

Education News

C A R E F O R K I D S

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Values Education - Classroom experiences from across Australia

In March and September last year, 16 teachers from a wide range of primary and secondary schools met at the Australian Children's Television Foundation to share their teaching experiences using our educational resources. As the coordinators of the ACTF's Advisory Schools' panel, they represent over 100 teachers across Australia. The coordinators meet in Melbourne twice yearly.

A common theme during the discussions and workshops which took place on both days, were the teachers' interests in incorporating values education into their curriculum using television, film and multimedia. They agreed that television and film are engaging media by which sensitive and controversial issues may be introduced into the classroom, providing teachers and students with a common point of reference to discuss issues that are often difficult to introduce in a vacuum.

"Getting along with others" at North Haven Primary School, South Australia.

Marija Baggio, the Assistant Principal and Advisory Schools panel coordinator at North Haven Primary School in Adelaide, says that her staff considers student well being a priority. The school has been implementing Program Achieve, looking at the five key foundations of getting along: confidence organisation, competence, persistence, and resilience. "We're calling it *bounce back for our kids*" says Marija. Using the 2003 TV series **Worst Best Friends** from the ACTF and the free online lesson plans and worksheets, the years 3-5 have discussed a range of issues, including bullying and family break up through looking at the characters in the story and the ways they cope with adversity and conflict. *Friends Forever*, one of the online lessons together with the worksheets supplied was a good starting place.



Worst Best Friends. Roger Thesaurus and his warring friends, Dusting and Millicent.

"The teachers have used the activities online, such as writing about friendship groups, writing up diaries, of getting along with others. Some of them are actually publishing them and putting them in the library, which is absolutely beautiful."

"No Bullying" at Richmond West Primary School, Victoria and Mona Vale Primary School, NSW.

At both of these schools teachers have also used **Worst Best Friends** and the ACTF Values Education kits **Chill Out!** (lower primary) and **What's Fair?** (years 5-8) to help support their anti-bullying programs. The kits comprise a video of segments from popular ACTF programs that stimulate discussion on a wide range of issues, a teachers' book, online units and a CD-ROM.

Sue Davis at Richmond West says that, "Many of our kids can't express themselves in words, but they can see things in the videos and it opens up a whole new sphere of communication for them. So I found it quite interesting that the children who don't normally interact as much in class



One of the **Worst Best Friends** online worksheets.

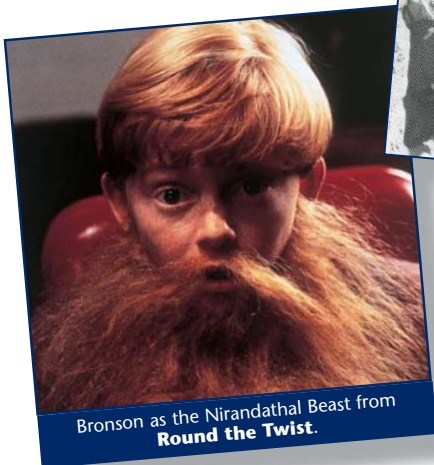
discussion, are interacting more and being prepared to discuss difficult and emotional issues through relating them to the videos."

"At Mona Vale we've been helping children to understand that bullying isn't always push and shove. It can be more subtle than that and just as hurtful. We use ACTF programs to study words, actions and even facial expressions and their consequences," says Charmayne Hodgman, the coordinator.

Round the Twist, Australian Rules and What's Fair? get students talking at Thornbury Darebin Secondary College in Victoria.

James Curzon-Siggers at Thornbury Darebin Secondary College in Melbourne's northern suburbs, started teaching personal development last year as well as his usual areas of English and Media Studies. James and the other panel members find that **Round the Twist** and the extensive lessons online for the series make it a very valuable resource, not just for media production ideas and understandings but for exploring values about families, sibling relationships, conflict and civics.

Round the Twist is a subtle and non-threatening look at human behaviour, foibles, follies and values like generosity and tolerance. The lesson Mob Mentality based on *The Nirandathal Beast* from series 3 of **Round the Twist**, asks students to consider the concept of mob behaviour, peer pressure and how they would handle situations where they and others are panicked and fearful.



Bronson as the Nirandathal Beast from **Round the Twist**.

"Similarly, **Australian Rules**, which is a powerful feature film about race relations has not only been really good for teaching narrative but for also raising awareness of indigenous issues in the classroom," says James.

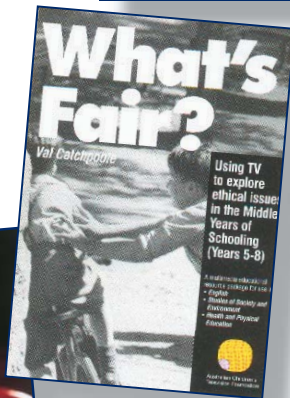
James has also started using **What's Fair?** and believes that secondary teachers can



Ben starts a one boy crusade to make the world right in **The Other Facts of Life**



Two friends deal with conflict in **Room to Move**, a **Winners** telemovie.



benefit from using this ACTF values education kit. "Visual resources have traditionally been a bit overlooked; where teachers doing personal development have not thought about using ACTF visual material, but **What's Fair?** is ideal because it uses 5, 10

and 15 minute snippets that work really well and then discussion follows from the classroom activities." **What's Fair** includes segments from the popular ACTF **Winners** telemovies *Room to Move*, *Top Kid*, *The Other Facts of Life* and *Boy Soldiers* and *Captain Johnno* from the **Touch the Sun** telemovies which are highly relevant to lower secondary students with their themes of rights and responsibilities, honesty, handling peer pressure and preventing bullying.



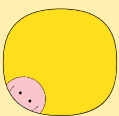
As well, **House Gang**, a comedy series about a group of house mates with intellectual disabilities learning to live together is a highly recommended senior resource.



Captain Johnno, a **Touch the Sun** telemovie that deals with disabilities.

All of these ACTF programs have extensive online resources in the Learning Centre at www.actf.com.au.

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