

RESOURCES PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE IN TEACHING

A quick description of this idea is that it is an extra-curricular college of education. It would be for students and teachers who feel inadequately prepared to deal with the problems they face in teaching and who are willing to take an active part in helping themselves and others.

So far the best plan seems to be to try to build up three kinds of programme:

1. An Advisory-Placement 'Switchboard'

a) To help students find places where they can work and play with children in unstructured, out-of-school situations.

b) To place students as volunteer helpers with teachers who are trying to do interesting, new work in schools.

c) To give students and teachers access to experiences that enlarge their understanding of social realities e.g. what factory work is like, police, courts, housing problems, how the welfare state works, hospitals and other areas of life that they might like to know about.

2. A Network Of Small Learning - Discussion Groups

that meet regularly helped when possible by people who are skilled in non-directive leadership, to work on problems in teaching, changes in personal attitudes, assimilation of new ideas in education, gathering and developing materials for teaching and any other projects they may set themselves. These groups need not be limited to verbal exploration; music, dance, drama, games, use of materials are all possible and valuable.

3. A Publicity-Communications Effort

to let more people know about interesting conferences, meetings, societies, events, lectures, books etc. that are about change in education.

IT DEPENDS ON US

The resources for this extra-curricular programme will have to come from within the community of those who are concerned about how we are helping children and young people to grow up into the future. A lot of people are beginning to see what the problems are and are trying different approaches to solving them. We know that many of the needed resources are available and that many people are willing to become involved. The whole idea may sound incredibly ambitious, but it can be done if people are interested.

The potential of a self-help programme in teacher education already exists, enough to make a start. What is needed is a real effort to get it together so that people know what is going on and can use what they need and give what they can.

ARE THESE OUR ASSUMPTIONS?

We are concerned with the wholeness of human beings, and with identifying the ways in which this is attacked and eroded.

Our concern is with education and growth, inescapably with children (the future), and inevitably with ourselves.

We can all learn from and teach each other. This is best done in open situations. We must create ongoing situations for communication in which people and issues are not polarised.

We need techniques for problem-solving, sharing, understanding and responding to change - working with it, using it, and not being used.

What we learn in this way is what is needed at the moment in schools by teachers and children confronting change. (Is this need admitted?)

There is a need to recognise change. There is failure in the schools and in teacher-training, where people are bored, cramped, and not helped to full functioning.

There is a large untapped potential of teachers who could benefit from working in a more open way.

We can reinforce each other, and nourish the natural forces for change and growth within people, which must break through whatever it is which is stultifying people and education.

Are we only helping people to adjust to an unacceptable social situation? What are we socialising children for?

IS THIS, THEN, THE WAY WE WANT TO WORK?

We need to initiate and build an organisation which is flexible and responsive, a structure with which people can communicate and express needs, find people to help them, people that want their help, and people to work with.

Ideally it will be self-actualising and self-directing. How can it be? Is some kind of self-definition necessary for survival?

What sort of structures do we need to survive in the way we want to?

What do you want that way to be?

How can you use this organisation?

How can we solve the problems of administration?

Do you want us to have money from a grant-making body? Do we need it?



I came to the Resources Programme with needs.
The needs were half-defined, and I still grope towards an understanding
of what they were and are and will be.
But I know that some have been met and I trust you to help me meet more
and help with my groping.
One of my needs is to help you.
(Is this why I am a teacher?)
Now that I feel I trust in the programme, in you and in me, I begin to
learn what I may be as a source of help, a resource.
What is my strength? How can I use it and how can you use it?
What are my skills, my experience, my resources of personality, my
capacity to grow, my capacity to share? What are yours?
How do we share? I feel your energy and you mine and we try to grow
and learn out of that.
There are times of confusion and chaos. Have we a direction? Suppose
we don't find one? Where are you? Where am I?
We grasp at words. We clutch at their fixity. We articulate, define,
state. Is this a structure we need?
I write this page. I learn as I write. Does it help you learn?
Something will echo in your mind, release a thought or feeling into life;
I know this because your words do that for me.
One of the things I learn from this writing is that tomorrow it will have
no significance for me: there is no fixity. I know where I am
today; tomorrow I shall be somewhere else.
I write this for me, and for you as a gift of love. If you were not
there, I would not have written.

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For further details about the Resources Programme for Change in Teaching, contact The Editor, Self and Society.