

TASK CENTRE PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

NO. 2

MAY 1995

We're Back

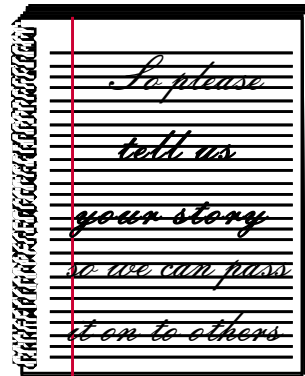
Well actually we never went away, but you would be entitled to think that we had considering the time that has elapsed since we last updated you on our project. It is a year since our first newsletter! We had expected to be more frequent.

The exciting thing is there has been such an expanding interest in the project, that the newsletter has had to take second place to improving the task collection, keeping up with printing demands and training additional consultants. Much of this interest has developed through the value you have placed on our materials and professional development when talking with colleagues. There are many schools where the project is making significant contributions to the overall curriculum and that has been noticed by others. So, thank you for your help.

We're Here To Help

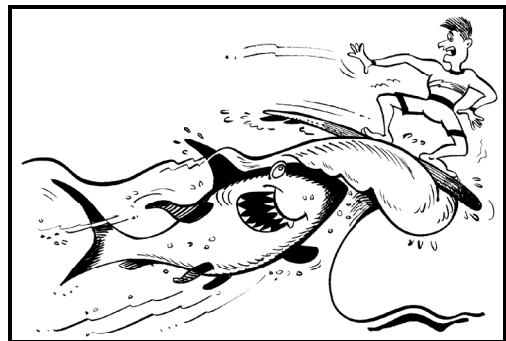
It is our intention to:

- continue supporting you as you work to improve teaching and learning in your school.
- facilitate the exchange of good practice as it has developed through the task centre focus in your school.



There is a response sheet attached to this newsletter which we would like you to fill out and return. If you want to write more than the space allows, please do. Just include it all in your own envelope.

It's Not All Smooth Sailing



If they believe it has value, teachers can make any curriculum development work well in the classroom; but that doesn't mean that there are no problems on the way. Your colleagues want to know the reality of your difficulties, successes and on-going concerns. The fact is that teachers listen to, and learn best from, each other. Your story will help us share the wisdom of practice.

Unit Plans

Have you written unit plans which integrate our tasks into your curriculum? This is one area we would like to share. We expect to expand our unit plans booklet, so please send us details.

We are also thinking of preparing packages of about 20 tasks related to particular strands. These would come with integrated teaching notes. Perhaps a computation package, an algebra package, a space package and so on.

Would you find these valuable? Please indicate on the response sheet.

The Library Project

In response to the needs of one school district in USA, we have developed a collection of tasks for each of their primary and secondary school libraries. These will be borrowed by students to take home for *Maths Around The Kitchen Table*. A Parents' Guidance Card has been written for each one. We also see that this outgrowth could become a feature of the Australian market.

Follow-Up Workshops

As a result of inquiries, we are offering to extend the process begun with the introductory workshop. Some inquiries have been directed towards the training of staff new to the concept.

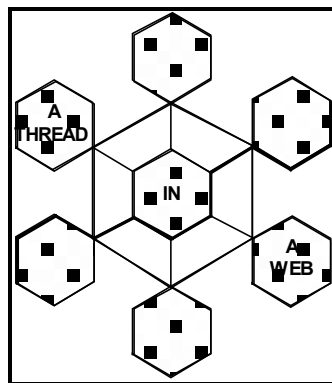
Others start:

We bought your task centre a year ago. The kids love using it. But the staff feel they need more guidance on how you assess changes in students' mathematical thinking.

Whatever your need, we are willing to help. Please contact us. You choose the length of the workshop you need based on a fee for service of \$100 per hour, \$250 per half day and \$450 per day.

More On Prices

As of January 1st, the Australian price for the full package of workshop and materials had to be raised to \$1400 and the kit only price to \$950.



As of the end of March, our Aboriginal kit of 50 tasks had been placed in 36 schools; mainly Northern Territory bush schools for which they were designed.

In addition, 140 other Australian schools (70 primary and 70 secondary) purchased a full package of materials with workshop. Further, 211 full kits (105 primary and 106 secondary) had been sold in Australia and many more of these schools were involved in sharing the workshop in a cluster day organised by one of the 'package' schools.

We also had 32 consultants spread across Australia and 3 in the UK.

As well, our export market had developed to include 75 kits sold in USA, 3 in UK and 6 in NZ. Charles and I are also grateful to have had the opportunity to share the best of Australian classroom practice with our overseas colleagues.

We thought you might draw some satisfaction from knowing that so many others have also seen the potential support the Task Centre Project offers curriculum development in problem solving.

Task Centre Research

Margarita Pavlou and Doug Clarke from the Australian Catholic University, Christ Campus, have been researching *'the perceived benefits to teaching and the professional growth of teachers, and to staff collegiality within schools, from the establishment and maintenance of the task centres'*.

The following quotes from their draft research paper tell their own story:

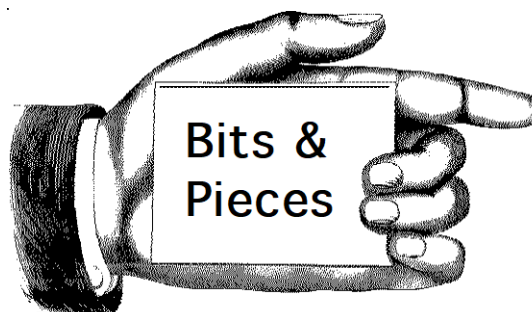
- *Several teachers were also pleased that the tasks presented mathematics as broader and more integrated than they had been able to demonstrate previously.*
- *A common theme in secondary teachers' comments was that the task centres were their first attempt to move beyond fairly traditional content and method.*
- *Several teachers commented on attitude changes that they had observed in other teachers to both what was viewed as important in mathematics, and to their enjoyment of the subject.*
- *Several teachers said that whole-staff introductions to the tasks, preferably through a whole-day inservice program were the best way to expose teachers to the tasks initially.*

And from the conclusion to the paper:

- *Although problem solving task centres require considerable teamwork and management skills on the part of all teachers involved in their use ...[they are] ... viewed most positively by teachers who have had experience with them.*

We have included a copy of our current catalogue of tasks. If you check it against your old one you will find many additions and changes that may interest you. One of the new tasks can also be found on the back of this page.

Best wishes for now, Charles Lovitt & Doug. Williams



- Please check the details on your mailing label and enter necessary corrections on the response sheet.
- The Questacon Maths Centre - the travelling maths show which allows students to use tasks from the original Canberra Task Centre - will be based at Darwin High School during Term 2.

Geoff Crane can be contacted on 018-486-382.

- Consider joining the Problem Solving Task Centre Network. This is a teacher generated support group which is independent of the Task Centre Project, but which shares a common interest. In fact, it pre-dates our project and Michael Richards, the co-ordinator, has willingly shared his years of experience with us. The yearly subscription of \$5.00 (UK £5 and USA \$US10) covers the cost of a twice yearly newsletter.

Contact:

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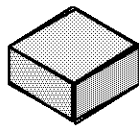
- Some schools have been able to purchase the standard plastic container from their local Woolworths for \$3.10 which is a competitive price. Essentially they have saved delivery charges.

TRICUBES

MATERIALS

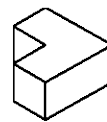
Four (4) tricubes and a worksheet

This task shows how a solid 3D shape can be drawn on 2D dotted paper.

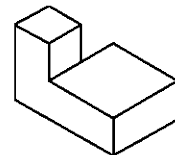


Note how the shading shows the surfaces.

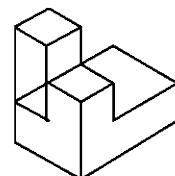
1. Take the green tricube and place it like this:
Copy the diagram onto dotted paper and colour to show the surfaces.



2. Add a red tricube like this:
Copy and colour the diagram.



3. Now add a yellow tricube:
Copy and colour the diagram.



4. Lastly add a blue tricube:
Copy and colour the diagram.

