

PROMPTED by the HEA and with support of their funding, we have been working in schools developing ways of using the data in the classroom, in the staffroom, with parents and with governors. Four regional courses are being planned for the end of 1990 to study the methods and materials developed and to make them available to co-ordinators of health education.

An exercise which promises to receive a lively reception from classes and to meet NCC requirements and health education objectives (a tall order perhaps) we feel is worth reporting here.

The 3rd year had been surveyed about nine months ago and four hygiene tables of results were presented to each class member.

Histograms derived from these tables (through the school's computers) are presented here, but it is interesting to note that the two classes of 3rd-year pupils who were 'mixed ability' English studies classes competently interpreted the tables.

JOHN BALDING

How clean are your kids?

The exercise was enjoyable and the sharing of ideas was vigorous. There was always more than one group composing statements for the same target audiences so that clarification through comparisons was facilitated.

veys which they had decided were necessary to fill gaps of knowledge from the Exeter survey. The class members were thus practised in the examination of tables from the survey.

The focus of the exercise was the reports on their own behaviour and the challenge was to promote some action based on the evidence. The exploration for the children was of a real situation in which they were identified as too was good and bad practice in personal hygiene. Methods of putting pressure on their peers

through information from teachers, 'shock horror' poster/pamphlet routines, and via messages home to parents were formulated. The opportunity to improve practice by improving the facilities was also not lost on those involved in the exercise.

To what extent involvement in this exercise heightened awareness of good practice and promoted it and attitudes towards it remains untested.

The same exercise using other selections of tables to suit science, PE, humanities and home economics would be easy to contrive. Doubtless other target groups for communication to advise on action could be

It became clear that some comments could be legitimately based on the data, but others were comments that the boys and girls wanted to make based on their own feelings and experiences.

Practised

The two classes had also studied other tables in connection with the survey of their leisure pursuits, time spent on homework, TV and video viewing as a component of six weeks' media studies. This programme had also involved them in an exercise of report writing based on tables from the health behaviour survey, extended by details from their own sur-

Working to the school
 4 percent of the males in the school aren't washing their hand after going to the toilet, this is just over 2 in every 100 children. might I suggest that you provide better washing facilities. Instead of 4 of having a sink with taps could you provide multi-driers (that wash and ~~dry~~ dry). You ~~to~~ could also start a poster or leaflet campaign.

The exercise

The classes were used to group work and in each class there were seven groups, mostly of mixed sexes. Members of the groups discussed the results and were required to make recommendations based on the data to a specific 'target' audience. These targets included

- The school
- The local council
- Parents
- Boys
- Girls

named but the school, the council, boys and girls worked well in these classes.

Cleanliness

The data examined by the 3rd year (NC year group 9) classes prompted them to want to promote action to achieve higher levels of cleanliness, and certainly they had strong views on potential improvements to the environment. However, the Unit director, a self-confessed dirty biologist, sees young people as usually achieving high levels of personal hygiene. These particular groups show even higher standards than most schools.

The accompanying histograms show two sets of school results produced by a standard computer package, as well as a comparison histogram from the Unit's report on *Young People in 1988*.

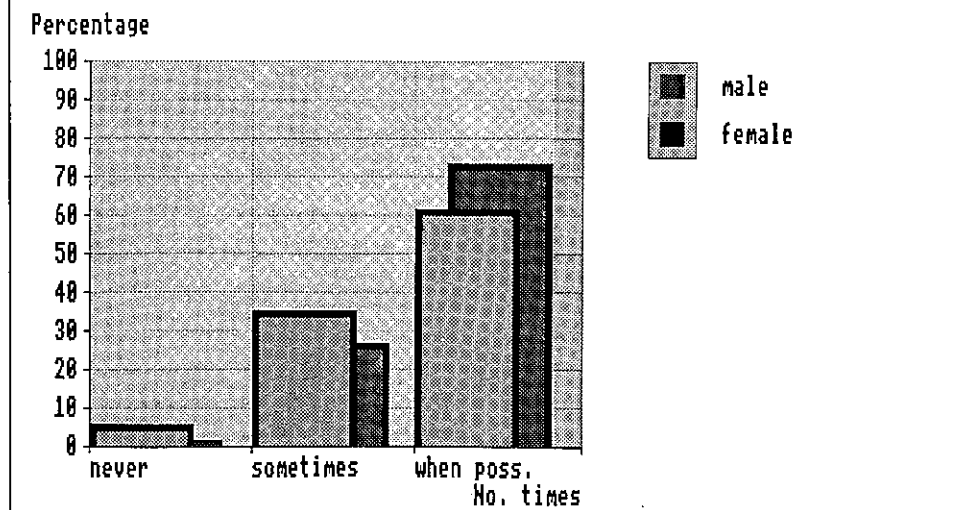
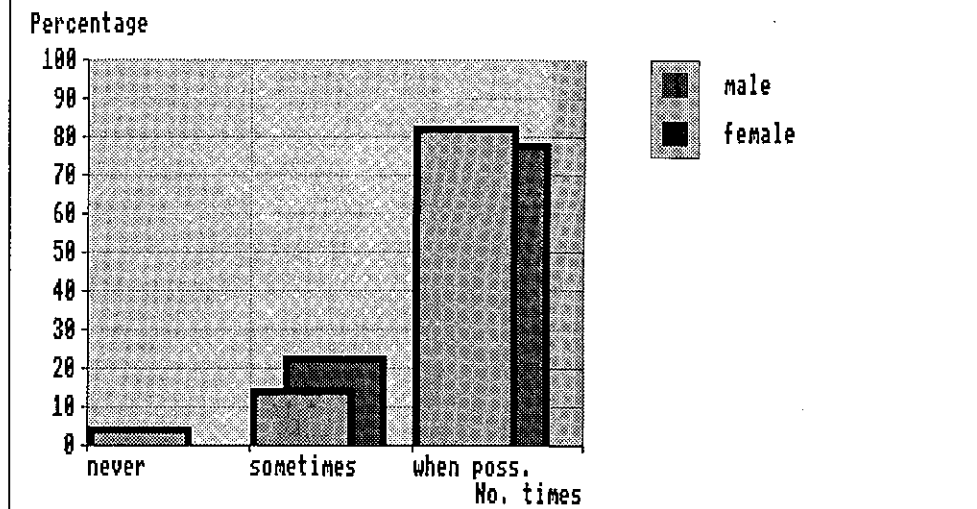
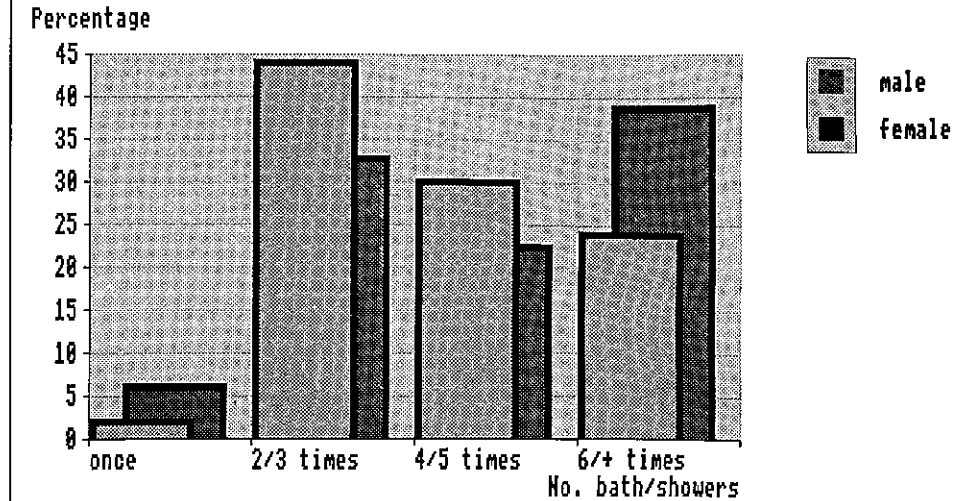
Further feedback from this exercise in English studies has been added to our pack of examples of good, recommended practice. They will be presented at our four nationwide conferences (see overleaf).

The data to produce these histograms was read off the original tables and typed into an Archimedes A3000 computer. It was then read into the GraphBox package (Minerva Software, Exeter) and the graphs labelled in the same package.

The graphs, saved to disc, were printed using the !PrinterPS driver supplied free with the A3000, in conjunction with the !Draw package (also supplied free). The !Draw package is necessary to print graphics, and can also be used to include extra text and different fonts, but the labelling on the illustrated histograms was done using Graphbox.

The data must be typed in rows separated by commas, the standard format for numerical data. This can be done using !Edit (also supplied free), but we used PipeDream 3 (Colton Software, Cambridge). This can manipulate numbers as well as text with great power.

We hope soon to be able to offer schools discs readable by their own systems, and not just by the route described above. This is an exciting possibility, and we are grateful to Mike Wood of Minerva Software for his invaluable help in this work.



Upper: Responses from the school's sample of 3rd-year pupils to a question about the number of baths or showers taken during the previous week.

Middle: Responses from the same sample to a question asking how frequently they wash their hands after visiting the lavatory.

Lower: Responses to the same question from a sample of about 6,000 3rd-year pupils in the Unit's report *Young People in 1988*.