ACCREDITATION
MATHMATICS
DRAMA
As CONNECT enters its second five years, a challenge faces us to build the support for ideas of youth participation in education. For CONNECT that has very practical implications:

First, we need funds. It has been pointed out that the basic subscription rate is very low. That's important to give all access to the publication. But does rely upon those who can afford it subscribing at a higher rate or including a donation. Can you?

Secondly, we need an increased circulation. So many people have never heard of or seen CONNECT - and we can't afford to do a mass, random distribution. You know people who don't subscribe but who should. Please show them a copy and encourage them. Can you?

And, of course, CONNECT is only what you write. So we're always anxious to hear of what you're doing.

This year, CONNECT can offer a further service - that of a consultancy. I've taken a year's leave without pay, and am anxious to work with schools or groups in the area of student participation. As they say, rates are reasonable...

Contact me by writing to CONNECT or phone me on (03) 489.9052.

Some interesting projects are currently in production. As is announced elsewhere in this issue, PEP in Victoria is printing four booklets that draw together articles from CONNECT on often requested themes. A video on meeting procedures for students is also in production. We'll let you know about availability of these, probably in the next issue.

Meanwhile, can I reinforce a comment elsewhere that we'd like to hear of relevant videos and films available to schools etc. We'd like to publish a full guide in a future issue.

Roger Holdsworth

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TOWARDS ACCREDITATION

In CONNECT 29, several articles under the heading "Towards Accreditation" began exploring issues associated with ways of recognising the work students do on committees (etc) as part of their 'normal' school work. The following notes arise from a working party set up by the Student Advisory Group of the Victorian Participation and Equity Program (PEP) and also including some members of the Student Participation Support Network (also within PEP). They are some ideas towards developing more detailed case studies.

WHAT IS 'ACCREDITATION'?

Accreditation here means a way of formally recognising participation on committees both inside and outside schools, as part of students' workload. It appears most obviously in ways of giving credit for such work within the school's reporting system.

WHY IS ACCREDITATION NECESSARY?

Students are at school to learn. Accreditation raises two issues:

* participation in various structures is a valid learning experience and should be recognised within the overall teaching/learning strategy of the school;
* students should not be penalised for missing classes or homework times to attend meetings - this should not be an extra, unrecognised burden.

Behind this, accreditation is also important to enable all students to have access to participation and representation, not just those students who can 'afford the time'.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

An approach to accreditation of students' participation on committees (etc) must pay attention to the following sorts of issues:

* If the student misses classes to serve on a committee, must class content be 'caught up'? Are there alternatives?
* What structural changes can happen to school organisation to make such attendance less personally disruptive?
* Should student representatives be required to present a formal report that can 'count' against course requirements?
* Who can/should attest to 'performance' on committees? In what terms?
* Can goals of involvement be specified that enable assessment to be negotiated?
* If some form of accreditation is negotiated, is it best as a new/separate unit, or incorporated into other subjects (eg English)? How about other subjects?
* What are the implications of such accreditation for the way one (teacher or student) approaches all other classes? eg class committees? negotiation?

(from CONNECT, No 29, October 1984)

PROBLEMS

The following danger areas need to be kept in mind:

* Participation on committees can be ignored or marginalised.
* Vague promises of recognition can be given, that are later denied.
* Students can be pressured to catch up on work missed or 'failed' because of 'missed classes'.
* Teachers and students can lack an understanding of the importance of accreditation, why it must happen, how it can happen.
* Students can spring the requirement for accreditation on teachers at the end of the year. Teachers need notice in order to work out arrangement - this must be done at the start of the year.
WHAT IS NEEDED?

1. Students need time to:
   * prepare: read papers, consult with other students, lobby other committee members, travel (if necessary), write proposals, research issues;
   * attend: meetings can be during school hours (clashing with classes), at recesses, out of school hours;
   * follow-up: write reports, discuss with fellow members, report back to constituents

   This time needs to be available without penalty ie students should not be penalised for being on committees or carrying out recognised work in relation to attendance.

2. A form of reporting is needed that enables participation to be recognised.

   It is difficult to conceive of a student receiving a letter or numerical grade for participation. Rather, a descriptive reporting system is needed to summarise the achievements in terms of specified and negotiated goals. Such a reporting system should give parity to a report on participation with all other subject reports. As such, this poses a challenge to the whole school's system of assessment and reporting.

3. The accreditation of participation should be, as far as practicable, part of the regular recognition the school gives to students’ achievements.

   Accreditation of participation should not be an 'add-on' element either structurally or in terms of the reporting format. It should be involved in and affect mainstream operation of the school.

4. At least a reference should be made available by the committee (etc) outlining attendance and involvement, skills and abilities exhibited, and growth shown.

   This should be the minimum form of accreditation.

WHERE ACCREDITATION CAN BE PLACED

1. A separate subject can be created eg as an elective. This could be a cross-age subject, say called 'Government'.

   The subject would enrol all students involved on committees (SEC, School Council, Regional or State Committees etc) and could both give time for preparation and involvement as well as providing some training and background.

   It would be relatively difficult to timetable in order to allow all interested and involved students to be in the class; it could reinforce a marginalisation of such involvement.

2. A subject can be created but not time-tabled. Teacher time would be allocated and enrolled students would communicate with this teacher in small groups or one-to-one.

   This recognises the involvement formally in both student and teacher time and is flexible in arrangement. It is, however, easily absorbed - the time just vanishes to other things.
3. An existing subject can undertake participation as a 'project' e.g. a Politics class could set up an SRC as part of its 'normal' workload.

This could give both time and a natural focus for recognition. It could, however, seriously restrict who can become involved. Perhaps 'time in lieu' could be given for the project to run during recesses or after school.

4. A general subject e.g. 'Extension Studies' can be created for a range of activities of which participation on committees is one possibility.

Similar comments to 2. (above) can be made.

5. A existing subject can recognise participation as part of the workload of that subject.

For example, an English class could accept work done for meetings (minutes, reports etc) as equivalent to essays, exercises etc. This would mean than an agreement could be made about certain class lessons for which attendance was compulsory and others during which a student could be involved in meeting preparation, attendance or follow-up.

This seems to have the greatest flexibility and easiest recognition as part of the school's 'valid' curriculum. It does require extensive understanding of the issues by the whole school and explicit negotiation of processes.

WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT HAVE TO DO?

Attendance at a meeting is not enough (as attendance in a class is not enough). There should be explicit agreement on what needs to be produced and on what evidence credit is available.

Some possibilities are:

1. A student's verbal contribution to a meeting could be recorded in the minutes (in as much detail as required). These minutes could be accumulated by the student as 'evidence'.

2. A student could produce written reports, both to the meeting and as a report to constituents. These reports could be filed by the student.

3. Reports could be published e.g. in a school newspaper, community newspaper, in the school newsletter to parents, in a taped speech or interview over the PA system or on local radio etc. Copies of these reports could be filed by the student.

4. Speeches made to the meeting or to students (including at inter-school functions) could be filed, either in written form or on tape.

5. Long-term or overview reports could be produced by the student using previous documents (minutes, reports etc) as evidence.

6. The student could (should) keep a diary that includes:
   - administrative details - date of meeting, purpose, conversations etc;
   - content of meetings - motions moved, topics discussed, reactions of others etc;
   - personal reactions - feelings, uncertainties, tactics proposed etc.

This diary would form a record in itself and also be a source for student self-assessment.

WHO WILL OVERSEE ACCREDITATION?

Self-assessment could be part of the outcome of accreditation of participation. But the participation and the pieces of work required probably also need some other 'verification'.

Possibilities for who could do this depend on the 'location' of the accreditation:

1. The teacher of the new or 'regular' subject could receive work done and enter it as part of the student's recorded achievements. This person would then also be responsible for writing reports as required.

2. A 'special' teacher could be allocated the task (with time release if possible) for formally recognising participation (negotiating goals and work-loads, writing reports etc) where an informal arrangement is decided upon.

3. An 'outsider' (e.g. consultant, PWC, parent, Principal) could maintain the overview and negotiate both goals and assessment.
4. A committee member could undertake to provide such a role.

5. It is possible that a mixture of these approaches could be possible, with the committee members, consultants, parents and Principal (for example) feeding reports to a specific teacher charged with their collation.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN?

1. These points need to be established in principle. An outline needs to be proposed to the School Principal and School Council.

2. Arrangements of accreditation need to be worked out clearly and in detail and written down. These can be negotiated individually or with a group.

3. A contract embodying these points needs to be signed by teachers and students involved.

4. Possibly a special form can be produced to include student and teacher assessment of participation.

It is now intended to develop more detailed examples of how these or similar points can be implemented in practice. If you have comments, ideas or examples (for publication or not) please send them urgently to CONNECT.

Roger Holdsworth

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YOUR COMMENTS

I enclose the TEAC magazine produced by year 10 and 11 students involved in the TEAC project at Collingwood Technical School this year. More copies are available from the school on request.

Ms Joe Manton, Collingwood Technical School, 35 Johnson St., Collingwood 3066

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
VICTORIAN DIVISION
PATRON: His Excellency The Governor of Victoria

I enclose a copy of "Young, Equal in rights and Responsible" - an interpretation guide to the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, prepared for young people in the school setting. This may be of some interest to you in your work. (Doc #200; $3.50)

Wendy McLean, United Nations Association of Australia (Victorian Division)
5th Fl., 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne 3000

Thank you for the information you gave me. It has been invaluable to us, not only for the register which is currently being planned, but also to expand our vision of Community Involvement Programs. We all enjoy CONNECT editions immensely ...

It is advantageous to both States if we are informed about the activities in our neighbour State. When we have our register published this will be a way of keeping up to date information on community involvement programs in both States.

Our book 'Unlocking Doors for Today's Youth' is on sale ($12.50) in Melbourne through the Volunteer Action Centre, 225 Beach Rd., Black Rock 3193.

Colleen Reid, Student Community Involvement Program, Volunteer Centre of NSW, 147A King Street, Sydney NSW 2000
The following two articles talk of negotiated curriculum in two very different areas - Mathematics and Drama. Colleen Vale's description (reprinted from The Victorian Teacher) of the development of her Mathematics course is a clear statement both of the students' involvement and of her responsibilities as teacher.

MATHEMATICS

Teaching maths so it adds up

By COLLEEN VALE,
Exhibition High School

NEGOTIATED MATHEMATICS course allows the class, with the teacher, to design a course which enables the students to learn mathematics that they can own and so develop confidence. The teacher's responsibility is to provide a framework for co-operative learning and approaches to the study of mathematics that generates enthusiasm.

I have found it useful to commence negotiation with a brainstorm of mathematical skills that cut across content areas. This list of skills then becomes a checklist for students when reflecting upon their performance with these skills for various topics. It enables them to recognise the difference between understanding mathematical concepts and the skills of working within the body of knowledge of mathematics.

Three skills that ought to be part of the list are:

- ability to verbalize mathematical concepts and methods. Hence the mathematics class must be language based. The students need to learn the words of mathematics so that they can talk about the work. Encouraging students to work co-operatively on all tasks aids this learning process. Students could also be encouraged to write more in mathematics. It's possible and very exciting to run a discussion in mathematics, either about what they have learned or about mathematical ideas and concepts;
- ability to use diagrams to represent concepts and to assist with problem solving. Much has been written about the importance of visual-spatial skills, especially in relation to girls. It is therefore necessary to provide students with a physical experience, using concrete materials or putting themselves in a situation so that they may feel and see the concept;
- ability to recognize and construct pattern. Pattern is at the core of mathematical concepts. Mathematicians have endeavoured to uncover the pattern of the universe and have re-created the pattern using symbol. Intuition identifies pattern and the vigour of proof re-creates it. Students need to be able to compare and contrast, be at home with shape, space and number. These skills obviously require language development and visual-spatial development.

In a brainstorm of mathematical skills, students will generate a breakdown of these three broad skills. Using such a checklist for assessment lessons the anxiety with right and wrong answers for the text-book exercises and so enables an evaluation of the students 'at homeness' with mathematics. When students feel more confident about their general mathematical skills they are more confident when meeting mathematics in a new context and have a set of self-made strategies for approaching different concepts and problems.

Students are familiar with sequentially structured maths courses and generally have a view of which maths content areas best meet their needs. It is important, when planning the actual work to be done, not to fall into the habit of using a textbook but to be innovative with method so that students may develop an alternative feeling of mathematics. It is also important to be flexible with the boundaries of the topic, to talk about the links with other areas of mathematics, other perspectives within mathematics and other disciplines. To be somewhere in mathematics is to be in front of a lot of open doorways. The course can evolve as students decide which path to follow and whether to return to the origin and choose another path in the labyrinth of mathematics.

The broad spectrum of confidence and background with mathematical concepts in the class led me to suggest that the class be run as two groups. The membership of the group is defined when each new set of work is negotiated.

One group of students chose trigonometry. In answer to 'what do you want to learn about trigonometry', they said, 'you know, sin, cos and that.' I did not want to reach for the nearest textbook so I took a number of general references (I added references to the index of some) to the next class. I asked the students:

What does trigonometry mean?
What is the origin of the word?
How old is trigonometry? When is trigonometry used? Why is it relevant?

What would you like to learn in trigonometry?

There were lots of suggestions ranging from viewing voice patterns, running experiments, visiting the planetarium, drawing tones of musical instruments to completing some astronomy calculations.

The first set of work I called 'trigonometry-waves'. Students completed some revision exercises on the unit circle, sketched trigonometric functions, sketched the first four harmonics continuing the trigonometric functions to approximate the sound wave of a few instruments, completed some reading about sound and light waves and conducted and wrote up some experiments on sound and light.

The group decided to continue to work on trigonometry and do some work related to astronomy. One student found a set of exercises for the class to work through. In this second set of work the group practised the use of diagrams for problem solving on utilised methods of various mathematicians of historical note.

This group has now moved on to exploring the ellipse. We had a conversation about an ellipse and its properties which lasted a whole lesson. Students used diagrams to resolve issues and I led the group through an experiential exercise. During the talk a couple of students and I contributed stories from our experience of reading. At the conclusion of the discussion there were a number of unresolved issues and directions to take:

What is the difference between a straight line and a curve?

Given an ellipse, how do you locate the focus?

How to build a whisper chamber?

The course is still evolving, and the class seems ready to adopt a more thematic approach to studying mathematics. Hopefully such an approach would enable students to gain and sense that mathematics is not a given body of knowledge but rather that it evolves and changes as understanding grows. It also allows the development of an awareness that the elegant proof and the straight forward method for solution from the textbook is not the way it was first done, nor is it the last word or symbol. The use of primary or secondary sources could be useful here. Talk and sharing of ideas is fundamental. When students internalise concepts then they are more able to make links and ask questions such as 'What if ...?' to generate their own learning.

The assessment for each student is goal based and descriptive. The students agreed on general goals - what the students would do in order to learn particular concepts that the class decided upon to practice and improve the mathematical skills the group brainstormed. These goals must be completed to achieve 'satisfactory'. As the course evolves the work set component of the goals is further fine-tuned. The descriptive assessment is a co-operative effort between the student and the teacher and may involve other students through more open discussion. Students reflect on their general mathematical skills in relation to the variety of topics they have studied, and I keep a file of their written self-assessments and my comments which is the information used when the final assessment is written. Part of the evidence of learning is the evolution of the course, the directions the students choose to follow, their readiness to share their understanding with others, to talk and teach others and to produce their own mathematics.

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Graham Parker writes of a Drama Workshop in Ireland. This experience, in turn, sheds light on the processes involved in negotiation of a Drama course with students. This is taken up in more detail in a longer article by Graham, available from CONNECT as part of our photocopy series: #167 "Negotiation in Drama Education" - 80¢.
Dorothy Heathcote is currently in charge of the Drama faculty of the University of Newcastle-on-Tyne. At the age of 58, she commands a world-wide reputation as a teacher of Drama, and is the author of numerous books concerning the teaching of Drama in Primary and Secondary schools. She is also in constant demand as a speaker and organiser of conferences and workshops by Educators, Psychologists, prison authorities and social workers in many different countries. Dorothy left school at the age of 13 and has never had a formal tertiary education.

In the following article Graham Parker, a Drama teacher at Collingwood Education Centre in Melbourne, describes his reactions to a Dorothy Heathcote workshop conducted in Dublin in September 1984.

DOROTHY HEATHCOTE WORKSHOP

Dorothy Heathcote's five-day Drama in Education workshop, conducted at the Drumcondra Teachers' Resource Centre in Dublin, was organised by a small group of Irish drama teachers forming a loose-knit organisation known as 'Drama Live'.

This group which has existed for approximately five years is funded through grant applications for teacher in-service programs from the Teachers' Centre, which in turn was established (primarily by small pressure groups dedicated to curriculum change) to evaluate the progress of Catholic education at the Primary and Secondary levels throughout Southern Ireland.

The Teachers' Resource Centre is part of the Drumcondra Teachers College which caters for 600 students in training and which does not feature Drama as an official subject of study on any of its timetables.

I am mentioning these factors by way of introduction in order to give insight into the nature of Dorothy's work throughout the week, but more importantly, so that her theories and practice can be analysed within the context in which I observed her working. This is important because as an educator whose work and beliefs are heavily premised on liberation through social politics, she was in fact working in one of the most reactionary educational environments I have experienced.

This does not mean that she was not well received by the thirty teachers attending her course or the group of twenty-five seven and eight year old children who became her class for five half-day sessions, but there were times when I felt she was preaching to the converted - or at least the semi-converted - when one realised that outside of this workshop there existed a system (centuries old) grounded in the traditions of Catholic hierarchy, and its accompanying ideas of classical scholarship, and which rigorously adheres to notions of streaming, religious indoctrination, public examinations (from Form 1 onwards) and a large and centrally organised board of classroom inspectors.

Within this context, I was often forced to separate theory from personality in Dorothy's case, in order to evaluate the worth and consistency of her approach in this highly unusual setting. For example, was she watering down some of her more radical ideas in an attempt to be understood by as many people as possible? And were her chievements with her group of students during the course of the week more a result of her method or the dynamics of her personality or simply that a highly motivated group of children were responding to the novelty of being 'unlocked' from their desks for five days?

To delve below the surface of these questions, it is important to describe the underlying theoretical structures of the Heathcote method, as she herself outlined it in a three-hour introductory lecture and subsequently reinforced in afternoon seminars.

SOME BACKGROUND

Dorothy believes that education, in its broadest sense, is a politicising process which moves from small examples of problem-solving and cognitive thinking (through social interaction) to an eventual wide political awareness, and that the main emphasis of our present social conditions in the western world should be to fight against a growth in de-humanisation. In other words she believes that the most important direction of all education is to return to 'feeling states' because most forms of social inter-
action have become (in her view) either at best politically regulated or at worst constitute a form of material and spiritual 'rape'. On numerous occasions during the course of the workshop, she referred to the notion of 'we feeling' (a label borrowed from Doris Lessing) and gave many examples of the 'rapist' politics of industrial, political and educational institutions no longer in touch with the caring displayed by small social units.

Within this broad process, she believes that Drama is one of the most essential educational experiences, because it relates to all the processes of being 'literate' (which she defines as the ability to read reality), for example: reading, writing, talking, listening, arguing, debating and making personal and group decisions while working through sequences of problems. And because drama equals the exploration of meaning through social contact (ie it is what exists between people to communicate with each other) it thus becomes an extremely active tool to foster 'we feeling' while exploring questions of social and political importance.

The practice of this is brought about is of vital importance and a summary of the Heathcote guidelines in practice are as follows.

First, she believes that all important learning takes place through experience and that during this learning process children have to be fully aware of what they are learning and why they are learning it. This necessitates an on-going process of reflective analysis on the part of both teachers and students. In other words, reflective analysis must be built in to all learning sequences and not merely added to the end of a lesson in the form of revision. Moreover, learning must start with small everyday experiences which are specific in kind and which are concrete in their initial stages, moving only gradually towards abstraction when necessary. Such experiences must be made concrete in understanding through a constant visualisation of ideas using signs, maps, diagrams, wall charts, graphs, letters, posters, drawings and photographs, to reflect and reinforce the development of ideas and group decisions.

Perhaps most importantly, learning through drama must be made concrete through the creation of what she calls 'fictional real time'. Simply stated, this means that although children must be made to see that drama operates within the realm of an artificially created fiction - and it is important that they are aware of the difference between fiction and reality - it is never the less a fiction which must be respected in its time of operation, in the same way that 'now time' exists in the science laboratory and the machine room.

Secondly, and as an extension to this point, she does not believe that children learn anything profitable by being placed into events as they might have occurred (eg in historical plays) or by being asked to characterise or role play without an in-depth understanding of role and context. Thus she would rather that the emphasis in drama be placed on 'perceiving' rather than 'portraying' and that children be challenged to think in roles but not necessarily 'act' in roles before they are ready.

Thirdly, she believes that the most productive form of learning takes place through a two-way social interaction from student to student (ie students learning from each other) and that although the teacher is an essential facilitator of this process, and one who must attempt to combine the characteristics of provider, guide, agent, recorder, researcher, critic and fellow-artist, she or he does not have the right to override this process with the dictates of personal beliefs. Too much 'teacher talk' destroys group cooperation and hence the potential for a social identity to emerge through inter-personal states of feeling.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Having grasped the essential logic of her theoretical platform (while at the same time wondering if a different working context might have challenged her to go to deeper levels of explanation than this) it was fascinating to examine the strengths and weaknesses of these theories in operation in the classroom.

During the first hour of her first session with the children, she solicited ideas of what they would like to work on for the rest of the week and (true to form) made all suggestions visible on a large blackboard.

My first criticism of her approach at this stage - which I will analyse in more detail later - is that there was little in the way of direct negotiation of content explored with the children. About fifteen suggestions were briefly talked about and almost as briefly dismissed, until the idea of exploring the working concepts of a small town community by constructing a model landscape was raised by Dorothy herself (who in fact had most of the materials needed for this task already at hand).

For the first of the five morning sessions, the children created a contour landscape,
using a large green double bed sheet, which Dorothy just happened to have on hand; raising this sheet by placing crumpled newspaper under various areas to create hills, and then making roads, railway lines, shops, houses and churches, with cardboard, paint and texts colours.

Another aspect of Dorothy's method which is relevant at this stage is that she believes children should be guided through (roughly) four stages of development at speeds appropriate to each individual student. The first of these four stages she calls the 'provider stage' where the teacher introduces certain ideas and materials and then allows the children to play with these materials without interference.

In the second stage, which began on the second morning, the children were challenged to think more practically about the town and its constructed environment and to ask themselves questions concerning the working viability of such a community. E.g: was the church in walking distance for elderly people? Were the roads in the right places? Was the gradient of the railway line too steep? Where did the town's water supply come from? and so on.

Having debated these various questions, the children then made last minute readjustments to accommodate a range of practical problems which had emerged. Then Dorothy introduced the notion that on the outskirts of the town there existed four ancient trees which were thousands of years old and would thus be of vital interest to tourists visiting the area. The small cardboard trees were placed carefully in position and at the end of this session both students and observing teachers were asked to do some homework on that night: the children being asked to write short stories concerning the myths and legends of the trees (which would later be compiled into a tourist guidebook) and the teachers being asked to write letters to the town council requesting accommodation and permission to visit the trees on behalf of various groups and organisations.

This was done in order to challenge the children concerning what kinds of people they would welcome to their town and which groups they might legitimately suspect (for example land developers and oil companies). It is also interesting to note at this point that Dorothy Heathcote's ideas of the importance of visual signs, creating a concrete focus for the drama and adding much to the notion of fictional 'now time' was being brought into the play. The town model itself became a constant reference for the future debates of the town council. The tourist guidebook also became a constant reference and drawings and paintings of the trees were displayed like tourist posters around the walls of the room. To add to authenticity, the letters of request written by teachers had to be stamped, fully addressed and posted through the mail.

During the third session (and the third of the four stages of development which Dorothy refers to as 'skill initiation') most of the morning was devoted to reading, writing and mathematics. A town council was formed; letters of request were read aloud; in most cases they were answered in writing; large accommodation charts were drawn up in order to match the needs of tourists with the number of rooms, beds, sheets, pillowcases and meals that the town could supply and what these services might cost. In short, a wide range of traditional curricula was introduced in this session, giving valuable insight to the Heathcote argument that Drama can cast a net over most school subjects.
In my view, day 4 was by far the most interesting. During this session, a sitting of the town council was organised to decide if an oil company should be allowed to test-drill for oil near the site of the ancient grove of trees. This meeting was initiated and organised by the children themselves and encouraged by Dorothy on the basis of her theory that in the fourth stage of development, feelings of social unity must be fostered. The meeting was intelligent, active and boisterous and an excellent example of the confidence which children can acquire when they are encouraged to think in roles but not necessarily act in roles, and how they can learn from each other in this setting. Regarding role play, the fine line of distinction in this case was that although each child was part of a fictional social unit (a member of the town council) and it was this unit that gave the drama its focus, they were not being asked to play the part of a particular character, but merely to play themselves within the context of the fiction.

In the meeting a split vote occurred between those children who wanted to have nothing to do with the oil company at all and those who preferred to invite a representative from the company to their next meeting in order to have the views of the company put. Dorothy encouraged the second of these two choices on the basis that in any form of industrial confrontation, a community of people can only increase their position of strength when gaining a clearer knowledge of the opposition's intentions, and hence she volunteered to play the part of the oil company executive sent down from head office to talk at a public town meeting.

This particular confrontation (and one of a similar nature which was organised on the fifth day involving the representative of a group of land developers) was preceded by a short briefing session in which children were asked to pay close attention to all details of the representative personalities and mannerisms as well as what they had to say. This, she explained to the children, was important in order to work out where the power base of each company was located. This is: were the two representatives merely agents of a higher order of decision-making within their companies and perhaps more open to the views of the community? Or did they represent the 'top rung' bosses who might be harder to convince and who may even have politicians and company lawyers on their side?

At this point, an interesting 'stopping and starting' device for dramatic action was introduced, whereby children were able to indicate at any point whether they wanted certain sequences stopped and repeated (like a re-run of a film) in order to more closely analyse the two personalities involved. As it turned out, the two representatives were both from the highest executive level and the drama (which eventually ran short of time on day 5) was to continue into the following week with the children acquiring information from local councils, libraries and lawyers concerning land rights, building permits and laws of environmental protection.

From this brief description it can be seen how the five day drama was able to proceed from a fairly simple and concrete starting point, through decision-making in a social context, to questions of much wider political significance. In Dorothy's view the work was highly successful (given the limitations of time) and suggested to the teachers involved in the program that the children were now at a stage which she defined as the 'investment level', meaning in essence that they had progressed from decisions in play to social decisions brought about by the financial and security needs of the village. Through this process, a certain degree of 'we feeling' had developed through group cooperation, but in order to go deeper, she suggested that questions of a more 'spiritual' value should now be introduced if the children's project was to continue. Two examples of how this might be achieved were, firstly, a request from a large group of blind people who had heard that the trees had healing qualities and would like to camp next to them for a period of one month; and secondly, a request from a group of Buddhist monks who would like to make the grove a permanent site for a temple of worship. The introduction of such notions would, in her view, instantly change the focus of concern from that of material and eco-
nomic considerations to one requiring a more fundamental questioning of spiritual values and the nature of human existence itself.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

In summarising my views of Dorothy Heathcote's work as I observed it in action, I would first have to say that I have little or no objection to the orientation of her political thinking. Her beliefs of learning through experience, of moving only gradually from the concrete to the abstract and from simple episodes to generalities within a fostered social context are sound, as is her belief that a sense of 'we feeling' must be encouraged through group cooperation in order to combat the psycho-political growth of dehumanisation in the western world. I also agree wholeheartedly with her view that a teacher should never override the importance of student decision-making and must essentially remain a facilitator of thought and action.

In terms of her methodology in practice, there is again much to be admired, particularly with reference to the constant visualisation of thought processes, an awareness of the levels of development that children are capable of achieving in a given context, the constant reinforcement of fictional 'now time', and perhaps most importantly the emphasis on observation rather than on character and role play in the dramatic process.

In some ways, however, I felt that she fell short of her aims in practice. Of course in the areas where she was successful, it was difficult to judge whether the efforts of a teacher with anything less than the gifts of power and vibrancy which she displays would be capable of maintaining such an energetic methodology.

In relation to the first of these two observations, however, I would like to make the following criticisms. First, it has long been my belief that the practice of negotiating the curriculum with students is the best and the most politically sound method of discovering students' needs, while setting the stage for group cooperation and inter-student learning. In most ways Dorothy Heathcote paid only lip service to this notion, particularly on the first morning when it became obvious that she had already decided in advance what the children's project would be. In fact at this stage I even felt that there was a deliberate dishonesty shown in her efforts to solicit student views which were then given little consideration.

Negotiation is also important because in bringing students' needs to the surface, it fosters a feeling of faith in the integrity and worth of the individual student input, and one would think that such a feeling (if maintained over time) must be close to the kinds of feeling states championed by Dorothy herself. In a private discussion with her, she displayed a keen interest in this notion, while admitting that it was not one of her strong points, and argued that the development of dramatic strategies, probably in the form of simulation games, might be a valuable contribution to effective negotiating practices.

This particular criticism on my part can also be carried through to other aspects of her teaching. For example, she has often been described as a 'benign dictator' and while there is no necessary criticism of a 'need for strong direction' in most drama work, I also felt that she missed a number of opportunities to develop student ideas by not having the ability to be a particularly good listener. In fact I found it highly significant that after five days of work, she did not know the Christian names of any of the children in her group.

A further criticism relates to the obvious lack of any strong physical work being encouraged in her class. This may not always be the case, however in terms of the landscape project and within the broad overview of her educational theory, I gained the strong impression that the greater part of her work with children is cognitive and extremely cerebral, and that neither in her introductory lecture nor subsequent seminars did she once make mention of the role of movement, dance or physical education within the realm of drama.

Allied to this emphasis of cognitive thinking, it was also evident to me that more space and time might well have been given to self-initiated play (in the Sladian sense) and that within her overall theory of experiential learning, no room at all was left to individual dreaming. This may sound like a waffly notion, but I am sure that acts of creation are not always the product of objective decision-making or the result of step by step through manufactured sequences of problems. Creativity, which in my view is more often a product of subjective discovery and the need to take intuitive risks, must also be nurtured with care and humour, for if such creativity is to disappear from our art and drama classrooms, then the progress of dehumanisation will certainly be impossible to halt.

Graham Parker, Collingwood Education Centre, Vere St., Collingwood 3066

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FRIENDS OF Y.P.

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since last issue:

PATRON SUBSCRIBERS ($20 pa): Marie Brennan  (Thornbury, Vic)
David Scott   (Fitzroy, Vic)
Carol Holdsworth (Colac, Vic)

$50 (donation):
  Queensland Council for Democracy in Schools (St Lucia, Q)
Youth Radio Project at 3CR & 3RRR

Three people (Uschi Bay and Roger Taylor at 3CR and Bruce Berryman at 3RRR) have the challenging opportunity of coordinating youth radio projects in Victoria for 1985. They are funded by Victoria's 150th anniversary celebration.

The main aim of the project is to involve young people in all aspects of radio. Some possibilities are: music shows, publicity, interviewing, a concert committee, reviews of films, concerts, events, current youth affairs, radio plays, journalism, debates, serials and comedy. Young people will be trained on various levels of radio production - use of tape-recorders, panel operating and editing.

Young people can work on their own projects or with friends. Or they may work with a school group or any other youth group.

We are also planning to organise Youth Festivals during the school holidays and putting a lot of young people's radio programs to air then, both pre-recorded and live to air.

All young people and workers with youth are welcome to contact:

Uschi or Roger: (03) 419.8377  Bruce: (03) 419.2066
to discuss the Youth Radio Projects. COME AND BE INVOLVED!

Uschi Bay, 3CR

Radio Training Handbook

3RRR-FM has received funding from PEP (Participation and Equity Program) for a Joint Sector Development Project involving the station, Preston College of TAFE and secondary schools. Under the general direction of a reference committee, Derek Holmes is researching and producing a Radio Training Handbook and relevant communication skills curricula for secondary school students.

The Handbook will cover practical training in broadcasting skills, an outline of the media system in Australia, appropriate communication exercises and other relevant areas.

Any teachers or students with suggestions, resources or information can contact Derek Holmes at 3RRR-FM, 1st floor, 25 Victoria Street, Fitzroy 3065. Telephone: (03) 419.2066. Derek will also be investigating the media needs of Melbourne metropolis schools.

Student Participation in Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PEP Courses

Christine Hogan of the TAFE Resources Unit in Western Australia is investigating aspects of student participation. Her study will focus on investigating strategies, processes and leadership styles used in developing by lecturers to enhance student participation.

Christine would welcome any materials and reports from lecturers or youth workers who have been involved in projects which include high levels of youth participation or responsibility and decision-making. Please contact:

Christine Hogan,
PEP Resources Unit,
3 Alvan Street,
Mt Lawley WA  6050  Ph. (09) 271.8252

COMING: Four reprints of articles from CONNECT are being published by the Participation and Equity Program in Victoria. They will be on the topics of: Cross-Age Tutoring; Students and School Governance; Students and Radio; Students Publishing. We'll bring you information about their production and availability in the next issue of CONNECT.
Youth Forum '85 (NSW)

The '84/'85 Committee of Youth Forum have prepared a list of possible topics for Youth Forum '85 and feel that before making a decision on which topics to include in the conference, they should survey Youth Forum members and other young people. They need to know what interests and affects young people and what topics you think are relevant so that they can make a decision that is most appropriate for the Youth Forum '85 Conference.

Views on the four most relevant topics should be sent to Youth Forum Ltd., PO Box 1599, North Sydney NSW 2060 (if possible by February 8th).

A. Morality: Youth moral attitudes/values are formed during their teenage years. What influences them? Are their conflicts between different groups or within groups, regarding moral standards? How can youth promote tolerance of differing moral standards?

B. The NSW Education System: Is the present structure of the education system meeting the needs of all youth? How do you see the future of education in NSW? In what ways can young people participate in restructuring the system to meet their needs?

C. Independence: Do you think that TEAS, the dole, youth wages, housing allowances need to be increased to a level that would allow real independence for young people? How would this affect young people's position in society? What could be done to help young people become more economically independent?

D. Nationalism: Is there such a thing as an Australian 'identity'? Is 'Norm' the norm? Is the Australian spirit "Posters"? 1988 brings 200 years - Advance Australia Where? How can young people influence Australia's future identity?

E. Government: Do you think youth should have more say in Government? How can young people participate in Government and at what levels?

F. The Legal System and Youth Rights: Does the legal system restrict the right of young people to privacy, freedom of speech, information, legal representation or a representative voice? Are there other areas where youth civil and legal rights are restricted? What legal avenues does youth have to exercise their rights? Does youth know how to use these avenues?

G. Conservation: Youth has to live in the society of tomorrow. Should they have something to say in the protection of their world? What action can young people take to ensure the future of their environment?

H. Nuclear Issues: What do you think about government policies on uranium mining and export, nuclear power, foreign bases, visits by nuclear armed and powered vessels, or disarmament? What role can young people play in shaping nuclear policies?

I. Discrimination: Many forms of discrimination affect young people. How has discrimination affected you? What positive action can youth take to overcome discrimination?

J. Media: Are the images of youth as portrayed by the media, real? Are they negative or positive images? How can youth use the media (especially during IYY) to convey a realistic image of what youth and youth opinions are all about?

K. International Youth Year: IYY is here. In 1986 will there be any lasting effects? What can young people do to highlight the themes of Peace, Participation and Development? What further actions can young people take during the second half of International Youth Year?

L. Unemployment: What are the effects of unemployment on young people? Can anything be done about youth unemployment? Are there positive aspects of being unemployed? In what ways can the extra time, not taken up with school or work, be used?

M. Are We Children Or Adults? Has society double standards towards young people regarding an early demand for responsibility and late recognition of maturity? Should young people pay as adults whilst being legally classified as children? In what other situations are there double standards? What can be done to amend this?

N. Socialism/Capitalism: What do the terms 'Socialism' and 'Capitalism' mean to young people? Are we given an unbiased view of these two philosophies?

Kieren Dell (for the '84/'85 YF Committee)
Skipping School

Skipping school: An examination of truancy in Victorian secondary schools is a research report from the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE). The research draws upon a number of sources: a document and literature search, a longitudinal panel study, case studies, a survey of school principals and senior staff and discussions with school, community welfare and police personnel.

For CONNECT, the most interesting feature has been the involvement of "student research teams" in the development of the case studies. Planning for the student research component of the truancy study commenced in the 1983 school year. Negotiation with the contact teacher from each school (5 government, 2 independent and 1 catholic school) which participated in this component of the study took place during the first term of the 1983 school year and resulted in the contact teachers recruiting students for the research teams. Each student was asked to recruit a team of four to six Year 10 and/or Year 11 students. VISE research staff requested that each team include students who had a history of truancy and that the teams reflected mixed "academic" abilities.

The research report strongly endorses approaches to truancy that build on the principles behind this aspect of the study: Programs of this kind are purposively structured to initiate changes in the nature, processes and operation of schools: features that are critical in attempts to address the problem of truancy.... The evidence provided by this study identified the school as a critical component in the promotion of truant behaviour. Accordingly, it appears that school initiatives to address this behaviour should, at the very least, be grounded in alterations to everyday school practices, procedures and curriculum policies.

The research report is available from VISE, 582 St Kilda Rd., Melbourne 3004.

Supplementary Grants Committee

Late in 1984, students from Supplementary Grants Program (Disadvantaged Schools) schools throughout Victoria met to elect student representatives to the Supplementary Grants Committee. As part of the election process, the meeting (of approximately 100 representatives) suggested criteria for standing as a candidate. The following is the list of questions suggested:

To the electorate or group:
1. Should we have a fixed meeting place for students?
2. What happens when an elected representative is sick?
3. How can we find out information from the representatives?
4. What happens if a group, area or region isn't represented on the committee?
5. How will we make sure that the representatives are doing a good job? What happens if they aren't? Do we have the power to recall them?
6. What happens when a representative leaves school?

To the candidates:
1. How will you report back to students?
2. Will you organise another whole group meeting? What will come out of it?
3. How will you make sure students are represented on area committees?
4. How will you find out the needs of individual schools?
5. Will you make decisions for yourself or will you find out from other students what they want?
6. Will you turn up to all the meetings?
7. How do we know you won't contradict yourself?
8. Will you have a regular meeting of representatives?
9. Will you stand up for your rights or will you get pushed round? How?
10. Will you have a chairperson for the group?
A recent CEP grant allowed AUS to employ a coordinator and clerical resource person to resource and facilitate the establishment and development of autonomous TAFE student organisations in Victoria.

The need for such a project was felt because there are relatively few Victorian TAFE colleges with effective student associations which have a voice within the administrative structure of the colleges. Where student associations do exist, they are often poorly financed and their efforts either opposed or hindered by the college administration.

Some TAFE colleges though, such as Bendigo, Gordon, RMIT, Prahran, Swinburne and Warrnambool, have established unions which work well.

The project has made contact with students on a number of the 27 TAFE colleges in Victoria. Project members also liaise with members of the TTUV and Student Services staff and staff have been taken to meet with Mr Kirby, Chair of the TAFE Board. Attendance at the VATAF's regular meetings has established a good working relationship. Contact has also been made with the directors or principals of all the Victorian TAFE colleges.

There are some TAFE students who are very active and interested in student unionism. But, on the whole, most students don't see unionism as an option or a possibility and therefore make no attempts to organise. However, once they are made aware of the possible benefits of a union they become very interested. Our publication, the TAFE Times, is important in this area for we rely on it to air student issues and spread the word on unionism.

Success

So far, things have been going well. Russell has been working on constitutions for some student associations. Drafts of constitutions have been drawn up for four colleges (Collingwood, Footscray, Frankston and Preston) and they will go before their respective college councils for confirmation later this year.

General student meetings have been held in some colleges and they have proved to be successful in getting students motivated and active.

If constituted student associations can gain control of their own funds and have membership and thus a voice on college councils, then our project will have been a success.

Special problems for TAFE students

There are special problems inherent to TAFE students. Firstly, the nature of TAFE courses means that most students are either part-time, external or block-release apprentices. This means that attendance on campus is either minimal or non-existent. Secondly, the courses are usually short (the longest would be two years) so students know that they do not have to put up with unsatisfactory conditions for very long. This also implies that there is no continuity if an association were to start up. We have heard of student associations being established and working well one year but when the active students leave at the end of their course, the association collapses.

Another aspect of TAFE courses is that they are, on the whole, vocationally oriented courses. Students want to finish their courses as fast as possible and join the workforce.

There is a lack of 'student identity' among TAFE students. For example, an apprentice mechanic does not see him or herself as a student, but as a mechanic (a worker). Therefore, they tend not to expect student services from the college and so do not organise when they are dissatisfied with college conditions (which is very often).

Further, the student services fee is usually quite small, which leads students not to expect much in this area. In fact, though many TAFE college populations are huge the fees add up, thus students should be receiving much more than they actually do.

Which Colleges?
The colleges we have been working with mainly are Box Hill, Collingwood, Frankston, Preston, Dandenong, Footscray, Moorabbin, William Anglis, Holmesglen and Prahran. Contact is maintained through meetings and visits by Russell to these campuses.

Reprinted from the AMC News, No 23, November 1984
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  B. RASG IYY Subcommittee members                           | 2 pp  | 30¢  |
  C. Community Liferaft Course Proposal                      | 10 pp | $1.00|
  D. Ideas from year 8 for IYY                               | 1 pp  | 30¢  |
  E. RASG PEP Submission                                     | 12 pp | $1.20|

Publications Received:

We wish to stress that the following publications are not for sale. However, they are available for perusal by arrangement: contact CONNECT: (03) 489.9052.

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Profile (Sunshine schools, Vic) Vol 7 No 4 November 1984
TAFE Times (Melbourne, Vic) Vol 1 Nos 1, 2, 3 August, September, November 1984
TEAC Times (Collingwood TS, Vic) 1984
Youth Forum Newsletter (North Sydney, NSW) Vol 4 No 2 November/December 1984
Rave (Winlanton, Vic) Open Day Special Edition; No 22 December 1984
Between the Lines (Williamstown HS, Vic) No 3 November 1984
Fawktalk (Fawkner HS, Vic) 1984
In Print (Glenroy HS, Vic) No 8 December 1984

OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Long, Long Ago (Bell Gardens, California, USA) Vol 2 Issue 4

Other Sources

Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) December 1984
Update NIE (Newspapers in Education, USA) Vol 10 No 10 Nov/Dec 1984; Vol 11 No 1 Jan 1985
Transcript (TEAC, Vic) Issue 3 December 1984
Communication Research Trends (London, UK) Vol 5 Nos 2, 3
Other Ways (AERG, Vic) No 20 December 1984
The Fringe Bugle (Fitzroy, Vic) No 29 December 1984
The IYY Reporter (US IYY Commission, USA) Issue 12 October 1984
Changes at the Fitz (Fitzroy HS, Vic) 1984
Youth Affairs in Australia (Youth Affairs Council of Aust., St Kilda, Vic) No 15, Nov 1984
YACA Briefs (Youth Affairs Council of Aust., St Kilda, Vic) December 1984
Briefing Papers (Youth Affairs Council of Aust., St Kilda, Vic) No 10, Nov 1984
IYY Bulletin (Youth Affairs Council of Aust., St Kilda, Vic) No 4, Jan 1985

We're very interested to put together a list of videos that are available on the area of student participation. If you have any or know of any, please let us know. If possible include: title, length, format, description (if possible) and where it is available from. We'll put out a guide in the near future and we can add to that.
PHOTOCOPY: COMPLETE: RETURN:

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* Lynall Hall Community School 1982 Yearbook ($1.50) ....... $ ........
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* The Fitz-Cell Directory ($1.50) - Fitzroy HS students .. $ ........

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TAPES: Various tapes - Art Pearl (6 tapes); SRC Day ($4 each/$2 + tape) $ ........

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