Programs, processes and outcomes in a youth participation program

Peter White
Chandler High School

During 1982 and 1983, Chandler High School in Keysborough has been operating a TEAC funded program based on Youth Participation principles. This group of students (volunteers of essentially mixed ability) have been engaged in a series of small group projects designed by the kids in response to the needs of 'client' groups in the community. Chandler students, therefore, have been asked to perform in a program emphasising collaborative learning and identification of community needs.

It is the purpose of this paper to outline the significance of this approach to learning for the students in the program, and to describe the planning and processes leading to the development and implementation of the program.

Program goals

Program goals are seen in three general areas - educational, personal and social. All are seen as being of equal importance, although we are under pressure, as are most educational innovators, to stress the 'educational' goals of our 'alternative' program.

Program goals are seen to evolve naturally from the various developmental stages of the course. The Youth Participation Program is seen by its developers to operate in a short-term, medium-term and long-term scale (the first two roughly equivalent to school terms in duration), and each fragment is significant in terms of establishing goals and in pre-determining, to a fairly large extent, the processes adopted in achieving these goals.

In the short-term, the major educational goal of the program developers is to instil into all class members that education should be a co-operative rather than a competitive process. Personal program goals emphasise that student learning should take place in response to students' perceived views of needs in the community, rather than their own self-centred needs, and social goals centre on an orientation to learning in groups rather than as individuals. Short-term learning then is critical in that most goals, and resulting processes, are a major turnaround from the kids' traditional learning experiences of competitive, individual behaviour. The short-term is therefore seen as an 'un-learning' stage.

Medium-term goals are extensions of the above. Educational goals focus on the students becoming totally accepting of (and demanding) learning modes different from traditional schooling. Kids volunteer into a different program, but our experience indicates that most take some time to really appreciate the program as an educational program, rather than a program which is simply exciting and fun as a participant.)

Personal goals in this stage emphasise the need for program members to share ideas, tolerate others in the group and to constantly seek consensus in their group decision-making. This will often mean supporting the ideas of others to the extent of not forcing their own ideas on the group. It is throughout this stage that 'success', in the form of beneficial youth participation 'projects', is relatively easily achieved by kids and readily perceived by them. In this sense, they quickly gain in skills and confidence. As such it is seen as an 'empowering' stage.

Longer-term goals become less tangible (like most educational goals?). Program staff seek a high degree of 'answerability'. Students are under pressure to perform - to critically analyse the outcomes of their projects in terms not only of their own and their client's goals, but in terms of societal issues raised by, and reflected in, the projects. Students must challenge themselves - to see 'through' the immediacy of a role in a group to complete a project. In a sense, we are forcing the beginnings of a long-term inquiry generated by the planning, processes and evaluation of projects. Personal long-term goals are similar in nature, to try to establish, and maintain a

(Continued p. 3)
This issue:

Following a bit of a time gap since the last issue, a large amount of material has accumulated - so another bumper end-of-year issue. I draw your attention in particular to two feature articles: Robin Blackley's fascinating account of the development of a cross-age tutoring program within the STC guidelines, at Exhibition High School; and Sally Ingleton's outline of video projects in the United States. I've also lifted some articles from ADVISE and Transition News - thanks to VISE and to TEAC for permission to reprint these.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS ANYONE?

Some suggestions:

1. A copy of You and Aunt Arie ($10 plus postage) - following the previous sell-out of copies, I've received 40 more - but they're going fast. An excellent buy for yourself or for a gift.

2. The LP "Riff-Raff" - West Community Theatre/Men at Work: $8 plus you picking it up. Great music, great dialogue, a great album.

3. And, of course, a gift subscription to Connect.

What more could anyone want for Christmas?

Have a good holiday ... write all those articles you've been meaning to get off your chest. Connect will be back next February.

Roger Holdsworth

Contents

1 Programs, processes and outcomes of youth participation ... Peter White
4 Radio Skid Row ........................................... Jimmy Coyle
5 Student researchers in action .......................... Garry Coventry
9 Student Newspaper Inservice .................... Melinda Spakes, Roger Holdsworth
11 REVIEW: Friday Night ......................... Friends of YP ....................
12 WREC: Student Action in Education Project .... Pamela Ward
13 Western Region Student Forum ................... Colin Briton
14 Student Rights: The Next Step! ............ Greg Thorpe
15 FEATURES: STC & Tutoring: Exhibition High School ...... Robin Blackley
22 Video in Education ................................... Sally Ingleton
26 RESOURCES: Youth Radio Project/CITY/Audio Tapes .. Jewell, Coyle, Shortal
28 Student Lounge: Caulfield High School ............... Kerry Howard
30 YOUR COMMENTS: Ingleton/Howard/Tucci/Regazzani/Ward ...........
31 SSDN ....................................................... Silvana Tucci
32 REVIEWS: Asculta Radio Group/Ena/You Want to Do STC/Acting Together ...
35 MATERIAL AVAILABLE ..........................
36 SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION ..................

Continued from page 35:

Other Sources:

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Media 3 (Rusden Media) August 1983
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sustained, high level of individual commitment to learning tasks. Socially, we are hoping that successful short and medium-term contact with a wide range of community agencies will generate a longer-term seeking of a wide range of adult ‘models’. Almost all of the above are generated through careful analysis and evaluation of the youth projects themselves — the long-term is seen as a ‘reflective’ stage.

Program processes

It should follow from the above that each successive stage (unlearning, empowering and reflective) will be associated with differing foci and differing methods. The unlearning stage focuses on total group development.

We believe that small group and individual task achievement cannot occur until the group is able to perform as a total unit (for example, see Mulford, W. and others for a fuller explanation of the notion of group development). The group will develop through various stages, with associated performance characteristics of individuals — for example very early in the life of the group, individuals will seek membership by being quiet and polite. Later they will seek membership by being aggressive and assertive. Neither is appropriate for collaborative operations. The program utilizes a series of ‘games’ (or analysis of them) to assist members through these early stages. Of great significance too is the first total group project, where all must contribute to achieve a successful result.

At Chandler the planned ‘catalys’ project was to be the catering of, and the supplying of activities for, our Year 7 camps. This cross-age tutoring exercise was seen to combine all the essential ingredients to ‘force’ a collaborative/client-oriented approach (our major short-term educational goal). With the advent of the bush-fires, the idea was wiped out. It was replaced however with a series of bush-fire relief concerts (student-initiated, devised, performed, and so on). A large amount of money was raised, students solicited a particular charity, and we were well on the way to achieving our short-term goals. The unlearning stage however is not felt to be complete until all group members embrace the notions of cooperative/client-centred learning and we spend much time, mainly through reflection on the bush-fire concerts, on establishing the negotiated program goals, processes and assessment criteria, and procedures with our students. Students had to be sure in their own minds exactly what we were about. In a sense, they had to discover it from their own (albeit short) experience. Like all real negotiated-curriculum exercises, staff had to stick firmly to non-negotiable program principles at times.

Once we had reached at least partial acceptance of short-term program goals, we were able to move into the empowering stage. Here, mainly from the start of Term II, students were encouraged to work in small groups on a range of projects for a range of clients. The central focus was therefore on the successful completion of projects. Projects completed included:

- running a restaurant in the school (for elderly citizens, local CYSS groups and migrant, primary-school age students)
- working on road safety campaigns for kindergaten and high school students
- assisting the elderly in their homes
- working as teacher aides in the local ethnic primary school
- developing a computer instruction course, producing a documentary video
- producing a documentary video (for the local CG&CS Branch) on problems of youth in area.

All projects involved the initiation of the rough idea (by students), negotiation with a client group (generally in the community), gaining of a total group commitment to the project and negotiation/re-negotiation with staff on the requirements of the project. These requirements (group and individual goals, methods, completion date, mid-term reporting and date and so on) were all set in the form of written contracts signed by students and staff advisor. Also involved were resource gathering and implementation/presentation.

All projects were assessed by feedback from clients, student self and group assessment, staff assessment (continuous and descriptive — focused on the achievement of project goals and a set of agreed criteria). The projects themselves in this empowering stage were to be very powerful ‘vehicles’ to facilitate not only our short-term goals of collaborative/client-centred learning, but, because of the rapid increases in student self-esteem and decision-making skills, also our medium-term goals of student acceptance of participation as an appropriate form of learning in its own right. Whilst they operate in groups, students now see that they hold very real power to influence and assist in the community around them. They really do feel empowered.

In many ways, Term III — the beginning of a long-term reflective stage — will present staff with the greatest difficulties. New projects will have to be commenced, but whilst students are engaged in the nuts and bolts issues of trying to get these new projects underway, we will be trying to force reflection on Term II projects — and on the new projects as well. Our main focus will be on analysis of project outcomes — not in terms of outcomes for the clients, but for the students. In a sense, we face a dilemma here for we are seeking an approach which forces an individual appraisal of a group project. We are (apparently) turning our backs on the notion of groupness and collaboration and re-introducing some of the individualism we worked so hard on in the unlearning stage. However, we believe that this is an essential component of the program — the ability of the individual to be able to reflect on his/her own experiences. This reflection should include the personal impact which the project groups have had for the individual (such things as growth in consciousness and awareness, changes in attitude, skill development) and knowledge. Specifically, knowledge or content which flowed as ‘issues’ which the projects — perhaps unwillingly at the time — attempted to address.

Many issues have been addressed indirectly. These include the plight of migrants, unemployment, violence/role of the police, different forms of schooling relationships with ‘adults’ in the community, peer-group relationships, commitment to self and others, the law and the role of support agencies.

The program certainly has not neglected content as such. The content however is now real, tangible, touched and influenced by our students. We are now in a position to ‘teach’ this content by asking kids to reflect, analyze and record it. This reflection has been on-going and a major weapon we have used is a personal diary approach. In addition, class/group meetings have more and more tried to focus on issues as staff and students perceived them. Class presentations will reinforce this. We will be asking the students to write much more in this reflective stage. They are already keen to do so. With this stage about to start, many comments must be delayed until our evaluation at the end of the year.

Program outcomes

In an article for AdvISE in 1982 (no. 31), I raised a series of questions about these programs. A year on, we have the answers to these questions — the kids have proved that they can identify issues and needs in society, they can respond to them and they can modify them. Along the way, they have proved absolutely trustworthy, able to negotiate fluently and effectively, and slowly became more and more willing to translate their success into writing. Decision-making and analytical skills have been greatly enhanced. Retention rates at Chandler to Year 12 have been greatly increased and the kids from the program battled in a vigorous, sustained manner until they have found work when they left school.

Students in the program are performing reasonably well in their traditional subjects (they spend half their week in the youth participation program). At the beginning of the year, only two (from twenty-two students) wanted to continue to Year 12. All remaining twenty students are now looking forward to Year 12 — an interesting outcome.

References

* See for example, KEMMS, S. and others — Towards the socially-critical school — Melbourne: VISE, 1983
* MULFORD, W. and others — Structured experiences for use in the classroom — Canberra: CDEP, 1980

DATE: 1st September 1983
PLACE: Basement Studios, Wentworth Building, City Rd., Sydney University
SETTING: A tense, nervous yet excited group of people are crowded around a small cassette player listening to a high pitched tone. The clock ticks over ... midday ... and the radio comes alive with a catchy new station ID jungle. Silence except for the catchy chords of Dave and Eva's composition proclaiming "We are the Information Station: 2RSR FM". A cheer from the crowd to the opening words ...

"Hello, I'm Jinny Coyle and I would like to welcome you to Radio Skid Row's opening broadcast. On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to thank everybody involved in making this moment possible: our technicians, producers, announcers, the news team and the community group broadcasters. Thanks also to the Department of Communications, the NSW Drug and Alcohol Authority, Sydney City Council and Leichhardt Council for their financial assistance. And finally we hope you, the listeners, will stay tuned to 2RSR FM Radio Skid Row."

FADE IN: Opening bars of Men at Work: Who Can It Be Now?

The long awaited minute over without a hitch - sighs of relief, then excitement erupts ...

2RSR FM is alive at last.
A community access station, orientated toward providing information to low income and disadvantaged folk ... Titbits on cheap meals and accommodation, job-hunting ideas, legal rights and aid, child-care, consumer affairs counselling groups ... I could go on forever.

From small beginnings as a cable radio, based in a tiny third floor room in the dealer end of Sydney, Radio Skid Row has begged borrowed and scraped to be heard!

Run by volunteers from all walks of life, days are filled with strip programming rostered on a regular two hour a week shift using music as the carrier for information.
At 6 pm, the station is handed over to the community groups who provide a wide range of public interest programs, including ethnic groups, Greenpeace, Sydney Uni Union, Sydney Gays, jazz, soul and demo music.

Among these is a combined school group - Cleveland Experimental/Plunkett Street High, whose program will be an avenue for a new world of learning, especially in communication which is so important to their growth and development.

The programs will be produced solely by the students, who have already spent many hours learning radio equipment and procedures in Cleveland's own small studio. RSR is hoping to bring in further schools to provide a wider spectrum of student participation. Our two newest trainee announcers joined us during the boredom of their school holidays. They feel that they can gain valuable experience within the working environment through Radio Skid Row, as well as meeting a wide cross-section of people outside of the 'school year'.

DATE: 9th September 1983
PLACE: 2RSR FM studios, Wentworth Building, City Rd., Sydney University
SETTING: Typewriters tapping, news crew editing, radio in the background (on 88.9 FM), frantic shuffling through records, phone screaming relentlessly: all this amongst empty cups of cold coffee, ashtrays brimming with forgotten cigarettes ...

THIS ... is the setting of Sydney's newest radio station:

2RSR FM ... Radio Skid Row ... THE INFORMATION STATION.

Jinny Coyle
Student researchers in action*

Garry Coventry

Without the competent and enthusiastic research work conducted by 40 students from eight Victorian secondary schools the writing of this paper would not have been possible. Also, thanks to teaching staff in these schools for their support of the endeavour. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work of Ken Polk and Arthur Pearl to whom much of the ideas about a student research project can be traced.

Introduction and purpose

The principal intent of this paper is to reflect on some theoretical, methodological and procedural implications which arise from a project designed to demonstrate the value of involving secondary school students in social research. The study itself is focused on truancy, and the particular component addressed here is one where student research teams have been formed in eight Victorian secondary schools to carry out case studies of truancy (including organisational responses to truancy) in their schools. Organising the project in this way challenges dominant orientations to the relationships between the trained social researchers, the problems they select, the individuals they investigate and the practice of research.

Investigating truancy by a 'students-as-researchers' approach is viewed as the critical phase of action research for the purposes of educational/social change. In this instance, what is at issue is that an integral part of the student research teams consists of individuals who are characterised by a particular problem and are vested with the power to study the problem (ie some of the students have been labelled as truants and are studying the topic of truancy). These students were responsible for the research, analysis and formulation of recommendations to deal with the problem of truancy.

No changes in general school practices or procedures resulting on patterns of school attendance were implemented. The project's major purpose was to provide students with an opportunity to assume roles as researchers (as part of their legitimate schooling experiences) which may be considered as strategic action. In other words, the approach adopted here has similarities to the action research work of Kemmis and others.

The orientation of the project

Employing students as researchers is not a new idea. However, the particular model employed here emerges from a history dating back to the 1960s. This history, largely influenced by work conducted in the US, has often been referred to as the concept of youth participation, youth advocacy or youth action (terms that have been used somewhat interchangeably). Victorian schools have operated programs based on this perspective (see Cole, 1981; Haldsworth, 1982; Jones and others 1982; Knight, 1982; Mansour, 1980; Marino, 1980; Mayes, 1978).

A range of activities and services, besides research, can be found in such youth action programs including cross-age tutoring, child care, drug education, student co-operatives and vandalism prevention.

What do these kinds of programs have in common? Essentially, the concept of youth action stresses the roles adopted by youth in schools, work and the community. Macro or social structural concerns such as politics and economics are blended together with social psychological (such as peer groups) and individual or micro levels (such as competency) of analysis to form a comprehensive, holistic perspective of youth programming initiatives. This broad based perspective, which values youth and the contribution they make to society, is woven together to develop programs which focus on creating positive experiences for young people (Cole, 1981; Pearl, 1978; Polk and Kobrin, 1972). These programs, therefore, are explicit attempts to change the roles of young people within schools and society.

Youth action programs are, by definition, suggestive of youth policies which would go closer to meeting the needs of all youth. Given gloomy predictions for the future, a central issue is the development of policies which improve the quality of life for youth in our modern society.

Several writers have commented on psychological fulfillment as defining features of the quality of human life. In reviewing these it is possible to identify a number of psychological states (or feelings) which appear to be important in the growing up process in providing legitimate identities for youth. At a minimum, the senses of power, meaningfulness, usefulness, belongingness and competence are critical aspects which need attention from youth programming and public policy (see Coleman, 1974; Friedenberg, 1965; Pearl, 1972; Polk and Kobrin, 1972). Presently we have done little to foster the consolidation of legitimate identity among youth.

Our institutions systematically, if inadvertently, deny young people roles which impart feelings of competence, meaningfulness, belongingness or political potency (Polk and Kobrin, 1972?).

What these writers and others are suggesting is that a different direction for youth related programming and public policy is needed. They believe it is time for a harnessing of the forces which affect the lives of youth rather than persisting in current attempts which have proved to be futile in changing the course of adolescent lives. Our social might becomes activated when youngsters stray from the course which has been laid for them. When they don't make it, our concern and efforts are aroused into attempting to do something which will right what has gone wrong. 'Troubled youth are the ones to be found in special programs.'

As Habermas (1973) contends, we should not neglect or explain away human and social problems but, instead, we need to place our public policies in another light. Models which provide steps toward the acquisition of a healthy, constructive and quality life for young people are needed. These models, grounded in an analysis of social changes which have had profound effects on the lives of young people and others, require firm roots in concerns of the economy, politics, ecology and social justice (Pearl and others, 1978).

In the long term, youth action does not aim to integrate youth into the dominant values and current practices of society, thus perpetuating present institutional arrangements. While a youth action program seeks to broaden the pool of young people who are eligible for educational credentials and meaningful work it recognises that the status of youth must be viewed from a political and economic perspective (Polk, 1983). Unequal distributions of resources, opportunities and options are found among social groupings. Youth action, therefore, combines the potential value of youth as a community resource with the need for institutional change to combat the powerlessness of all young people, in general, and the most obvious forms of structural dislocations (such as lowered levels of educational and occupational outcomes) experienced by some young people, in particular. It is a strategy which must be consistent with a livable future (Pearl, 1983).

* A shortened version of a paper presented to the annual meeting of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand, 25-28 August 1983.

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At this point the sociologist may begin to recognise that the guiding framework for youth action is an integration of the re-statement of control theory provided by Elliott and others (1979) with aspects of strain and labelling perspectives. In their elaboration, Elliott and his colleagues suggest that individuals are bonded to the social order by the degree of involvement in and attachment to conventional (legitimate) social groups and social institutions, including school and work. Lowered levels of bonding are said to arise from failure to achieve legitimate goals (which links to opportunity or strain perspectives) as well as negative labelling experiences in school or work institutions (which links to the labelling perspective).

Youth action programs in schools are explicit attempts to develop fundamentally different linkages between the school and students. By creating roles which institutionally define students as competent and responsible, the bonds between the school and students are strengthened and students are more likely to acquire positive, or status enhancing, labels. This represents somewhat of a departure from earlier work done within labelling theory which focuses on the reduction or avoidance of negative labels.

Principles of youth action

By now, it should be clear that the kinds of programs and social changes proposed by youth action go well beyond the boundaries of individual schools and even those of education itself. Changes limited to the addition of a few new alternative programs to existing schools will have little impact on youth unless these programs are tied to changes which will affect the roles, status and futures of young persons. In addition, alternative programs are not useful unless they are seen as explicit steps towards broader changes within schools in the way youth are taught, credentialled and processed through the educational institutional.

Some specific principles for the development of relatively small scale, model programs oriented toward institutional change and which avoid the problems of specialized programs for 'troublesome' youth have been described elsewhere (Cole, 1981; Polk and Kobrin, 1972; Polk, 1983). These principles, incorporating both theoretical and procedural parameters, structured the student research project conducted in the eight secondary schools. Briefly, youth action projects of this kind should

1. assume that the young persons involved (including the trustees) are capable of competence and responsibility
2. organise the action effort so that pay is provided, thus creating a model of employment linked with learning
3. ensure that explicit steps are built into the program to bring about clear learning

Research training and facilitation of the student research project followed two distinct paths: seminars and regular field visits. At the first seminar held on 26 May 1983 at VISE, most of the student teams and contact teachers were brought together for the first time. Once some administrative details had been described to the group, the teachers were invited to move to another meeting area for a discussion of the dynamics of truancy from a school perspective. Students remained for their first briefing of the role they would take in the truancy project. An attempt was made to have students participate as much as possible in this process, particularly in identifying the stages of research and the questions they considered pertinent to a study of truancy. Students were asked to write down the five most important questions for a truancy study to address. Their responses were collected and some 34 different questions were identified. The product of this 'brainstorming' session was distributed to all research teams in the subsequent week, providing the starting point for the development of research plans. It should be noted that these research questions generated by students added several new dimensions to the research problem not apparent in the literature (such as does truancy cost money, are students aware of compulsory school attendance laws and why do truants not opt to leave school officially?).

The seminar was followed up by a field visit to all teams to clarify issues which were raised (including the importance of confidentiality and informed consent) and to assist in the development of each research plan, different in each school. These plans were based on four major stages of research identified as defining the research problem, methods of data collection, data analysis and report writing. Each stage had a scheduled time allocation for completion, an essential strategy of youth action to minimise the risk of 'failure' to complete the research. A second meeting of student teams was held on 16 June at VISE, though the presence of teachers was not required and was discouraged by VISE research staff in the interest of maximising student participation. All eight schools were represented. The main purpose was to finalise research plans and to respond to issues related to research methodology. Student expectations about their involvement in the project were discussed by the group. A large portion of the afternoon seminar was spent working in groups, culminating in a 'mirroring' exercise where teams were paired, providing feedback and reaction to the other team's research plans. These small group exercises were productive and fostered group dynamics of team identity and co-operation within and between teams. Subsequent field visits built on the foundation established at the seminars and were
responsive to the needs of each team. The relationship between the student teams and the VISE research staff member responsible for the project's co-ordination strengthened. Communication took place on a weekly basis with arrangements being made with elected team leaders. Several mailings of resource materials to support the teams' progress through the research stages occurred, covering aspects of data collection, data analysis and report writing. These materials provided useful background reading for the field visits to facilitate the conduct of the research projects.

As the teams progressed to the tasks of data analysis and report writing, field visits were negotiated needs for assistance and support. Generally, visits of approximately two hours duration were more frequent as the project neared the 19 August deadline for completion of research reports. Students were also able to utilise VISE staff as outside practitioners to overcome problems encountered in data analysis and interpretation.

Reflection on some issues arising from the project
The intent here is to elaborate upon the theoretical and practical parameters which guided the project. After implementing a youth action approach for social change it is important to engage in critical reflection about the underlying theory and procedures adopted. These issues, some of which were previously referred to as youth action principles and others which arise out of the practice of engaging in such endeavours, are complex and inter-related. For ease of discussion, however, they are treated as independently as possible.

‘Beach head’ strategies
The constraints on resources for support and facilitation of innovative programs require a manageable and rational approach to change. Small scale intervention in schools is most likely to offer the most practical immediate solution to the problems experienced by many young people. Models should be viewed as self-contained stepping stones to broader organisational change. They may begin as ‘alternative’ programs but there is a need to make them ‘non-alternative’ in the sense that a major goal of any strategy or program, no matter how small in scale, should be to have impact upon traditional organisational practices within schools.

Structural constraints
There are a number of constraints on student research programs of this type. Two kinds are addressed here. First, legislation governing work experience programs in schools presently limits student involvement to 12 days per year and requires the sponsoring employer to take steps to safeguard students’ well-being. Supervision arrangements cannot be neglected, especially for students of compulsory school age. Second, organisational structures of schools must be negotiated. Projects need to be sensitive to differences for implementation at different schools. Variations in the context of schools, particularly curriculum timetables, require adaptation of the youth action model rather than blanket adoption. Nevertheless, the long-range goals of changing schools’ organisational climates are to be kept in mind.

Payment of students
Through available research funding and the provisions of the Education (work experience) act, 1974 (no. 8659), student researchers were able to be paid at the rate of $2.50 per hour. This represents a daily rate of 10 times greater than that suggested by legislation. Besides philosophical reasons for paying students to act as researchers, in accordance with the competence and responsibility expected (at a rate which might be considered as far more cost effective than the charges of many research organisations), money is important for other reasons. Pay maintains motivation for involvement throughout the project, ensures that projects are non-exploitative of young people and creates a model of employment combined with education.

Recruitment of students
Teacher recruitment of students into the project was two-pronged: some students were recruited through routine public avenues operating in schools (such as class announcements, bulletins) while at least some students, regarded as truants and/or academically unsuccessful, were recruited through reputational avenues (such as other teachers, student welfare, co-ordinators, peers). In this project, the nature of what the student teams were expected to accomplish and their mixed membership offset the potential for negative labelling and stigma that might result from reputational recruitment.

Obviously, truants brought a fresh dimension to the conduct of the research project at the outset. Those characterised by the problem had such a depth of understanding and analysis of the problem that they played key leadership roles in team activities. It was our purpose to reintegrate such marginal youth into legitimate schooling activities and for this to be accomplished we required schools to select other young people regarded as good students or ‘straight’ kids. Together, they were involved in a useful and legitimate task, each contributing their skills and competencies.

Organising activities around teams
The basic units of the project were student teams operating in their school communities. This emphasis was deliberate and planned. Considerable evidence points to educational strategies based on co-operative activities, rather than competitive or individualistic activities, as being most effective for educational and social development. In effect, the organisation of this project moved a small slice of educational practice into line with current knowledge about pedagogy.

Being political
Social change is a political exercise and action programs have a number of crucial steps to negotiate from the beginning. Innovations must confront institutional order. This does not necessarily mean that confrontations with agents of the order are required. It is possible to define a process which confronts the logic of the order, yet enlists agents of the order to participate in this new process. Youth action projects challenge traditional methods of teaching, yet many teachers have willingly participated because such programs have evidenced improved student learning.

Participation, decision-making and ownership
The involvement of young people in the decision-making processes within social action programs is crucial. Operationally, it is difficult to define what constitutes real youth involvement in decision-making. Programs differ in what steps might be negotiated for involvement. The original source of program development is often controlled by adults in their roles as teachers, policy makers or funded researchers. Institutional accountability concerns, therefore, may take precedence and as such usually dictate traditional patterns of program operation.

The originators may be reluctant to divest any forms of power which might threaten their attachment and sense of responsibility to systems of institutional accountability.

Power inequity is reflected in many ways. In schools, for example, teachers hold power over students because they are the school's representatives (ie legitimate power) who can reward or punish (ie coercive power) and are seen as the holders of knowledge (ie expert power). Those sources of power need to be reassessed if projects can meet institutional accountability concerns within a climate which maximises student ownership of the project's processes.

Youth action programs are designed for youth and, therefore, youth must have a say in the operation. If they are to be encouraged to take responsibility for tasks and acquire a sense of ownership then purposes and activities must be negotiated and agreed upon. This does not mean that teachers and researchers give up their professional responsibilities as educators and social scientists. They must be prepared to act as leaders and facilitators but not as directors.
Education and credentialling

At the heart of this project was a concern to demonstrate that all students are capable of responsibility, educational competence and social competence. Project phases, including training seminars and field visits, were structured in ways which avoided giving messages about deficit notions and young people. To reinforce any student's labelled inability to undertake any task would have been counter-productive to our intent. Care must be taken not to let inevitable tensions which develop between the 'trained' researcher and the 'untrained' researcher, to run rampant and become destructive to the goals of action.

Traditionalists may argue that the project paid insufficient attention to clear goals of educational development for student participants. The comment 'research cannot be part of school curriculum' echoes in staff rooms. On the contrary, 'subject type' educational skills are required and do develop in the conduct of research. Developing interview schedules and questionnaires, and writing research reports, are literacy tasks which require clarity of communication.

Analysing quantitative survey data by percentage calculations and graphical presentation requires numerical skills. Both kinds of learning gains, as well as others more recently argued as the key functions of education (such as oral skills, confidence, maturity, negotiation, responsibility, cooperation and political competence) appeared to have developed, even after such short duration of the project. However, constraint to these developments becomes apparent at the time of writing research reports. Decision-making about division of labour in the teams tended to be influenced by the perceived urgency of the task at hand. The student teams assigned writing, typing and calculating activities on the basis of who had experience and, therefore, was seen as best able to accomplish work most efficiently (sensible decisions, nonetheless).

Whatever the outcome, participants should not be excluded from further formal educational experiences because of their involvement in a youth action program. Options for pursuing education are already restricted by school practices such as streaming. Any alternative program which further risks the potential of student choice over the future educational options cannot be defended.

Evaluation

It is recognised that various sections of the community may be sceptical of new and/or different approaches to education. Projects such as this should be seen as constituting an experimental plot of an innovative model linking education, work and social problems. Considerable attention must be given to the crucial role of evaluation. It is important that we do not replay past failures to evaluate what we merely think are effective action strategies.

This paper is a starting point for further evaluation that it provides a description of the student research project and some initial reflections about some of its impacts. Much more is needed. The issues identified here require elaboration and assessment by others. Follow up is necessary to investigate whether there are any long term effects of the project on the structure of the eight schools. Later this year such evaluation will begin.

Conclusion

Employing students as researchers is a model that has several major implications that should be noted.

1. It is a particular illustration of what young people can do for schools and how their roles may be redefined.

2. It provides modelling information for the development of activities that combine education (both in terms of content and processes) and work, necessary for alleviating the problems of education, transition and unemployment.

3. It challenges the practice of research as being the exclusive domain of the highly trained and credentialled. So called 'problem' people can undertake comprehensive investigations and play key roles in potential solutions to their own problems.

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BACKGROUND

In response to Werribee Technical school students' wish to meet with other students involved in newspaper programs and the policy of the regional EAC to facilitate networking and support between both funded and non-funded projects, a Student Newspaper Workshop was organised.

Forty-eight students from twelve ost-primary schools and several teachers came together with articles, photos and plenty of ideas and enthusiasm, on 13 September at the Footscray Demonstration Unit.

Roger Holdsworth (State Program Support Team) and Barry McDonald (MR Consultant) negotiated with the students a method of organizing the workshop, ordering articles and layout.

Students seized the opportunity to perimise with layout. Articles includee readability, creative writing, etc., information about SRC's, etc.

A forty page magazine format paper, named SHATTERED, was laid-out and printed by 4.30 p.m.

The following details of the organisa-

ion and planning process for the pro-

teed below to assist other ion or groups who may be contem-
plating a similar activity.

organisation and Program

Session 1

September 9.00 a.m.

Session 2

September 10.50

11.15

Full group meeting to decide on format and size of newspaper and which groups to work on which pages. One group elected to work on a proposal for the cover and title, for participants' approval.

Groups began working on layout.

Session 3

September 11.45

12.30

1.30

Full group meeting to decide on format and size of newspaper and which groups to work on which pages. One group elected to work on a proposal for the cover and title, for participants' approval.

5. Groups began working on layout.

Lunch.

Participants decided on 6.

Session 4

September 14 Final screening completed.

Session 5

September 15 Newspaper delivered to printers.

September 23 Printed paper delivered to Regional Office. Copies sent to all schools and multiple copies to participants. Follow-up evaluation survey sent to all participants.

What was Learnt from the Workshop?

1. It is possible to complete a newspaper layout in a day.

2. Co-operation between students and commitment to the task was evident throughout. Some new friends were made.

3. The negotiation process provided a practical example to both teachers and students.

4. The organization seemed practical and clear, i.e. the Workshop was advertised throughout the region. Students brought prepared, typed articles and screened photographs to the workshop. In this way much of the preparation was shared amongst several teachers and groups of students.

The response from those who wished to attend the workshop was greater than what could be accommodated.

Funds were provided by Western Metropolitan Regional TEAC as part of its in-service program. The total cost was $800, which included 2,000 copies of the newspapers, subsidised student travel, lunch, layout materials, etc. The Supplementary Grants Program helped with the organization and provided some layout equipment and expertise.
The students had the variety of experience. Some came to the day wanting further development of skills gained in their own layout sessions, others were expecting an introduction. I'd assumed more experience than commonly existed and had to adjust rapidly. The first sessions enabled us to provide some input on paper format, on examples of “good” and “bad” layout, on what content is worthwhile and on creative possibilities for using existing material. We could have talked all day, but I'm not sure whether participants would have learned - or learned. The more valuable approach was to nudge groups as they worked, to give them feedback, to shout, to laugh, to approve or frown.

We cut corners by listing and grouping all articles on the board and allocating them places. This was then checked with the group - no objections. Someone suggested a quarter-fold format - no objections (though later the printer frowned and groaned).

And into smaller work groups and on with the work. There were articles to be written. Others had to be re-typed to fit the format or reduce their length (one and a half spacing is not okay for cramped newspapers). Some pages were slapped together rapidly, criticised and taken apart, to be argued over at greater length. Other groups spent hours moving copy fractionally up or down or puzzling over what they were doing - and finally had to rush to stick it down.

“We need an extra page. Is that possible?”

“We’ve gone two over. Okay?”

The twenty-four pages planned blew out to thirty-two and, on the final count (we were marking squares on another board by then, to try to make sense of the frenzied production), to forty.

First, photographs of the day.

“We want to shutter the photos on the front cover. What do you think?”

A quick meeting after lunch. “What do you think?”

Okay.

10 Earlier, we’d decided to remove the activity to organize. Students have used the experience and applied it to projects back at their schools. Some schools who didn’t participate have asked whether workshops will be held next year.

Most importantly, this is an illustration of how a Regional TEAC committee can sponsor a curriculum initiative on its own behalf. By networking students in an in-service and finishing with such a tangible result, this is a singularly practical way of promoting the aims of the TEAC program.

Copies of SHATTERED may be obtained by telephoning Melinda Sparkes, Transition Education Officer, Western Metropolitan Region, on (03) 370 2565.

— Melinda Sparkes
Transition Education Officer,
Western Metropolitan Region

**STUDENT NEWSPAPER WORKSHOP**

They slowly sized each other up.

“Where are you from then?”

“Seen our paper? Want a copy?”

Fifty strangers, sharing an enthusiasm for the production of school newspapers and a willingness to learn — a little overwhelmed by the “demand” that a newspaper be prepared by the end of the day, but willing to give it a go.

The students had their varying amounts of experience. Some came to the day wanting further development of skills gained in their own layout sessions, others were expecting an introduction. I’ve assumed more experience than commonly existed and had to adjust rapidly.

The first sessions enabled us to provide some input on paper format, on examples of “good” and “bad” layout, on what content is worthwhile and on creative possibilities for using existing material. We could have talked all day, but I’m not sure whether participants would have learned — or learned. The more valuable approach was to nudge groups as they worked, to give them feedback, to shout, to laugh, to approve or frown.

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“We need an extra page. Is that possible?”

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The twenty-four pages planned blew out to thirty-two and, on the final count (we were marking squares on another board by then, to try to make sense of the frenzied production), to forty.

First, photographs of the day.

“We want to shutter the photos on the front cover. What do you think?”

A quick meeting after lunch. “What do you think?”

Okay.

By 3:00 p.m., groups were starting to drift away.

“We’ve finished. Send us copies?”

“How many for your school?”

The final meeting to decide distribution didn’t happen, swept away by the clamour to finish.

Increasing peace-and-quiet.

We pick up paper, find the lost scalpels and spread the pages. “No, this goes first, I think.” Page number, colour, notes for the printer. “You’ll screen the photos for the front page, won’t you? Oh, he wanted that overprinted here.” And we, too, go home.

It was practical decision-making under the pressure of time. It was seeing that it is possible to produce a paper with little fuss. It was a demonstration of co-operation and organisation without hierarchy. It was a clear statement that students can “get it together” produce a startlingly good product in a short time and have fun doing it. Of course, none of that could have happened without the prior organisation — contracting schools and students, lining up the printers, buying materials and so on. I enjoyed the day and found it personally satisfying — and extend thanks to Melinda Sparkes and Kay Crawford for their work in making it happen.

— Roger Holdsworth
State Programs Support Team,
TEAC Victoria
In March 1982, the Western Region Education Centre (WREC), in conjunction with the Western Times newspaper, launched the West Short Story competition.

The aim of the competition was to promote local writing and to produce an anthology for young adults which is relevant to their experience of the area in which they live. The competition received over 100 entries and from these, 12 were selected for *Friday Night and Other Stories from the West*.

The stories chosen for publication reflect the assortment of writing styles and subject matter found in the overall group of stories. As a collection, the anthology gives an intentionally diverse picture of life in the western suburbs of Melbourne and hopefully makes some contribution to the identity of the area.

Most of the authors are previously unpublished and all live or have lived in the region. Their ages range from 14-90 years old.

The stories were chosen by a selection panel consisting of: Jenny Pausacker, a children's author and editor; Sue Holmes, the Western Region Secondary English Consultant; Norma Holloway, a children's librarian at Sunshine North Primary School; Angela Altair, Western Times newspaper representative and Jane Elliot, publications coordinator, WREC.

The anthology was funded by the Schools Commission with additional financial support from local councils and bookshops.

It was published by the Western Region Education Centre. The Centre has previously published books by Michael Hyde and Joyce Hoyle and it has produced *Girls Own* and two poster kits *Hard Times and Things That Work Against Women at Work* in conjunction with the Campaign to Encourage Non-Sexist Education.

*Friday Night and Other Stories* will retail for $4.95. It is available from WREC, 34 Kingsville St., West Footscray 3012.

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**FRIENDS OF Y.P.**

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

- Western Region Education Centre (West Footscray, Vic)
- VISE (Melbourne, Vic)
- Dave McRae (VSTA, Richmond, Vic)
- Keith Gove (East Malvern, Vic)
- Pat Thomson (North Adelaide, SA)
- Transition Resources (East Perth, WA)
- John Firth (Melbourne, Vic)
- Ray Taylor (Melbourne, Vic)

**PATRON SUBSCRIBERS** ($20 pa)

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**SCHOOL NEWSPAPER MANUAL**

Are you involved in producing a school newspaper? Are you interested in learning what's involved?

From several requests for information and in-service, I'm putting together a "manual" on school newspaper production. It's reached the stage of chapter outlines. It's a work in progress, in that it reflects your experience or needs. If you'd like to see a copy of the outline and give some response, contact Roger Holdsworth on (03) 529 2055.
Student Action in Education project

The Student Action in Education project based at the Western Region Education Centre, is underway. Funding from Transition Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) has been confirmed to allow the project to continue through 1984, along with the appointment of a second Project Officer. I started work at the beginning of term 3. Prior to that, I was working as a Project Officer at St Albans Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS).

The Student Action in Education project aims to support and resource Student Participation in Education throughout the Western Metropolitan Region, especially in the area of curriculum development.

The Project will work towards:

1. providing a series of in-service and training workshops to students and teachers interested in student participation;
2. the collection of resources and publication of material concerning student participation;
3. the setting up of a regional network of student organisations and student media projects. This network will be linked to the Regional Student Working Party - an open committee of students and teachers;
4. providing support to students involved in School Councils and student representative organisations operating in schools;
5. examining some of the issues connected with student participation, such as curriculum, discipline, assessment procedures and student travel.

This term's work has got off to a good start, with over 20 schools in the region expressing a strong interest in becoming involved. Many schools are in the process of setting up student organisations and have welcomed support from the project.

Some events coming up are:

1. Due to the cutting in funding of many TEAC programs in the region, a day has been organised to video five such programs. The video will be available at the beginning of 1984;
2. A Forum Day has been arranged to discuss some of the issues which should be looked at in International Year of Youth 1985. The Forum Day will be held at the Western Regional Education Centre on December 7th 1983 from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm. Students, teachers, young people and youth workers are welcome to attend. Enrolment forms and details are available by ringing me on 314.3011.

3. A Gala opening of the project will be held at the beginning of 1984.

A report of the first stage of the project and publications on "Student Representative Organisations" and "Meeting Procedures" will be completed by the end of 1983.

Any person interested in the project, can contact me:

Pamela Ward, Project Officer SAIE,
Western Region Education Centre,
34 Kingsville St., West Footscray 3012
Phone: (03). 314.3011

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Western Region Student Forum

"Our rights, our schools, our future" was the title agreed upon for a Western Region student forum held on August 3rd. Two tertiary students, Fay Milenska (Welfare Studies, PIT) and Phil Gilmore (Youth Work, PIT) were based at the Western Region Education Centre for 10 weeks to organise the forum in conjunction with student groups and relevant organisations. As a result, almost 150 people attended, predominantly students from 24 schools in the region.

The forum's aims were to:

* bring students from different schools together to share ideas and information about common student concerns;
* make recommendations about student rights in education;
* develop a regional student link-up.
Presentations were given by students, a recent school leaver and a regional consultant on student welfare/discipline was invited to answer questions on suspension, exclusions and the abolition of corporal punishment. Issues included the new provisions for student representation on School Councils, Student Representative Councils (SRCs), a student union proposal, student rights and students having a say in curriculum development and assessment procedures. Emphasis was placed on discussing these issues in small groups - coordinated by students - with breaks provided by a lavish free lunch and a screening of Meetings, Bloody Meetings.

An evaluation of the forum confirmed the obvious good-will and enthusiasm shown throughout the day despite a few organisational difficulties, crowd density and the mixed nature of the audience. A report on the forum summarising what was done, discussed and recommended, will soon be available from WRBC, as will a video selection of the day's events. Both these productions should be useful to others interested in student participation in decision-making.

Colin Britton
Project Officer, WREC

Student Rights: The Next Step!

1983 has been a big year for students in the Victorian State education system. It has seen a new government with new programs, giving for the first time real status to students and their ability to participate constructively in school-based decision-making.

I feel, however, that this is only the first step. The time when students have an equal stake in the process of decision-making in schools has not yet come.

Between now and that time, three more things have to be achieved. These are in the form of added rights for students. These rights need to be recognised so as to allow students to participate equally and effectively along with staff and parents.

If this is to be achieved, and students are to participate equally in the decisions concerning them, then these rights must be accepted, supported and observed by all groups presently involved in education, and in particular the government.

The first of these rights consists of:

*The right for students to assemble and to discuss issues during school time:*

This is an area which is sorely lacking at present. Students need this support from their schools if they are, as desired, to become constructive, in touch, effective and equal members in the new decision-making process.

*The right to a form of 'credit' to be considered as assessment for students who participate in the new decision-making process during school time.*

Students, it must be understood, are at school firstly to pass and progress. They hold this responsibility to themselves and often to their parents. If involvement has to happen at the expense of academic or scholastic achievement, then it is an oppressive system which will not allow equality for students in the decision-making process.

When these two rights are accepted and supported, it will be much, much easier for students to achieve a third right to be recognised:

*The right to an effective, representative organisation for students, decided on by students, in every school in Victoria.*

For other groups in the school community ie the staff and parents, this right has generally been recognised, especially at high levels in education. For students, however, it is yet to be. Students are seldom supported to be organised at the school level and have never been democratically represented at a state or regional level.

Greg Thorpe, student
St Albans High School
and member, Regional Working Party on Student Participation - Western Metro. Region.
The concept of cross-age tutoring is one which has been viewed favourably by educationalists for many years. Rarely, however, does the acknowledgement of the validity of this type of learning extend to its establishment as a formal subject. Even less often are the models which are established in particular schools able to be transferred to other schools. Here though, perhaps, is one model which has been developed within Exhibition High School which teachers in other schools, interested in this concept, may be able to modify to suit their own needs.

STC & TUTORING

Exhibition High

BACKGROUND

Exhibition High is a girls' secondary school, nestled among the high rise flats of South Fitzroy in Melbourne's inner suburbs. It has a population of some 360 students, the majority of whom come from non English speaking backgrounds. The predominant ethnic groups are Greek, Indo-Chinese, Turkish, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian. About 35% of the population come from English speaking families. Most of these are single parent family situations. Pensioners and the unemployed represent nearly 70% of the school's parent population.

YEAR 12 AND STC

A year 12 course of study was offered for the first time in 1978. Up until this time, the school had offered study up to year 11 only. From then until the end of 1981, students in year 12 at Exhibition High undertook the VISE Group 1 study option. Consequently, fierce competition, excruciating examinations and, for most, a resounding sense of failure became the outstanding memories of their final year at school. The sad fact was that, because of the nature of this assessment model, non English speaking students were severely disadvantaged.

More significantly, however, the school curriculum below year 12 was necessarily geared to enhancing the chances of those who finally presented for the examinations. The wisdom of continuing with this study structure came under increasing scrutiny. Given the nature of the school population, the career aspirations of the total school population, the retention rates beyond the 15 year age limit and the 'success rate' at the exam level, the school community began to look seriously for an alternative year 12 course that was better geared towards the needs of the students.

The eventual choice was VISE Approved Study Structure V, known as STC (the Schools' Year 12 and Tertiary Entrance Certificate). A complete and adequate discussion of this course of study will not be attempted here. However, its outstanding characteristics need to be mentioned.

First, there is no pre-determined curriculum. The content of each subject is negotiated between the class teacher and the students. It is broadly determined by the interests of the students, the knowledge and skills of the teacher and what s/he perceives to be the needs of the students, the career aspirations of the students and the resources available within the school. With the exception of English, there are no compulsory subjects. Secondly, assessment is non-competitive and goal based. There is no arbitrary 'standard' which must be reached. Assessment goals are negotiated between teacher and student, and form the basis for eventual judgement as to whether each unit (the formal recognition of one term's work) has been satisfactorily or not satisfactorily completed.

Thirdly, there is built-in work experience which must be satisfied before a student can be deemed to have satisfactorily completed the course. In addition, tertiary visits are encouraged, and students are provided with assistance in negotiating entry into tertiary courses.
RAMIFICATIONS OF STC

The ramifications of the introduction of STC for the rest of the school have been enormous. The transition has not been without its problems, but the soundness of the decision has rarely been questioned. Most significantly, the rest of the school has also abandoned the traditional competitive assessment model and has moved over into the STC model of non-competitive assessment and negotiated curriculum. Gone are the days of giving marks out of ten, and As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es. While this has caused some confusion for younger students, most of whom have come through an education system founded on competition, the feeling of the older students is that this system provides far more certainty and security. This is not to say, however, that it is easier. Most teachers admit to giving more Ns (not satisfactory) than Es (fail). They are, however, now certain about why an 'N' has been given.

Greater variety in assessment technique is now obvious. Test results, essay marks and behaviour no longer constitute the only methods of assessment. Other factors including attendance and punctuality, participation in discussions, organisational ability, initiative, listening skills, leadership qualities, perseverance and others are also considered. An 'S' is not the automatic prerogative of the most academically capable, or an 'N' the inevitable result for the non-reader. More details of the mechanics of goal-based assessment will be provided later.

More careful examination of curriculum is now necessary. Every teacher is required to write precise course aims, negotiate assessment goals in relation to these aims, and provide an evaluation of the success or failure to achieve these aims at the end of each term. While some of the intricate mechanics of this system still break down occasionally, the implications for successful ongoing curriculum development which flow from this process are undeniable.

Equally significantly, the traditional academic subjects (eg mathematics, the sciences, history, germanic languages etc) are no longer necessarily portrayed or identified as the 'right' or 'best' subjects to choose. Students are encouraged to experiment, to experience variety within their curriculum choice, to relate subject choice to career aspirations, and to capitalise on their ability to speak another language. The school attempts to offer as wide a variety of subjects as is possible within the constraints of rooms available, teacher expertise and staffing ceilings, and also to provide as wide a variety of experience as is possible within each subject.

For example, at the year 12 level, students in English are offered the opportunity of writing and producing their own play; the Community Languages program offers each student the opportunity to study her native language; while students in Social Studies were able to choose between writing research essays on current affairs issues, making a video on the Supplementary Grants Program in the school, working as teacher aides in a local primary school, or negotiating an individual topic for study. Such is the variety which is possible when course content is not pre-determined, and such is the context within which the cross-age tutoring program in Exhibition High School was conceived.

DEVELOPMENT PRIOR TO 1983

The notion of cross-age tutoring had been floated many times at a variety of forums within the school in previous years. English and Mathematics faculty meetings, Planning Committee and even the School Review Board of 1976 had recommended that the idea be investigated. Each year at the annual School Curriculum Conference, the issues of student confidence, the level of student self-esteem and the notions of according students more responsibility were regularly raised. Cross-age tutoring was seen to fit in somehow, but in the end-of-year scramble to finalise allotments and determine curriculum priorities, the idea always seemed to be passed over. Curiously enough, the initiative came from the camps project, a program funded through Supplementary Grants. The Camps Committee had, in a sense, anticipated the introduction of STC, since it had, for several years, pursued a policy of encouraging the students to take on much of the responsibility for organising their own camps. Then in April of 1982, a pilot Student Leader Program was undertaken. Students in level 10 were offered the opportunity of attending the level 7 camp as leaders. Seven students applied for consideration and all were accepted. The experiment was 16 an unqualified success. All three groups of participants (level 7 students,
level 10 students and staff) were extremely positive about the experience at camp. The expansion of the program was recommended and, later that year, level 11 students were invited to attend the level 8 camp, and level 12 students to attend the level 9 camp as student leaders.

At the post-camp debriefing session with the level 10 student leaders, several of the students queried the fact that such an experience was confined to only the area of camps, and that as such was limited both in the number of students who could participate and in the amount of help which could be offered to younger students. "Wouldn't it be nice," one said, "if we could do this sort of thing as part of our coursework?"

Towards the end of 1982, the camps coordinator decided to offer such an opportunity. Given the previous experience of this group of students, it was decided to offer a subject called 'Cross-Age Tutoring' to year 11 students in 1983. Significantly, five of the seven students who attended the level 7 camp in 1982 elected to take up the subject in 1983. Ten students out of a total of 46 in the level enrolled for the subject in 1983. During the course of the year, one student was refused re-admission into the course at the beginning of term 2 and a further four students have joined the group.

NEGOTIATING THE COURSE

The year 11 course at Exhibition High is organised much the same as it is in most other schools. Subjects are grouped together in blocks and students must choose one subject from each block. English is compulsory. Cross-age tutoring was written onto the timetable in two of the six blocks. In both cases, and quite fortuitously, it was placed against the two science blocks, both of which have a five period per week time allocation, rather than the four which is given to the other three non-English blocks. This helped to widen the options available to the cross-age tutoring students. It was decided that each cross-age tutor would work only with one group of students and/or one teacher, so when the timetable was complete, the next task was to search for possible placements for each of the students. This was done by dissecting and re-assembling the weekly time-table, arranging all the time devoted to cross-age tutoring together so that an overall assessment of the possibilities could be gained.

The following factors were taken into consideration. First, each student would work in the class for two or three periods a week, preferably with the same group of students, and only with one teacher. Secondly, the students would work together as a group for one period per week with the teacher co-ordinating the cross-age tutoring program. (As luck would have it, none of the students choosing cross-age tutoring chose chemistry, so Thursday Period 4 became the group meeting time.) Thirdly, each student had to meet once a week with her supervising teacher, preferably during class time when neither had commitments to classes. Thus each student had a slightly different individual timetable. By way of example, several students' individual timetables are set out below:

Example 1: Student works with teacher in 7A Maths. Timetable is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 1</td>
<td>Teaching times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 2</td>
<td>Teaching times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 4</td>
<td>Group meeting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 5</td>
<td>Meeting with teacher, who does not teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>during this lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2: Student works with teacher in 7B English. Timetable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 5</td>
<td>Teaching times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2</td>
<td>Teaching times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 4</td>
<td>Group meeting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 6</td>
<td>Meeting with teacher who does not teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>during this lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 3: Student works with teacher in 7B Social Studies. Timetable:

Monday periods 1 & 2 & Friday period 6: teaching times.
Thursday period 4: group meeting time.
Monday 8.30 to 9.00 am: meeting with teacher who is teaching during all lessons which student has free.

Only two of the 13 students have to meet with their supervising teachers out of class time. This factor has been critical since the experience has been that the regularity of and commitment to these meetings are the most important elements in the overall success of each student’s program. Where meetings have broken down, so has the effectiveness of the student’s participation. Where meetings have happened regularly, successful experiences have generally ensued. It might be pointed out that most meetings do not last for the whole period (50 minutes). The remainder of the meeting time has been used by the students to prepare teaching materials or to write up their journals (see below).

Once the students’ timetables had been finalised, the next task was to negotiate the precise nature of the course.

What precisely would the role of a cross-age tutor be?
What written work would be required?
How would assessment occur?

The starting point for discussion was logically, as it is for all STC subjects, why had the students chosen the subject? The responses varied. About half wanted to be teachers, youth workers or social workers, and had chosen the subject because it appeared to specifically relate to their career aspirations. Others were unsure of their futures, and were looking for an opportunity to broaden their work experience. Several wanted to experience variety within their course of study, while another disliked all the other alternatives. It was agreed that the weekly group meeting would serve two purposes. First, as a discussion forum where problems encountered in the class could be raised and clarified, and secondly as a time when some theoretical input from the teacher could be made.

During term one, much discussion about day-to-day teaching issues took place - how to cope with younger students who became very attached, how to handle confidential information, what to do in a teacher versus students confrontation situation, how to tell the supervising teacher you had too much/not enough to do, how to avoid being drawn into taking sides in peer group arguments and more. In addition, several sessions were given over to reading and discussing some basic psychology theory eg theory of self-concept, physical/social/emotional developments during adolescence, defence mechanisms etc. During term 2, the emphasis was more on exploring career options which were related to the sort of work the students were doing in cross-age tutoring. Activities included guest speakers and visits to tertiary institutions. During term 3, projects are planned. First, there are to be a series of communication skills workshops conducted by students from the Youthwork Course at Phillip Institute of Technology. Secondly, the students want to view and discuss the recently released film Street Kids.

In relation to written work, it was agreed that while the subject had never been conceived as a theoretical, written-based one, some written work was important. Students each purchased a pen carbon book and undertook to keep a journal of their activities. Entries would include records of discussions with supervising teachers, observations of lessons which they participated in, and where they actually took on responsibility for preparing and teaching a lesson or part of a lesson, formal lesson plans. One copy was to be given to the teacher coordinating the cross-age tutoring program, while another copy remained in the book for the student and supervising teacher to refer to while discussing and planning lessons. In addition, it was agreed that each student should submit one written assignment per term. In term 1, this took the form of some values clarification exercises, and testing an hypothesis about the acquisition of formal reasoning. In term 2, students undertook to each write an article for the school newspaper on their experience as cross-age tutors. The term 3 assignment will be based on the film Street Kids.

ASSESSMENT

As with all other STC subjects, assessment in non-competitive and based on the attainment of negotiated goals. The end-of-term report is a description of
the success or failure of the student to satisfactorily complete the goals. It is based on the assessments of the supervising teacher and the coordinating teacher, and the student’s own self-assessment. In the case of cross-age tutoring, two sets of goals are negotiated. First, there are the group goals that relate to all students and which take account of attendance, written work, participation in organised group activities, and commitment to weekly meetings with supervising teachers. Secondly, there are the individual goals which are worked out between the students and their supervising teachers, which relate specifically to the time actually spent in the classroom with younger students. Towards the end of each term, short questionnaires are distributed to the supervising teachers. They are asked to comment briefly on things like the students' attendance and punctuality to classes and weekly meetings, students' roles within the class, specific work tasks undertaken, success in attaining assessment goals, perceived strengths and weaknesses and improvements noted. Students are also required to complete formal self-evaluation sheets. The final report, which is written by the teacher coordinating the cross-age tutoring program, incorporates the views of all three people.

EVALUATION

All of the teachers involved in this program have not yet met together as one group. Communication takes place mainly through occasional bulletins and informal discussions. Consequently, no formal evaluation discussions have yet taken place, and because of the extraordinary number of meetings already scheduled for term 3, are not likely to until the final school days of 1983. Nevertheless, a fairly clear picture has emerged:

1. Advantages to the teacher

Given the reality of staff ceilings, schools are constantly having to make decisions about priorities for teacher time. Coordination time and time allowances for special responsibilities inevitably eat into and very often consume the amount of time able to be allocated to support teaching. The cross-age tutoring program, to a limited extent, has been able to assist the support teaching program. While year 11 students are obviously not as valuable as trained teachers, they do at least significantly reduce the teacher:student ratio. They can halve the number of questions that need to be answered, they
halve the size of reading groups, they double the amount of individual attention any one student may expect or the amount of time a student may get to practise her reading. Individual students who tend to become disruptive if they are not attended to immediately can often be contained, and greater variety of activity within each class is possible. While it becomes increasingly obvious that there is a great variety in ability and aptitude amongst the cross-age tutoring group, all of the supervising teachers have been adamant in their belief that the year 11 students have been a bonus rather than a burden.

2. Advantages to the younger students

Some of the advantages which flow to the younger students involved in this program have already been mentioned above. Given the socio-economic backgrounds of the students, it is of no real surprise that many students in the junior levels of the school exhibit extreme attention-seeking behaviour. The younger students really look forward to the lessons that the cross-age tutors come into. The tutors represent many things for them. They are people who may be asked for advice about everything from boyfriends to menstruation to peer group squabbles. The younger students sometimes find it less embarrassing to ask for help from an older student rather than from a teacher. Similarly, if they are already painfully aware of their reading problems, having an older student listen can sometimes be less threatening. First term at a high school is a difficult time for all new year 7 students, and seeing an older friendly face in the playground provides some relief. For those who are being picked on, or who are not sure where to go, a helpful, friendly year 11 student is a godsend.

3. Advantages to the tutors

Notwithstanding the above, the great success of the program to date lies in the feelings of achievement and confidence which have come to the tutors. Never was the argument for the self-fulfilling prophecy more clearly vindicated. Students who have been told they are trustworthy and responsible and who have been placed in positions of trust and responsibility, have acted out their roles steadfastly. Feedback from the group meetings has been extremely positive, with the students being clearly able to identify the advantages afforded them by their participation in the program. All of the students commented about how their confidence has grown enormously.

"Joining in discussions in English classes is easy for me now," said one student. "It's nothing to running a spelling test on my own."

Others have commented that they have been able to clarify their career aspirations. One student has determined to become a youth worker and has set her sights on attaining that goal, while two others have now decided that they definitely do not want to become teachers. One student wrote on her self assessment that it was nice to feel wanted and respected.

"School has become a whole new place for me," she said. "I have much more respect for teachers, and they for me ... I know I can be useful and that's a really good feeling."

In at least one case, the successful involvement in cross-age tutoring has had repercussions for her other subjects. Her whole commitment to school and study has improved remarkably.

FINAL COMMENTS

One side advantage of this program is that it does not make heavy demands on staff allotment time. The program is accorded only a modest two period a week allowance. The coordinating teacher uses one of these to run the group meetings and the other to visit those students tutoring at local primary schools, discussing students' progress with supervising teachers, writing bulletins and doing the usual preparations and corrections. Supervising teachers have all been prepared to accept the notion that meeting with their students is normal classroom planning, and as such requires no additional time allowance. Mention might also be made of the fact that the school has been able to forge closer links with several of the local primary schools as a result of the program.

Two students worked in primary school teaching situations during term 2, and at least another one will be doing so during term 3. The feedback from the primary schools has been most encouraging and the exchange of ideas and information that has resulted from a program of regular visits to discuss the progress of the cross-age tutors has been most worthwhile.
Finally, mention needs to be made of the problem areas and of the lessons which have been learned. First, the person or persons fixing the timetable need to be consulted. A great deal of minor juggling of subjects and teachers may be necessary in order to create a sufficient number of suitable placements. Secondly, beware of the fact that timetable changes are inevitable, and may ruin individuals’ placements. There needs always to be several spare placements in the event of one or more being knocked out by timetable changes. Thirdly, where students have worked with more than one group of younger students, problems have generally arisen. Wherever possible, the cross-age tutor should work with just one class and one teacher. Fourthly, the importance of the meeting time with the supervising teacher cannot be over-emphasized. These meetings are the linchpin of the entire system. Next, it needs to be clearly understood by everybody that unsatisfactory progress must result in the student transferring to another subject. It’s just not fair to expect the teachers or the younger students to have to cope with an unreliable cross-age tutor. Finally, regular feedback to the supervising teachers is most important. They need to know what has been contracted at the group meetings, and what their responsibilities to their students are, and they will welcome suggestions as to how to best employ the tutors.

Robin Blackley, Exhibition High School, 19 Bell St., Fitzroy 3065

Kids teaching kids

“He who teaches others teaches himself.”

That dictum by 17th Century educator John Comenius is still valid today; students at Beattie Elementary School, Lincoln, Neb., found out last year.

Sixth-grade teacher George Conrad and first- and second-grade instructor Barry Fritch combined their classrooms for an experiment based on “peer tutoring.” Having older students work with younger students as “peer tutors” is one way to provide more individualized attention to each student, Conrad said.

While the first- and second-graders get lots of help with their reading, writing and math skills, “it gives the older students an opportunity to solidify basic concepts they’re supposed to be learning throughout their academic careers,” Conrad said.

Although both groups continued to work on assignments at their own grade levels, the teachers devised projects each day which paired the older students with younger ones.

A major part of the three-week experiment was based around the Journal-Star Printing Co.’s NIE program. Each day for a week, enough copies of the morning newspaper were received so that each pair of students had their own copy.

The older students helped the younger ones learn how to use the index, and to find their way through the often-confusing world of a daily newspaper. Projects involved reading, math, logic and creative writing.

One day the student teams worked together deciding how to spend a hypothetical $100 on items that were advertised in the Journal, a project which gave practice in both math and reading, the teachers said.

Another day the students clipped favorite photographs from the newspaper and made up stories about them. In most cases, the younger student came up with the idea and the older student helped put it into correct, grammatical English.

“It’s fun, because you get more help with stuff instead of just sitting by yourself,” said Josh Lausten, a second-grader. Another second-grader, Aaron Burns, said, “If I don’t have a good dictionary; and I’m trying to find out how to spell a word, I can just go ask a sixth-grader.”

The idea isn’t really so revolutionary, Conrad noted, pointing out that one-room schools of the past had plenty of opportunities for interaction between children of different ages.

Adapted from a story by Bob Reeves, staff writer for The Lincoln (Neb.) Star.
VIDEO IN EDUCATION: Can Television Be Used To Communicate?

"What's on TV tonight?"

"Nothing!"

How many times have we heard kids at school say that to each other (or us). Yet a typical student has watched 15,000 hours of TV by the time s/he has finished school. Students today learn and pick up a vast majority of their information from the TV, more so than from newspapers. Considering that TV in Australia is controlled by only a few people, it's a pretty frightening thought. A bit like having a TV company as our school's supplier.

Yet the medium of television is an exciting and powerful source and learning tool. The fault lies in the program controllers who let's face it, direct their studios to a low denominator in our society.

If only the community could control television, it could become an agent for social change.

Well, it's happening in the United States with the rapid growth of Cable Television. The majority of cable companies are providing up to 20% of their channel capacity for public access. And some systems are capable of 100 channels. This means that schools, local government, community organisations and individuals are now taking charge of programs which are screened on their local channel. What's more, the cable companies are paying for it!

If school districts are organised, this can mean a vast network of facilities can be provided on a long-term basis. Facilities include fully equipped production and post-production studios, internal cable drops and link-ups between nearby schools for interactive use. Potentially, it's very exciting.

Apart from producing and screening programs, the facilities may be used by School Boards to inform parents about activities, policies and elections. In-service may be conducted for teachers and administrators. Even School Board meetings are cable-casted, making School Board members much more accountable to their local school community.

Cable-casting may only take place a few hours a day with the rest of the channel time either being shared with other community organisations or with a 24 hour "community calendar". This is operated by a character generator with 10-20 pages of school district/community information continuously updated, being screened.

Yet, despite the boom in Cable TV and Public Access, very little money is being going direct to curricula or youth programs in schools and the community in "youth participation" programs that were flourishing a few years ago. We hear tales from Reagan's former employees on "Youth Programs are expected to be transformed by a private enterprise". "No more "incentives"." He means, "you can get the young people to work in the air force."

(Remark to Lord Wogan: If it will be a garden trophy or we have all the "youth" money, the air force has to have it. In the old story about a bomber.)

As the Federal tax dollar to education shrinks and local communities must pay more and more from local taxes for their schools, programs for youth and video programs.

I visited one such program recently.

PROJECT BLUEBERRY began in the Mt. High School in Warrnambool, a small town in Western Victoria. The school has 120 students between years 11 and 12. Initiated by the teachers at the school, Barry Waddell and Ted Grimmett, it is part of the English Department. The students are learning communication skills. For juniors and seniors, "blueberry" is an experience English Course that meets in a lab for two hours a week. We have a double period in the video lab. For seniors and year 12, there is a semester-long course with more emphasis on video work. There's greater latitude with regard to program length and content.

The focus of the program integrates reading, writing and video production skills. The subjects in all three cases are concepts of community and the relationship of the individual to it. Over 35 writing assignments per year emphasise perception, detail and order. The video production, executed exclusively by students, brings all the insights and skills of the course into practical
The focus of the program integrates reading, writing and video production skills. The subjects in all three cases are concepts of community and the relationship of the individual to it. Over 35 writing assignments per year emphasize perception, detail and order. The video production, executed exclusively by students, brings all the insights and skills of the course into practical fruition. Groups of two to five students create 5-10 minute video segments (mostly profiles of local community members, but include tapes about teenage pregnancy, runaways, alcoholism, the local hospital, the local radio station, handicapped children of the area, etc). Students are allocated 12 weeks for an hour on the local cable channel. Students do all the work - make the contacts, write the scripts and storyboard, conduct pre-interviews and interviews, shoot, direct and edit all the shows. They then publish and promote them in the local community. Each stage is as important as the next and meshes together as a great learning experience for them.

It improves their writing, teaches them personal communication skills, increases their knowledge of the local community and gives them a critical understanding of the media and television.

"Community TV ... allows interaction and awareness of what is going on locally ... it doesn't just show what the large networks want everyone to see and accept and it gives the people in the area a chance to see themselves on TV." - student Project Blueberry.

Apart from class time, students put in endless hours after school, in evenings, on weekends and holidays towards their projects. I visited the school mid-summer and David Bernstein had no trouble rounding up a couple of ex-students to talk to me about the project. "Project Blueberry taught me more motivated to try and do something about my grades. It showed me that there can be a reason behind school," Cindy Byrnes. Surely that's the essence behind any learning situation - if we can motivate the students then the rest downhill coasting (give or take a few bumps). Yet Project Blueberry will not continue in 1983-4, due to the schools decision to cut its funds.

"The school has a budget cut of $100,000 and one poor English teacher, giving the remaining English teachers another year each. So Blueberry had to go. We're fighting the admin. for years, rallying support each year to save ourselves from the axe. This year ... I felt a little tired of rallying the same forces," David explained.

"I feel really bad that the other kids are going to miss out on this experience. It was like being in a family at school; we'd all work together and get really close," said Vicki Samble (ex-student).

So a good program is perhaps still due to funding cuts and lack of administrative support. Both factors are common experience with many innovative educational programs in Australia.

Perhaps '83 in Australia and start up Project Koala Bear," David suggested.

The Naziannoy School NETWORK VIDEO PROJECT began in Chicago eight years ago, (coordinated by Denise Zaccardi). Originally the project operated out of ten community centers with employed coordinators in each. Now the project is down to three centers, each with voluntary coordinators - Denise being the only remaining professional.

Another variant of the project:
The Network Project was originally created to:

- make residents of diverse communities the essentials of video production, distribution and viewing tapes oneself and maintenance of the end product, production skills;
- provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for growth and development of job readiness skills;
- produce and distribute video tapes on issues of community concern;
- offer employment and job counselling to qualified applicants;
- maintain a library of workshop materials and community produced video tapes;
- serve as a resource for other community agencies in need of video service.

Over the last few years, the young people have completed many videotapes relevant to their issues of their local community, which consists of mainly black and Latino youth.

For example, Latin Queens depicts a girls' gang and explores the motives for joining a gang, participating in gang activities and finally leaving. Everything Must Change was made by 7th and 8th graders about their ghetto neighbourhood. Think Tito's examines teenage pregnancy. The experiences of three young mothers are described as well as the Latino community attitudes. Voice of the people
follows a community organising effort to establish cooperative housing on Chicago's northside. La Esperanza documents the creation of a mural at a local high school and examines the role of the artist in the community.

Due to an acute lack of ongoing funds, much of the group's energy is being channelled into raising money by trying to sell their programs plus get work in their local area making video programs, for example, filming weddings, celebrations etc. This 'hustling' is valuable experience but also incredibly frustrating when the young people would much prefer to be making tapes about issues relevant to them and indeed to many other youth in their community.

I found the concept of this program exciting, especially as it had existed before the Reagan cuts, as the links between high school, alternative schools, unemployed youth and the community were very strong, with a sense of shared responsibility and cooperation between all parties. This model could be easily adapted to the Australian situation, with schools linking their school leavers in with CYSS groups and the community. Of course this has been done in some Victorian schools for some time.

At the moment, Chicago is finalising its Cable TV franchising and when the city is finally wired, this group will have a strong chance of gaining television time through the Public Access facilities.

"I've learnt that TV is more than just something that you sit down and watch: it's sort of a tool...": student, Jefferson High School.

In contrast to the previous two programs, the television and and video course at JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL in PORTLAND, OREGON is booming.

Why? First, because Jefferson High is located in an almost all black neighbourhood in Portland. As part of the Government's desegregation program, some high schools in black neighbourhoods have been given large sums of money to develop their facilities hopefully in order to attract a white population of students as a balance! (It's called a "Magnet" Program.) Jefferson decided to spend its money on developing facilities for the performing arts, which includes a professional colour studio, five portable colour video recording units, three complete editing systems and a three colour camera mobile unit equipped for remote coverage.

Secondly, because the City of Portland has one of the most innovative and extensive Public Access Cable TV systems in the USA. The system has dedicated 10 channels of its two-way, 108 channel capacity system to various community needs. In addition to a black-oriented channel, they offer arts, government and health channels. Soon to begin operation will be a local sports service, a channel for the hearing impaired, a channel offering programming on environmental issues and two educational services.

With these two factors working together, Jefferson HS has developed a four-year course (years 9-12) in television production:

Year 1: Introduction to TV or Comprehensive TV Production
Year 2: Television News
Year 3: Advanced TV Production
Year 4: Independent Study of TV News.

Students usually begin at years 9 or 10 and are first introduced to all the aspects of basic equipment operation, scripting and simple editing. In the second year, they create and produce a daily TV news show which is telecast to all Jefferson students via the closed circuit cable system. Included is work on interviewing and understanding the concepts behind news reporting. They will also study communication theory and mass media.

Finally, using the sophisticated equipment at the school, students produce programming both in studio and on location, that may be aired on the local cable TV system. Students can contract to do course work outside the school that is credited. One student I spoke to, was working under the coordinator of the black community cable TV channel.

By the time students had completed this course, they had not only a strong understanding of the media and how it relates to their own community, but were able to either walk into TV related employment or further study with relative ease.

As well as offering this extensive course in Television Production, Jefferson offers a similar three year sequence in both Radio and Journalism. Students can combine the three disciplines if they wish.
These courses were extremely sophisticated, yet invaluable to the participating students. It made Media Studies courses offered in Australian schools look like a bad joke.

BERKS SCHOOLCASTING: Technically much more advanced than the above example, lies an organisation of local school, industry and government personnel, who meet monthly during the school year to coordinate the scheduling of locally produced programming on a common educational channel. They are known as Berks Schoolcasting and are based in Reading, amidst the hills of Pennsylvania.

Apart from deciding on the program schedule for their cable channel, the group exchanges information about equipment utilisation, new concepts in the use of closed circuit television, multi-directional communication via mid-band channels and programming ideas and information.

The continuing effort of local schools has witnessed the evolution of a communication network which connect schools and tertiary colleges with each other and with hospitals, local government, senior citizens organisations, civic and service groups. This type of interconnection, facilitated by the cable system and microwave links, allows communication on five levels:

1. within specific school buildings;
2. between buildings within a school district
3. between school districts
4. between one or more buildings and/or districts and other entities in the community
5. from a school system direct to cable subscribers (see diagram).

Confused? Breath-taking isn’t it! I could go on but will stop here.

The concern over communication is becoming more and more evident today, not only in society but in schools. Teachers are stressing the basic communication skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening; administrators are making a strong effort to explain school policies, programs and curricula to the community. As for students, they are constantly struggling to understand and to find ways of being understood.

Television, if used properly, can play a role in all these aspects of communication. The above are just a few examples of how this is being done in the States, especially with the existence of cable TV and Public Access.

Whether or not cable TV ever reaches Australia is debatable. Certainly, sooner or later, with the advance of the satellite, new systems will reach our shores. Meanwhile there are many ways that we can begin to use the existing video equipment in schools and in our local community in order to develop a real communications tool out of television.

Sally Ingleton
Nicaragua
CITY

CITY (Community Improvement Through Youth) operates in Adelaide and is part of the Department of Labour.

CITY works with young unemployed people developing community improvement activities. A program has been developed in high schools and involves students in classroom activities, seminars and community projects.

A varied and comprehensive resource kit is provided, divided into three sections: Part 1, Activity Suggestions, provides ideas and directions for initiating discussion and debate around issues of employment and unemployment, from statistical information to studies of how unemployment might affect the family and the individual. Parts 2 and 3 provide information, resources and examples of publications - an extremely useful resource for teachers particularly.

Much more important, however, are the outlines of the CITY High Schools program seminars and Community Projects. The Seminars are designed for years 10, 11 and 12 students and for groups between 10 and 30 students. Seminar topics suggest activities aimed at student awareness of "the competitiveness of the labour market" and what unemployment can mean for them. What is hard to support about the project is that the standard seminar format includes a CITY group-worker running the seminar plus one or two unemployed volunteers. This seems to be putting the unemployed unpaid worker in the situation of social eccentric and devaluing her/him even more by not paying her/him.

Furthermore, these seminars are meaningless without tying them into the Community Projects program or some practical, active project to provide some answers for unemployment, rather than being depressed by the situation.

The Community Projects Program involves CITY youthworkers with a group of students and teachers in eight schools, to provide an 11 week work experience in a community service organisation for students. Students decide upon and organise projects based on work or personal interests and some examples cited are: establishing a local BMX bike track, a local information map, an adventure playground, producing a youth issues film. Students are to be involved in all aspects of the project from the initial idea planning to structuring budgets, approaching organising bodies, setting up appropriate community support resources and evaluating the project. Projects are intended to be financed by each school involved through Education Department Transition Grants funding.

It's hoped that this funding covers payment for the young people themselves.
The idea of Community Projects Program is a good starting point for young people's involvement in the community. CITY suggests this to be an activity for years 11 and 12 students. Rather, this should be an activity for year 9 and 10 students and a more comprehensive, longer-term project set up for older students. With only two or three hours spent on the project each week and only a few weeks for completion of the task set, the program could be seen as rather tokenistic. Also, it doesn't really challenge accepted notions of work or really tackle what alternatives to traditional ideas of work actually exist in the Adelaide community. As such, the program is a beginning point, hopefully to stimulate further activities and an increasingly political stand point.

These comments are based on written material only, sent from Adelaide. It is always difficult to really discuss a project without some involvement in it. It'd be interesting to hear from some of the CITY activity participants. Kits and other written material can be obtained from:

CITY, GPO Box 465, Adelaide 5001 SA  Ph. (08) 227.0444

Rebecca Coyle

Education Audio Tapes

The Riff Raff recording went to air on a recent program. We got quite a lot of positive listener feedback. Following is a list of interviews I have had over the last two years with educational 'experts'. Copies of these are now available from John Price, AVRB Bendigo, PO Box 421, Bendigo 3550. Cost is $1 per tape (plus postage and packaging).

Tapes recorded by Justin Shortal for 3CCC-FM, Central Victoria:

Tape 1:  Side 1:  *Professor Art Pearl* (Univ. of Santa Cruz, USA). Professor Pearl explains his views on the needs of young people now and in the future, and how, as a society, might work towards meeting these needs. Other topics include 'a community assessment' and 'the inadequacy of traditional curriculum'.

Side 2: *Professor Ned Flanders* (USA). Talks about ways teachers can improve their own effectiveness in the classroom.


Tape 3:  Side 1:  *Ian Adams* (Alan Watson Centre for Family Life and Support). Talks about the need for all teachers to reassess their ideas about student needs, interests and aspirations. Discussed the concept of teacher self-esteem.

Side 2: *David Pettif* (Choice and Diversity Project). Speaks about parent participation in curriculum decision making, school councils' new roles etc.

Tape 4:  Side 1:  *Clarice Bellenden and Judith Firkin* (TEAC/VISE Equal Opportunity Task Force). Interview includes discussion of sexism in schools and ways in which it can be faced.

Side 2: *Bob Juniel and Barbara Blamey* (Education Officers coordinating Tech Year 12 course). Interview gives brief explanation of the new Tech Year 12 course; its aims and purpose.

Justin Shortal,  
Schools Liaison Officer,  
3CCC-FM,  
Station St., Harcourt 3453
It's amazing how easy it is to come up with "good ideas". Even if you're not innovative, there are plenty around to use - they seem great - even though one doesn't anticipate the endless problems that plague you from idea to action.

Mid 1982 saw a great leap forward for Caulfield High School - a "Projects Week": fund-raising with a bit of PR and morale boosting thrown in. Naturally the staff were enthusiastic (think of all the "new equipment" we could buy to improve the quality of education in the school) while the students sat back, waiting for us to tell them what to do next.

The first step was to call for submissions, so we'd have some idea of how much money to aim for. As the requests for gym mats, books and typewriters filtered in, some of us wondered what the students themselves might want. Having suffered years of oppression at the hands of the "experts", they were naturally reluctant to suggest anything, knowing that no-one listens to students anyway. (Well, they are wrong - we do listen. The fact that we rarely act on what they say is irrelevant, isn't it!)

Inspired by ideas in Connect and the ideas of Peter Cole, a couple of us sat down with some rather nervous students over several lunchtimes and came up with:

1. more lunchtime sports equipment;
2. a student lounge (built and managed by students);
3. school beautification.

I must admit the "lounge" idea was pushed on to them as they didn't think they'd be "allowed" to have one, so why bother? Anyway, the submission went in and the Projects Committee (with four student reps) approved the idea.

Next step: School Council - and the fight was on. In our haste to get something that might encourage student responsibility and interest as well as a commitment to something they "owned", we'd forgotten the bureaucratic necessities of:

1. supervision and legal liability (I thought student participation required an element of trust on our behalf);
2. where to put it? (we'd thought once the need was recognised, we'd find a way).

Well, we decided that was why we were mere teachers and students - and not administrators!

Several "meetings" followed. At each, the Principal came up with a new document about legal liability and the fact there there were no spare rooms (the fact that only 10-12 staff ever used the HUGE social staff room on a regular basis for lunch seemed irrelevant ... it's more important to have a happy staff ... kids are here to do as they are told).

One particular meeting was cancelled, though an impromptu discussion proceeded with 'sound' arguments against the lounge being voiced: "... can't let students have their way..." "They can't be trusted" "Anyway, it's not work, so they don't need it." Oh, teacher superiority and obedient students - the perfect education system.

My fury at the narrow idea of curriculum held by many staff culminated in a paper "The Student Lounge and Curriculum Change". Here was the chance to give students responsibility, show our trust in them and acknowledge their concerns as genuine ones. The paper was labelled "a double barrelled shotgun with three blasts" by the Principal. He suggested that I not circulate it as it implied some staff were wrong and that there was division in the staff. (We can't let the truth leak out can we?) After he told me it was typical of women to be "so irrational", I circulated it immediately.

Arguments raged for the rest of the year, and the issue was left with a 28 "committee" that I stayed off, hoping the decision would seem more impartial.
1983 saw a new Principal and "The Continuing Saga of the Student Lounge". With his initiative and cooperation, we got a room (one that had originally been a student common room anyway). The issue of supervision was solved by agreeing to leave the room open to view from the corridor - as well as students working out their own roster system for duty.

I was teaching a subject called "Real Life English" - in essence, students negotiated what they wanted to do - with an emphasis on "real life". Several students leapt at the chance to work on the Student Lounge. We had a budget of $1000, a room and a few ideas. Efforts to get a 'management committee' going consistently failed - my lack of managerial skills as well as their unwillingness to give up free time.

While most students didn't see the task as 'real work' (that's writing and reading!), they were certainly enthusiastic about the idea. With the help of the Graphics teacher, a mural was designed for one wall and plans made for a graffiti board on the other. Once work got underway, some were so enthusiastic they spent all day there, skipping other classes. I sat waiting for complaints by staff at the end of each day.

Eventually the room was opened - we still didn't have carpet, but what the heck! After about 6 weeks, a new set of problems arose - we'd failed to work out an effective managerial system. A semi-riot by some year 11 students resulted in the student monitors closing the lounge down for a week. I discussed the problems with several interested students and decided that the lounge would not re-open until we had identified the problems and come up with solutions to all of them.

According to Madge and Angela (year 10), "The student lounge has been closed for nearly a month because some students were misbehaving. One of the problems we have is that some students don't take any notice of the rules. Also, some students think they can run the place and only allow their friends in there, so many junior students don't like going in there. They don't feel wanted or comfortable.

"We also have a problem with the stereo. It has been turned up too loud sometimes and the amp has blown up. We have to lock it up every day and it takes three people to disconnect and move it. Kerry wants us to sell it and buy a portable tape/radio. It'll be easier to look after.

Central part of mural: It has punks to the right and animals, trees and birds to the left. Students in front are from the year 12 photography group. The mashed body under the tram is hidden.
"We've just raised another $1000 in our Walkathon so we should be able to get a new carpet in during the holidays. We tried second-hand carpet, but it didn't work."

For me, it is a "continuing saga". I'm still hopeful that all the problems will eventually be sorted out, though at the moment I'm just wondering what will go wrong next!

NOTES:

Stereo: A nice big one with speakers that put out lots of noise. Jim and Nick (two year 10 boys) who did a lot of the initial work, took it on themselves to "modify" the speaker. Nick connected the wrong wires one day and also blew something in one of the speakers.

What I found worrying though - most of the music played was solid "disco". This attracted the year 11 boys (regular disco goers and large in stature) who managed to take over the place. By accident, they are also Greek, which led to a game called "spot the Aussie" and renaming the lounge "Wogsville".

Things escalated to the point where there were plans to turn the room into a full-scale disco - they'd even got quotes for black-out material and flashing lights - so much for escapism and peace and quiet! I was tempted to veto the idea though I finally settled for two weeks of intensive persuasion! (I'm winning!)

Graffiti wall: This was originally board painted white. We figured we'd paint it over from time to time. What we didn't realise was that permanent texta oozes its way through several coats of paint and some gross obscenities about individuals just couldn't stay! It's been painted again with blackboard paint and chalk provided free. It seems to be working as there's no graffiti anywhere else in the room.

Kerry Howard
Caulfield High School,
76 Booran Rd.,
Caulfield 3162

YOUR COMMENTS

Well, finally, here is the article that I've been promising you. It's very long and feel free to edit it in parts.

It's been written in St Ignace, Michigan, in New York City, in a New Orleans Youth Hostel and finally in a Latino house in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala under a 25 watt lamp at about 0° temperature - so the quality may be a little disjointed!

It's another world here in Mexico and Guatemala, and the USA seems far away. All that's here are the Coca Cola and Levi billboards and Mayan Indians walking around with dirty T shirts bearing the slogan "This is the property of the New York Yankees" which I find very ironic. US imperialism is so evident here - the great god of the north breathing down everyone's necks. Poverty and repression in Guatemala is quite horrifying.

I go to Nicaragua in two weeks which I'm looking forward to very much.

Sally Ingleton, San Cristobal, Mexico

Just a few notes on the "Student Lounge" at Caulfield High. I'm sorry that I haven't got time to really whip it into shape and there's lots of details missing. I really do think sometimes it'll never end, and while the students don't have much experience at participation and decision-making, it'll be very much of an up-hill battle.

Kerry Howard, Caulfield

Enclosed is an article for possible publication in your magazine. It is generally about nuclear disarmament, aiming to motivate and spark an interest in this issue. It is aimed at the audience of secondary students.

Silvana Tuccio, Coburg
I notice in your latest CONNECT issue (August-October 1983) that you are encouraging your readers to commence thinking/acting upon the potential for International Youth Year as suggested by the theme "Participation, Development, Peace". You printed an extract from the YACCA IYY brochure for the non-government/voluntary sector. Attached are the two news-sheets I've prepared to date, which supply background material for editorials. They also open up some of the scope of IYY. Our Trans Ed people here in Queensland are very interested and I have commended your publication to them. Please utilise the information from the NewsSheets and hearty congratulations on interest incited so far.

Denise Regghenzani, State Coordinator, IYY Secretariat, PO Box 33, North Quay, Queensland 4000 (07)224.8050

(The NewsSheets are included in the photo-copy list)

The Environment Centre of WA has recently received funds from the Australian Government (under the Wage Pause Program) for the establishment of an environmental education program. One aim of the project is to provide members of the general community, teachers and students with information on what resources are available to assist in increasing their awareness and knowledge of environmental and peace issues.

The Environment Centre was established in 1974 to provide a central resource base for groups and individuals interested in developing their concern for environmental issues. In addition, the Centre provides a library, reading area, information leaflets and other services which are available to all members of the community.

Michael Ward, Education Officer, The Environment Centre of WA, 790 Hay Street, Perth, WA 6000.

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S.S.N.D.

Yes, it's nuclear disarmament again!

But before you flick the page, consider this: there is a nuclear war threat. "Bonkers!" you say. "Like hell there is! I don't see it under the desk, behind the chair — nothing!"

Well, you're right in a sense. It's not as if a gun is directed, point-blank at your head, where you can't escape the fact that it's there. The situation is rather like this: For whatever crazy reason, you decide to walk to school in the middle of the road. You're not trying to attempt suicide. Yet the possibilities of being run over are much greater than if you walked on the footpath. Hence your life is threatened. So it is with nuclear weapons. Their existence is a threat to everyone. Positioned and ready, they can be fired at any given time.

"OK, there's a threat; so what?" you say.

The fact is that nuclear weapons are not your ordinary rifles and machine-guns. They have potential for greater destruction. Just how much can be detected in this fact: "there are enough (nuclear weapons) to kill us (every person alive today) several times over ..." The consequences of a nuclear war are then horrifying and detailed. This statement from Nuclear War: The Threat to Australia briefly makes the point: "Australia will be relatively badly hit ... about half our total population will be killed more or less immediately and perhaps another quarter seriously injured or incapacitated by radiation sickness, contaminated food and water and disease, so that they will die in the following few months ... societies as we know them will cease to exist." Nuclear war is hence like a shattered bottle of milk. Once it is spilt, the bottle and the milk cannot be
returned to their former state. Wouldn't it have been wise therefore to have avoided placing the bottle in such a precarious position?

Nuclear weapons are nevertheless continually being improved and built. Among France's defence plans for the next five years, for example, is "the arming of its sixth nuclear submarine ... with the first series of M4 multiple warhead missiles" as reported in a recent issue of the International Armed Forces Journal. More weapons with greater capability for a first strike increase the probability of their being used (first strike is the idea that "nuclear war is winnable if the side who starts it destroys the entire missile arsenal of the other side").

This increasing threat of nuclear war can be likened to a steamroller running wild down a slope. In its path stands the world's people. If one person tries to stop it, she will most likely be squashed. But if everyone joins in, then a greater resistance is possible and the chances of curbing it and its threat of destruction are increased. Yet before any individual can take part, they must first know that a threat exists. In knowing the why and wherefore, the most successful tactics in stopping this steamroller can then be thought of and activated.

The Secondary Students for Nuclear Disarmament aim to make as many people as possible, especially other secondary students, aware of this threat. This is in addition to the general PND aims. It is our future and we want to make sure we have it, peacefully.

SSND meets in Melbourne on the first Friday of each month at CICD, 4th floor, 252 Swanston Street, Melbourne at 5.30 pm.

Join in: learn, act and live.

Silvana Tuccio

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**REVIEWS**

**ASCOLTA RADIO GROUP**

by Rebecca Coyle and Roger Holdsworth

Published by Transition Education Advisory Committee, 582 St Kilda Rd., Melbourne 3004 (03) 529.2055

The Ascolta Radio Group is a report in a series of project reports from TEAC-funded projects. It is presently the most comprehensive and detailed report of a school-based radio project that exists.

The Ascolta Radio Group project works with primary and secondary schools in the Brunswick area of Melbourne. Programs produced by students and teachers from those schools, are put to air regularly on 3CR at 6 pm on Saturdays (and occasionally at 7 am on Sundays on 3PBS-FN). But the Group's main emphasis is on curriculum development in the participating schools around the production outcome of radio programs.

The Group is based at Moreland High School (The Avenue, Coburg 3058 - phone (03) 383.1300) where a small pre-recording studio has been set up. In 1983, the group was funded for running costs by the Supplementary Grants Program, and for a half-time project officer through TEAC.

This report covers an outline of the activities of the project (programs made, schools worked with, the studio, equipment and so on), an interim evaluation report and outline of a case study approach, and resource material used within the project. It provides a unique insight into the workings of the Group and particularly into the processes of material and curriculum development. For example long sections detail the work of the project officer in supporting both staff and students in the schools.

The resource section, too, should prove of great value to schools embarking on similar projects (and we hear of more and more doing so). There are sheets of instructions on use of equipment and on interviewing techniques as well as sections on evaluation and a day-by-day diary of activities through a 'typical' week.

Mention should also be made of the entertaining and relevant illustrations by Tony Smithe which counterpoint and lift the 130 + pages.

Check with the Publications Officer at TEAC about availability of this report. It has been sent to all schools in Victoria and to educational libra-
The editors of *Emu* Literary Magazine for Young Australians proudly announce the arrival of the first issue.

*Emu* is a serious new literary magazine for young writers.

*Emu* aims to present a wide range of articles from a variety of writers in the 15 to 25 year old age group.

*Emu* is at present self-funded and eager for readers. It is edited by three young women students.

We feel that it fills the need for the recognition of isolated young writers. We strive for a high standard with challenging content.

Well worth a read and your support!

*Emu* Literary Magazine,
192 Clarke Street,
Northcote 3070. (03) 459.9508

The editors state in the editorial: "... The *Emu* editors want to give constructive advice to help improve the work and thus the magazine. To this end, we plan to arrange workshops for our writers where all can contribute opinions. We would like to help discourage the feeling of isolation some young authors have professed to feel... so we welcome the opinions of our readers..."

(Fiona Capp, Catherine Jaggs, Evelyn Tsitas, editors.)

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YOU WANT TO DO STC

Robin Blackley's article on Exhibition High School gives a good run down of the operation of the STC Course in one school. It should also be emphasised that the growth of STC has been phenomenal in Victoria: six schools in 1977 to 28 in 1983, and approximately 45 envisaged in 1984. It has obviously tapped into a strong demand for school-based non-competitive and negotiated year 12 courses; it has obviously been able to deliver 'the goods'.

There is some material around to assist schools contemplating undertaking STC (not a light decision). Previously in CONNECT, we have mentioned The STC Book produced by the STC Group and published and made available by the VSTA, 35 Elizabeth St., North Richmond 3121. Now a number of schools in the western suburbs have got together to publish in tabloid newspaper format: *You Want To Do STC* - and, more importantly, this 24 page paper has been produced in Maltese, Italian, English and Greek. As such its prime audience is parents and students contemplating embarking on STC studies.

*You Want To Do STC* contains articles on "What is STC?", "What STC Did For Me", comments from teachers, parents and students and articles on several subjects and units. Great cartoons from Joan Rossler run through the text.

The 'editorial' says: "This publication has been planned, written and organised by students, parents and teachers in the Western Region. Its main aim is to give all concerned an opportunity to voice their views about STC and inform interested community members about the way in which some STC courses and units operate."

It's a valuable and exciting publication. Check with Hana Karas at Sunshine High School (460 Ballarat Rd., Sunshine 3020) or with Dave McRae at the VSTA (above) about availability.
In the literature of Drama in Education, it is difficult to escape from publications which dwell academically on the age-old battle between 'Child Centred' learning - in the tradition of Peter Slade, Dorothy Heathcote and Brian Way for example - and the more conservative view that Drama teaching is 'about' skill acquisition and abstract standards of aesthetic excellence.

In Acting Together, authors Clare McCarty and Jac Rattley have avoided this problem by producing a short, practical and easily readable publication which emphasises the creative and political importance of school-based curriculum planning and negotiated course content.

The book traces the development and processes used at the Parks Community Education Centre in Adelaide with groups of secondary age students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Beginning with the argument that the content of courses must always be relevant to the needs and experiences of the students involved, and that solid 'content' is the firmest base for any program, the authors then proceed to describe their methods of operation and the highly successful outcomes of a number of their performance orientated projects.

Of particular relevance to teachers attempting to implement processes of course negotiation in their own schools (and in other subjects), the book deals in some depth with the kinds of questions which students need to be asked, and the 'how', 'why' and 'when' of such questions in relation to curriculum planning through whole group involvement.

Through example, it also gives valuable suggestions to the Drama teacher on how issues of vital importance to the lives of students can be developed, through group cooperation, into successful originally scripted dramatic performances, and how this process can be integrated into other subjects.

For the Drama teacher in particular, it is a book which steers a clear course between the 'assumed' opposites of individual and social development on the one hand and 'Artistic Standards' on the other. Essentially it adopts a 'child centred' approach but utilises techniques and methods from different streams of thought (including a strong emphasis on production outcomes). Most importantly, however, it does not assume that teachers have all the answers but rather that theories and methodology are never relevant in themselves without the practice of continued student input and group cooperation.

Acting Together is one of those refreshing publications born of experience rather than academic leprosy, and as such is highly recommended.

Graham Parker, Lynall Hall
# Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>90¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>&quot;Education for a Future: An alternative to Educational Sociology&quot;: Dr Tony Knight. Paper given to the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference, Aug 83. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>&quot;A Social Action Curriculum: Education for a Future&quot;: Dr Tony Knight, August 1983 (to be published in 'Ethos')</td>
<td>15 $1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>&quot;Student Researchers in Action&quot;: Garry Coventry - discussion paper to SAANZ Conference, August 1983</td>
<td>17 $1.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>&quot;Student Case Study Profiles&quot;: Companion paper to 163.</td>
<td>21 $2.10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>International Youth Year (Qld) News Sheets</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>166</td>
<td>Community, Cable, Educational Video package. inc. 166A Community Television Review May 1980 24pp $2.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>&quot;Negotiation in Drama Curriculum&quot;: Graham Parker (Lynall Hall Community School)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60¢</td>
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## Publication Projects:

We wish to stress that these publications are not for sale. They are available for perusal by arrangement: contact CONNECT on (03) 489.9052.

### AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

- Network (North Geelong schools, Vic) Vol 1 No 2 Nov 1983
- Paddlewheel (Wilcannia School, NSW) to Vol 8 No 37 18 Nov 1983
- Mallacoota Mouth (Mallacoota School, Vic) to issue 331 18 Nov 1983
- Apple Pie (Bacchus Marsh HS, Vic) No 1 July 1983
- You Want To Do STC (Western Suburban STC Schools, Vic)
- Ascolta (Brunswick Schools, Vic) Vol 10 Nos 5, 6 Oct, Nov 1983
- Rave (Winlaton, Vic) No 18 September 1983
- Shattered (Western suburban school inservice, Vic)
- Panorama (Westall HS, Vic) Vol 2 No 3
- Scoop (Buckley Park HS, Vic) Vol 1 No 1 July 1983
- Braybrook Junction (Braybrook HS, Vic) Vol 1 No 2 August 1983
- Community Capers (St Albans Technical School, Vic)
- Yunnan (Warriappendi School, SA) No 8 July 1983
- Caulfield Capers (Caulfield HS, Vic) March, June, August 1983
- Student Bulletin (Young Christian Students, Vic) No 25 September 1983
- Tech Times (South Melbourne TS, Vic) No 3 October 1983

### OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

- Foxfire (Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568 USA) Vol 17 No 2 Summer 1983

Continued page 2
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