student participation in 2013 ... 2030 ... 2043 ...

HUGE FINAL PRINT ISSUE:

as Connect goes on-line

- Times Have Changed (1991): and it changed me!
- 2030: The Worlds We Live In... and choices we make...
- VicSRC: Teach the Teacher extends to 10 more schools
- VISTA: Forward to 2030...

Resources:

- Student Voice Seminar: Cambridge (UK) - June 2013
- A Student Voice Rubric
- VicSRC Regional Conferences; VicSRC Congress; SRC Awards
- Connect on Facebook
- Connect Publication Catalogue – including FREE resources
Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bi-monthly since 1979.

It aims to:
- document student participation approaches and initiatives;
- support reflective practices;
- develop and share resources.

This Issue:

So this is it ... after 33+ years and left with shelves of boxes of back issues of Connect, the final print copy arrives. From now on, it's all electrons!

And what a big issue of Connect this is. (I guess it means we blow what remains of 'profits' from the 33+ years in a final flurry of print and postage.)

We asked in the last issue of Connect: What is student participation, action, voice, engagement, involvement, representation etc like at the start of the year 2030? And you responded (sometimes unsolicited, sometimes on request) with fascinating glimpses of possibilities down the road we're travelling. Initially, I was simply going to collate these visions and publish them, but the first returns were so positive, I thought that a bleak or dystopic future needed to be posed to counterpoint the unalloyed joy and optimism. So instead of editorialising here on the subject, I've allowed two contrasting editorials to filter through the 'quantum sea' and these appear on pages 8 and 9.

As I note there, I have taken inspiration from Michael Fielding's observation that 'student voice' (and 'student participation' etc) is not a neutral technology, but that it expresses values about the kind of society (including roles of learning and teaching) in which we wish to live. I think we are approaching some critical points in this debate, where ideas about 'student voice' – and the roles of students in schools ... and the roles of young people in civil society – are about to get much more complex and fraught. We will make choices that can shape substantially different kinds of futures.

I also asked in last issue's editorial: "What do we learn ... particularly as we again enter a period of economic cuts in education? What will be the impact on practices and initiatives in student participation, voice, engagement, involvement, representation and so on? Are we in a better position to survive these attacks and constraints? How? What do we need to do?"

These contributions are, hopefully, part of the continuing debate about these issues. Stephanie Neumann starts by taking us from the past to the present - it was a joy to hear from her. Lyn Loger and Pyotr Hodgson remind us of the need to hear the 'silenced voices'; Helen Cahill and Alison Cook-Sather write of learning partnerships within educational communities; Sue Cahill and David Mould place student leadership at the centre of learning and training – and of their communities; Ian Fraser and Keith Heggart dare to think about where technological change might take student voice; Adam Fletcher, Art Pearl and Art's students in Oregon (Shawn, Conner, Casey, Roseanna, Sarah and Rayven) place the work we are doing firmly within notions of democracy and enfranchisement; both VISTA and the VicSRC bridge us from current work to possibilities – and two students from the VicSRC Executive, Braiden Pace and Lachlan Hugo, cautiously dream about where their current participation might take us all, 'warts and all'.

So onwards to the digital future for Connect ... In this issue, I've also included an updated publications and resource catalogue. You'll notice there that electronic subscriptions to Connect are now free. If you haven't yet sent us an e-mail address, please do so, so we can continue to send Connect to you. And please tell others about Connect, encourage them to subscribe: we want to take this opportunity to reach many more people!

While publication in this way removes printing and postage costs, it doesn't leave us cost-free. Many thanks to everyone who has donated recently to keep us alive. Your continued support would be most appreciated. If you haven't yet sent us an e-mail address, please do so, so we can continue to send Connect to you.

And, of course your continued stories are vital to continued publication of Connect. We already have a substantial article about a 'Hip Hop Student Voice' project for #201. The electronic format should also permit more interaction between contributors and comments on articles. We love this sense of the possibilities that are opening up for all of us! See you on the other side!!

Roger Holdsworth
In 1991, as a Year 11 student at Nathalia Secondary College, I had the honour of working on the Times Have Changed book. In this curriculum initiative, we students collected and published oral histories from our community in north central Victoria.

I'm currently studying my Master of Teaching (Primary) at Melbourne University. Today, a deeply moving experience brought back the pride and sense of achievement I felt as a student so many years ago, but that had faded from my memory until now.

Roger Holdsworth gave a guest lecture around Student Voice for our Social and Professional Contexts (SPC) subject. I had read his article Schools That Create Real Roles of Value for Young People last night and connected completely with it and was looking forward to hearing him in person. During that lecture, and as part of illustrating the power of learning approaches in which students engage in and create meaningful works and expressions, he held up a copy of Times Have Changed.

I nearly blurted out across the lecture theatre - but I've been trained well, so I put up my hand. I said I had participated in the creation of it, and had an interview (with Bela Angel) published in it. Roger talked about Lyn Loger, the teacher who convened that curriculum project (see next page); I mentioned how fantastic and inspiring she was, and that there had been a connection with Foxfire at the time. Twenty-two years later, it’s all fresh again in my brain.

I was reminded of a time that was crucial for me, educationally and personally. As someone who had felt disconnected and alienated for their whole life, this book gave me a safe and encouraging place to write, and take pride in who I was and my abilities. I know that’s true for other people involved with it as well. It was the most meaningful and real educational experience I’d had - and stands to this day. What a gift!

Now I look at this book - I still have my old copy - from the perspective of an educator, and it is helping me bridge the often gaping space between theory and practice, with the power of meaning. I have direct personal experience of the power and agency that a project like this brings, and I see the immeasurable benefit for students as their teacher and facilitator.

At the end of this year I’ll graduate, and hope to focus on literacy intervention during the early years of primary school. Our voice can’t be expressed without the right tools; Lyn taught me that, with the right tools, we can all find it. Helping children find their tool-kit and skills to express their voice and create their own space in the world is my dream. I’m thankful for the labour of love that Lyn Loger created through this project, for the lasting impact it’s had on me and for being reminded of it after such a long time forgetting.

This was just what was needed to rekindle focus, drive and dreams.

Stephanie Neumann
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Do we evaluate our society by its ability to hear the voices and encourage participation of the most vulnerable and/or the most silenced in its community? Can we estimate a society’s growth in wellbeing in this way?

VicSRC’s 2030 Congress, held in Shepparton this year, focused on these editorial questions to students and educators that were contained in Connect 292. Student Action Teams across the globe brought their findings to the Congress.

Why Shepparton? Because Shepparton has the highest regional Australian Indigenous population in Victoria and the input of Yorta Yorta language voices were essential to the Congress findings. Here is voice at its most pivotal: emerging traditional owners’ voices in a language brought back from the brink of extinction.

Connect is produced again in Victoria in 2030 through the dedicated work of Brunswick Secondary College’s Student Action Team, linked with the Student Teacher program at The University of Melbourne. Connect 300 contains a selection of reports and multimedia links to a Congress that mined the core of what student voice and participation is all about.

It is heartening, looking back over 30 years in Australian society, to see that the fostering of the public voice of minority groups continued its momentum to the present day.

The heart-rending online voices heard in the indigenous Bringing Them Home oral history interviews featured by the National Library (1998-2000) and the Many Voices production of 2002, provided rich evolutionary ground for the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal people.

From these, there steadily grew an upswelling of voices of minority groups in Australia seeking to have their public group voice heard.

The voices of forgotten Australians and former child migrants: You Can’t Forget Things Like That (National Library 2012) was recorded and published, while in 2013, the voices of about 5000 children (now adults) who had been sexually abused within religious and government institutions told their story and had Commissioners ‘bear witness’ in the Royal Commission on Child Sex Abuse. (The Age April 1, 2013)

Australia had become the empathic listener to minority groups – to those who, as children, were silently disadvantaged within social systems whose designers could not have envisaged that there would be a future need to provide public avenues for such group voices.

This larger model of Australian society as the empathic listener opened up pathways for the smaller model of school society to emulate.

The appointment, in 2013, of a Principal Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People in Victoria, Bernie Geary OAM, highlighted this progression.

Each of these encompassings in the wider society underlined to educational leaders the importance of valuing voice as a humanising force – of having minority groups’ stories acknowledged and validated publicly.

Avenues were opened up for students with learning differences to have a group public voice – to join in the educational conversation as equal participants. Their group voices across Australia have been heard, recorded and documented. The result has been an increase in overall student wellbeing and a deeper understanding of education as a learning exploration to be openly shared and celebrated by all.

Connect 292’s editorial questions and VicSRC’s 2030 Congress have built worldwide student/educator awareness of the importance of upholding the voices and participation of minority groups. The Student Action Team model has continued to facilitate student voice and participation.

Where to from here?

Lyn Loger
co-authored by:
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It has been an honour to be included in the last hard copy edition of Connect. Congratulations and thank you for all the inspiration that Connect magazine has provided me as an educator. I look forward to reading Connect on-line in the future and continuing the enrichment process.

Lyn Loger

Image: www.dolezalek.com/chris/silenced.htm
Learning as Community

Address to beginning teachers, February 14, 2030

Once we taught in boxes. Children were sorted by age, and assigned to the teaching box, then called The Classroom. You can hear by the presence of the word 'room' inside of classroom, that teaching was place-based. It occurred in a specialised building. You can hear by the word 'class', that the collection of children was based on their category. Nowadays you might presume that they were categorised according to their interests or level of expertise, but in the past this was most unusual.

So what has caused the changes that have brought us to our present arrangements?

Most of you will presume that advances in technology have brought us to where we are today. To a degree this is true. Once the population had instant access to internet-based enquiry, there was less and less need to herd bodies into 'schools.' Children of the digital generation could leap into learning from their homes.

Great advances were made as teachers became adept at inviting students into learning, operating as Companions and Mentors, rather than as Transmitters and Controllers. Self-directed learning in the Cloud was a welcome innovation, and undoubtedly comprised the greatest shift in teaching practice since departure from the apprenticeship traditions of medieval society.

As you are aware though, these changes happened in a period of great social unrest and increasing inequity. All was not gain. We saw escalation in the prevalence of depression and anxiety, and the proliferation amongst the young of extreme practices of bodywork, as young people sought to control their bodies, bodies which had all but become invisible to the outside world. They took to wearing elaborate masks to become invisible to the outside world. Bodies which had all but disappeared. Children from the era of Classrooms, but from the invisibility, impotence and indifference one felt from spending too long in the Cloud, Children longed to be real, and to feel themselves to be both at Cause and Effect in their world.

It was our most recent education innovation that enabled us to address this new form of suffering. We reinstated intensive forms of face-to-face learning. Not a return to the ‘boxes’, but rather the invention of the ‘bridges’.

The bridges were our Learning Partnerships. In Learning Partnerships children are positioned as contributors. They work in face-to-face embodied encounters, sharing with each other and with adults. The interactions are highly purposeful. The Children are brought together to teach adults. They teach doctors how to relate well to patients. Mental health is the most sensitive topic for us – more personal than sex - so if you don't open the topic we won't go there. They teach Teachers how to understand what Children need to make their learning meaningful. We need to use our knowledge. We want to do things to make the world a better place. They teach Parents to understand the Child’s need for contact. Listening to a podcast in my bed is nothing like when you read to me! Your sounds effects are rubbish, but your lap makes me feel more real. They teach Politicians how to understand the needs of Families. We need a commons where we can run free and a village in which we are known. Learning Partnerships are reciprocal. Children contribute and in turn they learn.

With this admittedly simplistic historical overview, you can see that something was lost during the shift from the era of Learning in the Factory, to that of Learning in the Cloud. It is only in recent times that we have begun to recognise the need for a re-gathering. It is only now we begin to conceive of Learning as Partnership, of Learning as Community.

The fulfilment of this concept is now up to you as the new generation of Teachers. May you preserve the nobility of this profession as you lead the young in their quest to contribute.

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Students constructing models of our schools: where do students fit in?

Remember, we haven't got long to do this! Use this string...

But how do we show where we fit into the school? Let's try and describe it in a short paragraph.

Let's draw it and start with Senior School Council at the top.

What are those arrows and string for ....... and what am I doing here?
Students Lead in their School ... and their Community

It is Eddie's turn to chair the School Leadership Team Meeting today and he welcomes everyone and comments that it is great that for once there have been no problems with the Internet connections. He knows if it hadn't worked this morning, he may not have been able to get back to the students about their proposal. It has made a difference to Eddie's life since he has been able to assist at home before he begins his school day at 12:30 pm. Today four team members are at school and four have logged in from home. His three student colleagues are all starting school at 12:30 pm today. His school has two starting times for both on campus and on-line learning. The first session begins at 7:30 am and the second at 12:30 pm.

Eddie and his student leaders have had much experience in these skills over the years at primary school, as they have been actively involved in Student Action Teams from Prep.

Eddie and Josie (another Grade 6 student) are also the student representatives for schools in the community on the local government management team. This relationship began after a Student Action Team recognized the need for the local Council to hear what facilities and services were needed by the young people in the community. In the beginning it was difficult for the students to be taken seriously but, over time, their ideas and proposals have led to improved services for the students.

At last week's Council meeting, the students requested financial assistance from Council to implement a home-based network for students who have difficulty in attending school. This network would be linked to teachers out of school hours to assist in these students' learning. The students also recognised the need for a cyber hub to be available to all members of the community so that teaching and learning could be reciprocal. With the support from Council, the students have met with local business leaders to ascertain what assistance they could offer.

This morning Eddie is proposing to the School Leadership team that the cyber hub could be built on some unused land at the back of the school. He has supporting documentation from the business leaders he and Josie have been meeting with and building regulations from Council. The students are unsure how the Leadership team will accept this proposal but, from past experience, they know that any change begins with respectful conversations, having strong evidence from the community and a lot of patience.

Eddie and the student leaders are hoping to receive some positive feedback from the Leadership Team this morning so they can report back to all the students that their proposal has merit.

He realises there is a long way to go but, from past experience, he knows that when students work collaboratively and provide strong evidence from all stakeholders, anything is possible.

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The recent discovery that parallel worlds do really exist—and that we can observe events in them—has led us to be able to make some cautionary reflections on the impact of large and small events of recent years.

Here are glimpses of two worlds of which we’ve become aware (we’ll call them ‘alpha’ and ‘omega’). These are complex realities, and others will analyse their full import. But here we’ll focus narrowly and briefly on what is happening in their 2030s in primary and secondary education in Australia—with a particular emphasis on ideas about ‘student voice’ and ‘student participation’—and the role there of a small educational journal.

As yet, we are unable to travel safely between these realities, though many desperate people have attempted to do so...new refugees in small ‘boats’ that leak virtuality from quantum seas. From here, we can look, but not act. Any action is firmly anchored as the consequences of the options we have chosen in past years.

Connect 300 in 2030

Sadly, we must announce that this is the final issue of Connect. Harassed by financial and legal pressures, and seen by those with influence as ‘dated’ and ‘dangerous’, we are unable to continue.

Looking back over the last 100 issues (those 17 difficult years since #200 in 2013), we can see the deterioration of educational conditions in Australia—and recognise the role of ‘student voice’ in those changes.

A key event were the responses to the widespread riots of 2018—events that revealed a divided, depressed and angry society, suffering from savage cuts to public services. Those responses, sadly, were also repressive—and their consequences even more divisive.

We now see, for example, even larger differences between schools. Yes, most are now private-public partnerships, but two factors have served to further divide them. First, teachers are now paid by results; there are some highly paid teachers who have achieved significant value-adding to students’ scores on the National Tests, and others (the majority of teachers) whose conditions (pay, class sizes and hours of work) have deteriorated markedly. Secondly, a relatively small number of schools, strongly supported by both federal and state funding, are able to recruit both the highly ‘effective’ teachers, and also, most significantly, provide scholarships to locate and enrol high-performing students. These mainly exist within tightly gated suburban communities and regard themselves as of ‘high prestige’.

‘Student Voice’ (though we’d perhaps not know this from the ways in which it existed in the early years of this century) is part of that selection. The decision to include ‘student voice’ in the National Tests seemed to be positive when first suggested, but this annual testing is now used to identify students in primary and secondary schools who have the potentiality for leadership/participation/voice—and these students have been increasingly recruited to and enrolled in a few schools. They will be trained there to be the future leaders of Australia: in business, politics, media and community.

Meanwhile, most students must attend what are now referred to as ‘residual schools’. Here class sizes are larger, teachers are worse paid, but a form of ‘student voice’ still remains prominent. Instruction is largely through individualised programs, set automatically against the National Curriculum by effective computer-based instruction, and tested regularly. Within schools, during and after all units of instruction, students must complete feedback sheets that ask them to rate their learning and their experience, including well-measured aspects of ‘fun’. The result of ‘capturing’ students’ ‘voice’ is to ensure that they remain ‘on-task’ and ‘engaged’ through interaction with individually targeted games-based software designed to ‘sugar coat’ instruction.

There has been, of course, constant resistance to this approach, but the defunding of any form of student networking has meant that there is no organisation of this resistance from that quarter. Rather, resistance is individualised too, and absenteeism is a constant problem. Fining students (and their parents) has had little impact in the face of depressed economic circumstances for many families. The growth of partnerships between schools and the justice system in recent years has seen the emergence of schools that link closely with prisons.

From Connect’s perspective, there is unfortunately now little interest in reflecting on and sharing stories about active participatory approaches. There is little space in a prescribed central curriculum for innovative practice (where even ‘creativity’ has been systematised and tested). Further, there is little interest to share stories and examples in a competitive system where ‘secret’ approaches that add value to students’ test scores (and hence enhance teacher salaries...and enable some students to escape residualisation) are jealously guarded.

Is Connect giving up? To some extent, there is little space to suggest changes that are seen as subversive of orderly society. But there is underground resistance that unites some students and teachers—and we’re joining that. Taking its name from an obscure novel by Cory Doctorow (For the Win) (and from the IWW at the start of the 20th Century), and using the same omnipotent and observant web that can also be used to divert or control them, they refer to themselves as ‘Webbies’. So Connect’s final message to our last loyal online readers is: don’t mourn, organise!

Roger Holdsworth
I am overjoyed to announce that this will be the final issue of Connect. After 50 years of publication, and sometimes feeling like a ‘voice in the wilderness’, it is clear that the exciting diversity of initiatives in student participation no longer needs an ‘external’ commentator. In fact, young people, in partnership with those supporting and working alongside them in their educational journeys, are not only leading in these initiatives but are much more skilled than Connect ever has been, in publicising and sharing information for others about them.

Even when Connect went on-line 17 years ago, we were doomed to be behind the cutting edge of the technological times, and subsequent events have borne this out. Connect can’t hope to match or report the diversity of what is now recognised as ‘student participation’.

The key was, I think, the huge reaction to the disturbing riots of 2018. We could have so easily gone down the path of repression and control (and almost did); but some key alliances – largely inspired and led by young people – captured the popular imagination with the slogan: “From me to we”. This turned the focus on the dangers inherent in the increased individualisation of Australian society, where education for example, was regarded as a commodity to be bought for private gain. This movement strongly rejected that ideology, and talked about education as a ‘common good’.

Starting with a few primary and secondary schools that enacted and shared an exciting vision of what a democratic society could be like, there was a slow transformation of learning. It began in small steps: a development of student-led discussions with fellow students, teachers and parents about the nature and purpose of education; the intensification of real-world learning directed towards solving community problems; shared responsibility for the learning of all within classes - so that whole classes took responsibility for working together; the growth of local, regional, state and national student bodies ... and many more such initiatives. In some schools, students began to challenge the centralised power of mass media, producing local multilingual newspapers (with students as reporters and editors), broadcasting radio and television programs with a vision of what their society could be like, using the internet to communicate and link with students around the world on common issues of concern and passion.

Of course, these ‘micro’ initiatives were also matched by ‘macro’ initiatives. The end of national testing and its replacement with the provision of sophisticated tools that students and teachers could use locally to examine and reflect on learning was important – and a battle that took a long time to win. (It was also a battle in which both students and parents joined with teachers and administrators.) And recently, the substantial restructuring of educational funding to ensure equitable outcomes – recognising the importance of all students in gaining and contributing to ‘education for the common good’ – has been achieved in ways in which the proponents of the earlier Gonski proposals could only dream.

This is not to say that all is now rosy and uniform, and that there are no divisions. We know there are still schools that seek to entrench private privilege - but these are largely schools that do not listen to students’ voices, nor recognise them as anything other than ‘future leaders’. We hear that dissatisfaction is rising within these schools too. There are still attacks that portray students as incompetent and with limited mental capacity ... but these are largely ignored as having no vision of how student learning and development can be allied to productive and valued work that shapes community. That is the keystone of the new visions of participatory democracy.

But significantly, the most substantial change has been the growth of a new atmosphere of respect within schools, as adults acknowledge the competence, vision and energy of young people, and young people equally acknowledge the accumulated wisdom and experience of the adults with whom they work. This respect forms the basis for a series of everyday productive partnerships. Students and teachers, faced with the same uncertainties and challenges of an even more rapidly changing world, work together in inquiry and action teams – to learn through developing proposals, arguments and actions, and reflecting on the changes they bring about.

The pervasive and flexible web, much more complex than it has ever been, provides many ways for student-led communication, on both local and global levels, and this is used to share stories about what is happening. Students provoke each other to more and more purposeful participation – this ‘snowball’ effect has been noted in many areas. There remain struggles about privacy and abuse, but students are at the forefront of identifying and neutralising such issues – and educating us all about what is both possible and risky.

Diversity remains a key to our society – and it is welcomed and embraced. Any attempt to write the definitive story of what is happening in education will have to wait on future historians. Certainly, a journal that tries to summarise the current state of ‘student participation’ in a few electronic ‘pages’ is not only doomed to failure, but also likely to restrict and constrain descriptions of the richness of what is happening.

So I cede that initiative to those who are at the centre of the action: the primary and secondary students of Australia (and the world), taking on real roles of value as they forge democratic, diverse, accepting and inclusive visions of who we are and what we could be.

Roger Holdsworth

Student Voice:
What is all this activity for?
Whose interests does it serve?
Is student voice a neutral technology or an inevitable expression of a set of values and assumptions, not just about teaching and learning, but about the kind of society we wish to live in?
Michael Fielding, 2012

April 2013
Supporting SRCS and Students to Train Themselves

The Director of Second Strike, David Mould, was interviewed shortly before running a workshop at last month’s 2030 National Student Participation Conference (NASPAC). The following is a transcript of that interview.

**Interviewer:** David, you’ve been the Director of Second Strike since 1999; can you even remember why you started the company?

**DM:** I can remember the very day! I was less than a year out of school and running a Student Council conference with some other young people at the Melbourne Town Hall. At the conference, the students kept commenting on the need for training and support for all SRCs but that it should be from someone who actually understood what an SRC is for, rather than some generic leadership day with irrelevant tasks.

I remember the lightning going through my mind! I had been on my SRC for years, but I’m now out of school and have time on my hands, so I’m going to give it a go! Within two weeks I was booked to capacity and learning very fast how to run a good training day.

**So SRC training days have remained the core of the business?**

Well, a lot has changed since the days when I would run a single training day to get an SRC off to a good start for the year. We don’t really do that nowadays though I would say that making sure the SRC members are skilled enough to do their job is still essential to what we do.

**Can you explain further?**

For secondary schools in particular, we don’t run many training days at all. Still quite a lot for primary schools though that’s now shifting as well. It’s all very exciting and has required a complete change in the way our trainers operate.

First, most SRCS don’t do just one training day. They tend to have four: one at the beginning of each term and it doubles as planning day or working retreat. Some make a short camp out of it. Second, and this is the key change to the way things are done, it is no longer the trainer from Second Strike who runs the training or conducts the exercises. The training is run by at least one current SRC student who has had some previous experience and usually one ex-student. Most often, it’s the President or Chairperson from the previous year’s SRC.

**So the students are left to train themselves?**

They’re in charge of designing and planning the program and then they deliver all the sessions. A Second Strike trainer is on hand to assist if things get out of control or the students get stuck – but they are rarely needed. The thing is that all the knowledge of the SRC and the school already exists within the students’ minds and an external trainer can’t top that. The skills they need are best learned when they are discovered together with the trainer instead of taught or transferred from an older person. So it turns out that students are their own best trainers all along.

**How do they know what to put in the program or how to handle difficult students?**

All senior students or ex-students who take on this role attend a seminar to cover just that sort of thing. We bring them together from across the schools and give them intensive training in presentation technique, program structure, facilitation and so on. We provide them with the training resources, activities, any special equipment they need and, as I said, one of the trainers goes with them to the training day as a coach and emergency back-up.

The exciting part of the training sessions we provide to the senior student leaders is that they get quite an advanced level of training that doubles as a recognised qualification. It is, after all, a fairly complex and involved undertaking.

They get to meet other students and ex-students from around their region and share some great training tips and tricks.
Some of them have recently started training partnerships and holding joint seminars, especially with the smaller rural schools.

**What are the advantages here?**

It’s bad business strategy to say this, but they’re better trainers than we are. Even where our training team may have the more polished skills, we just can’t compete with the magnetism of a current student or ex student saying: “I’m no expert either, let’s figure it out together.” The additional training days throughout the year are exactly what was always missing: what was separating the good SRCs from the great SRCs.

The best bit of all, and something Second Strike has no part in, is that the student leaders continue to be responsible for training the other members of the SRC all throughout the year. Ex-students come back as volunteers through the year without stepping in too much. This is where the real training opportunities are, on the level of daily tasks, routine meetings and debriefing projects.

**Sounds like you’re out of a job.**

There are still the primary schools for now, though things are now finally starting to change there too. Some secondary school SRCs are forming partnerships with their local primary school JSCs and they spend time together, which is now including a level of training. It’s an exciting new front and I really hope it takes off, though I’d hoped to see it happen 10 years ago. If this trend means we’re out of a job, we can still train the School Councils or Boards – until the SRCs muscle in on that turf as well I suppose. Now that would be fun!

**What has disappointed you about SRCs over the years?**

I was almost heartbroken back in 2022 when the Premier of Victoria basically banned student organisations. She did it because they were becoming too organised, too effective. I wasn’t upset so much by the Government’s action but by the appalling lack of reaction from the students. I heard people grumbling and complaining and yet one by one the SRCs across the state allowed themselves to be shut down or just never got started after the new year because they waited for a teacher to do it for them.

This shocked me. I was certain the students would band together and prove they were capable of sustaining their own organisations – even without teacher support. It was two years before that rule was scratched out and SRCs came back and even then, it was largely because teachers started organising them again.

Now that ex-students are continuing to support their SRCs, I feel like there is more passion about and an extra level of support for students to rely upon. But still, when I see an SRC taking their time to get started in Term 1, I remember the days when no SRC met and I want to bark and scream at them to get themselves organised. There are no students left in school now from those days, so it’s harder for them to remember the lesson that their SRC must be sustained through their work and could be taken from them again. It could be taken away from them again, but only because the students allow it to be taken.

David Mould
Second Strike

Yes, we do SRC Training.
Email us on:
info@second-strike.com
or go to:
www.second-strike.com
for more information.
Fourteen years ago, the Victorian government agreed to turn over administration of all its schools to their student bodies – in a hope that this would revolutionise the education system.

It failed.

The first two years went perfectly with the entire education system being reshaped to produce spectacular results. It wasn’t long before the rest of the country followed suit and changed their systems to match. Everybody was motivated to learn and expand, and the new school leaders were constantly finding more and more innovative ways to do this. Unfortunately these new ideas put too much strain on budgets and eventually forced most schools to close. It took the government over a year to get the education system back into a running state. The project was branded a complete failure.

After the abandonment of the student administration program, student leadership bodies were abolished all over the country and idea of student voice became nothing more than a cold distant memory. During this period Connect magazine strove to continue running, however, due to lack of interest in student voice, it became just like all the other resources of the era: a forgotten relic. It published its last issue on the 21st of July 2024 with a memorial to all the people and organisations that spent their lives fighting for a greater student voice in schools and communities. The final words of the magazine were: “Students are our future, with no say over theirs.”

Roger Holdsworth, the editor of the magazine, regrettably died two months later.

The death of Holdsworth sent secondary and tertiary students all over the country into a newfound need for student leadership and sparked the beginning of what became known as the Holdsworth riots in 2025 in which there was widespread protesting in schools across the country. The damages included over four million dollars in destroyed books, 16 million dollars damage to public property and almost 3000 injuries to both teachers and students. Parents became too scared to send their children to school.

In early 2026, the government gave in to the demands of the protesters and legalised the initialisation of Student Councils within government schools. In the four years until now, this has done little more than keep the peace, and most private schools are still without Student Councils. However this has been the first step to resurrecting the student voice.

Braidan Pace
Brauer Secondary College; VicSRC Executive 2012-13

Having come so far!

So much has changed since I finished Year 12 and ended my final VicSRC Executive term in 2013. If you tried to explain what is now a reality to my 17 year old self, I doubt he would believe it!

If I tried explaining that the VicSRC has a membership which includes every secondary school in Victoria, he would not believe it. If I tried convincing him that there is now a Departmental declaration that requires that there must be two places for student representatives on School Councils, he would not believe it. And even if I tried telling him that every secondary school in Victoria has an SRC, and every SRC is member of a local cluster, and those clusters are represented at the 200 person VicSRC Congress held at Parliament … Hmmmm … what’s that?? Oh, you said 17 years, not 70 years. Whoops, well let’s wind the clock back just a little bit.

I finished school in 2013, and even now in 2030, unfortunately every school does not have an SRC. Though that isn’t to say student voice hasn’t come anywhere.

The primary achievement has been mandatory student representation on all School Councils. This initiative continued to be a priority for the VicSRC many years after I finished there, and finally, the Department of Education has legislated its support. As a result, students at a school level are given the chance to question, discuss and resolve. As a learning community we have come to adopt a true ‘21st century learning’ approach: students are partners in their education and, given the opportunity, will flourish under their own leadership.

In my continued interaction with the VicSRC after leaving high school, I have seen the growth of student voice on a statewide level. By continuing to produce resources such as Represent! and by running pilot programs for their Teach the Teacher initiative, VicSRC membership has grown to 50% of all secondary schools.

Now, at the VicSRC Congress there is an annual attendance of over 150 students, with more issues debated; each year, the Student Executive continues to report bigger and greater achievements. Further, from the ever growing legitimacy of the organisation’s work, the Department of Education has increased funding, resulting in more programs for students (including more workshops and more conferences), and the employment of a second full time worker for the organisation.

Now, when the media reports on education and schooling issues, the VicSRC is one of first groups to be questioned for comment. And, when the Department of Education consults with its various stakeholder groups, the VicSRC is listened to, and the views put forward by the organisation are given equal weight to that of other peak bodies in the state.

Even now there are still some of the same challenges to be faced as previously. Student apathy is still a large hurdle to be overcome, and ‘anti-student participation’ paradigms are continually being challenged. The growing government support for student voice remains encouraging, but we are still a long way from reaching some of the previously mentioned goals.

I believe that there will come a time when students will a say in their schools that is equal to any other member of that community (including staff), and when students will take the lead and set the goals for their education and their future. We are still a long way off that in 2030, but even now, when taking the time to look back, we can see we really have come so far!

Lachlan Hugo
Blackburn High School; VicSRC Executive 2011-13
Student Voice: 
from Marginal Tokenism to Educational Driver

Looking back over the past seventeen years since the 200th issue of Connect, it is probably constructive to review the journey that the student voice movement in its various guises has travelled in that time to arrive where we are now.

With the introduction of the national curriculum in 2012 and the call in the same year by the then Prime Minister for Australia to be ranked in the top five nations world-wide in education (meaning in maths and literacy as measured by PISA and other international tests), followed by an expansion of the NAPLAN tests in 2016 to all year levels, student voice and the idea of listening to, and acting on, the ideas of students with regard to their education became very much a lower-order concern in the minds of education bureaucrats and school administrations.

Curriculum, course structure, lesson plans, and teaching methodology all became centrally controlled and with an increasing reliance on standardised tests of maths, science and literacy to measure student achievement (which then became a proxy for teacher and school success or otherwise), school curricula narrowed to allow more test preparation time – with the result that subjects such as the Arts were reduced in many schools. ‘Data’ became the educational watchword and anything that couldn’t be measured easily and recorded in numerical form on the MySchool database for comparison with other schools and school systems (including student input into school vision, ethos, curriculum or governance) was seen as unimportant.

Similarly, time for extra-curricular activities, Student Councils and the like vanished in many schools. Apart from a few shining lights, schools, teachers and students became so pressured from the demands of politicians and bureaucracies for measurable results and accountability, that student voice activities in most schools became either non-existent or reduced to tokenistic ‘consultation’ on minor issues such as changes to school uniforms.

But these centralising tendencies could not last forever, and toward the end of the second decade of the century, changes, partly driven by technology, were being seen. As schools struggled with increasing problems of student disengagement with the teaching and learning process, partly driven by a disconnect between their highly connected on-line lives outside school and the still traditional classrooms and teaching they encountered within schools, it came to be seen that schools, in their search for answers, were missing a critical ingredient: the ideas, opinions and insights of those very students. Gradually, numbers of schools increasingly came to listen to student opinion and saw an increase of student and community involvement in the schools, a growing commitment among previously disengaged students and an improvement in student and staff morale.
Moving away from the previous era of tokenistic consultation with students saw those students develop a sense of agency and to take responsibility for, even control over, their own learning. Teachers, administrators and students came to realise that student voice was one of the most powerful ways of improving learning as students became involved as co-teachers of their fellow students, helped to design courses and lessons and had input into the way in which lessons were taught. Teachers became more comfortable with working with their students as partners in learning, as co-developers of courses and began to seek student feedback on their lesson content and teaching methods. In many schools teaching and learning became a collaborative process between teachers and learners, to the benefit of all. Student voice also allowed a greater diversity of opinions to be heard and enabled schools to meet the needs of the students more fully.

Beyond teaching and learning, students are now consulted on a wide range of issues, from classroom and school design, through school policy development and implementation, to social and community issues. Students-as-researcher groups work on a vast range of projects within their schools and community, such as bullying, IT implementation, water conservation, discipline issues within the school, and many, many more, usually within the formal curriculum. With the spread of technology within schools, these projects are often conducted by different groups of students in schools across the country and overseas.

Technology has made a great difference to the ability of students to have their voices heard; through on-line collaborations, students from across the country have presented to governments and government departments on a range of policy issues, both of immediate concern to them as students and on national and global issues. This powerful student voice is playing an increasing role in government policy-making today as students from across the country come together using an amazing variety of technologies to discuss issues, research, prepare position papers and presentations and talk with government or department representatives in real time. Student voice forums are regularly held on-line and individual groups of students constantly communicate with each other across the world.

As technology enabled schools to be less bound to the reality of a single campus and to enable student learning at their own time and pace (and place), the needs and demands of students for their own education became paramount and schools had to transform into providers of learning in response to student needs, especially in high schools.

Student voice has become one of the most compelling drivers of education today.

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Student Voice has Changed!

It is natural to reflect upon the past when one reaches a significant milestone, and the 300th issue of Connect is certainly that. It has been close to two decades since Connect reached episode #200, so now seems an appropriate time to consider the way that student voice has changed in schools since then. Only the bravest fortune teller would have predicted the changes that have taken place in society, and I think I can confidently say that no one predicted that these changes would have flowed into schools in the way they had.

Schools – and the students that attend them – are functions of society. Changes in society affect schools, and the students who attend schools eventually become the ones that might work towards changing society. Having said that, the way that society and schools interact is neither simple nor swift, and schools and curriculum often have an ideological element in their teaching and structure.

So what have been the significant changes in society between 2013 and 2030? The most obvious change is that national governments are struggling to deal with issues that exist on a global scale. Since 2013, problems like environmental damage brought about by climate change, mass refugee movements from ongoing conflicts and increased competition for scarce resources have continued to grow and continue to have effects on a global scale. Governments, used to working in a national paradigm, have struggled to find solutions to issues that often begin beyond their borders and international cooperation remains tenuous at best.

The second significant change has been the growth in ‘connectedness’ between people. Although traditional forms of civic engagement, like membership in clubs and social groups have continued to decline, this approach to belonging has been replaced by increased activity in online groups and communities supported by ubiquitous access to technology. Technology – and especially mobile and wireless technology – has saturated first world nations and, due to increasing affordability, also become much more common in developing nations, limiting the effects of the ‘digital divide.’ This technology has increased in complexity, with ‘wearable tech’ becoming increasingly popular among the younger generation. Watches, glasses, even clothes have become integrated with devices like web browsers and cameras. Rather than a source of information, the internet has now become a place of being and belonging, with social media groups continuing to find ways to integrate more fully into everybody’s experience of daily life.

These changes have influenced schools, too. One of the most significant changes has been in the way student voice has developed from something that was limited in its authenticity to something that is now much more meaningful. Not surprisingly, the global changes outlined above have challenged schools, and especially the ways in which schools and young people relate to each other.

The widespread implementation of technology has meant that students have more choice than they have ever had before. No longer are students tied geographically to one school. A new generation of teachers, who have never known life without the internet, have quickly leveraged the ‘connected’ nature of modern life into their classrooms and are also quick to publish courses and materials to a global audience. Students now have
the opportunity to learn anywhere and at anytime. Massively Open Online Courses have exploded throughout the education system. Courses are increasingly delivered online, with content curation tools now being regularly used by teachers. School communities have moved – either partially or wholly – into a virtual environment, and technology-mediated solutions to collaboration, reflection and assessment are used regularly.

Students can access courses from around the world. Home schooling has become more attractive than ever before due to the profusion of resources available on the Internet. This development has meant that student communities have grown exponentially. Students have a wide range of educational opportunities, and different, flexible ways of completing the requirements for accreditation. In addition, they have broad personal learning networks, including people from countries around the world. Certainly, in 2030, education has become a global phenomenon. This means that education has become a buyers market – and not a sellers market. Students can – and do – pick and choose their educational approach. This means that schools now must listen to their students in order to ensure that they are meeting their desires.

These changes have driven a rapid increase in the role of student voice in schools and outside of them. As students have built networks through the facilities provided by schools, becoming increasingly familiar with developing an online presence, they have found more opportunities to speak out coherently and together. This has meant that students have developed a voice and a sense of agency in their schools. Utilising these networks and the power of social media, students in different schools and institutions have led campaigns demanding changes in the ways schools run. In a time when the simplest video might reach more than one million likes, students have found a wide audience – and consequently a great deal of power. Whether they wanted to or not, teachers and administrators have been forced to acknowledge this new found power, and suddenly institutions like Student Representative Councils have become authentic and meaningful, rather than simply figureheads. They now more closely serve as the voice of students – about everything from curriculum to school rules and expectations.

Nor is that the only way that student voice has changed. Students – indeed everybody – now have access to more information than ever before. Activists can make films about issues like environmental disasters and then share them with a global audience – a global audience that includes students. Students are now capable of sourcing their own information from a variety of sources. They can become experts in their own right. More than that, students can and do interact with other experts and activists. This has meant that schools, as ‘silod’ institutions, are in the process of disintegrating. Why should schools be the only place of learning, when learning so very clearly takes place in a variety of other spaces? The barriers between schools and communities have been dismantled, and now students can find their voice in wider arenas than simply schools. They can, and are, becoming problem solvers and local activists in the local and global community. Young people have campaigned for social change in issues like racism, homelessness and equal rights for homosexuals. So not only do students have increased voice within schools, but they have an increasingly important role to play in local and global communities.

Of course, although great strides have been made in making student voice since 2013, there is still a long way to go for schools to become authentically student-centred. In the future, as we look forward to Connect 400, these are the areas of expected development. Schools as buildings will cease to exist. Instead, there will be a rise of ‘learning centres’; where students of all ages can meet if they choose. Age based learning will disappear completely, and students will be able to select from a universe of possible classes, subscribing to institutions from around the world. Students, instead of being passive recipients of knowledge, will become active co-constructors of knowledge, understanding and their own democratic future.

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Back at the turn of the 21st century, it felt about as strange to read about **student voice** as it did to shift from starting with ‘19’ to ‘20’ when writing the date. Some of us had visions and hopes, of course, and began to call attention to what students had to say about their experiences in school.

In the rising of what Michael Fielding called ‘new wave’ student voice (the first wave was in the 1970s), the 1990s and early 2000s generated an increasing number of arguments for the importance of listening to and working with students to improve schools. In Canada, Michael Fullan asked: ‘What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered?’ (1991: p 170). In Australia, **Connect**’s own Roger Holdsworth (2000) argued for students having an active role ‘in decisions about and implementation of educational policies and practice’ (p 355). In England, Jean Rudduck, Julia Flutter, and others asserted the potential of student voice to provide schools with ‘directions for constructing a better future’ (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004: pp 131-132).

As the new century unfolded, teachers, principals, students, scholars, and advocates around the globe began to take up and act on these calls. Efforts such as the VicSRC in Victoria, Australia, the Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning project out of the University of Cambridge in England, the SpeakUp project of the Ontario Ministry of Education in Canada, and SoundOut in the United States are just a few that spread the word about student voice and offered models and resources to guide others in this work.

In the second decade of the 21st century, notions of students as partners and even leaders in educational reform made their way into higher education. Books like *Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning, Staff-Student Partnerships in Higher Education*, and *Engaging Students as Partners: A Guide for Faculty* began to emerge, and sessions at meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning began to focus on students as partners and change agents.

Thirty years later, a third of the way through the century, those of us committed to collaborating with and learning from students are finally seeing this work take hold. Student-teacher partnerships focused on exploring and revising how we do the work of teaching and learning are now accepted practice in both K-12 and post-secondary settings. Student voices are part of all conversations about teaching, learning, and reform, because educators and policymakers have recognised that not only do students have a right to be heard, they take the responsibility for their and others’ education seriously and, in collaboration with teachers and all kinds of stakeholders in education, can help make schools and universities more engaging and effective places to learn. This shift toward partnership has made education not only more effective but also more enjoyable for everyone. Working as partners, rather than as antagonists, being connected to rather than alienated from one another, allows us all to put our energy into learning and to enacting more democratic practices while working to make the world a more just and sustainable place.

In *Hope in the Dark*, Rebecca Solnit’s beautiful account of how radical, activist movements have shaped history, a woman who participated in the Women’s Strike for Peace (what Solnit calls the first great anti-nuclear movement in the United States) describes how foolish she felt standing outside the White House in the rain, protesting the arms build up with a small group of other women. Later she heard Dr. Benjamin Spock, who became a major activist on the issue, describe how the turning point for him – what prompted him to get involved – had been seeing a small group women protesting outside the White House in the rain. ‘Hope in the dark’ is what we must have, Solnit argues, to take the steps toward creating the world we want to live in.

Those visionaries writing thirty years ago, as the century turned, calling

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**From Calls for Student Voice to the Proliferation of Student-Teacher Partnerships**
for attention to student voices, had such hope. I do not mean to draw a parallel between the threat of nuclear war and the danger of not listening to students.

My point is that the small steps taken by those with vision and courage can lead the way to a much larger transformation.

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References
It’s a crisp spring morning, one of those days when I think back to before all cars were electric; when on a morning like this the plumes from the exhaust in front of you would hang in the air like a cloud. I don’t miss that. As I look at my 16-year-old who still can’t help but smile ear to ear when it’s him driving me to work, so he can stay after school and volunteer with the election taking place that day, I realise his smile and pride is infectious. I shake my head, wondering how it took so long to get here, when driving my son to school didn’t have nearly the negative effect on both the earth’s well being and ours – like it once did.

My son, who today will be voting for the first time, along with his friends and other young people who were lucky enough to be spring babies in 2014, probably don’t truly understand the connection between the United Nations Convention on Renewable Energy (UNCRE), passed in 2021 and their new found right to vote in this election.

As an adult ally and supporter of youth voice for almost 40 years, I’m grateful that I got to witness the story unfold.

It started in Canada in the winter of 2013, rooted in serious injustice and inequity. Though it is hard to image a world like this today, at that time Indigenous youth around the world were still facing great challenges. Government policies, systemic racism and multiple levels of oppression were keeping many First Nation Peoples in Canada in a constant state of crisis. Communities were under housed, many had no access to clean drinking water and education and child protection services were severely underfunded. One in four children in First Nations’ communities lived in poverty. Suicide rates were five to seven times higher for First Nations youth than for non-Aboriginal youth, and rates among Inuit youth were among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average. First Nation graduation rates from high school were at approximately 36%, compared to the overall Canadian graduation rate of 72%. Sadly, at the time it was reported by the then political body, the Assembly of First Nations, that a First Nation youth is more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school. Again, it’s hard today to imagine a world where this would be not only tolerated – but also driven by a people’s government.

Though that winter, a growing movement occurred. Idle No More was a response of Aboriginal grassroots and allies who, across Canada, and then around the world, came to stand for justice, fairness and respect of Treaties and the environment. Traditional Indigenous Round Dances took place in public squares and shopping centres, teach-ins were led by young people on campuses, and rallies drawing thousands occurred on Parliament Hill and in communities all over the country. This movement, originally led by four women, took on a life of its own, where the grassroots eventually helped re-shape not only what Canada would look like today, but the rest of the world. What they did mattered.

You see, in 2013, 40 percent of First Nation young people in Canada were under the age of 16 years. This movement inspired thousands of these young people, who in their lifetime felt voiceless, who felt that they didn’t belong and who felt that their future was in serious jeopardy. They then began their own peaceful actions to demonstrate their commitment to the land, their culture and unity amongst all nations.
One of the highest profile groups became known as the Journey of Nishiyuu. David Kawapit Jr was a 17-year-old Cree from Whapmagoostui on Hudson Bay in northern Quebec. Following a dream and vision, he chose to walk the 1,600 kilometres to Ottawa on The Quest of Wisjinichu-Nishiyuu, Quest For Unity. Six of his friends, along with a guide, joined him. On January 16th they began their walk, on snowshoe, their supplies pulled behind them on sleds. Along the way more young people, some as young as 12 years, joined their walk as they travelled traditional routes.

I will never forget sitting with a boy I supported at that time, 12 year old Dylan, who joined me on March 25th, in Ottawa, on Parliament Hill, to welcome the walkers, by then totalling more than 200. The mood was celebratory and emotional, with the speeches by the young walkers in their own language, touching and inspiring Dylan in a way that would change our entire world. Though not First Nations himself, he learned that day about what commitment and passion looked like for the Earth and what genuine leadership was. He had never really understood the peril the Earth was in and, listening to the Nishiyuu walkers, other young people, he knew that something had to be done to continue the work they started.

As the years passed, Dylan became more engaged and supported by adults in his life to learn and share about environmental issues. He got involved in school clubs and local activities, including a community garden, a bike lane advocacy group and nationally, around green energy at youth environmental conferences. His engagement, along with his articulate and outgoing nature, caught the eye of popular environmentalist David Suzuki in 2018.

At 17, he was invited to share his idea for an international agreement on green energy as it related to transportation, with the United Nations, then still in New York City. His presentation, filled with passion and solid economic sense, was well received and, over the next three years, along with other young people from Canada and around the world, he was regularly invited back to help shape, develop and plan what was passed unanimously as the UNCRE. What was most talked about throughout the process was the role Dylan and other young people played convincing governments to sign and ratify the Convention.

Having been privileged to support Dylan throughout his journey, it led to me introducing him in 2026, when he was then 25 years old, to a young girl I was supporting in another project. Rekka was 12 years old and was inspired by his actions, in the same way that Dylan was by the Nishiyuu Walkers. She knew that young people needed to have a louder voice in the decisions that affected them and though there had been talk for years about lowering voting ages in Canada, it had never happened. Rekka made that her goal. Learning from Dylan, she rallied young people from across the country. She engaged municipal, provincial and federal representatives, gathering support; her young and powerful voice swayed many. In 2028 she sat in the visitors’ gallery as the government voted to lower the voting age to 16 years. Ironically, Rekka was a fall baby in 2014 and, unlike my son, she won’t be able to vote today – though an additional 700,000 voters will be able to.

Because of her passion, commitment and perseverance.
Because she was inspired by Dylan.
Because he was inspired by the Nishiyuu walkers.
Because they were inspired by the Idle No More movement.
Because they were inspired by injustice.
It all mattered. Every bit.

As we get closer to my work, I share with my son how much he matters. He laughs and says he knows. I tell him regularly.

He understands that today is because of the hard work of young people before him: those who took risks, found space for their voice and got engaged and acted. It’s why he has been involved for the past five weeks volunteering and helping register the new voters and promoting the election to them. He knows that his actions matter – and that if the young people vote today they will be more likely to stay civically engaged as they get older. He knows what he is doing is important. Because of the work of Rekka and those before her, my son feels like he belongs.

We get to my office and he gives me a high five. What ever happened to the high five I wonder; then I smile again. I can’t help it.

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The sun is rising on schools around the world as student voice moves from being passive and coincidental, to taking the forefront in schools. Through Meaningful Student Involvement, students are engaged as partners throughout education. Twenty years ago, this was not such a normalised practice in all schools, and this article and description would have seemed outlandish to many.

Now, in 2030, the complete enfranchisement of full personhood for all people, regardless of age, has been suddenly embraced world-over by governments and communities of all sizes. Young people are seen and treated as fully human. Originally suggested between the lines of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this has been the greatest transformation ever in society, and has rippled through all corners of our world.

Walking into an average school, the physical appearance, daily operation, and every outcome has been wholly transformed. Rather than stuffy hallways packed with hyper-frenetic students seeking momentary relief between classes, children and youth of all ages are welcome to come and go at will. Recognised as self-driven learners from their earliest years, all young people everywhere are in charge of their own learning and, because of that, every single student is completely motivated and surely empowered to initiate, drive, fulfill and complete education to their own satisfaction.

Attendance in schools isn’t limited by age either. Rather, students are able to select the learning environment that best suits their desires. Adult learners co-mingle with young learners as both learn to value the other in new ways.

The hearts and minds of adults continue to expand as well. Our ability to more effectively engage young people in equitable ways has become invaluable as social change moves more rapidly. People who enact and teach the practice of student engagement and voice have been mainstreamed in professional development across all fields of industry, economy, governance, education, human services and beyond. The frameworks of Meaningful Student Involvement have been seen as essential components for successful living far beyond schools, as the role of the learner has become ubiquitous throughout all sectors of society.

This enfranchisement of full personhood has also transformed educational management – and necessarily so. Given the ability to vote from birth, the voices of young people have suddenly been valued by politicians in a new way. Those who ran early programs to engage youth voice have been awarded with immediate youth support, while others have been required to earn the trust of students.

School board members, state, territorial, and federal parliament members, mayors – all elected positions – are suddenly held directly accountable to students themselves. This leads to a kind of authority that completely transforms educational management in a variety of ways. Pushing for the type of participatory engagement they routinely have experienced on the Internet for decades, children and young people insist upon active democratic processes that reflect their best interests. School bureaucracies have been forced to reinvent their activities to suit the expectations of the elected representatives that control their budgets, who in turn are voted in by young people.

Ultimately, the most powerful step any of us can take is to continue to transform the ways we see and treat children and young people every single day. If every one of us changed our own attitudes and behaviours, we would see the complete engagement of young people emerge as a new cultural norm within a generation. More importantly though, we would continue to influence and motivate succeeding generations of children and youth as they change the world they live in. I believe there is no greater action we can take.

Adam Fletcher
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The outcomes of these systems have been as radical as their transformations. Academic achievement is longer the measure by which school performance is metered. Rather, students have come to understand that personal engagement throughout their own lives and within the larger world they’re members of is more important. Schools have devised systems for measuring self-sustainability, personal growth, and social well-being. Their actions have been valued throughout the larger society, as the health of democracies have suddenly spiked upon these transformative measures. Ultimately, economic growth, civic engagement, social contributions, cultural inheritances, and peace and nonviolence have been seen as the outcomes of the experience of schooling.

As a pathway towards the enfranchisement of full personhood for all people regardless of age, student voice in schools was one avenue. Others included youth engagement throughout society, including civic, economic, cultural, recreational, and familial activities. Further still, the creation of advanced structures of support for young people, including training, funding, and personal support programs, continued to help to take society there.

Adam Fletcher
Learning occurs in a positive and safe environment in which everyone supports each other. In a democratic culture in the classroom, decisions are student-made yet facilitated by the teacher. All voices are heard and valued, and rules are created to benefit everyone involved. Most importantly, students in a democratic classroom work collectively on real problems and issues in order to actively change and improve the world in which they live. This requires meaningful, engaging and creative curriculum. Having a dream or a vision is a key piece of democratic education and a democratic society, but the dreams are tethered to reality and centred within one’s community, as well as applied to real world problems.

A democratic classroom culture starts with an optimal learning environment. This environment is inclusive, welcoming, safe, respectful, exciting, and encouraging for all. Everyone in this environment is provided the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential.

In a democratic classroom, decisions are made collectively. The classroom is not teacher centred but one in which both students and teacher focus on making the world they live in a better place. The teacher is important for guidance, facilitation, experience, knowledge, support, and encouragement, avoiding the dual enemies of democracy: authoritarianism and anarchy. The students are encouraged to see themselves as valued and intelligent and are provided opportunity for their voices to be used for real purpose and the creation of a public good.

There is ample time for research to discover knowledge and organise that knowledge into a coherent argument that is defended with logic and debate. Because this process will lead to more than one idea of what is necessary, time will be made available and there will be encouragement of conversation, discussion and debate. It is in these discussions and debate that students grow intellectually. Moreover student voice is an important part of the design of meaningful and valuable curriculum. Students work on issues that have value to them and their community and each gets an opportunity to exercise leadership. Additionally, they understand that with more freedom comes more responsibility. The teacher relinquishes control only when students demonstrate the willingness and ability to assume democratic citizenship responsibly.

In a democratic classroom everyone is treated with dignity and kindness. Students are encouraged to feel competent and capable of great things. Considerable effort is made to establish a system of fairness. Everyone pledges to ensure that no one comes to school to get their feelings hurt! Everyone is equally encouraged to participate and everyone is equally valued. There is a conscious effort to understand the perspectives of others.

In a democratic classroom debate is always open and each person is encouraged to bring to school his or her own cultures. Diversity is valued because it enriches discussion. In a democratic classroom attempt is made to understand all of its members and everyone is made to feel important. In a democratic classroom culture, everyone is expected to become educated citizens who know how to play an important role in shaping a rapidly changing world for the better.

An important aspect of a democratic classroom culture is negotiation and persuasion with evidence and logic key determinants in decisions made. What can’t be negotiated are the rights of each student. Moreover, rules cannot benefit some at the expense of others. This classroom becomes a safe place to voice opposing ideas - but everyone must first agree to disagree without being disagreeable, to oppose the argument but not attack the person. This kind of classroom pulls students toward it instead of driving them away from it; it is fun, interesting, and challenging.

Furthermore, there is freedom in a democratic classroom to disagree with the teacher. It is also essential for teachers to not only provide his or her views, but also the views of adults with opposing outlooks. If children want to find a democratic role model, they should be able to look no further than their teacher.

School whose primary goal is the preparation of informed and responsible citizens should not be regulated at the state level or nationally, but instead change projects should be encouraged to occur in each classroom. The results of these projects can be published in Connect.

Change projects within the classroom, school, community or environment start small. Students in a democratic classroom are aware of their responsibility to their world and they work jointly to make change. Students come to school knowing that they are taking essential steps toward more ambitious projects to ultimately be significant players in the invention of an ever more rapidly changing future.

We are students at the University of Oregon in a course on democratic education, who have read a number of Connects and desire to share some of our insights with Connect readers. As future educators, our mission is to enlighten. We believe that all classrooms have the potential of creating a democratic community. Such a community prepares its youth to apply what they learn to solve real and important personal, local and world problems.
Australia was shocked yesterday when the seemingly unbeatable Labor-Liberal coalition that has governed Australia forever, was overwhelmed by what had been believed to be a loosely organised disconnected group of young people: The Youth Connect Party. That party won a majority of parliament seats in every state (Northern Territory and Canberra having become states) with a platform that called for a democracy to replace a corporate controlled plutocracy.

The winning campaign emphasised:

- regional self sufficiency;
- sustainable economy with solar and other renewable energy totally replacing fossil fuels;
- services replacing things;
- smaller, slower community based government;

all dismissed as adolescent fantasy by the prevailing government acting as if its power was unchallengeable. It should also be noted that The Age, the all encompassing Murdoch media – he may be long gone but it is still here - shared that disrespect, causing one to wonder who were they polling.

Soon we will welcome our first younger than 30 Aboriginal woman as Prime Minister, whose cheery positive pronouncements of a new day and a new way for Australia had been sneeringly denigrated. It was the pronouncements of democratic principles, so much a part of Connect that she was able to crystallise into the rallying cry for a political upheaval the like of which had never occurred in Australian history.

She described democratic authority and contrasted this with the disrespect for the ordinary citizen that has characterised Australian rule this past half century. She called for inclusion – all helping all – contrasting it with the prevailing hierarchy that has been maintained by pitting group against group. She emphasised the importance of real knowledge: the bringing of school into the real world and the real world into the school, insisting: ‘there was no such thing as an ignorant democracy’ and how Connect had fought an ongoing and ultimately successful struggle against ignorant schools. Promoting ignorance she insisted has been the primary goal of both major parties, only advertised and sold as ‘educational reform’. The only thing that distinguished Labor from Liberal in education, she said, was that each promised to bring more ignorance to schools.

She brought attention to the many Connect projects that taught students how to work together in change-producing coalitions. She spoke of students learning about rights in Connect activities, something not only not taught in schools but systematically violated, and how Connect generated learning environments where all were encouraged to full potential.

She noted how equality, long a faded dream in a world of mass incarceration of Aboriginal people, mistreatment of immigrants, huge discrepancy in funding of state and public schools, growing concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands, became, because of Connect, not only meaningful but as demonstrated reality.

So, on my 121st birthday, I celebrate Connect’s greatest achievement: an Australian government conceived in democracy and dedicated to its further development.

Art Pearl
Professor Emeritus University of California, Santa Cruz; Adjunct Professor, University of Oregon
As we have previously advised, this issue of Connect is our final print publication. Connect will now be only produced electronically (on-line): if you are a subscriber, copies will be sent to you by e-mail every two months, or you will be able to download your own (colour) copy of Connect from the Connect/ACER website (where back copies are currently archived):

research.acer.edu.au/connect/

Access to Connect will be FREE from this point: no more paid subscriptions. We will continue to provide information, stories, case studies and resources to the widest audience at no cost.

However this does not mean that we can publish Connect at no cost to us. So we will now be totally reliant on any donations that you are able to provide to assist our work, and these will be acknowledged in each on-line issue.

The Transition

We have written to all current subscribers, inviting you to join the Connect e-mail subscription list. If your subscription has recently expired, we’d love you to renew your subscription to issue 200 (on a pro-rata basis) and then join the free list.

All issues prior to the last six are already freely available on the Connect/ACER website. The usual process of adding back issues (from 2012) will continue, with issue 194 added this month. Then, starting in May, we’ll progressively add the remaining issues – approximately one a week – until all issues are on the website in June.

New Subscriptions

If you are finding Connect for the first time, or have not been a subscriber for some time, you are also welcome to join the new e-mail subscription list. Simply e-mail us:

r.holdsworth@unimelb.edu.au

with your name, address, phone number and, most importantly: e-mail address. We’ll then add you to the list and send Connect to you every two months, starting in June.

Content

Connect will continue to carry practical stories and resources – from and for primary and secondary schools – about student participatory practices in classrooms and schools ... in curriculum, governance, networking, community and so on.

Those stories and resources will continue to be your stories. You are encouraged to contribute your experiences and learnings for others to read.

Connect free, on-line ... starting June 2013

A Student Voice Rubric from NYC High School Students

Last autumn, What Kids Can Do (WKCD) (USA) produced a feature story on the extraordinary work of the Student Voice Collaborative in New York City (see also Connect 198 [December 2012]: 12-15). At the time, this group of NYC high school students was putting the finishing touches on a Student Voice Rubric that would guide their work on behalf of student voice in their individual school, as a collaborative, and as a force for student engagement across New York City schools. The finished rubric contains performance standards and presents what WKCD recognises as “some of the best thinking we’ve seen on student voice – and its power to lift students and schools alike”. See: www.whatkidscando.org/studentvoicerubric/
Conferences, Celebrations and a look at Conditions for Student Councils

NATIONAL SRC TEACHER ADVISERS CONFERENCE

Whilst the continued advances in technology and social networking allow us more than ever to connect with SRC Teachers across the globe, nothing beats face-to-face interactions with others. This was evident once again at our National SRC Teacher Advisers Conference held recently. Conference highlights were our keynote speakers: Adam Fletcher from SoundOut (USA) and Asher Jacobson from Involver (UK) who provided an international perspective on student participation and shared the work of schools at an international level.

Again, our workshop sessions, where practising primary and secondary SRC Teacher Advisers shared examples of successful practice and programs, proved popular, as did the opportunity to engage and connect with others at the Conference Dinner. Our AGM held during the conference saw the newly elected executive appointed and the outgoing members recognised for their tireless work to our organisation.

A particular highlight of the organising committee was the continued increase in the number of students accompanying teachers to the conference and also presenting workshop sessions alongside adults – recognising the true partnership between adults and students when it comes to effective decision making.

We encourage you to continue the conversation and maintain contact with conference delegates via Twitter and the conference website and be on the lookout for dates and details for the 2031 conference.

2030 STATE OF STUDENT COUNCILS REPORT:

Undertaken every 3 years, the State of Student Councils research report aims to identify the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for SRCs and SRC Teacher Advisers.

With the previous report completed in 2027, it is pleasing to note:

- The successful implementation of mandatory student representation on secondary School Councils with 100% of surveyed secondary schools reporting student representation.
- An increase in the number of schools allocating time during the school day to facilitate SRC Meetings as opposed to using recess and lunchtime.
- An increase in the number of teachers accessing professional development to support them in their role as SRC Teacher Adviser.
- An increase in the percentage of total spending by Student Councils on local school-based projects.
- An increase in schools now receiving SRC Accreditation status.
- An increase in the number of schools allocating the role of SRC Teacher Adviser at a Leading Teacher level and/or offering higher duties payments or time release for the role.

Of concern were:

- The barriers and challenges faced by regional and rural SRCs in relation to connecting with other schools and by SRC Teacher Advisers in accessing professional development.

Copies of this report will be made available via our website following our launch event next month.

VicJSC CELEBRATES 15 YEARS:

Past and present VicJSC students gathered in Melbourne last month to celebrate the 15th Birthday of the VicJSC. Some achievements during this time have been:

- The reintroduction of Free Fruit Friday funding to provide primary school students with free fruit once a week.
- Participation in DEECD consultations around student welfare and well-being and effective teaching and learning.
- Primary students and SRC teacher advisers presenting on the work of the VicJSC and supporting others to establish of similar organisations in NSW and Tasmania.

In reflecting back on the work and growth of this organisation, it’s important to acknowledge the primary school students who formed the first working parties and the SRC Teacher Advisers and past members of the VicSRC Executive who mentored and supported their projects with next to no funding. It was through their determination and strong belief that primary school students were capable of being included in decision-making at all levels, that this organisation has grown to become what it is today.

Whilst 2030 is a long way off, this article symbolises the potential of what VISTA could achieve with your support and involvement. With no additional funding, VISTA relies on your membership to keep our organisation functioning. Please visit us at srcteachers.ning.com and join our organisation so we can work towards making the above a reality.

VISTA currently receives no additional funding to operate its programs and relies heavily on memberships to support its programs. Visit us at http://srcteachers.ning.com or e-mail us at vista@srcteachers.org.au for details on how to join.

April 2013
Teach the Teacher: Funded for 10 New Schools

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) will support ten new Victorian secondary schools to initiate student-run professional development for teachers in 2013. This program provides an exciting opportunity for schools to be involved in an innovative program that brings students and teachers together to talk about classroom learning and teaching!

The VicSRC has developed a model for school-based professional development for teachers that is initiated, organised and run by students at their school, under the title Teach the Teacher. The program aims to improve learning outcomes for young people, develop stronger and more effective relationships between students and teachers, improve teaching and learning processes, and increase student ownership of and engagement with education.

A key element of this project is that students are leading the way, are actively engaged and are supported in the process through the training program that the VicSRC has developed. The program has been trialed at two Melbourne secondary colleges in 2012, and is now being extended more broadly to other interested schools with support from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

Do you want to take part in this exciting project?
The Teach the Teacher program will operate in ten further secondary schools in Victoria during 2013. The VicSRC is currently inviting expressions of interest from schools that would like to be a part of this project.

What will the VicSRC do?
The VicSRC will liaise with the school, provide information to the school leadership team and training for the SRC, and create practical resources to assist with the operation of the program.

What will the school need to do?
Make sure that the school leadership team and SRC are on board and ready to work with the VicSRC to implement the program at the school. The program will be run by students from the school, with support from teachers and advice from the VicSRC.

Get in touch
If your school is interested in running a Teach the Teacher program during 2013, please contact Kate Walsh, VicSRC Coordinator at: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au or phone: 03 9267 3744.

More information will be sent to schools early in term 2. Also check the VicSRC website for updates: www.vicsrc.org.au

VicSRC Regional Conferences 2013

Attention Victorian secondary SRCs:
Get involved with the schools in your area, gain new skills and make connections!

VicSRC Regional Student Conferences enable students to meet together across schools, learn from each other and discuss common interests and issues.

Conferences are one day events (from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm) that are hosted by local schools and presented by the VicSRC. The conference programs are interactive and are designed to enhance student participation as well as promote active learning.

Conferences are designed for SRC members to give students the opportunity to:
• share the ideas about the work their school has been doing
• get ideas from other SRCs in the local area
• be challenged to make theirs school more effective
• learn how to effectively plan responses to important issues
• link their interests to the ongoing work of the VicSRC
• gain new skills and new friends!

Check the VicSRC website for Conference dates and all locations and for registration details:

www.vicsrc.org.au/events/conferences

Here are some examples:

Southern Metropolitan Region/Peninsula: Thursday May 2nd: Padua College (Mornington Campus) Register by: Wednesday April 24th

Outer Eastern Metropolitan Region: Friday May 10th: Heathmont Secondary College Register by: Wednesday May 1st

Bendigo: Tuesday May 14th: Bendigo Senior Secondary College Register by: Monday May 6th

Inner Eastern Metropolitan Region: Wednesday May 22nd: The Mac.Robertson Girls High School Register by: Monday May 13th

Western Metropolitan Region: Wednesday May 23rd: Braybrook College Register by: Tuesday May 14th

Northern Metropolitan Region: Wednesday May 29th: Bundoora Secondary College Register by: Tuesday May 21st

Tiffany Chapman
Conference Coordinator 2013
The 8th Annual VicSRC Congress 2013

Congress brings Secondary School students together from across Victoria to voice their opinions and ideas around education and set the VicSRC's agenda for the next 12 months.

A Voice for Students

A Vote for Action

When
Friday 2nd - Saturday 3rd August 2013

Where
Oasis Camp, Mt. Evelyn
Melway reference: 120 D3

Who
Year 7 - 12 students

Cost
$90 p/student VicSRC members
$115 p/student non-members
Price includes accommodation, all meals, registration, materials & GST.

Full supervision provided
Further information about Congress and registration forms

For more information contact:
Kate Walsh
VicSRC Coordinator
(03) 9267 3744 or 0411679050
coordinator@vicsrc.org.au
Michael Swift
Congress Coordinator
congress@vicsrc.org.au

REGISTER BY FRIDAY JULY 19, 2013

The VicSRC is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and auspiced by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.
IDAHOT Day

On May 17 this year, the VicSRC, in partnership with Minus 18 and the Safe-School Coalition will be celebrating the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT). We are inviting all schools to get on board.

How do you get involved you ask? Easy!

The weeks around the 17th are full of fun and informative events your school can attend, such as the Human Rights Summit run by the UN Youth on the 16th of May. A lot of the events aren’t run on the actual IDAHOT day though, so you have the whole day to make the people in your school aware with what's going on. To make this easier on you, we are providing you with PDF resources with ideas for action and fun activities you can participate in as a school. We are also encouraging all schools to make a pledge against discrimination and bullying at your school. The pledge can be found on our website and through the links below.

All you have to do to access all our resources is jump onto our IDAHOT Day facebook page or the VicSRC website and follow the appropriate links!


Go to the VicSRC website: http://vicsrc.org.au/
Or visit Minus18’s website: www.minus18.org.au
To get your school to attend the UN Human Rights summit go to: www.unyouth.org.au/vic/lgbt-summit

4th Annual Victorian SRC Recognition Awards

Does your SRC deserve recognition??

Schools often spend time, effort and money on producing sportsmen and sportswomen, academics, debaters and musicians, but less on student representatives. So again this year, the VicSRC is holding its 4th Annual Victorian SRC Recognition Awards, to reward and celebrate outstanding Student Councils throughout the state.

The awards will be presented at the VicSRC Congress by the Victorian Minister for Education, Hon Martin Dixon, on the 2nd of August.

Award Categories

There are again four award categories this year:

The Connect Award for Integration, recognising SRCs that are strongly connected to the school’s decision making processes (the School Council/Board and its committees), and that are strongly responsive to students’ needs and voices.

The Second Strike Award for Enterprise, recognising SRCs that, through the use of strategic planning and strong leadership structure, have completed a highly successful school or community project.

The VASSP Award for Informed Representation, recognising SRCs that are truly democratic and fully representative of students.

The VISTA Award for Outstanding Teacher Adviser, that recognises and highlights the support that teachers provide to SRCs.

Apply by June 28th

We want to encourage all SRCs to apply!

For further information and application forms please visit the VicSRC Website in early term 2. Applications close on June 28th.

Lachlan Hugo
Recognition Awards Coordinator
Represent! Student Representative Councils and their support teachers.

It was written and published in 2010 for the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) and is available on-line from their website. Further publications (Represent! Plus+) are being added regularly.

Check: www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent

Student Action Teams 'How To' Manual


Back issues of Connect magazine are available on-line for free through a partnership with ACER. All back issues exist on the Connect website.

Connect supports student participation, providing practical examples of active student participation in primary and secondary schools. It brings together a collection of practical ideas and articles about how Student Councils can get beyond tokenism ... and make a difference. Now on-line for FREE on the Connect website. Available online for FREE from www.asprinworld.com/connect


Student Councils and Beyond: Students as Effective Participants in Decision-Making

This Connect publication supports effective and relevant participation of students in decision-making through student Councils in primary and secondary schools. It brings together a collection of practical ideas and articles about how Student Councils can go beyond tokenism ... and make a difference. Now on-line for FREE on the Connect website.


A bi-monthly practice journal that documents and supports examples of active student participation in primary and secondary schools, it provides practical examples of and resources for student participation in school governance, classroom/curriculum decision-making and community initiatives and action.

Learning in the community is online and available free through the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) and is available on-line from their website. Further on-line issues exist on the Connect website. Check: www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent

Represent! Student Representative Councils and Beyond: Students as Effective Participants in Decision-Making

This Connect publication supports effective and relevant participation of students in decision-making through student Councils in primary and secondary schools. It brings together a collection of practical ideas and articles about how Student Councils can go beyond tokenism ... and make a difference. Now on-line for FREE on the Connect website.


Supporting student participation, providing practical examples of active student participation in primary and secondary schools, it provides practical examples of and resources for student participation in school governance, classroom/curriculum decision-making and community initiatives and action.
Student Action Teams: Implementing Productive Practices in Primary and Secondary School Classrooms

Student Action Teams, as part of their school curriculum, adopt a community issue that they care passionately about, research it, decide what needs to be changed or improved and take action to achieve that.

In this book, primary and secondary schools tell how to establish and implement Student Action Teams, with examples in traffic safety and the environment. The principles and approaches outlined here can be used to guide developments in any school - acting alone or in a cluster.

ISBN 978-0-9803133-2-1; 90 pp; 2006 $33/$27.50*

Reaching High: A Program Promoting Positive Approaches to Learning Differences

Reaching High tells the story of 14 years' work around literacy in north central Victoria. Student participatory approaches are central to a program that caters for students with learning differences, with an annual student-run three-day regional camp as the culmination of that program. This camp brings in adult role models who have, or have had, learning differences, to act as mentors for students. Past student participants now also act as leaders, adult role models and assistants.

This inspiring and exciting 120-page book documents the development and operation of the Reaching High Program. It outlines the theory and community links behind the program, and how it is built on the active and strength-based participation of students. The book includes a DVD of practical ideas. (Available at reduced price without DVD.)

ISBN 978-0-9803133-0-7; 120 pp; 2006 $33/$27.50* (with DVD); $22/$16.50* (without DVD)

Switched On to Learning
Student Initiatives in School Engagement

... is a book for teachers and others, written by members of the Student Action Teams at Pender's Grove and Preston South Primary Schools in Melbourne.

These students have been investigating student engagement with school and have written about their work and their learning in a 52-page cartoon-style book. The book covers ideas about what engagement is and how it can be measured, and why it is important. Then it goes on to look at the factors that influence engagement with school and what can be done to improve student engagement. In the final chapter, the students describe their journey – and how this approach was itself an engaging one.

This book is essential reading for teachers, students, principals, consultant, parents and others, who want to learn how schools can become more engaging, who want to hear what experts (students from Grades 4, 5 and 6) have to say, and who want to consider how to develop their own approaches to engagement.

ISBN 978-0-9803133-3-8; 52 pp; 2009 - re-printed 2012; $6.60/$5.50*

Democracy Starts Here!
Junior School Councils at Work

How do we learn about citizenship and democracy?

In this book, students and teachers write about their experiences with Junior School Councils in ten Melbourne primary schools.

These are not citizens-in-waiting. They are already active and involved citizens, asserting their ability to take part in decisions about the operation of their own schools. Their experiences provide practical examples of learning how to be active and informed citizens, committed to the ideas and operation of democracy.

From these schools in Preston and Reservoir, you can learn: what Junior School Councils do, how to set up and structure a JSC, about reporting to students and others, about valuable resources and networks, and how to support Student Councils. 48 pp; 1996; $6.60/$5.50*
Students and ...

... was a series of small publications from the Victorian Participation and Equity Program (PEP) in 1986. It included studies reprinted from Connect 1979-1985. There were books about Students Tutoring, Students Publishing and Students and Radio (all out of print, but may be in school libraries). The final volume was ...

Students and Work

Participants at a conference on ‘Mixes of school and work’, held in September 1985, identified a need for more examples of school/work programs already operating in schools: how they were developed and how they are administered. This publication was largely a response to those views. It was an attempt to provide a theoretical overview of mixes of school and work, identify the issues relating to such approaches and provide examples of programs that have operated in schools and been reported on in Connect between the years 1979 to 1985.

Peter Blunden, who edited this collection, wrote in the introduction: “There is a wide range of possibilities, many models of school and work programs that can be drawn from by schools. Hopefully this publication will be useful by presenting some of these possibilities and raising some of the issues for discussion and debate.”

The issues remain as relevant today. It is fascinating to get a glimpse of initiatives from 30 years ago.

ISBN 0-7241-3995-8; 80pp; 1985; $6.60/$5.50*

( Only 1 copy - available until sold.)

Foxfire

... is a public school-based program in north Georgia, USA, in which students have documented and published oral histories of their communities since 1966. In 1972, Foxfire published the first book of collected articles. In visits to Australia in the early 1990s, Foxfire made available some copies of their publications.

Foxfire: 25 Years

What was it like to be fourteen and help create these Foxfire books? And what happened to the students?

In this anniversary book, Foxfire’s ninth and tenth grade students interviewed former students, who were in professions as varied as mayor, school principal, cab driver, airline pilot, editor and more.

Anchor Books; 359 pp; 1991
ISBN 0-385-41346-7; $22/$11*

(Limited copies available until sold out.)

Sometimes a Shining Moment:
The Foxfire Experience

This book recounts the early story of the Foxfire program in northern Georgia, USA. It outlines how it came about, the principles involved (overarching truths), and the practical details of the grammar/composition course within which it was located.

Doubleday Anchor Books; 438 pp; 1985
ISBN 0-385-13359-6; $22/$11*

(Only 1 copy - available until sold.)

A Foxfire Christmas

As an example of the processes involved in Foxfire, students interviewed their own grandparents, family members or community members to record and share Christmas memories and traditions of Appalachia: preparations and decorations; food and menus; gifts and Santa; serenading and other traditions.

Doubleday Books; 170 pp; hardback;
ISBN 0-385-41347-5; $22/$11*

(Only 1 copy - available until sold.)

Foxfire 9

Connect has one copy of this collection, with some cover damage. This is available from Connect for postage costs.

493 pp; 1986; $11/$5.50* (Only 1 copy - available until sold.)

* discounted prices for Connect subscribers

SRC Pamphlets

A series of six 4-page pamphlets about Student Representative Councils was published by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. The contents of these pamphlets have later been reproduced in issues of Connect, and were also used in writing of Represent! (see opposite).

( Only 2 sets available until sold out.)
1988; $6.60/$5.50*

* discounted prices for Connect subscribers
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(Postage:  Outside Australia add $5 per copy of publications  $.........)

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Student Councils and Beyond
On-Line!

We’ve almost run out of print copies of the first Connect publication: Student Councils and Beyond (from 2005). And many of the ideas have subsequently been reflected in the Represent! kit from the VicSRC (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent).

So we have made all of Student Councils and Beyond (a compilation of articles and resources from many earlier issues of Connect) available on-line for FREE. It can be downloaded (as one document or in sections) as PDFs from the Connect website. Find it at:

www.asprinworld.com/connect

All about Student Action Teams, including some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:

www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams

News and Reviews

Student Voice Research and Practice Facebook Group

www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/

This open facebook group was initially established by Dana Mitra, and is now supported by the work of academics, practitioners and students throughout the world. It provides a valuable community of people working and interested in the area of ‘Student Voice’ - in Australia, USA, UK, Italy and elsewhere – as well as access to useful resources and examples, and up-to-date information about initiatives. You can easily log on and join the group at the above address.

Connect on Facebook

In order to assist in the transition to the new digital Connect, we now have a presence on facebook. Find us at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Connect/360372760717566

We’re already posting some news, links and stories there to complement what you see in the print version of Connect. It would be great if you could go there and ‘like’ us, and watch there for news of Connect’s availability on-line - for FREE - in mid 2013!
The third Student Voice Seminar will be held at the School of Education, Cambridge University (UK) in late June 2013. As well as the main seminar day (Wednesday June 26), there will be pre- and post-seminar sessions. This is the draft agenda for the three days:

Pre-Seminar Session:
Tuesday June 25: 2-7 pm
To give participants a chance to meet one another, share materials and resources, and network informally.

Following a welcome from Alison Cook-Sather and Julia Flutter, participants will share in small groups or pairs about the work they do related to student voice, and their experience at previous summers’ student voice seminars or other venues. This will then be shared with the whole group.

Participants will also be encouraged to share video material, share or sell books on their work, and create poster display boards that can remain on display throughout the three days.

Main Seminar Session:
Wednesday June 26: 9 am - 5 pm
To give participants a chance to share works in progress that themselves link across lines (of context, level, role, etc.) or, as a group within a particular session, make such links.

There will be sessions on the following themes, with 15-minute presentations, responses from student discussants, and 20 minutes of discussion of methods and approaches:

How to Listen to Students:
- “Listening to Girls’ Voices on Bullying Through Working with Tweenage Co-Researchers and Teenage Focus Groups.” Helen Hearn, University of Nottingham, UK
- “What Can Participatory Methods Derived from Inclusive Research in the Field of Learning Disabilities Offer to Student Voice Research in Higher Education?” Professor Jane Seale, University of Plymouth, UK

Curriculum:
- “Negotiating the Curriculum as a Way of Developing Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in Schools.” Jeroen Bron, Senior Curriculum Developer, Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development, SLO
- “How Our Definitions of Curriculum in Higher Education Impact on the Nature of Student Participation in Curriculum Design.” Catherine Bovill, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Assessment and Self-Assessment:
- “Student Voice in Assessment at the Policy/Major Decision-Making Level.” Jannette Elwood, Queen’s University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK
- “Self-Assessment: A Process to Liberate and Sustain Learners and Their Learning.” Dr Roseanna Bourke, Senior Lecturer, Academic Group Director, Educational Psychology, School of Educational Psychology and Pedagogy, Victoria University, Wellington, NZ
- “Voices from Students, Academics and Employers on the Need to Re-Design Assessment in Higher Education.” Elisabeth Dunne and Derfel Owen, University of Exeter, UK

Ethics and Expansion of Student Voice:
- “Voice and the Ethics of Children’s Participation in Research.” Prof John O’Neill, Professor of Teacher Education and Director of Research Ethics, Massey University, Palmerston North, NZ
- “Mind the Gap: Creating a Family Learning Environment that Facilitates Learner Voice.” Kate Wall, Senior Lecturer, Durham University; Helen Burns, Research Associate; Durham University; Anna Llewellyn, Teaching Fellow, Durham University, UK

The Schools Students Want: Cross-Context Analyses:
- “Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning: A State-Wide Model.” Helen Beattie Ed.D., Founder and Director of “Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning.” Vermont, USA; with Dana Mitra, Penn State University, Pennsylvania, USA
- “Participation, Connection and Rupture: Cross-Age, Cross-School and Cross-Sectoral Links Across Heterogeneous Australian Settings.” Eve Mayes, Kadek Arya-Pitanyh and Susan Groundwater-Smith, Australia

Post-Seminar Session:
Thursday June 27: 9-12 am
Workshop on Sustaining Student Voice Work:
Facilitated by Roger Holdsworth, publisher of Connect, volunteer/supporter with the VicSRC, the umbrella body of Student Representative Councils in Victoria, Australia.

Questions we will explore together will include: How do we bring about change? How do we work to change attitudes and cultures, that go beyond working with people who are already thinking alike? What are the best approaches to use with teachers who might, in the first instance, dismiss ‘student voice’ or any form of partnership? What is our ‘theory of change’?

For more information - and particularly if you are interested to attend – contact Alison Cook-Sather: acooksat@brynmawr.edu
Connect has a website at ASPRINworld: www.asprinworld.com/connect

ASPRIN is the Australian Student Participation Resource and Information Network (“a cure for your student participation headaches”) – a still-emerging concept. The Connect section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, recent back issue contents and summaries of and order information for Student Councils and Beyond, Student Action Teams, Reaching High and Switched On to Learning.

There are also links from the indexes of recent issues to their archived PDFs (see below).

Connect is now also archived and available electronically: research.acer.edu.au/connect

All issues of Connect are being archived through the ACER Research Repository: ACEReSearch. Connect issues from #1 to #194 are available for free download, and recent issues can be searched by key terms. See the ASPRINworld site for index details of recent issues, then link to and download the whole issue you are interested in.

www.informit.com.au

In addition, current and recent issues of Connect are now available on-line to libraries and others who subscribe to RMIT’s Informit site – a site that contains databases of many Australian publications. You can access whole issues of Connect as well as individual articles. Costs apply, either by a library subscription to Informit’s databases, or through individual payments per view for articles.

Contributors to Connect
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Friends of Connect
By supporting Connect with donations, the following have helped keep us going. This is particularly important as we shift away from paid subscriptions. Even though costs will also drop, there are still costs associated with ongoing publication. To make a donation to the work of Connect, use the form in the Catalogue in this issue. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since the last issue of Connect:

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Julie and Graeme Jane  Moonee Ponds (Vic)
Peter Cole  Port Melbourne (Vic)
Jan Hargreaves  Chapel Hill (Qld)

Local and Overseas Publications Received
Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can’t lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on: (03) 9489 9052 or (03) 8344 9637

Australian:
Parents Voice (Parents Victoria, Wandong, Vic) Vol 40, Issue 1; February/March 2013
Student Advocate (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 7 No 2; April 2013
YapRap (YAPA, Surry Hills, NSW) February-March 2013
Youth Studies Australia (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart, Tas) Vol 32 Number 1; March 2013

International:
Rethinking Schools (Milwaukee, WI, USA) Vol 27 No 3; Spring 2012-2013: Learning Math - Learning Justice
Back issues of *Connect* from 1979 to April 2012 (that’s over 32 years! – from #1 to #194) are now all freely available online! Thanks to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), back issues of *Connect* have been scanned or uploaded and are now on the ACER’s Research Repository: [ACEReSearch](http://research.acer.edu.au/connect).

You can find these issues of *Connect* at:

[research.acer.edu.au/connect](http://research.acer.edu.au/connect)

The left-hand menu provides a pull-down menu for you to select the issue number > browse; the front cover of the issue is displayed, and you can simply click on the link in the main body of the page to download a PDF of the issue. Recent issues are also searchable by key words.

**Availability**

The most recent 12 months of *Connect* (ie the last 6 issues) will continue to be available ONLY to subscribers until April 2013. These issues will then be progressively added to this site and new issues made freely available there from June 2013.

This ensures that *Connect* maintains its commitment to the sharing of ideas, stories, approaches and resources about active student participation.

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**Let us know**

There may be some gaps or improvements necessary. As you use this resource, let us know what you find. (If an issue of *Connect* seems to be missing, check the issues either side, as double issues show up only as one issue number.) If you have any ideas for improving this resource, please let us know.

**Most importantly, please USE this resource.**

Back copies of *Connect* are available online for free!

[research.acer.edu.au/connect](http://research.acer.edu.au/connect)