workshops, writing, research etc. For more information, costs etc, contact CONNECT on: (03) 489,9052.

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