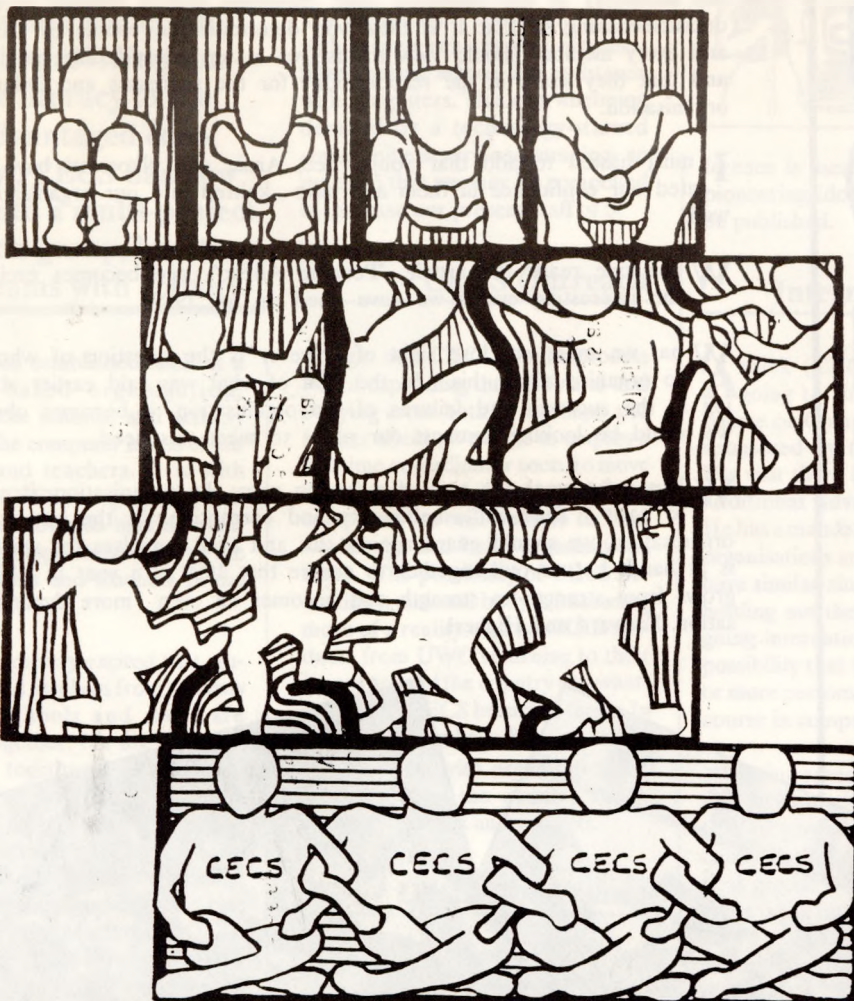


March 1989 Vol 5 No: 1

CECS NEWS

cape educational
computer society



**GROUP WORK - Breaking Down
Isolation and Frustration**

EDITORIAL

1989 Has started with a bang!
So much has happened in CECS
this quarter that it is difficult to
imagine that only two months
have passed.

One of the most significant features of this year has been the employment of the four new people by CECS. Having so many new people in influential positions can be potentially dangerous for an organisation such as CECS which is run along democratic lines.

It thus becomes incumbent on the members of CECS to be vigilant against too much of the responsibility for the running of the organisation resting on the shoulders of the employed staff. Members should actively participate in decision-making so that it is they who determine the course of CECS. Each and every member should view themselves as an indispensable part of CECS, and that they share in the responsibility for the successes and failures of the organisation.

I must hasten to add that Sonja, Lee, Ansie and Nkosinati have all vindicated our confidence in them and have knitted into our organisation quite well.

When one reads the article, "Peeping Ahead", one becomes excited about the interesting events we have lined up for 1989.

What we must not lose sight of however is the question of who is going to organise all of this. In the light of what was said earlier about sharing in the successes and failures of the organisation, it becomes obvious that we would be looking amongst our ranks to meet this need.

When it becomes the task of a few to carry the organisation, it could lead to early "Burn-out", inefficiency and corruption. In the interests of our organisation, we should guard against this and avail ourselves for whatever task is at hand. Let us pull together to ensure that 1989 is a year in which CECS grows from strength to strength and becomes an even more dynamic organisation. Forward and Higher!



PEEPING AHEAD

AT 1989

This year promises to be an exciting one. The word is going around - "CECS is growing in leaps and bounds". From being just a computer society involved in providing computer literacy to the disadvantaged community, CECS has now grown into a multi-project education group, bursting at the seams with activity.

CECs has established itself as a mass-based organisation, rooted in the schools, and actively taking up the computer needs of our students and teachers. It is with pride that CECS recognises its own contribution towards making computer technology come alive to the many students and teachers in the schools.

Yes, we are very excited that students and teachers from so many different schools and areas are working together. It's not only getting them together, but also their being so productive in so many creative ways. The computer is thus playing a strategic role in getting teachers to transform our education from the present authoritarian one to a more democratic one. Oh, it makes such a big difference working together! Why didn't someone tell me about this before!!

CECS Projects

Currently the CECS Project Centre is struggling to cope with the great numbers of students, teachers and members of the community streaming in everyday.

The telephone is constantly tied up with various schools and organisations seeking advice and assistance with computers. This overwhelming demand by a technology-starved community is very encouraging - so much so that we may be compelled to increase our present staff of 5.

CECS Outreach

Right now CECS is in the process of expanding into the rural and outlying areas both in the Cape and further afield. We hope to employ a full-time co-ordinator soon, to move out to those areas. With a mobile of computers we will be able to hold workshops and build organisations there. The possibility of CECS becoming a national body is becoming more of a reality with our HED students from UWC returning to their homes around the country and wanting to start CECS branches there. In addition, there have been moves to make contact with organisations in other parts of the country which have similar aims and projects.

CECS Conference

The highlight for this year is the proposed CALP conference. This would be a historic conference which we hope would put the role of computers firmly on the agenda of the movement towards transformative education. It is hoped that such a conference would bring together not only academics, but also students and teachers from all over the country around the subject of computers in education. This con-



ference is meant to produce many pioneering ideas which would duly be published.

International Links

Ashiek (CECS Chairperson) is going to Britain on a 4-month course on Computers in Education, sponsored by the British Council. His visit there hopes to yield some additional advantages for CECS. He has a mandate to set up links with organisations and institutions which have similar aims and projects, thus holding out the prospect of CECS going international. It is a distinct possibility that CECS can send one or more persons on this type of study course in computers every year.

Having raved about our horizontal expansion, I must point out that of greater significance is the consolidation of our structures (vertical growth). This year our main focus is the establishment of strong, active regional structures, for they alone form the basis of a strong, dynamic CECS.

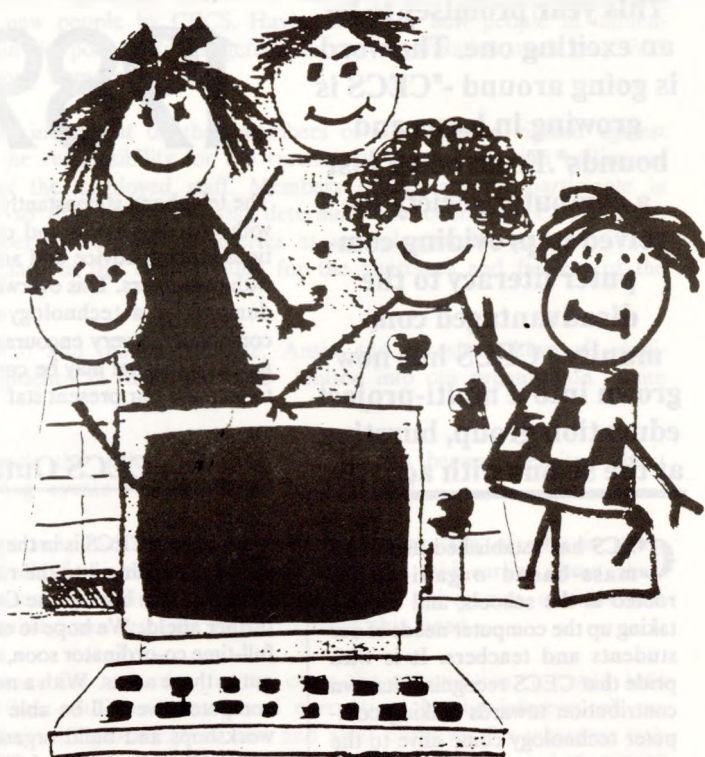
We hope that through our regional and other workshops and activities, we can draw even more teachers and students into making our education *come alive*! We need all of you to get involved and make these subject groups work, for your own sakes, and that of a new and better education system.

Educational Resource Project

THE ERP is geared toward assisting teachers in changing the present education system into one that will be based on the needs of the community that it serves and that will equip students with the necessary skills to take their place in a changing society. The main focus of this project is education, but more specifically, the appropriate use of the computer in education.

The work of the ERP is directed at the student. Our target is to teach the student in his totality. Through our academic work we will teach her self acceptance and self expression as well as the principles of constructive interaction with other human beings. Our aim is to give students an opportunity to be creative, to realise their true potential and to think critically. We do realise that this is a formidable task. Alternative ways and methods of teaching will have to be developed to make this ideal a reality. The Educational Resource Project is aimed at equipping teachers with necessary skills to make this happen.

The Regional Course is aimed at the formation of Subject Groups in all the regions. At the end of the course the members of the various subject groups will be taken up into the central subject groups. We hope to form subject groups of most school subjects in all regions that will continue to operate even after the end of the regional course.



Our experiences in the past have shown that when given an opportunity to work together, teachers always come up with brilliant ideas and produce work of an excellent standard. To ensure that these ideas are preserved and shared with others, we plan to publish the best worksheets and lessons in subject packages. In this way teachers whom we cannot reach can also benefit from the work being done in subject groups.

Many attempts have been made in the past by other organisations to get subject groups off the ground. The Educational Resource Project is not an attempt to replace or compete with these organisations. Rather, we hope to work hand in hand with them, share experiences and resources, establish chan-

nels of communication and assist each other wherever possible.

The final phase of the Educational Resource Project is to publish a comprehensive workbook on computers in education. We hope that this book would serve teachers, students and educationists generally as a source book for ideas, a manual and a reference book. In the book we will outline not only our achievements, but also our mistakes on a theoretical and practical level.

The aims of the Educational Resource Project have been set very high, but we believe that through the commitment of our present members and those whom we hope to recruit in the near future, we will be able to make all of them a reality.

MEDKOM

Today, the link between media and computers is almost complete. The production and layout of media is increasingly computerized, to the extent that computers are seen as indispensable in the media world.

The Media Project was formed as a response to this, and in recognition of the important role that media plays, and the need for media skills to be developed.

The Regional Media Course draws in students from each school to develop media skills to produce school newsletters.

Courses are run in the five regions, with a view to establishing media committees in each school. We also have a central media committee that produces CECS newsletters, manuals, posters and other media.

The project therefore aims to research and develop media skills appropriate to schools and the community. Through establishing media committees at schools and producing student newsletters and other media, we can help fulfill these needs.

CECS POSITIONS

CECS is an independent, non-racial, democratic organisation in the Western Cape which aims to encourage and develop the appropriate and progressive use of computers in education in South Africa today.

We invite applications for the following full-time posts from people who can work in a democratic environment, are community oriented, and wish to make a relevant contribution in the field of education. The posts will be available from April 1989.

Project Centre Administrator

This post will involve:

- administering our Project Centre, scheduling its use
- setting up and maintaining stock and library systems
- some financial administration
- generally overseeing daily operations
- effectively delegate and follow-up admin tasks
- work closely with the Project's Co-ordinator in the organisation of a National Computers in Education Conference to be held later this year.

Qualifications:

Administrative and organisational experience and the ability to delegate and co-ordinate activities are important. Confidence with basic accounting helpful. Computer experience not vital as training can be given.

Skills Training Co-ordinator

This post will involve:

- conducting computer skills training on IBM-compatibles
- research and development in major application software
- technical trouble-shooting, software installation etc.
- servicing the needs of CECS

Qualifications:

Teaching experience helpful. The applicants need not be highly proficient as intensive training can be given.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MADE IN WRITING TO CECS, PO BOX 24427, LANSDOWNE, ACCOMPANIED BY A FULL CV AND REFERENCES SHOULD REACH US BY 24 MARCH 1989.

FOR ENQUIRIES PHONE
021-6370563.

► New CECS ◀
T-shirts and
badges are
available!
GET YOURS
NOW !!

WORKING

The way you see the world will determine your aims and ideas as a teacher. Like everyone else, teachers act according to their particular world outlook, affecting the kind of work they produce and expect from their students.

Teaching can be both tiresome and stimulating. Whatever it is depends on the teacher and the attitude she/he holds towards the subject and the class as a whole. The effective teacher aims at making the syllabus more interesting and relevant. Not only must it be more relevant, but it must also stimulate the pupils to think critically. The teacher, however, has to remain sensitive to the needs and limitations of the student.

To promote creativity, the students should be encouraged to put together and evaluate their own work and also include their personal experiences and opinions. With encouraged GROUP WORK the pupils must learn to depend on their own skills and knowledge and develop a sense of responsibility.

An effective and concerned teacher encourages pupils to be responsible for their own knowledge and learning and that of their peers. The process of learning therefore becomes a social activity not an individual one.

The idea of learning in groups is not a new one but it is an idea whose time has come !

Group work can mean anything from working in pairs to working in large groups. More than anything it means not working on your own, privately, hiding your work from others, competing.

Group work also helps people to learn from each other. Joint projects can be discussed in a way that people inspire and stimulate each other, picking up on each other's ideas, debating points of view and arriving at a common understanding.

But do groups really work? Won't you just have chaos ?

Let us not fool ourselves. New things will take extra effort and time to work. Our students may not be used to group work so it will require patience, creative discipline and good preparation to get things going.

But in order to facilitate group work, the teacher can and should design resources to stimulate the students and in that way encourage the development of their cognitive skills.

Students find using worksheets and working in groups more exciting than having a teacher in front of the class giving all the information. But at the moment students are not used to this kind of teaching and often find it more demanding. But it is important to encourage them to

WORKING IN GROUPS

do their own thinking or else the whole purpose of interactive teaching is lost.

TEACHERS AND SUBJECT GROUPS

Working together as teachers should be much less difficult - as long as we are clear in our objectives and as long as people do the work they are assigned to do! The quickest way to kill group work is to rely on one or two people to carry the load

But is group work good for all situations?

No. Sometimes we can work more effectively on our own.

For example if you are preparing a set of lessons around a particular relevant theme - child abuse is topical in Cape Town - you can each of you do some thinking before you meet about the subject, making notes, collecting newspaper articles etc.

Then you could come to the group and brainstorm ideas, (content first and then method). You could then divide the lessons up amongst the individuals (or pairs), go away and work on the lessons, then come back to the group and present your work.

The group could then make suggestions for each other before the final product is put together and shared for all.

THE COMPUTER, GROUP WORK AND YOU

The computer is useful in six ways:

a. You can type up your work on the word processor, making changes as you go along. No more typex or re-typing!!

b. You can save your articles on a disk and bring it to your subject group. If they suggest changes, you can make it easily and re-save your work.

c. You can put your work straight onto a wax stencil from the computer, making as many stencils as you like.

d. You can put big heading in many different styles and fonts on your stencil, include designs and generally give your students interesting looking worksheets.

e. You can copy the disks and thus share your lessons with others in your subject group and with teachers in other regions.

f. You can save your articles and keep them for next year, making adjustments where necessary, saving you all that retying!

ARE YOU PART OF A GROUP TOO?

WORKS!

COMPUTER PREGNANCY RISK!



awaiting the outcome, and evidence to show whether there is cause for concern.

A study of 1 600 women in Carolina, USA, last year established what appears to be the strongest link so far between visual display units (VDUs) and miscarriage. They found that women who worked with VDUs for more than 20 hours a week were 80% more likely to miscarry, than women not using them.

The debate at present is whether monitors themselves are actually the cause, or whether sitting hour after hour in front of a computer screen produces mental stress that could lead to a miscarriage. Computer operators also tend to sit in the same position for many hours, and this could also be detrimental to unborn babies.

No Protection

In South Africa there is no legislation protecting pregnant women from possible effects of VDUs, however, some unions and employee organisations have negotiated private agreements with their employers. Employers have argued that there is no difference between the rays emitted by VDUs

and those of television sets. What makes a difference, however, is that computer operators sit far closer to the screen and consequently face far greater risks.

At present, doctors and medical researchers feel there is no cause for alarm, and that no clear link has been proved between the use of VDUs and pregnancy failure.

The question that needs to be raised, however, is what protection exists for women. Do we wait until researchers have come up with concrete proof before we show concern, or do expectant mothers try and protect themselves and their children from possible harm? It poses a dilemma, especially if jobs are at risk.

We will attempt to keep all our members informed on any developments of further information that becomes available. We would welcome any letters, comments or further information that you may have. Letters can be sent to:-
CECS PO Box 24427
Lansdowne 7780.

There are growing fears that expectant mothers using computers could face the risk of miscarrying. Visual display units (VDUs) or monitors emit a small amount of radiation, which, with prolonged exposure, could have harmful side-effects (especially to expectant mothers).

Concern was first raised by women working for an American Newspaper, US Today, when they realised that out of 36 employees who had become pregnant, 13 had miscarried. The rate of 36% was two or three times higher than the national average.

Concern Raised

A team from the US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh) has begun investigations at the Newspaper. Women around the world are anxiously

A VERY USEFUL TEACHING AID

overhead computer display

The Overhead Computer Display is a very useful teaching aid.

It looks like two sheets of glass sandwiched together. The device is plugged into the computer, taking the place of the screen. Anything that would normally be displayed on the screen is now displayed on the OCD as a Liquid Crystal Display (many watches and calculators have similar displays).

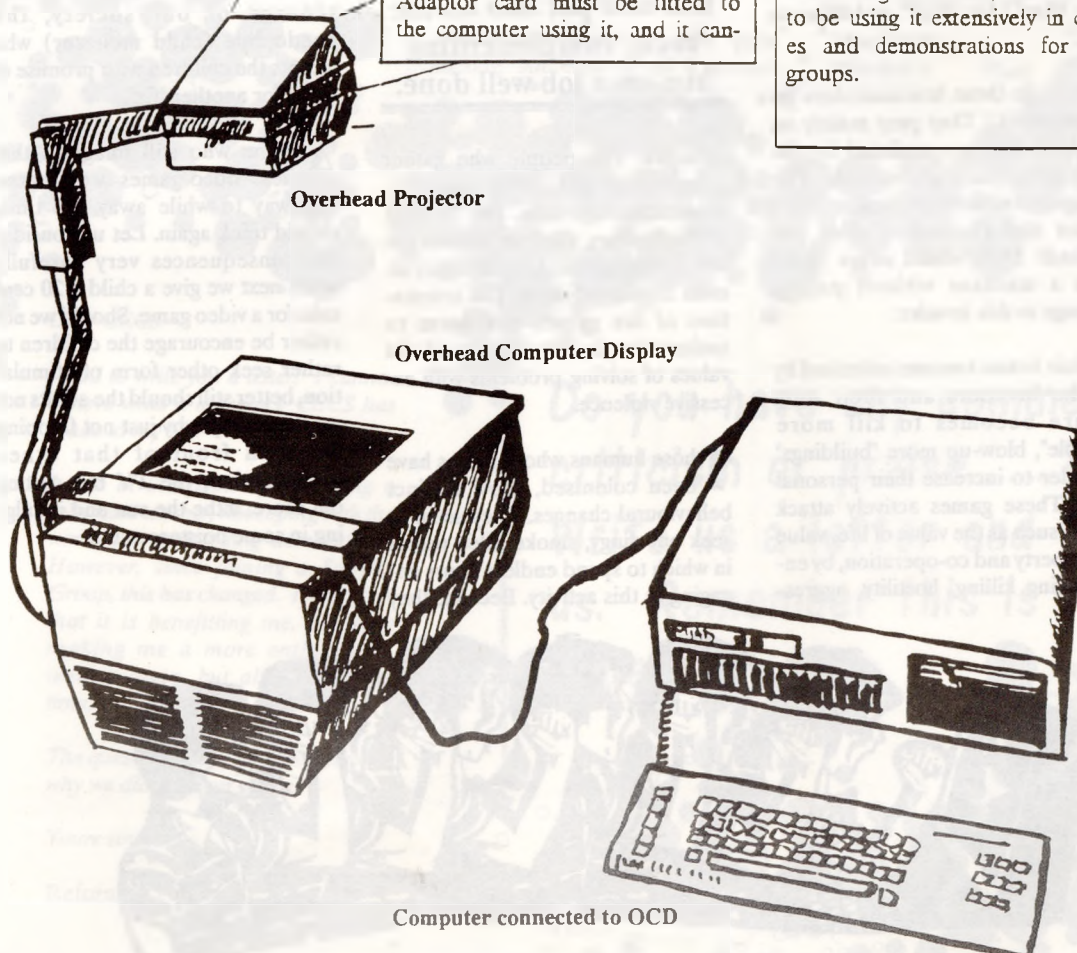
The OCD is placed on an overhead projector and the display is projected onto a wall.

The teacher or demonstrator uses the computer as s/he would normally do. The only difference being that the screen is now a display on the wall!

The OCD has one or two drawbacks - a Colour Graphics Adaptor card must be fitted to the computer using it, and it can-

not be used with portable overhead projectors as these use a different projection process to ordinary overhead projectors.

It's ideal for demonstrations and teaching situations, and we hope to be using it extensively in courses and demonstrations for large groups.



BRAIN INVADERS

Now, nobody would be blamed for imagining that the description is an extract from some cheap James Hadley Chase novel. Surprisingly, it is a description of a scene that takes place daily in almost every street corner shop or shopping arcade. We, earthly mortals, are facing the Invasion of the Brainsnatchers.

In nearly every shop you enter today, you come across at least one of these innocent looking brainsnatchers in the form of a video game.

These "games" were introduced to us not long ago (less than ten years ago) in the form of the ever popular "Space Invaders" and "Pac Man" but have since developed into more hard-core forms such as "Action Man", "Air Wolf" and "Karate Kid."

How do these brainsnatchers go to work? They prey mainly on children who are attracted by the flashing colours and sounds. The kids are lured into placing a coin into a slot and thereafter they are hooked! They would never again pass a machine without paying homage to this invader.

Their brains become colonised by the invaders and their only desire becomes to kill more "people", blow-up more "buildings" in order to increase their personal tally. These games actively attack values such as the value of life, value of property and co-operation, by encouraging killing, hostility, aggres-

sion and individualism. In the majority of these "games" the major purpose seems to be the killing or destroying of as many "human forms" as possible.

The male children of our society (between the ages of 6-60) appear to be particular targets of these

The staccato sound of a machine-gun renders the silence asunder.

"That's great, I have killed all of the suckers, laughs the killer. A small group of admirers, huddle around him and pat him on the back, complimenting him on a job well done."

invaders. The people who gather around these "games" are almost always exclusively male. The "heroes" of these games, the ones who do the killing on the human's behalf, are almost exclusively male. The orientation of the games also seem to underwrite the Macho, Ramboist values of solving problems with excessive violence.

Those humans whose brains have been colonised, show distinct behavioural changes. They seem to seek out dingy, smoke filled rooms in which to spend endless hours engaging in this activity. Because they

no longer show interest in outdoor sport and creative activity, they are usually dull, pale, wan individuals who are not able to discuss anything other than the latest video game or to rattle off their "High Scores" on each of the available games. There is no longer a desire to build "waentjies", climb trees, explore the veld, be creative or even tinker on their parent's cars. Their only desire is to get their next "fix", their next game.

Because they are dependable on attracting large numbers of children, these video arcades attract a dangerous brand parasite, the drug dealers, who peddle their wares in the arcades where they know children will gather. The children also fall victim to that other scourge of our society, the paedophile (child molester) who tempts the children with promise of coins for another "fix".

Anyone who still imagines that these video games are a harmless way to while away the time, should think again. Let us consider the consequences very carefully when next we give a child a 20 cent coin for a video game. Should we not rather encourage the children to rather seek other form of stimulation, better still should the adults not set the example by just not flopping down in front of that other brainsnatcher, the TV but getting out there, in the sun and indulging in some boisterous fun.



LETTERS

Dear CECS News

At the end of last year I had never heard of CECS before. I first heard about CECS when I joined the Media Committee at school - then I was introduced to CECS by a teacher. I immediately wanted to join up and I did.

Well one of the reasons are because of computers, but it was not the main reason. My actual reason is the fact that CECS offered a media course in which I was very interested.

The media workshops were quite exciting, but most of all I enjoyed

the part on computer literacy. Learning how to use the computer can be a bit confusing at times, but you finally get the hang of things after much practice. As they say, "practice makes perfect".

I have met a number of new friends. I think in time CECS will become my social life as well.

People in CECS have encouraged me to work much harder at school. CECS has also given me a greater perspective on education. I have also learnt the new meaning of education!

Moederick,
Mitchell's Plain

Dear CECS

I had to write you a letter! I cannot believe what a difference CECS has made to my life.

I was at the point of becoming a frustrated teacher, not coping with the workload, and getting demoralised. However, since joining a Subject Group, this has changed. I really feel that it is benefitting me, not only making me a more enthusiastic teacher again, but also saving me time.

The question we are all asking now is, why we did not start sooner!

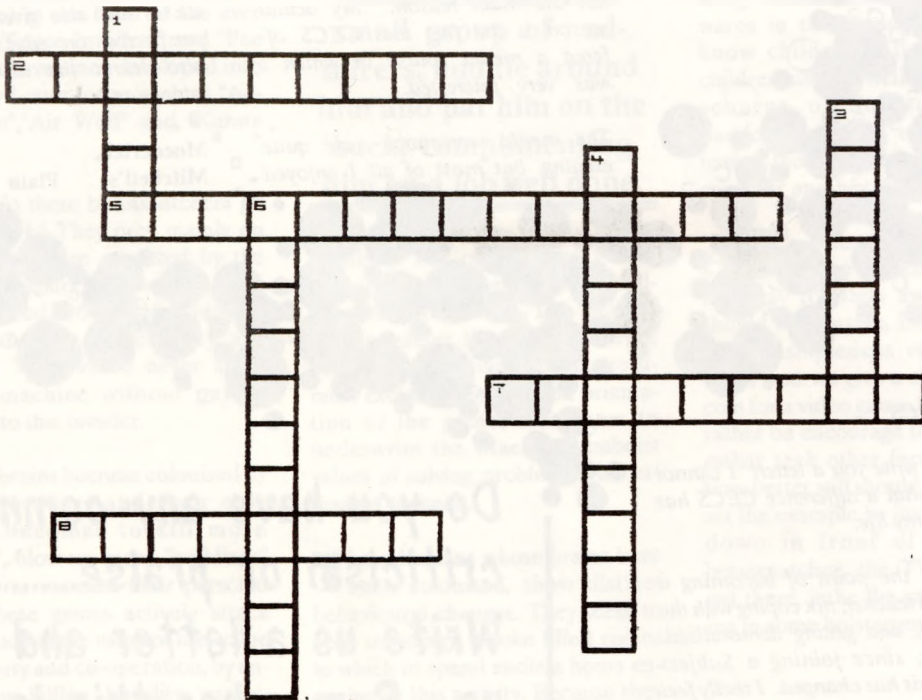
Yours sincerely

Reformed Teacher

Do you have any comments, criticism or praise.....?
Write us a letter and tell us. Remember this is your page!

CROSS

WORD



ACROSS CLUES

2. Working in groups promotes ...
5. Groupwork develops the adolescent's
7. A ... teacher would not shy away from the possibilities of group work.
8. Working with people can become a ... experience for the adolescents'

DOWN CLUES

1. Students can identify and therefore communicate more effectively with their ...
3. The teacher could ... students during group sessions. This should stimulate discussion.
4. The student becomes more ... when working with their peers.
6. The teacher is merely a ... during group work.