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ABSTRACT

The original Foxfire program evolved into the Foxfire Teacher Outreach program during the 1980s, providing an approach to classroom instruction applicable to all content areas and grade levels. It is a student-centered, hands on, community-based generally for 2 weeks in the summer. Teacher networks are test-driven). The Foxfire Course for Teachers is provided at many colleges and universities, usually for graduate credit and generally for 2 weeks in the summer. Teacher networks are formed to provide support, with one person acting as network organizer at each site. Each course graduates a group of teachers who implement the Foxfire approach in their classrooms. Network members who participate in Foxfire-affiliated networks benefit by gaining opportunities to continue growth in an approach to instruction. Networks provide opportunities for teachers to develop leadership. Teachers are able to gain a sense of making a difference by being part of something larger. The primary Teacher Outreach grant runs out in June 1991, but the program will continue in an altered fashion. Currently, over 10 networks have been formed, and in one school, the entire staff is being trained. Two appendixes offer "The Foxfire Approach: Perspectives and Core Practices" and a network coordinator job description. (SM)

FOXFIRE-AFFILIATED TEACHER NETWORKS

A Paper for AERA 1991 Annual Meeting,

Division K Symposium 37.10, Saturday April 6, 1991,

"What Are Teacher Collaboratives and Teacher Networks All About?"

by Hilton Smith, Coordinator, Foxfire Teacher Outreach

Adapted from a chapter for a forthcoming book by Ann Lieberman and Lyn Miller
for Teacher College Press, by Hilton Smith and Eliot Wigginton,
with Kathy Hocking (Bitterroot Teachers Network, Idaho) and
Bob Jones (Soundfire Teachers Network, Washington)

At the outset, I'd like to enter three pieces of perspective for this presentation. First, forums like this are somewhat incongruous and uncomfortable for a program like Foxfire. Most of us involved with it prefer events that are more dynamic and interactive, and to which we can bring students and teacher colleagues as co-presenters. So, while I have a "paper"—primarily because I agreed to have one, I may deviate from it, especially if I detect members of the audience drifting.

Second, most of the paper consists of observations derived from the experiences of those of us involved in the program of Foxfire Teacher Outreach, and is not salted with citations to studies and research. Our work,however, is consciously informed by and indebted to a number of contributors to the dialogue about schooling: (a) Seymour Sarason's insights about the culture of schools and the problem of change; (b) studies of schooling by John Goodlad and Ted Sizer; (c) perspectives on schooling and change by Maxine Green, Bill Schubert,and Larry Cuban; (d) programs which seem to share common pedagogical orientations with Foxfire, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools, Mastery in Learning, Carl Glickman's Program for School Improvement in Georgia, Whole Language, and Cooperative Learning; (e) Ann Lieberman's and Lynn Miller's work on teacher empowerment; (f) Joyce and Showers writings about follow-up strategies; (g) studies of teachers like Nona Lyon's look at epistemological-ethical dilemmas faced by classroom teachers; and (h) the philosophical-psychological foundations of John Dewey and Jean Piaget.

Third: In the early phases of the Civil War, the young and inexperienced troops on both sides, excited by the onset of battle and vividly aware that they had better kill or be killed, tended to pull the triggers of their rifles prematurely, as they moved the firearm from vertical (loading) to horizontal (aiming). The discharge, of course, sailed harmlessly into the air. Hence the last admonition yelled by commanders at their troops as battles commenced: "Aim low!" It seems to me that the enthusiasms of those of us involved in efforts to make a difference in schooling often causes us to launch our findings and insights prematurely. The annals of conferences like this are full of such examples—of projects and programs whose heritage lies primarily in those annals, not in enduring practices and changed priorities. Though Foxfire's Teacher Outreach is flush with

in the sense of aspirations, certainly, but in the sense of keeping our sights clearly on the problems yet to be solved.

The conventional way to write about a complex program like Foxfire's Teacher Networks is to provide an overview of the program, then get into the specifics--moving from general to specific. Foxfire is not exactly conventional and neither is its Outreach program, so it's not surprising that presentations about it seem to work best when we start with something specific, something that conveys the flavor and major features of the program, then move into generalities. Most readers will associate Foxfire with student-generated anthologies about Appalachian culture, under the general rubric of "cultural journalism." Beginning in about 1967, the success of that instructional venture attracted teachers, primarily secondary language arts, to Foxfire workshops on cultural journalism. Conducted primarily by Eliot Wigginton and Foxfire students, those initiatives spun off about 200 similar projects tat we know about. In 1985, Wig provided a chastening reflection about those efforts:

> Despite the newsletter Foxfire published [predecessor of Hands On], and despite a national conference for [magazine] advisors and their students...those of us who were producing magazines were so widely scattered across the land that we were never able to develop a strong sense of mission as a group. Each of us labored alone in his or her classroom, isolated from each other as well as, often, from our own peers. With only the most sporadic of communications possible, there was no collective momentum, little philosophical growth, and no discernible net change in the way host schools conducted business with their students or their communities. (Wigginton, 1985)

During the 1980's, stimulated by critical interactions with the education community and by the addition of staff members in fields other than language arts, Foxfire evolved into an approach to classroom instruction applicable to all content areas and all grade levels. That approach is what the Teacher Outreach program disseminates. The approach is student-centered, hands on,

community-based, and determinedly conscious of being academically sound—the intended contrast here is to instruction that is teacher-centered, curriculum-based, and test-driven.

Now to an event that captures the essence of the program.

During the second and final week of the Foxfire course for teachers we conduct each summer at Berea College, the members of the Eastern Kentucky Teachers Network (EKTN) and their students conduct a Showcase--an exhibit of the projects they have completed in their classes during the previous year.

To visit the 1989 showcase is to enter a whirl of student energy. In Berea's Student Center exhibition area, second graders hold forth at a table displaying two magazines of "mountain tales" they produced during the year; others in their seven-person team explain the large photo display of their projects, while several work the crowd, selling the magazines. Nearby, two members of a high school social studies class describe their magazine project, Yesterday's Memories, answering inquiries by teachers from a graduate course at the University of Louisville. (They're impressed with the students' ability to articulate What and How they learned from the experience.) Across the room a teacher who travels from school to school on an Arts Council project plays Simple Gifts: Songs from Leslie County Schools, an audio cassette his students conceived and produced. Nearby, three students in a local history project, Remember When, explain their project "for the umpteenth time" to a knot of other students and teachers. A teacher and her fifth-graders from a parochial school explain the scrap books, photo montage, and posters that document their project on family histories, Time Changes. Across the stage area, seventh and eighth graders conduct tours through a huge display about their project, a magazine called Memories. Visitors flow through the exhibits, nonstop, for four hours. Adolescent curiosity overcomes shyness, as students from different schools conduct overlapping dialogues about "their project" and "their teacher." And their teachers watch, responding when needed, sharing insights and frustrations with each other.

It is an event that displays the Foxfire approach at its best, often serving as the single most persuasive activity for the teachers participating in the course. It is also a powerful demonstration

of the vital role that teacher networks like EKTN play in the professional lives of the teachers seeking to implement that approach to classroom instruction.

About the "Foxfire approach": We settled on "approach" as being most descriptive of the shared practices we engage when we teach, rather than "method" or "technique" or "style". We reserve "philosophy" and "pedagogy" for the shared fundamentals on which the Foxfire approach and similar approaches rest. Each practitioner of the Foxfire approach then designs his or her specific strategies and classroom techniques, built on those shared practices, appropriate to specific teaching assignments, curricula, students. and personal strengths. We have a document, "The Foxfire Approach: Perspectives and Core Practices," that provides the current version of those shared practices.

A. Foxfire's Teacher Outreach Program

In 1986, three organizations, including Foxfire, received grants from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity to see what each could contribute to overall education for literacy. ("Literacy" used in its broadest sense.)

Foxfire's Teacher Outreach program, funded by that grant, seeks to answer this question: By encouraging and equipping teachers to use the "Foxfire approach" to instruction in their classrooms, K-12, all content areas, would we contribute to literacy education? Mounting a program like that means that we are one of many groups seeking to influence what goes on in classrooms. Each of those groups is in some way unique, and each contributes to the array of instructional options.

A longer view, moreover, reveals a whole parade of similar endeavors. launched with decennial regularity; fueled with sincerity and fervor; funded by foundations, governments, and school districts; endured by pliant, resilient teachers; applauded by the sponsoring groups; and hardly noticed by generations of students. The same view reveals that very few succeeded in fulfilling the goal of changing how teachers teach and what students learn. Someone likened the

array of abandoned programs to a roadside junkyard. The analogy is only slightly overstated.

We are mindful, therefore, that if we succeed in some measure, we also might contribute something useful to the overall pool of strategies for changing how teachers teach. Groups launching other promising approaches to instruction could consider those strategies in designing their own programs.

Before you get very far into this piece, we want one caveat clearly understood: though we've had some success thus far, and though we try to draw lessons from what has succeeded and failed in the past, we do not have a formula or blueprint to follow. Not yet; maybe not ever. Our plan is to start with our best notions, then revise and improvise as needed. If we are thoughtful, and if we document what we do, and if we analyze what we document, maybe we can succeed in some measure.

Success is, for our purposes: (a) Teachers involved in this endeavor continue to use and develop this approach to instruction, continue to unfold the underlying principles, continue to help each other over the rough spots; (b) their students arrive at subsequent stages of schooling and life with enhanced prospects for making the most of every opportunity, fulfilled as individuals, equipped to learn on their own; and (c) the approach is recognized and supported by schools and school districts as effective. All that, *after* the initial stimulus of money and inspiration is withdrawn. We also should be able to show how all that happened.

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? With slight alterations, that sort of language appears in all sorts of documents and perorations every year. And it probably sounds overly ambitious. Maybe it is. However, besides being thoroughly chastened by our awareness of the junkyard of previous initiatives, we have two assets that provide just enough confidence to tilt at this very large windmill: (1) nearly all of us involved in this endeavor are classroom teachers, most of us with a number of years in service; and (2) the approach that drives the way we teach seems to resonate with something fundamental in just about everyone--it just seems right.

It's also reassuring to draw on the heritage of past efforts to improve classroom instruction derived from the same pedagogical principles as those which inspired Foxfire. They didn't endure

as intact programs or organizations, except in small pockets in special circumstances, but the stories of successful classes in that heritage glow like warm coals. It's one time when being new isn't the point.

With caveats and basic rationale in place, I'll try to provide a capsule description of our Teacher Outreach program and how teacher networks fit into the overall scheme. Several of the points in this description are amplified later.

By design, the program is responsive, rather than aggressive. There are no whole-page ads in *Education Week* for life-altering three-day seminars for only $395.00. We do not do manditory hit-and-run in-service programs.

The program starts by our acceptance of an offer to provide a "Foxfire course for teachers" at a university or college, usually for graduate credit. The course is supposed to encourage and equip teachers to use the approach in their respective teaching situations. In our original plan, we considered four or five such courses during the year as manageable, while providing enough variety of populations and schools to really test our assumptions about what might change how teachers approach classroom instruction, especially in terms of improvements in student literacy. Each course is supposed to model the Foxfire approach, so that participants experience first-hand what their own students would experience in a "Foxfire classroom," as well as observing the techniques of those of us who conduct the courses. (A side comment: It is interesting to notice the teachers who feel acutely uncomfortable with being placed in roles that require participation and ownership of the class process, then observe the stages of insight as they realize that they are uncomfortable because they, like their students, are unaccustomed to a "democratic classroom.")

As texts, we usually use Sometimes a Shining Moment (Wigginton, Doubleday; 1986), with emphasis on "sometimes", and John Dewey's Experience and Education. Throughout the course, we try to model a pragmatist's perspective of practice enlightened by theory, and theory, in turn, refined by reflection on the outcomes of practice. Most teachers are not accustomed to that perspective on classroom practice, but nearly all, as it turns out, derive considerable satisfaction from that kind of pedagogical engagement. (Does that, perhaps, have implications for teacher pre-

service programs? That's an arena we are just beginning to move into.)

Most of the courses are offered during the summer (ten to fourteen intensive days), the rest during the school year (usually once a week, evenings, for a quarter or semester). As a final, culminating activity to demonstrate mastery of the principles of the Foxfire approach and the underlying pedagogy, and as a running start for the next school year, each participant picks a chunk of curriculum from his/her respective teaching assignment and designs a hypothetical "project" that would engage students in a thorough mastery of that chunk and set them up for the next chunk. The teachers participating in the school-year courses can actually engage their students in designing the project, sometimes completing parts of it before the quarter is over. Those projects, hypothetical and "real," are thoroughly critiqued by their peers in the class and turned in at the conclusion of the course.

Several of the networks now conduct staff development programs for school districts or consortia of districts--same design, length, and requirements as the graduate course. Whether done as a graduate course for credit, or as a staff development program, the participants elect to participate, most out of a genuine sense of need, rather than mere curiosity. We avoid captive or mandated audiences like the plague.

That's the course, and that's only the starting point. After that, there has to be a support system—an organized array of people, materials, resources, guidance, counsel, perspective, encouragement, strategies, etc., designed primarily by the participating teachers themselves. We knew that school districts would not be able or interested at this point to provide the kind of support system newly trained "Foxfire teachers" would need. (More on that at the end.) We also knew that few existing support systems provided opportunities for teacher-to-teacher colleagueship, something many teachers said they needed and wanted. Teacher networks had the most promise of providing the support needed. We learned very quickly that networks simply did not form spontaneously, so we made a point to try to arrange for someone to serve as a network organizer very early in the program at each site. We also learned very quickly that the organizer needed some sort of formal status as a Foxfire teacher network organizer, some operating funds,

and continuing involvement with Foxfire. That led to the position of Network Coordinator, who facilitated the beginnings of an entity of some sort that teachers could call, touch, listen to, etc., and into which they could focus concerns, ideas, and energy—a network. (More about coordinators later.) In most cases, the coordinator set up an office in his/her home, sometimes moving into office space at the sponsoring institution later. Either way, there's an individual, address, telephone number, word processor, copier, and recently, a modem with a conference on AppleLink—a base of operations. Rather than making a list of what networks actually do, I've salted network activities throughout the rest of this article, putting each network activity into a perspective appropriate to the activity.

Every course and staff development program "graduates" a group of teachers who start implementing the Foxfire approach in their classrooms. Each individual in those groups has unique teaching assignments and constituencies; each has unique talents and perspectives. What they try in their classrooms needs to be documented, captured and analyzed for the benefit of all of us. Whether another "shining moment" or an utter disaster, and anything between, those efforts need to become part of our shared frame of reference. All of us needed to know what worked and why, what did not work and why. To encourage teachers to share their experiences beyond heartfelt encounters at network meetings, we converted our journal for teachers, Hands On, into a vehicle primarily for teachers' case studies. Most teachers are not comfortable as documenters, or as writers, so this continues to be an uphill effort. Recent developments in "classroom-based research" or "teacher-as-researcher" have eased the way considerably.

To coordinate all this, we set up a Teacher Outreach office at the Foxfire Center in Rabun County, Georgia, home base for Foxfire. That office, with a staff of two, maintains files of participating teachers' projects, edits Hands On, assumes oversight responsibilities for the integrity of the overall effort, dispenses grant funds to the networks, tracks current trends and research in education as they relate to Foxfire and Teacher Outreach, coordinates the meetings of network coordinators, and coordinates the evaluation of each component of the program. Until recently, the Teacher Outreach Office practiced "benign neglect" regarding the networks, staying out of the way

as much as possible. More on that point later.

When we present the Teacher Outreach program to groups of educators, it is at this point that most start asking questions about the funding of the networks. Foxfire reallocated a substantial portion of its original outreach grant to help the "original" five networks get started. As those networks stabilized, they began to raise some of their own funds, primarily through grants. The host institutions of the newer networks—we refer to them as Type Two networks—sign an agreement that obligates the institution to provide most of the initial and continuing funds for the network, including the coordinator's salary. Though the networks, Original and Type Two, are becoming more financially independent, we have realized that at least some portion of the networks' funding will have to come from a coordinated national fund-raising effort. More on that point in the closing section of this paper.

B. The Roles of the Networks

Networks of teachers certainly are not new. Foxfire networks may be somewhat different in that they form in the regions around the sites where we offer the courses and staff development programs, then begin to assume responsibility for the course itself and for supporting the efforts of other teachers beginning to implement the Foxfire approach in their classroom. They have some of the voluntary, spontaneous qualities we associate with networks of the 1960's, with a strong overlay of permanence and professionalism. They become interwoven with the education establishment--conducting staff development programs, helping write curricula, making presentations to professional gatherings, etc., rather than assuming the counter-cultural postures often associated with 60's networks.

Of course, not everyone who takes a Foxfire course joins a network. To date, we have trained about 1500 teachers. Around 1000 of them participate in our networks to some degree. At some sites we never hear from about half of the members of the class after the last session. Still others take the course, then go to their classrooms to perform exemplary feats of pedagogy with no thought about networking. They are rare--and about twenty-five percent selfish; what they do does

not become part of the body of experiences to share with other teachers.

As we stated earlier, one thing we knew for sure when we started the outreach program was that simply putting teachers through a course or an in-service program does not change how teachers approach instruction. They may learn a strategem or two, but their basic approach is not changed. We knew that from personal experiences, too. We have sat through many hours of staff development stuff, rarely rewarded with something we could use. More to the point, we have done a few staff development presentations, with the same results for those in attendence.

The usual pattern of most teachers, including those of us on the Foxfire staff, has been to get through the staff development program in whatever is current, then go back to our classrooms, close the door, and teach very much as we had been. When we did try something novel, it was in approximate isolation and often not the result of a staff development program. If it worked, fine; if it didn't, no one knew but us--and maybe the students. There was little sense of participation in something larger, something important beyond our classrooms. If we encountered unexpected adversity, we could easily slip into the default mode of teacher-centered, text-based instruction.

We also considered the context in which teachers operate currently:

(1) increased state control of schooling, hence loss of local autonomy, hence less teacher autonomy;

(2) increased pressure for their students to achieve, especially on standardized tests;

(3) teacher evaluation systems, often perceived as unfair and not helpful;

(4) increasingly specific curriculum requirements, hence less latitude in which to be creative;

(5) greater teacher visibility and vulnerability because of criticisms of schooling;

(6) lack of adequate funding for instruction;

(7) little support for trying new approaches;

(8) very little opportunity for professional dialogue with peers in the same school;

(9) the fact that many teachers say that their training has been inadequate, even inappropriate for what they are expected to do and want to do.

Substantive studies by participant-observers like Seymour Sarason (Sarason, 1982;

Sarason, 1972) confirmed what we intuitively suspected: encouraging and equipping teachers to adopt a different approach to instruction—as opposed to a new text or the use of a supplementary classroom activity, like a simulation—requires that they own the process of adoption, can try the new approach at their own pace, and adapt the approach to their local situations and personal abilities. That requires time and attention well beyond what courses and workshops are designed to provide—quality time and extended attention rarely provided by school district staff development programs, professional organizations, or school adminstrations. As Joyce states bluntly in his Prologue to the *1990 ASCD Yearbook*, "Teaching was the only complex vocation whose personnel were not provided with time for colleagial activity or rigorous and continuing study of their work." (Joyce, 1990)

More important than any other factor, however, was the articulation of confirming sentiments by teachers participating in the outreach courses. The participants' critique after the 1989 course at the University of Washington elicited summative comments like these:

> I gained an understanding of a missing link in my teaching style and thinking. Through the presentation and modeling, I learned a great deal about human dynamics, facilitation, and promotion of critical thinking. Being able to ask nitty-gritty questions about classroom functions as well as philosophical concerns was invaluable.

> This approach gives me a total structure using strategies for change. It was all useful, memorable and life-changing. Every activity had a purpose that was evident.

> This course started me towards a higher level of learning, teaching, and awareness. It has opened my eyes in a more vivid way into really understanding that every child learns in different ways.

More to the point, the same course critique drew these responses to the question, "What's

next?"

It would help me to have a support group I could call to be a sounding board. It would be nice to be able to meet with a group to share our experiences and ideas.

I need to stay in touch. I need support. I need to have a feeling of contribution and completion.

The group needs to form a network; a support group that continues to grow, prosper, and change.

It was that kind of thinking that led to the idea of teacher networks as the major vehicle for the follow-up we knew was necessary for teachers to successfully implement the Foxfire approach on a scale of more than a few inspired, isolated individuals. We didn't know how the networks would form, organize, or operate. We did know that the teachers themselves were the ones to decide those issues.

That meant, of course, no model or formula to follow for establishing networks. This is not a franchise operation. There would be long conversations and meetings, awkward moments, loose ends, false starts, personality clashes, and several additions to Murphy's Laws. (E.g., the network member who understands the approach least will be the most outspoken advocate in public; the more network members discuss the mission of the network, the less they agree on the mission.) We assumed that if the need was genuinely there, and if we helped nurture promising initiatives, that viable networks would form. We knew that the networks would have to be teacher-centered in the same way members' classrooms are student-centered, and for the same reasons. Members would have to have a direct influence on the networks' directions, programs, and organizations. (An aside:We have learned the same lesson as programs like the Coalition of Essential Schools and Mastery in Learning: that teachers do not necessarily come equipped with the attitudes and skills that enable them to share governance and work collaboratively.)

The network coordinators, of course, are the folks who provide guidance and energy for the formation and development of the networks. The selection of the coordinator was different in each of the networks, so their backgrounds and personalities are correspondingly different, often reflecting the characteristics of the region. Most have considerable experience in classroom instruction, several are tenure-track college or university staff members, several have experience with other non-profit education organizations, and a few have prior experience as program administrators. They seem to share these traits: independent, self-starting, willful, discerning, optimistic, practical, very hard-working, durable, willing to take risks.

Connie Zimmerman, the Skyline Teachers Network coordinator, shared her perspective on the roles of the coordinator:

> The role of the coordinator? Invite, nudge, nurture, encourage, listen, support, provide Kleenex, ask questions. Be enthusiastic, positive, realistic with an idealistic perspective—practical, in other words. [The coordinator] also has to keep the wheels greased behind the scenes so that the democratic process has the structure in which to develop. I also learned not to provide too much, too soon. You overwhelm everybody. For example, no one wanted to deal with the network's budget and finances. You'd think they would want to own the pursestrings from the outset. Only when there were situations about which they cared did they get into finances.
>
> You have to think ahead and you have to be opportunistic. [The university] gave me a chance to teach in the undergraduate teacher education program. It's not part of my coordinator's roles, but it has given me a place in the scheme of things around here that really helps. That goes along with developing friends in key places. That's not in the cynical sense. They are friends because they see things the same way as I do; it's just a matter of developing those relations further, toward mutual benefit.

In the second year of the Outreach program the coordinators developed a general list of a

coordinator's roles and tasks, so that someone considering becoming a coordinator would have an idea of what she/he was getting into. (See Appendix B.)

Growth of each network has been "organic," varying from region to region, reflecting the personalities of the leaders and members, and responsive to the concerns and visions of the members.

That brings the discussion to this question: What do network members derive by participating in Foxfire-affiliated networks (and, I presume, similar organizations)? We asked that question on several occasions to groups of active network members. Each network generated slightly different lists, but the results were very similar each time.

[One] The single most common answer: the network provides support and opportunities for members to continue growth in an approach to instruction. There were the usual narratives about the value of the emotional support network members provide each other, but the most nods acccompanied assertions about the value of sharing classroom techniques and, contrary to those who say teachers are not interested in theory, the value of understanding better the philosophical underpinnings of the approach, of being able to articulate why this works. Knowing that they were participating in the continuing development of the approach, versus implementing something already formulated, heightened the potency of network experience. (It is worth noting that the courses for teachers do attract a fair number of teachers whose whole career has been built on dutiful implementation of instructional designs assigned and expected by their supervisors. Nearly all experience some uncertainty in considering changing their approach to classroom instruction, particularly when they realize that designing such changes involves active collaboration with their students; a few pull back from the edge and make no attempt to change; most at least have begun the process of altering their approach to instruction. Nona Lyons' research into teachers' attitudes about themselves and their profession produced some unintended insights about the soul-searching that often attends teachers' involvement in innovation-induced reflection on their practice. If borne out by more focused research, those findings may have considerable value for anyone considering

changing how teachers teach.)

[Two] Networks provide opportunities for teachers to develop leadership. The most obvious is the chance to serve in leadership roles in the network itself, especially as part of the executive committee and as members of committees with specific roles, like planning showcases or reviewing small grant proposals by other teachers. They assist other members with instructional problems, conduct in-service programs for school districts and participate in presentations about the Foxfire approach to educational organizations. They write case studies that are published in Hands On and other journals. Network members often attend professional meetings, giving speeches with their students, representing the network and bringing back the message of the event to the network. Perhaps the most rewarding participation is to help teach the course for teachers.

[Three] Another way of viewing participation in a Foxfire-type network is as a form of teacher empowerment, at least in terms of classroom instruction, if not necessarily in terms of school-based governance. From a paper by Sharon Teets, coordinator of the East Tennessee Teachers Network, presented at the 1989 annual meeting of the Association of Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education (Teets, 1989):

> Virtually all of the reports calling for reform in the schools speak to the need for teacher leadership in the schools (Gross and Gross, 1985). The teaching and research skills acquired in the Foxfire course, combined with opportunities for leadership in the teacher network, would appear to be helpful in fostering the empowerment of teachers to assume leadership roles in the broader educational community.
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> Just as the most thorough evaluation of the Foxfire approach to date has used qualitative research methodology (Puckett, 1989), the best evidence of the Foxfire potential for teacher empowerment comes from informal conversations with teachers who are active network participants. These lively conversations are often inspirational—teachers talk

about the Foxfire approach as changing their personal lives, as well as those of their students. They describe projects that range from in-depth exploration of issues such as homelessness, personal safety, environmental pollution, as well as the use of student-written material as alternatives to the exclusive use of basal readers for reading instruction. One teacher documents a significant increase in the reading level of her second graders as a result of her change in reading instruction.

Teachers' descriptions of qualitative changes in students' behaviors and attitudes, as well as skills, are numerous. Taken together, they are convincing evidence that the teachers using the Foxfire approach feel that they can make a difference in their classrooms. Perhaps it is not the articles documenting student projects in Hands On, or the actual content of what the teachers are communicating in conversations that is impressive. Instead, it is the fervor and enthusiasm with which they express themselves.

The Foxfire approach appears to contribute to empowerment through the modeling and the subsequent use of the core practices with students. Reflective thinking, problem-solving, community involvement, and participation in the democratic process are at the heart of the core practices. As teachers help students to become empowered, they, too, seem to develop the skills for their own empowerment.

A significant issue in the empowerment "struggle" is that of being "permitted" to become empowered. The Foxfire seminar grants teachers that permission. Teachers are viewed initially as competent, capable individuals who can design, with their students, effective instruction that meets and exceeds state-mandated guidelines. Opportunities for ongoing dialogue with other teachers and professional development activities contribute to enhanced competence and confidence. Recognition of competence, whether in the form of publication in Hands On or in other journals (Stumbo, 1989), or in assuming the role

of teacher in the Foxfire courses, adds to the teacher's self-confidence as a leader in the profession.

[Four] One fact of life for any teacher is the question of how to deal with a principal and other administrators who may not understand or appreciate the differences between the Foxfire approach and teacher-text-centered instruction. Helping teachers deal effectively with administrators is one service teacher networks perform, while at the same time serving as a resource for administrators with instructional problems in their schools. The effect is a form of empowerment that does not involve anyone feeling as though he/she are giving anything up.

[Five] Participating in a network gives a teacher the sense of being able to make a difference by being part of something larger, of being connected with other movements that are complementary to Foxfire, as well as with the other networks. Many network members claim to have a bigger picture of schooling, reforms, and opportunities in education—and of realizing that there is a place in which to share those discoveries—as a consequence of networking.

[Six] There are tangible benefits from participating in a Foxfire network. Networks are a source of financial support for classroom projects, travel to professional conferences, and pay for substitutes so members can attend network events. Networks can arrange for resources for classrooms, including consultants, experts, materials, etc.

One comment from the members' critiques of EKTN's Fall 1989 network meeting helps bring many of those somewhat abstract points to life:

> That I'm not the only one having fear as I begin; that I am not alone out there. Even the veterans are still learning (there are no experts); that we will progress, helping each other. A renewed zeal to return to school and push forward.

C. Evaluations

Throughout this program we conducted evaluations, from simple "course critiques" after each of the courses for teachers, to a systematic assessment of the overall effectiveness of the

course conducted largely by an outside evaluator (Phase One Evaluation), to an ambitious effort to assess the extent to which the teachers participating in the courses for teachers and networks actually implement the Foxfire approach in their classes (Phase Two Evaluation). (Eddy, 1989; Eddy and Wood, 1989) We used the results, usually confirming but also often chastening, to revise the course and to alter the ways both Teacher Outreach and the networks did business. (Our only regret is that we did not allocate nearly enough funds for evaluation in the original grant proposal.)

These excerpts from the "Final Thoughts" section of Eddy and Wood's pilot study for the Phase Two Evaluation suggest the kind of searching analysis we have received from that evaluation (Eddy and Wood, 1989):

> In only one school [in this network] did we find the philosophy moving out to other teachers. This school also seemed to have the greatest connection with the coordinator, Wigginton, and [Foxfire]; it also had an involved and supportive administrator. However, even in this setting most of the philosophy was limited to "Foxfire projects."
>
> The bottom line for me is that the [Outreach] Program makes sure it doesn't wake up one day and find itself operating in a kind of splendid isolation, its teachers "doing their own thing" and talking only to one another—unaware that there were "fellow travelers" elsewhere moving in the same general direction.
>
> [I]t did seem to me that a good many teachers were finding they actually could teach effectively by giving up more and more control and letting their students take on greater responsibility for the way things were taught, if not yet for what was taught. It wasn't a major change certainly, but it was beginning to happen.

A subsequent report summarizes the results to date of evaluations of the

program in four networks, indicates which of the core practices seem to be taking hold and which seem to be difficult to implement, and provides a tentative assessment of the effects of the contexts in which teachers operate on their efforts to use the Foxfire approaching their classrooms.

Benefits to and gains by teachers are of little value unless those benefits and gains show up as gains by the students in their classrooms. We are beginning to accrue evidence, both anecdotal and more empirical, that students in Foxfire classrooms gain at least as much in academic knowledge and skills as students taught in more conventional, teacher-text-centered modes, and considerably more in the affective domain, especially manifested as enhanced attitudes toward learning. One of the tasks for the networks is to develop ways to accrue that kind of data, a task that has frustrated many educational researchers. Whether those gains will endure as those students move through later grades, college, and vocations we will not know until and unless we conduct some sturdy longitudinal studies of those students. We're developing plans for that now.

D. To Balance the View...

As the Phase Two Evaluation comments suggest, none of what we describe above has happened easily, or painlessly. In each network there were times when all of us began to doubt that the network would become something more than a coordinator and a small group of skeptical teachers with very tentative commitments. At times, the process had a two-steps-backward-one-step-forward feel. In other words, it was not a matter of providing the course for teachers, then watching while groups of eager teachers banded together into a potent pedagogical force. Network members occasionally withdraw or simply fade away; some lose patience with the pace of growth and development; for some the network is not political enough (Foxfire networks are consciously and firmly non-political with regard to the educational systems in which they operate); sometimes the direction of the network becomes incompatible with some members' values and priorities; and sometimes a teacher just doesn't have the energy to add another commitment on top of career and family.

Now that we can see what the networks are becoming—professional organizations with the

wide range of programs and services outlined above—it is clear why each was slow to attain "critical mass" and become a viable organization: Teachers are interested in participating in a venture that promotes professional and personal growth; they are not interested in simply getting together to share classroom stories, nor in replicating their school district's staff development programs. In other words, what teachers wanted and expected was much more than we had calculated—more than a support group, but more like a support group than the other professional organizations to which they belong.

Developing such an organization is a daunting task in itself, especially when participation is voluntary on the part of folks who are already overworked and overcommitted. Participation in a Foxfire network means helping organize and run the network, unlike organizations wherein you pay your dues, get a newsletter, and decide whether to attend the national convention in Chicago. There's no headquarters office in D.C., with a staff of 200. Instead there is an awareness, sometimes uncomfortable, that the only way for a network like this to succeed is to make commitments to provide mutual support for present and future members. We're not accustomed to joining an organization like that, especially one in which we would be charter members—without a clear charter to follow.

Connie Zimmerman, coordinator of the Skyline network in Atlanta, provided an analysis of why critical mass was so difficult to attain and what she thinks provided the impetus for enough momentum for Skyline to coalesce into a working unit:

> First of all, distractions abound: (a) A lot of these folks see graduate courses as a means, not an end. Getting through the courses and getting the degree is the point. So some are not really taking the course with the idea of getting involved. [Note: Connie is the only member (of sixteen) of the GSU Spring 1987 course for teachers who participates in the network.] (b) School districts have their own programs, of course, and many of them are not voluntary. (c) Then there's university bureaucracy. In our case, the course can be taken only as an elective, so it doesn't fit into many teachers' programs of study. That

gives us really low enrollments in our courses, so we're not getting the numbers we need for the network. And they haven't done much to promote the course, either. (d) Then sometimes the problem is ours: some members of the network become "protectionist" about the network and maybe turn off people who might otherwise join.

I'm not really sure what happens for a network to get critical mass, but I know there were several things that helped us. First was just getting enough people through the course so that 50% participation was enough to be a network, not just buddies. After that was the retreat where we met the EKTN members; that gave everyone the realization that we were in something national. And our first real live working session, where we were doing something, and the presentations with their kids to other teachers, with press coverage. The best experience for several of them was helping teach the workshops last summer.

A coordinators' discussion generated a list of additional hazards:

(1) Geographic distances and the reluctance of school districts to provide substitutes for teachers to travel make it difficult to get members together. Telephone discussions, letters, and computer linkups cannot substitute for face-to-face interactions.

(2) The membership question: Who are the members? Everyone on the mailing list? Only those who participate? Those who say they are members? Sometimes those questions intersect with the personalities of the members, resulting in divisiveness or a sense of exclusion felt by some potential members. Then, who decides who are members?

(3) That, in turn, contributes to the identity problem: just what is this organization? The obvious answer, it is what the members make it, turns out not to be obvious at all. Each member has his/her own concerns, teaching assignments, memorable experiences, and world view. Some are more vocal and demonstrative; some are looking for a cause in which to enlist; some are arming themselves for battles with the system; some are walking, talking bundles of uncertainty, seeking alignment; some are veterans, about burned out, seeking renewal. The network then tends to

become many things to many people—sometimes too many things, so that no one is quite sure whether it is worth the commitment.

(4) Without a core of shared perceptions, the network is slow to develop a sense of mission, sometimes agonizingly slow. Until the members somehow broaden their perceptions to embrace issues and concerns beyond those of their own classrooms, the identity, personality and membership problems are difficult to overcome.

A Skyline network member's letter to the coordinator, following a network meeting that dealt with some of those issues, provides a personal perspective that undoubtedly conveys what many network members feel:

> On the way home, I was thinking about what you had asked regarding little or no involvement in Skyline by some who have taken the course. In retrospect, I can see the "stages" I've gone through with this new way of teaching. There came a time, as you know, when I really "caught on" and got so excited I couldn't wait to implement some of these things I was learning. At the same time, all of us are sort of treading water just to keep up with everyday duties.
>
> So when you start asking things like, "Can you attend a retreat? A Spring meeting? Do a newsletter? Contribute articles? Etc...," it is a little frightening at that point. I remember thinking, "This may be too much of a commitment for me right now."
>
> However, now that I have gotten my feet wet and tried a few Foxfire-type activities (big and small), I feel more "qualified" to do and contribute to some of the above-mentioned things. At first, it was just too overwhelming.
>
> You continued to call, write, and boost my confidence, and that is probably what kept me involved (little as it was) in Skyline. Your visit to my school really helped, too. I liked the way you got right in there with the kids and got to know them so easily. I think it made them feel a part of it also. I realize, however, that you can't do it all. So, I was thinking perhaps we could sort of pair up with another county and have a coordinator in

each one who could occasionally get everyone together, say on that side of town. Or, maybe it wouldn't have to be geographically close... I don't know... I was just thinking...

The letter conveys the apprehensions and the emergence of a cautious commitment. It serves as a poignant summary of much of what we have said above--and a reminder that schooling involves people, not automatons who can be reprogrammed to do different tasks. It also confirms our initial assessments: that the need and potential are out there, that this would be a difficult task, and that teachers would see it through.

Jenny Wilder, the Eastern Kentucky network member who serves full-time as the person who visits network members' classes and responds to their requests for help, has begun to tap her experiences in that role as a way of reflecting on all that she encounters. The tentative results are fascinating. To share one observation from that study: most of the teachers wrestling with issues related to the classroom implementation of this approach become aware that it is affecting much more than their approach to instruction—that the philosophical principles are, in fact, spilling over into their personal lives. As one EKTN teacher stated it during a level two Foxfire course for teachers last summer, in good humor, by the way, "You're messing with my worldview!"

E. Implications

To the extent it is warranted to infer from our experiences with teachers during the first five years of this program to the system of schooling in the U.S., here are the points that I think we'd offer to the dialogue.

One, our lives as teachers—doing our jobs, being evaluated, working with students—need to be professionally rewarding, with a sense of growth and engagement in something more than stuffing content into kids. Our days and weeks should provide for time for reflection, for professional research, and for dialogue with colleagues with similar pedagogical orientations and those with dissimilar orientations. That dialogue needs to be informed by information, insights, and findings about learning, school culture, and content areas.

Two, teachers would benefit from the opportunity to explore the philosophic-pedagogic traditions in their teaching, and to see their practice as being, in fact, based on epistemological and ethical theories, however unrefined and jumbled they may be, then to continue to explore and refine their practice in the light of theory, and to reflect on those theories in the light of the results of practice.

Three, staff development programs should cease their smorgasbord of offerings, concentrate on the approaches their teachers identify as promising, and engage teachers in the district as mentors, observers, and resources for years of developmental followup and support.

Four, dump, once and forever, the illusion that state-mandated curricula translate into taught curricula and, in turn, into learned curricula. The implications of that for curriculum development, teacher evaluation, classroom assessments, and content area coverage are enormous.

Five, the sort of changes suggested by those points cannot begin in any one place or with any one aspect of our system of schooling and teacher training, nor are we going to overhaul those systems with one huge Zap! of a magic-wand plan. They have to start wherever and however people are willing, including Ann Lieberman and Linda Darling Hammond's initiative (NCREST) to synchronize the efforts of several major ventures. But one place where we'd better start working is in our communities. As Ted Sizer and others have observed—and to a lesser extent our experience confirms this, any efforts to reform schooling or restructure schooling turns over all the rocks where the crazies and special interests lurk. Without informed and involved community support, our best efforts will be, at best, superficial revisions of existing regularities.

F. The Prospects for the Future

The primary Teacher Outreach grant runs out in June, 1991. We plan to continue, albeit in an altered fashion. The staff of the Foxfire Fund will pursue a different agenda after June, 1991 (completing its 25th year, coincidentally), with a continuing commitmnent to the Outreach Program. We have received a grant from DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund to continue our work. That grant, by the way, has one unique feature: half of it was to be put into a special endowment for

Foxfire Teacher Outreach, managed separately from the Foxfire Fund's endowment, thereby insuring our long-range commitment to this program. I wish more foundations had that kind of vision and trust.

Nearing the end of the fifth year of this endeavor, we've seen ten networks form, with two more scheduled to get underway this summer, plus a third initiative wherein a school district is hosting the Foxfire initiative for all three elementary schools and the middle school in the district. General inquiries and overtures continue to arrive at a rate of about one a day and serious overtures arrive at the rate of more than one a month. We try to respond carefully, avoiding the tendencies of both the one-quick-hit event and the teach-one/tell-ten paradigm. The consensus of all of us associated with this endeavor is that we will be cautious about adding new networks, staying well within our resources to make sure we do not lose the integrity of the approach or the process, thus maintaining the grass roots orientation of the program. Picking up on the Civil War bit at the beginning of the paper: By the second year of the war, another piece of battlefield wisdom entered commanders' and veterans' admonitions: "Keep your powder dry." I think that's analogous to our attitude of trying to avoid becoming careless and thus losing the vitality of our primary asset: the energy, good will, and insights of the members of our networks.

As of this writing, we've just begun our first venture in training the staff of an entire school, with prospects for several others. In Georgia, we have agreed to train teacher teams from several of the member schools of the League of Professional Schools, to train teacher-administrator teams from a cluster of schools within Gwinnett County, a rapidly expanding county in Metro Atlanta, and to serve as a facilitating agency for that county's Leadership Team as it tries to develop a more coherent pedagogical base for both its curriculum, staff development, instruction, and management.

Recent developments in the governance of some of the networks suggest some patterns for the maturing of the networks and the solution to some of the problems of growth. Bitterroot initiated a system of "area contacts," network members who agreed to be responsible for maintaining contact with the other network members nearby. Each "area" also agrees to take on

particular chunks of the network's business, for example, coordinating the Showcase. Bitterroot is also considering a more formal arrangement of regional coordinators, network members who agree to oversee the area contacts in their region of Idaho. (Bitterroot is spread over the entire st .e of Idaho, which means up to a twelve-hour drive, one way, to get to some of the network members.) Skyline, somewhat more compact geographically but seriously fragmented by the presence of over twenty school districts in the Metro area, set up a Core Group, similar to an executive committee, to conduct its business. EKTN, the oldest and largest network, set up an Executive Committee about two years ago, then found funds to release one of its members, Jenny Wilder, to serve as a Teaching Associate. Jenny takes on the responsibility for working with teachers in the network, while the Coordinator, Debbie Bays, focuses on fund-raising and administration. MountainFire, based at West Virginia University-Morgantown, has both an Executive Committee of members and an Advisory Board of educators and supporters. The Louisville Area Foxfire Network uses a kind of informal executive committee, but does its business at regular meetings wherein everyone present has input and a vote.

Those activities and the constant flow of overtures and opportunities coming to networks stretched the coordinators and active members beyond reasonable levels. To help that situation and to help us respond more effectively to serious overtures and opportunities, the Pew Foundation awarded us a grant that enables us to provide Leadership Training Institutes for network members who are moving into any of the leadership roles described in this paper, as well as funds to the networks and Teacher Outreach to use those network members more effectively. (More paid work, less volunteer, another dimension of professional empowerment.)

One observation from the pilot for the Phase Two Evaluation turned out to be prescient about our future directions (Eddy and Wood, 1989):

> [A]lthough "management" may not be precisely the word for the continuing relationships the [Teacher] Outreach Office will be working out with each of the networks in the next few years, the pressures on it will surely mount on other scores as new units are added.

[Long list of tasks follows.] All this and probably much more will compound the pressures and demands on Teacher Outreach as each new network...is established.

That happened. In addition, as the networks became larger and more stable, they insisted on more coordination of the whole Outreach effort, including the networks themselves. That was the end of the Teacher Outreach office's policy of benign neglect described earlier.

The networks have formed what be termed a confederation of networks, with an Executive Committee of coordinators to make middle-range decisions, the headquarters staff at Teacher Outreach to coordinate the whole operation and long-range planning done by the whole collective of coordinators and network leaders. Most of the networks will become more closely affiliated with the sponsoring institutions, hence becoming more financially independent.

With the cooperation of various members of the networks who have used and critiqued some of our Foxfire course guides, we will convert them into a series of handbooks to be published by Heineman-Boynton/Cook. A video or two about the Foxfire approach will complement the handbooks.

In the Summer of 1990, we offered the basic course for teachers fourteen times, at sites in ten states. In 1991, the summer schedule currently has thirty level one courses, a Leadership Training Institute, a three-day rally for Foxfire-trained special ed teachers, half a dozen level two courses, and substantial participation in the Institute for Democracy in Education's summer conference at Ohio University. Most of those courses and workshops were conducted by the network coordinators and network members, assisted by "mix-and-match" teams of teachers from other networks. Formats for the courses have become increasingly imaginative, responding to what we've learned from the evaluations and to the exigencies of local circumstances. For example, several of the networks now require attendance at several followup sessions during the year following participation in the course. Others build network involvement into the commitment prospective participants make in order to be considered for participation the course. In some cases, the demand for the course is such that the network can screen participants, seeking teachers whose

performance seems to indicate real interest in using the Foxfire approach, trying to create classes with equal representation of elementary, middle, and secondary teachers, and creating cadres of Foxfire teachers in the same school.

Whatever the direction, locations, and programs, the teacher networks will continue to be the primary vehicles for Outreach—at least for the forseeable future.

The preceeding phrase holds two caveats: One, we could come upon other, more promising support systems for Outreach. Doubtful, but the pragmatic premise on which this whole edifice is built says that we attend to what works, not necessarily what we have been doing. (Imagine that premise becoming the operational paradigm of education!)

Two, we haven't set this endeavor up as a necessarily enduring parallel to the systems that states and school districts already operate. If teacher performances and student achievements support the contention that this approach should be one of the approved and supported approaches to classroom instruction, then its practitioners will weave it into the organizational structures of the educational establishment. Then some of the resources and energies that currently support conventional modes of instruction will flow into the classrooms and support systems for those teachers who elect to use it.

Will that happen? It may be hard to imagine, but it's not unthinkable.

The convergence of groups and programs, this window of opportunity for educational reform, the apparent alignment of resources for restructuring schools that create more fertile grounds for students and their teachers—none of that is necessarily vindicating or validating or persuasive. Window close, at least they have historically, reactions set in, funding withers in that seemingly whimsical way that foundations change priorities, leaders burn out—or are subverted in to the system, and promising programs forget to heed Sarason's admonitions to dedicate at least fifty percent of their energies to the process of change, not content—and to attend to the concerns of everyone who is affected by the change.

As of now, we have many reasons to be optimistic, to be reassured—and to continue. So we plan to, but we also plan to keep our powder dry and our aim low.

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Appendixes

Appendix A - The Foxfire Approach: Perspectives and Core Practices

Appendix B - Network Coordinator Job Description

32

The Foxfire Approach: Perspectives and Core Practices

Perspectives

This revision of what was entitled "Nine Core Practices" reflects the latest in our collective thinking about the principles and practices characteristic of the approach to instruction we pursue. The principles and practices are not scriptural; they are not oracular. They come from reflections and discussions on the results of classroom instruction. In time, we will refine them again to reflect the best of our thinking.

This approach to instruction is one of several promising approaches, some of which share many of the same principles. We've found that as each of us explores this approach in our classrooms, we broaden the base of experience from which we all work, often engaging other, resonant approaches and strategies. The approach never becomes a "recipe" for any teaching situation, nor a one-best-way teaching methodology that can be grasped through one-shot, in-service programs or teacher "handbooks."

In the contexts in which most of us work, few of us will be able to say that our instruction manifests all of these "core practices." Being able to assert that is not the point. The point is to constantly review our instructional practices to find ways to engage each core practice. For when that happens, we and our students experience the most elegant and powerful results this approach can deliver.

The goal of schooling—and of this approach to instruction—is a more effective and humane democratic society. Individual development through schooling is a means to that goal. Often given rhetorical approval while being ignored in practice, that goal should infuse every teaching strategy and classroom activity.

As students become more thoughtful participants in their own education, our goal must be to help them become increasingly able and willing to guide their own learning, fearlessly, for the rest of their lives. Through constant evaluation of experience, and examination and application of the curriculum, they approach a state of independence, of responsible behavior, and even, in the best of all worlds, of something called wisdom.

Core Practices

1) **All the work teachers and students do together must flow from student desire, student concerns.** It must be infused from the beginning with student choice, design, revision, execution, reflection and evaluation. Teachers, of course, are still responsible for assessing and ministering to their students' developmental needs.

   Most problems that arise during classroom activities must be solved in collaboration with students. When one asks, "Here's a situation that just came up. I don't know what to do about it. What should I do?" the teacher turns that question back to the class to wrestle with and solve, rather than simply answering it. Students are trusted continually, and all are led to the point where they embrace responsibility.

2) **Therefore, the role of the teacher must be that of collaborator and team leader and guide rather than boss.** The teacher monitors the academic and social growth of every student, leading each into new areas of understanding and competence.

   And the teacher's attitude toward students, toward the work of the class, and toward the content area being taught must model the attitudes expected of students—attitudes and values required to function thoughtfully and responsibly in a democratic society.

3) **The academic integrity of the work must be absolutely clear.** Each teacher should embrace state- or local-mandated skill content lists as "givens" to be engaged by the class, accomplish them to the level of mastery in the course of executing the class's plan, but go far beyond their normally narrow confines to discover the value and potential inherent in the content area being taught and its connections to other disciplines.

4) **The work is characterized by student action,** rather than passive receipt of processed information. Rather than students doing what they already know how to do, all must be led continually into new work and unfamiliar territory. Once skills are "won," they must be reapplied to new problems in new ways.

   Because in such classrooms students are always operating at the very edge of their competence, it must also be made clear to them that the consequence of mistakes is not failure, but posi-

tive, constructive scrutiny of those mistakes by the rest of the class in an atmosphere where students will never be embarrassed.

5) A constant feature of the process is its emphasis on peer teaching, small group work and teamwork. Every student in the room is not only included, but needed, and in the end, each student can identify his or her specific stamp upon the effort. In a classroom thus structured, discipline tends to take care of itself and ceases to be an issue.

6) Connections between the classroom work and surrounding communities and the real world outside the classroom are clear. The content of all courses is connected to the world in which the students live. For many students, the process will engage them for the first time in identifying and characterizing the communities in which they reside.

Whenever students research larger issues like changing climate patterns, or acid rain, or prejudice, or AIDS, they must "bring them home," identifying attitudes about and illustrations and implications of those issues in their own environments.

7) There must be an audience beyond the teacher for student work. It may be another individual, or a small group, or the community, but it must be an audience the students want to serve, or engage, or impress. The audience, in turn, must affirm that the work is important and is needed and is worth doing—and it should, indeed, be all of those.

8) As the year progresses, new activities should spiral gracefully out of the old, incorporating lessons learned from past experiences, building on skills and understandings that can now be amplified. Rather than a finished product being regarded as the conclusion of a series of activities, it should be regarded as the starting point for a new series.

The questions that should characterize each moment of closure or completion should be, "Now what? What do we know now, and know how to do now, that we didn't know when we started out together? How can we use those skills and that information in some new, more complex and interesting ways? What's next?"

9) As teachers, we must acknowledge the worth of aesthetic experience, model that attitude in our interactions with students, and resist the momentum of policies and practices that deprive students of the chance to use their imaginations. We should help students produce work that is aesthetically satisfying, and help them derive the principles we employ to create beautiful work.

Because they provide the greatest sense of completeness, of the whole, of richness—the most powerful experiences are aesthetic. From those experiences we develop our capacities to appreciate, to refine, to express, to enjoy, to break out of restrictive, unproductive modes of thought.

Scientific and artistic systems embody the same principles of the relationship of life to its surroundings, and both satisfy the same fundamental needs. —John Dewey

10) Reflection—some conscious, thoughtful time to stand apart from the work itself—is an essential activity that must take place at key points throughout the work. It is the activity that evokes insights and nurtures revisions in our plans. It is also the activity we are least accustomed to doing, and therefore the activity we will have to be the most rigorous in including, and for which we will have to help students develop skills.

11) The work must include unstintingly honest, ongoing evaluation for skills and content, and changes in student attitude. A variety of strategies should be employed, in combination with pre-and post-testing, ranging from simple tests of recall of simple facts through much more complex instruments involving student participation in the creation of demonstrations that answer the teacher challenge, "In what ways will you prove to me at the end of this program that you have mastered the objectives it has been designed to serve?"

Students should be trained to monitor their own progress and devise their own remediation plans, and they should be brought to the point where they can understand that the progress of each student is the concern of every student in the room.

Rev 8/24/90

NETWORK COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The following list of tasks came from network coordinators. The tasks listed are those that seem to be common to all networks, and do not include tasks that are unique to each network and coordinator's situation.

1. Help teach the Foxfire course for teachers, working with network teachers to accept increasing responsibility for the course each year; make logistical arrangements for the course, including scheduling, lodging, meeting rooms,etc.

2. Coordinate recruitment and selection of teachers for the Foxfire courses.

3. Serve as the contact person and negotiator with the sponsoring institution.

4. Serve as a member of mix-and-match teams to teach the Foxfire course at other sites.

5. Critique course participants' units of study or projects submitted for the course.

6. Review minigrant proposals and monitor progress of minigrant projects.

7. Keep track of equipment purchased with minigrant funds.

8. Help teachers write and edit case studies to fulfill minigrant obligations and for publication in Hands On.

9. Seek resources and connections for network members.

10. Prepare an annual budget with the network, maintain accurate financial records, submit financial reports as required by the Teacher Outreach Office.

11. Prepare quarterly reports of network activities; distribute to the Teacher Outreach office, foundations, and other networks.

12. Obtain copies of any publicity that network members receive and send copies to Teacher Outreach.

13. Maintain an accurate network mailing list and send a copy to Teacher Outreach.

14. Develop a network newsletter and other communications as needed. Share with Teacher Outreach and other networks.

15. Coordinate professional presentations by network members and their students; watch for opportunities for network members to make presentations and conduct staff development workshops.

16. Serve as an adviser in network members' classrooms, helping them and their students to develop projects, deal with classroom problems, and locate resources for classroom instruction.

17. Promote the growth of the network through meetings, newsletters, workshops, etc.

18. Participate in decisions regarding overall development of the Outreach programs, including new networks, new courses, etc. Participate in coordinators quarterly meetings.

19. Secure funds for the network budget.

20. Participate in evaluations of the network and of Outreach in general.

21. Participate in developing the "teacher as researcher" component of the Outreach program.

22. Work in collaboration with the other Foxfire-affiliated networks and network coordinators.

23. Lend expertise to newly forming networks.

24. Continue own philosophical and professional growth.

25. Avoid burnout...