16. Role -Playing.

**Formal Versus Informal Teaching**

The group of students is divided into two teams, each of which performs the same role play. While discussing formal and informal styles of teaching be sure to show their advantages and disadvan­tages. Expand on the ideas of your character. Disagree with some participants and share the others' points of view. At the end of the conference you should come to a conclusion about the desirable style of teaching in school. (May be done by a vote.) Comments from the class on each team's performance and the value of the dif­ferent arguments are invited.

Situation: After studying the county reports on the work of formal/informal classes in secondary schools of the county the chief education officer who is at the head of the local education au­thority) holds a conference to discuss the most controversial issue in the area of "teaching style" that is to say: are "informal" styles of teaching more effective than "formal" ones?

Characters:

1. *Mr. Bernard Hudson,* aged 33, an education officer, has no definite view of his own, he is in two minds after his inspection. Pu­pils seem to do better in terms of the basic skills in formal classes, the superiority of formal teaching for basic subjects is evident. Children taught in informal classes achieve lower academic out­comes but are more independent, cooperative, ask more questions seeking information, are better at non-verbal problem solving, are less frequently absent from classrooms. Much individualised in­struction is used here.

1. *Miss Susan Curry,* aged 54, a Geography teacher in Stewart  
   Comprehensive School. Stands for firmness, principle and authori­  
   ty. Never reduces learning to the level of entertainment. Organises  
   her lessons well. Laughter is not her style. Ignores fashion. Respon­  
   sibility is the air she breathes. She likes utilizing her strength to its  
   utmost limits. Always shows her power. Likes making and keeping  
   rules. Insists upon her pupils' even margins and correct posture,  
   punctuality and industriousness.
2. *Mrs. Hilary Bell,* aged 42, a grammar school teacher. Likes her  
   work and her school. Approves of its formality, its regard for order.  
   Is used to working briskly, without a break. Writes in careful, legi­  
   ble script. Has cultivated felicity in the language." Never permits  
   her pupils to use expressions which are inelegant, rude or improp­  
   er. Always acts within reason. Reminds people of Mary Poppins, an  
   English nanny from a fairy-tale with supernatural powers. Has the  
   same effect on children. Keeps pupils on their toes. Discipline in  
   her class is strict. Discourages movement during classes, pupil talk  
   is forbidden. All the same shows much respect for her pupils.
3. *Mr. Mark Dawson,* aged 27, principal of Newlyn East Primary  
   School. Believes in being friends with the children, in classroom  
   democracy. Is charmed by his younger pupils. The infants are his  
   pets. Likes to join in their games at break, to feel that they love  
   him. In his lessons pupils take an active part. He lets children  
   speak and think through speaking. Doesn't approve of Hilary  
   Bell's didactic methods but admits that they work if a teacher is  
   sincere since kids are fair. You can't fool them. If a teacher is doing  
   a sincere job, they know it.
4. *Ann Bennett,* 21 year-old student teacher. Uses informal  
   methods in her class. Movement during her class is allowed, any  
   question is encouraged. Interruption of the lesson doesn't scare  
   Ann. She comments on all marked work in the spirit of a teacher-  
   learner dialogue. Likes to put problems and encourages their dis­  
   cussion either in pairs or groups. Though her class sometimes  
   lacks discipline she is quite happy with her work, methods and pu­  
   pils. Believes that in formal classes children won't develop an abili­  
   ty to think and feel for themselves. But her timing and planning are  
   not perfect. Sometimes doesn't have time to explain and drill ev-  
   erythihg she is expected to.
5. *Mrs. Leonie Thorpe,* aged 67, a pensioner, former teacher of  
   English. Thinks that there is no single right of handling classes or  
   individual children. Each teacher should find his own way. Leo-

nie's experience shows that certain formal ways of behaving in the classroom are more likely than others to lead to order. Is not sure that children can say and do as they please in the classroom. The more teachers take from children, the worse it gets. Thinks it is necessary to find some way to show them who's "Boss". But be­lieves that an olderly and highly drilled class who know exactly what is expected of them at each point of the lesson may not al­ways develop personal qualities. Thinks that friendliness and co­operation are required on any teacher's part.