

Connect

supporting student participation

Number 209
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Can the Learner be the Teacher?

Resources:

- **VicSRC Recognition Awards**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Student Participation Toolkit**
- **Excellence and Equity: MSAC, Ontario**
- **VicSRC 'Teach the Teacher' position**
- **VISTA Meetup in November**
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- **JSC Congress in Victorian Parliament**
- **Students Upgrade School's Computer Suite**
- **Primary SRC: Park Bench Project**
- **Year 10 Student Leadership Team**
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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.

Connect:

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This Issue:

I remain fascinated by the stories in this and every issue of *Connect*. They cause me to think about core ideas of learning and engagement - and puzzle and argue with myself over what I'm hearing and seeing.



At the recent JSC Congress in Melbourne, for example, the primary school student delegates discussed '*volunteering*' and were generally dismissive of any proposal that suggested coercion to volunteer. But some student delegates also suggested that even the 'expectation' that all students should or must volunteer, would weaken the relationship with their activity within their communities. Perhaps lurking somewhere was a distinction between '*volunteering*' and '*Volunteering*'.

These ideas about expectations then formed a thread in my mind, that ran through how I read the many ideas and approaches to participation presented here. On the one hand, there were challenges to external expectations about what students can do and the roles they take. "*Can learners also be teachers?*" asks an article here - and then explores how students can also take a greater role in assessing their learning.

Can we codify positive expectations into courses? The **Challenge-Based Learning** approach outlined here at a high school in Rooty Hill, NSW, suggests that we can establish learning structures in which the school and its students have an expectation that their learning will be socially useful ... not as a co- or extra-curricular approach, but as the 'normal' way that learning occurs. It is expected that students will have important and valued roles within their school and community.

Similarly, a primary school in Adelaide has established a system where students are expected to lead investigation and change within the school - and they write here about the ways some students took responsibility for **upgrading the school's ITC systems**.

Secondly, there are also examples of internalised self-expectations - beliefs that either limit or liberate us about what is 'normal' or 'possible'. In writing about the work of a primary school SRC, the students' first inclination was to describe the organisation of their disco ... perhaps, in my view, replicating a limited expectation of '*what students can do*'. Yet in the same conversation, that SRC also described how it developing a school-wide consultation to design a public seat in the neighbourhood. The two aspects of their work sit side-by-side to demonstrate a broader range of possibilities for student initiative. What do we expect of student organisations? What do they expect of themselves?

Next Issue ...

The next issue of *Connect* marks 35 years of publication! The deadline is the **end of November**; publication early in December will provide some end of school year reading for you. I'd love to read and share stories of ways you are tackling and challenging expectations, showing that **all** primary and secondary school students can be purposeful and productive in their learning.

Roger Holdsworth

Next Issue: #210: December 2014

Deadline for material: end of November, 2014



Primary school students take over Parliament



Second Strike
Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development
Victoria

Young student leaders, from primary schools all over Victoria, came to the Victorian Parliament House on 12 September 2014 for a special **Junior School Council (JSC) Congress**. They came to discuss the topic of **volunteering**: someone willing to do something for their community of their own free will. Students pointed out that, today, many people just do things for money. So this year's JSC Congress was all about raising awareness of volunteering.

The **JSC Congress** is an annual meeting of primary school student delegates, supported and organised by **Second Strike** for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). These meetings allow students to debate and recommend on important issues, and also teach students about how the parliament works, and that they can make a difference in today's society.

This year, there were 59 schools represented by the student delegates, along with their parents and teachers.

The JSC Congress started off with a bang. The host, David Mould of Second Strike, spoke initially, followed by Hon Inge Peulich, a member of the parliament who was elected into the Legislative Council in 2006. Inge Peulich spoke about why the Parliament House was so important and how lucky we were to be there. Then there was a guest speaker, Chris Varney who had Asperger's Syndrome: an ex-VicSRC Executive member and volunteer with World Vision. He spoke about how volunteering can help our community and why this was important.

Then came the first activity of the day, where student delegates made opening speeches in the two chambers of parliament. These were about the research and discussions around volunteering that they had had in their schools before the day.

Next were workshops to find motions that could raise awareness of volunteering – and these would be debated in the formal sessions. The students were put into groups at the start of the day, which enabled them to discuss ideas on how to raise awareness of volunteering among students. Some of the ideas were very well thought out and could have worked! There were groups who thought about having volunteer clubs at schools, and even a website to show where to volunteer around your community! It was just a matter of whether everyone else agreed with your group's ideas...



The most interesting part of the day finally arrived. The JSC Congress was going to debate the motions that the groups worked on. When these were voted on, each Chamber (or House) would prioritise the top three ideas. The three best ideas would then go to the opposite house for them to endorse. The best ideas would be presented to the government after the Congress for them to decide whether they could use them or not.

The first motion debated was about setting up volunteer clubs in schools. Students in a volunteer club would take part in activities to help the community as an optional activity that would meet during lunch. Some students thought this would be a very good idea as it meant children didn't have to do volunteer outside of school hours, and they would have a friend to accompany them. Other students disagreed as the idea might not raise enough awareness. They also mentioned lunch times were for playing. This motion was carried.

The next motion was about having a persuasive advertising campaign targeted at younger people to encourage them to volunteer. Some students thought it could work, as advertising can be effective. But questions were also raised about who was going to pay for this idea. Students said that the government should pay, as it could help raise awareness of volunteering. However, this motion was not carried.

Another motion was about having an online website where they could fill in a questionnaire. The results would tell people what volunteer work was in their community and right for them. Students thought it would be a great way for younger people who wanted to volunteer to find out more information about it. This idea could also encourage people as they wouldn't get discouraged at the amount of work it takes to find where to volunteer. Others stated people should be more aware of what goes on in their community. This motion was carried.

The next debate topic was learning about volunteer work as part of the curriculum. Students would learn about smaller volunteer organisations. They may also raise money to help them with their cause. Some people thought it was not the school's job to associate with companies they didn't know. Others were worried it might become part of homework, and if it did, not many people would want to volunteer as no one liked doing it. On the other hand, students said if schools could get one person to volunteer, they could spread the word. If word got around, soon everyone would start to volunteer and get interested in it. Also, it was a good way to help students learn about the world around them. This motion was carried.

The next debate was a confusing one. It was about how volunteers should not be paid for their work. Most students said volunteers were already not being

paid, and hence there was no point talking about the motion. Others disagreed and stated if volunteers were being paid, people would do it for money instead of from their own free will. If they did start to be paid, it goes against the meaning of volunteering. For some reason, this motion was carried.

The final motion to be debated was about how schools should put up posters, have talks in assembly and classes about volunteering. Students thought this was an excellent idea as many people didn't know the true meaning of volunteering. Many people also thought volunteering was a chore and learning about it might change their minds. Most students disagreed and argued that, if schools tried too hard, it would be as if they were forcing students to volunteer. The question was asked: "What if people were taught the meaning of volunteering, but still didn't like the sound of it?" This motion was not carried.

The day was packed with exciting things to do and learn about. The JSC Congress really opened the primary school students' eyes to the world around them, and they had lots of great ideas about volunteering. This experience was invaluable as delegates got to decide the future of volunteering. Overall, the day was engaging, yet educational, and many student delegates probably agree!

Caitlin Kuo

Student delegate: Grade 6

Camberwell Girls' Grammar School



Resolutions: Carried (in priority order) and Defeated ...

Lower House

1. That schools should create networking groups to advocate to the State Government to increase global volunteering opportunities for young people.
2. That the teachers should inform students about the volunteering opportunities around the community through school newsletters, assemblies and class time.
3. That schools should encourage students to volunteer their time in the school and local communities by giving them more public recognition.
4. That primary school students should be part of a Victorian Junior School Council because school students should be heard.
5. That students in Grades 4-6 should volunteer with their buddies (from Prep to Grade 3) to ensure younger students can learn about volunteering.
6. We propose that volunteer opportunities and co-curricular activities for primary school students are advertised and included as part of the VicSRC's online platform.
7. That schools should create networking groups to advocate to the State Government to increase global volunteering opportunities for young people.
2. That a volunteering club should be introduced for all primary schools in Victoria to raise awareness and help the community.
3. That primary schools should encourage students to connect with community organisations; make it optional homework eg find out some organisations that not as much people know about it, then present it in class.
4. That volunteer organisations should not pay volunteers.

Motions Defeated

1. That teachers should have at least one fun game at the end of the day, so students will have something to look forward to after working hard.
2. That teachers should make subjects more fun by making a board game about learning. This could change schools worldwide.
3. That councils should focus their efforts and resources on performing Arts in schools.
4. That the DEECD should make school chairs more comfortable, swingy and cozy because other chairs are uncomfortable and rock hard.
5. That schools should have an annual day to volunteer their time (during school) to help the school or an organisation.
6. That the Government should put out persuasive ads, encouraging anyone and everyone to do volunteer work.
7. That the DEECD should provide all primary students equal opportunities to volunteer within the school community.

Upper House

1. That the Department of Education should create an entertaining website where companies or organisations can advertise when they want volunteers, to get more people involved and help people find different opportunities to which they can volunteer for, with custom searching to fill in what you want to do.





PD for Student Councils

Ideas from the JSC Congress Teacher Workshop

Wow – it's Term 4! ... time to start thinking about 2015. What is your role with the JSC/SRC at your school? Will it be the same next year or will it be a different teacher for the 6th year in a row?

Most schools think that student participation in the school community is important but, along with so many other things in the basket of "if only we had the money", we don't often support this idea with adequate teacher support, time or money. However, most schools do have a process for selecting school captains and leaders - but how often do they invest in 'professional development' for these students? This was the focus of the teachers' session at the JSC Congress in 2014.

In the JSC Congress teacher workshop, 'training' students was raised as an issue. Below are three of the topics we explored to describe ways that every school could use to give students PD in these areas – good luck!

WORKING AS A TEAM:

Goals of the session: To get to know each other;

To work as an effective team through establishing team expectations about behaviours, values and sharing opinions.

Ideas for the session:

Team building games/circle time (eg Bingo, three truths and a lie, introduce your partner)

Role plays – what good teamwork looks like and what poor teamwork looks like

Brainstorm protocols

- Use talking ball/stick
- Create smaller groups and collaboratively complete worksheets
- Establish roles and expectations
- End product: a JSC/SRC constitution written by the students and signed by the members

Brainstorm ideas for planning events

- Raising money with goals driven by students
- JSC/SRC-run assemblies
- Full school excursion with money raised by JSC/SRC
- Sister schools to raise money for those in less developed/socio-economic areas

RUNNING AN EVENT:

Goals of the session: For students to develop a procedure to follow when organising and running events throughout the year

Ideas for the session:

Teachers to facilitate a discussion about what is involved in planning an event and provide them with previous examples; past JSC/SRC representatives share what they have learnt from planning an activity

Create a template that allows students to take ownership of running events and teaches them processes that need to be followed to get an event happening.

Template to include:

- Goal of the event
- Date
- Permission gained from (relevant people/committees)

- Budget of event – including costs and potential profit
- Risk assessments that need to be done eg. How many teachers required for supervision for a lunchtime activity
- Timeline for planning and 'on the day'
- **ACTION** column to allocate who is taking responsibility to do what

Create an event committee for the different events and discuss/allocate different roles and responsibilities for students to volunteer for.

PUBLIC SPEAKING:

Goals of the session: To develop confidence in students to speak in front of an audience

Ideas for the session:

Role model of good vs bad public speaking through the use of Ted talks, YouTube

Brainstorm: what does good public speaking look like?

- Speaking in a clear and succinct voice
- Using cue cards effectively
- Making eye contact with the audience
- It is OK to stumble but need to get started again
- Use of passion and humour where appropriate
- Use of posture to get the audience's attention

Create role plays and scenarios

Students present within the leadership group

- Use of a mentor to provide feedback to a particular student in a supportive environment using a rubric that includes self, peer and teacher feedback
- Use of video to help them watch how they speak – identify strengths and areas of improvement
- Q&A session about what people did well and where people can improve

Provide a structure for students to follow – a strong start, middle and end

Continue to provide opportunities for students to practise using known topics in small and then larger groups

Dianne Parkinson
VISTA Executive

Good luck! Don't forget to use 'resources' that you might have access to:

- Invite previous JSC/SRC Captains back to lead a session
- **Second Strike** run some great training sessions too!!! (www.second-strike.com)
- Check if your local Council's Youth Department offers leadership training
- Check out VISTA resources at our NEW website: www.vistasrc.org

VISTA currently receives no additional funding to operate its programs and relies heavily on memberships to support its programs. Visit us at www.vistasrc.org or e-mail us at info@vistasrc.org for details on how to join.

Students Upgrade School's Computer Suite



At Burnside Primary School, our Year 7 students take on a wide range of student leadership responsibilities. At a Year 7 school leadership training day in term 1, students experience a range of learning activities that help them to understand the skills and qualities that a good leader needs.

After this training, they are invited to select from a range of student leadership roles and responsibilities and put into action their strengths to help to develop and support our whole school priorities.

At Burnside Primary school one of our main priorities is to ensure that digital technologies are embedded into the curriculum in new and innovative ways. Students are encouraged to use feedback processes to share their ideas and put forward ways to improve digital technologies. Some Year 7 students opt to take on a leadership role as a member of the **Student ILT (Innovative Learning Technologies)** committee, who review students' requests and create action plans to act on these.

The committee has been in operation now for almost three years, and has developed and evolved over time. The first meeting with students operates

as a 'circle of inquiry', in which a leading question such as: *'In what ways could you help to improve student learning opportunities with digital technologies?'* is addressed. This prompts students to think about their own strengths and the ways in which they can help to support our school's priorities. Students on the committee compile a list of their digital technology skills and personal qualities and we then work out roles that they will undertake to utilise their strengths. Each year the students' roles and responsibilities can vary depending on the skills and qualities they bring.

This year, the ILT Committee members are supporting students and staff on a rostered basis over lunchtimes in our Library Learning Centre. Students on the Committee demonstrate and model to others how to operate and use the interactive television screens

and new windows tablets. They also complete school jobs that are added to a jobs list by school staff. Such jobs have included solutions for headset devices, researching suitable learning websites for units of inquiry and copying CD-ROMs for Graduation.

This year's committee of Daniel, Calvin, Daraghi and Salomon, have also been responsible for the **upgrade of our computer suite** and, supported by the school technician, have worked together collaboratively in order to ensure the smooth transition and operation of the suite. Students worked out the software and operation systems required and looked at options for new PCs. They worked together to devolve jobs as part of the changeover process and were responsible, in conjunction with the school technician, for planning and organising all aspects of this. They problem-solved as they came across the need for recycling boxes and communicated appropriately at a whole-school level to negotiate recycling and the resources they needed. They managed and executed their roles and responsibilities in a timely manner and minimised the impact this had on





suite down-time and thus loss of digital technology learning time for classes.

Students continue to use their strengths. Now that the technical stage of our suite has been upgraded, we are looking at remodelling the learning technologies suite to accommodate flexible learning opportunities. Ideas suggested by the Committee include incorporating interactive screens and pods of PCs designed to support collaborative learning technology access, so that students are able to learn from and with each other, rather than just one on one with the computer. This fits in with our whole-school approach on formative assessment

members trained the students last term and got feedback on their ideas and how they see 3D printing in the curriculum. The students loved the idea and were really keen. We have recently done a 3D printing trial but when we purchase, we hope the student committee will be able to learn what to do and teach others!

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strategies and the integration of our *First Attempt in Learning (FAIL)* and *Self Organised Learning Environment (SOLE)* concepts that staff members were introduced to during our professional development at the recent 2014 *Edutech* conference.

Incorporating *FAIL* into learning includes enabling students to critically and carefully feedback strengths and areas to improve to each other, so through peer-to-peer feedback, children own and improve their own outcomes. *SOLE* further develops this, as it gives children the opportunity to explore new technologies and learn the most they can through trial and error and building on each other's knowledge. Our digital technology lessons invite those with the knowledge to share and support others and learn from and with staff.

We continue to look for innovative and exciting ways to improve our digital learning technologies at Burnside Primary School, with a strong emphasis on student voice and learning from the leaders.

Our current school initiative, led by members of the staff ILT Committee, involves incorporating and thinking of the possibilities that the world of 3D printing will bring to education and the global society. Two staff

All about Student Action Teams, including some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:
www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams

Who Owns the Learning? Can the Learner be the Teacher?

As we enter the 'teen' years of the 21st Century, we ponder how and if teaching has changed from the past. How do we define learning and teaching? Can we challenge the notion of ownership of the learning? How can student 'buy in' to learning ... and, in fact, become teachers as they learn? These reflections around the particular questions of the 'why' and 'how' of ownership of learning, outline the way this is currently being tackled in a school in Torquay, Victoria, Australia.

The broader challenge of learning and teaching within a 'contemporary environment' has led to an emergence of thinking that mathematics learning and teaching in particular might look, sound and feel different in 2013 and beyond. The access to instant information, the rapid development in technological advancement, as well as the changing nature and requirements of the workforce, demand that formal education for the young should no longer be 'remembering' or 'regurgitation' without reasoning, or a reliance on the completion of tasks for no particular reason other than to 'finish' them. Instead it implies that mathematics learning will be centred on the discovery, questioning, analysis, reconstruction and application of learning.

The Australian government's response to the Global Financial Crisis, through an educational lens, was to stimulate the building industry by enabling schools to build new learning areas. (BER, Building the Educational Revolution) (DEECD, 2014) Many schools in Victoria chose to build what they classified as "Contemporary Learning Areas". These could be described loosely as relatively large buildings without many of the

traditional inner 'classroom' walls present. These large open-plan buildings could then be interpreted in a variety of ways so that teachers have the opportunity to develop learning spaces for a variety of purposes, including wanting to adapt more collaborative methods into their learning and teaching practice.

The result was, in one particular school, learning areas that challenged the 'traditional' method of teaching, where the teacher planned the lessons and the students responded accordingly. Teachers who were working in these open-plan areas, could no longer conduct their 'teaching' in isolation, as another teacher may not have been at that point and, in addition, there would be noise from the other areas, which had major impacts on the ability to listen/talk in traditional ways in classroom areas.

Some challenging thinking and problem solving then occurred, which has led to several changes to the learning and teaching approaches. The following is a description of some of the approaches trialed that have led to a shared partnership between teachers, and between teachers and students in the learning process, as well as to the

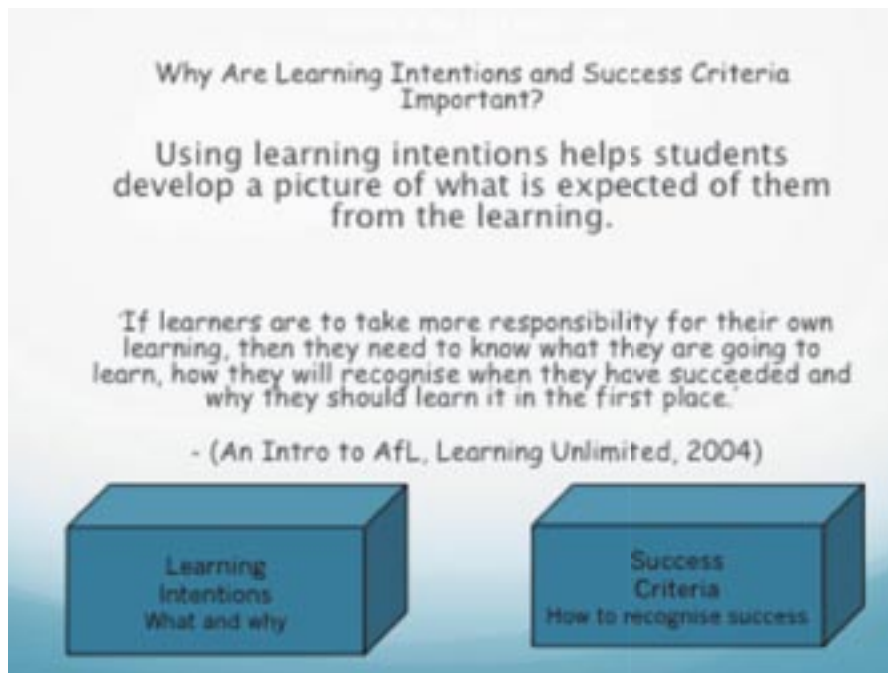
visualisation of students as both learners and teachers.

Contemporary environment - That is, the walls are moveable, or there aren't any, the space is flexible and no student or teacher owns a desk. The room does not appear as a rectangle with rows of tables and chairs, or hard furnishings, but rather an architecturally designed area with a mixture of both hard and soft furnishings, where students choose where they work. Just as you would not choose to sit at a table and chair at home to read a book or watch a movie, so do the students have a choice in their learning environment. This approach has emerged from a combination of thinking from 'Reggio' (Reggio Emilia Approach, 2014) as well as the environment as the 'third teacher'. (OWP/P Architects, 2011)

Making the curriculum evident – enabling the students to 'buy in'

Reflections upon teacher practice, student engagement and student assessment results, have led to an exploration of ways to 'reveal' the curriculum to students and parents. The Australian Mathematics curriculum content descriptors were considered (ACARA, 2012), with slight changes to vocabulary to assist with comprehension of the descriptors. Students at the year 5/6 levels, were provided with these year 5, year 6 and year 7 curriculum content descriptors. Not all students are achieving at the





same level; current thinking and research around 'high expectations' suggests that students need to know their learning path:

Studies suggest that not only do students tend to increase or decrease their efforts to match the expectations laid out for them, but also that students are "reasonably accurate" in perceiving the extent to which their teachers favor some students over others by placing different expectations on them. (Hanover Research, 2012)

The students were interested in what else lay ahead in their learning and so later years were also investigated. These descriptors were then further broken down into learning intentions

and, alongside these, success criteria specified. The use of this approach was based upon our reflection on ideas about assessment for learning.

Revealing the curriculum to students has provided an opportunity for students to develop clarity on learning direction. The development and use of learning intentions in Mathematics sessions has enabled the students to be thinking about and reflecting upon the 'learning' taking place rather than focusing simply on finding an answer. It has had repercussions for the pedagogical content knowledge (from a conceptual development perspective) of the 'teachers' as well as for their understanding of the planning and reflection process involved in preparing for Mathematics sessions.

Alongside the development of learning intentions lies the development of success criteria, that is, how does the

student recognise when they have been successful? These learning intentions and success criteria are developed with the students. On occasions, work samples were initially used as a catalyst (ACARA, 2012) to aid teachers and students to think about what success might look like, including a focus on the mathematical language used.

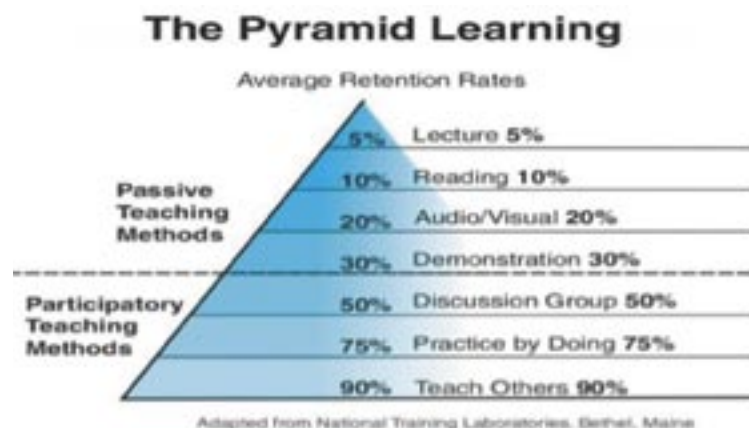
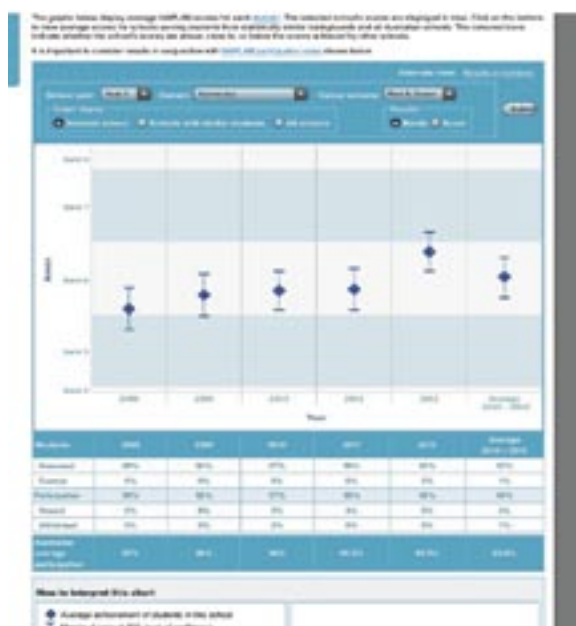
An important next step is that the students have since developed their own learning intentions and success criteria in running workshops for other students, so becoming the teachers themselves.

The role of the 'teacher'

The teachers' role in the Mathematics sessions has evolved over a period of time. The teachers have developed an understanding of the importance of a learning culture: all can be learners, all can be teachers – and the significance of all stakeholders identifying themselves as learners. A session no longer involves the teacher 'at the front'; rather, the teacher provokes, prompts, questions, and helps students synthesise and re-think strategies and understandings. The reflection and articulation of understanding has become paramount.

One of the ways we can validate this approach, is through the schools' NAPLAN results. These results are produced from Australia wide formal testing at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the curriculum areas of Literacy and Numeracy. Staff, parents and students review the school's results. The staff would review these results as one of the tools used to monitor how student improvement, or value adding, is taking place between years 3 and 5 for each student (ACARA, 2014):

A focus for discussion during recent times, has been reflection on the 'Learning Pyramid' that appears below – as a way of understanding how students learn most effectively:





This pyramid seems to resonate when thinking about teaching as an active process for the teacher. That is, what is it that I am trying to deepen the understanding of, what words do I need to use to aid in this understanding (so subject specific), what type of examples could I use, what materials might I use etc. This provides a very detailed consideration for trying to teach others. In addition, Michael Fielding's (2012) thinking around 'student voice, participation and engagement' provides support for this approach, repositioning students as 'teachers' as an approach to effective learning.

Student-Led Workshops

This belief led to an unpacking of what 'student-led' workshops might look like, as another tool to aid deeper understanding.

Why 'student-led' workshops? I know that if I can teach someone else, then it has a great impact on consolidating my own understanding. In teaching someone else, students have to think about *what* they are going to try to teach, *how* they are going to teach it (so the methodology and language associated with teaching), and *how they will know* if the learners

have been successful – as well as a range of many other thoughts. The thinking involved in both the preparation and teaching phases then allows students to articulate their understandings of what they are trying to teach someone else – and hence learn themselves. Student-led workshops were initially enabled from a student's passion or talent, whereby the student might teach others about kicking a football well, painting using oils, creating Christmas decorations. What staff and students noticed were the high levels of engagement as well as the attention to detail and organisation of the students running the workshops.

The student-led workshops were successful from many aspects, with students' feelings of self-confidence articulated during teacher "check-ins" with students. When asked the question, "What do you think have been the benefits of running your own workshop?" Examples of students' responses are:

- "learn new strategies and teach them to others"
- "help me to become more confident in front of other people to share how I learn in maths"

- "at the start of the year and previous years I've never been confident in maths...I've been more confident sharing now my learning with other people. It's fun."

In an article from *Asia Society* about *How High Performing Nations Teach Global Skills* (from Singapore), highlighting some of the **Competencies for a Changing World**, we noted and were encouraged by the following foci for some high performing nations:

- Confident person who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively.
- Self-directed learner who questions, reflects, perseveres, and takes responsibility for his own learning.
- Active contributor who is able to work effectively in teams, is innovative, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, and strives for excellence. (Singmaster, 2013)

In particular, we note the focus on self-direction, reflection and perseverance, and that responsibility for learning is firmly embedded with the learner.



Use of Assessment

We use various approaches to assessment to assist learning, which also build student ownership and responsibility.

a) Three-way interview

The use of the three-way interview, that is, discussions between student, parent and teacher, came about as part of our thinking about strategies that would assist in developing the students' self assessment, and increase opportunities for students to articulate their thinking and learning in order to help set direction for future learning. This thinking was supported by the *Professional Learning, Assessment for Learning* website, developed by the Curriculum Corporation on behalf of the Education Departments of the States, Territories and Commonwealth of Australia.

Student-led conferences, in which students present their learning to their teacher and parents, are an opportunity for students to formally reflect on the learning that has taken place over a period of time. This reflection occurs as students prepare for the conference, as well as during the conference itself when they show and explain to their parents what they have learned. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, and the teacher's role becomes one of support and on occasion, asking questions that may help the students clarify their meaning and depth their thinking (Education Services Australia, 2002).

Feedback from parents and students has been most positive, with "clarity of the curriculum", assisting in "parent understanding of schooling at present". It has also meant that the student has a much greater 'buy in' on the learning evidence and accountability for their learning.

b) Blogging – or the use of ICT tools and a web based approach to student self assessment, including teacher tracking of student progress, particularly through the use of 'Show Me' and 'Explain Everything' Apps, has been used because of a belief in Askew's work on teachers who have a **connectionist** orientation:

The connectionist orientation places a strong emphasis on developing reasoning and justification leading to the proof aspects of UAM (Using and Applying Mathematics). Reasoning about number is as important as its application, and as such UAM becomes integral to the teaching of number. (Askew et al, 1997)

and the success of student learning and achievement when this orientation, along with other influences, is embedded in teaching planning and implementation.

c) Self-Regulated Assessment

The graphic below was taken from Kevin Dodd at Kibblesworth PS (2007), and then adapted in mathematics sessions. Students were given the opportunity to place themselves on a continuum in a particular area of mathematics, it was apparent through this exercise that they were very honest with themselves and were acutely aware of areas for improvement. This information was

used to help them plot future learning goals. A modified version has also been used recently around the question of confidence in the area of mathematics, with very positive responses across the cohort of students.

This form of self-regulated assessment has been used with both students and teachers, either from a pedagogical content perspective or in reflecting on and assessing elements of staff professional understandings on components such as 'Learning Intentions'. Identifying names can be used, or post it notes without names. Alternatively, participants (students or teachers) can be asked to "imagine in your mind where you sit", depending on the situation. This self-regulated assessment tool has been utilised as another way to enable learners to develop responsibility for their learning. This approach is also supported by Hattie's (2012) work on self-reported grades.

Conclusion

All of the elements mentioned in this article have been used with a variety of frequencies, as well as in relationship with each other, in order to help learners assume control of their learning. These tools have been found to be of benefit to both the child and adult learners.

The success of the continuing focus on learning ownership will continue to be monitored using external and internal tools, but ultimately, if students and teachers are identifying themselves as learners who have responsibility for and ownership of their own learning, with support from all appropriate parties, then the school should continue to develop quality learners.

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Division

Having problems

Getting there

Understand it



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Park Bench Project

Grade 5 and 6 students at Springvale's St Joseph's Primary School designed a special park bench for their community in 2013. They approached the Dandenong City Council and proposed that this bench be constructed as part of the redevelopment of the area ... and hopefully this will now happen.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) at the school developed the project with input from all the 200 Grade 5 and 6 students as an example of students having a voice in their local community.

The SRC started by brainstorming ideas for a project to meet community needs. They suggested:

- **Hygiene:** cleaner toilets, more toilet facilities, reducing litter, having better drinking taps/drinking fountains
- **Safety:** removing graffiti, reducing drugs and alcohol, not having people smoking on the streets outside shops, a more visible presence from the police
- **Facilities:** extending and improving the public library, having more public seating around Springvale in parks and at bus stops
- **Traffic:** might involve the removal of the level crossing at Springvale, and sorting out traffic problems

The Grade 5/6 students voted for the one they thought the best. This was a decision to develop a special **community park bench** that would represent Springvale. The arguments were that the provision of attractive and functional seating could create more pride in our community and local environment, which may in turn reduce littering and graffiti. It may also make places seem more friendly and safer. Students had previously identified seating as a concern in their initial brainstorm.

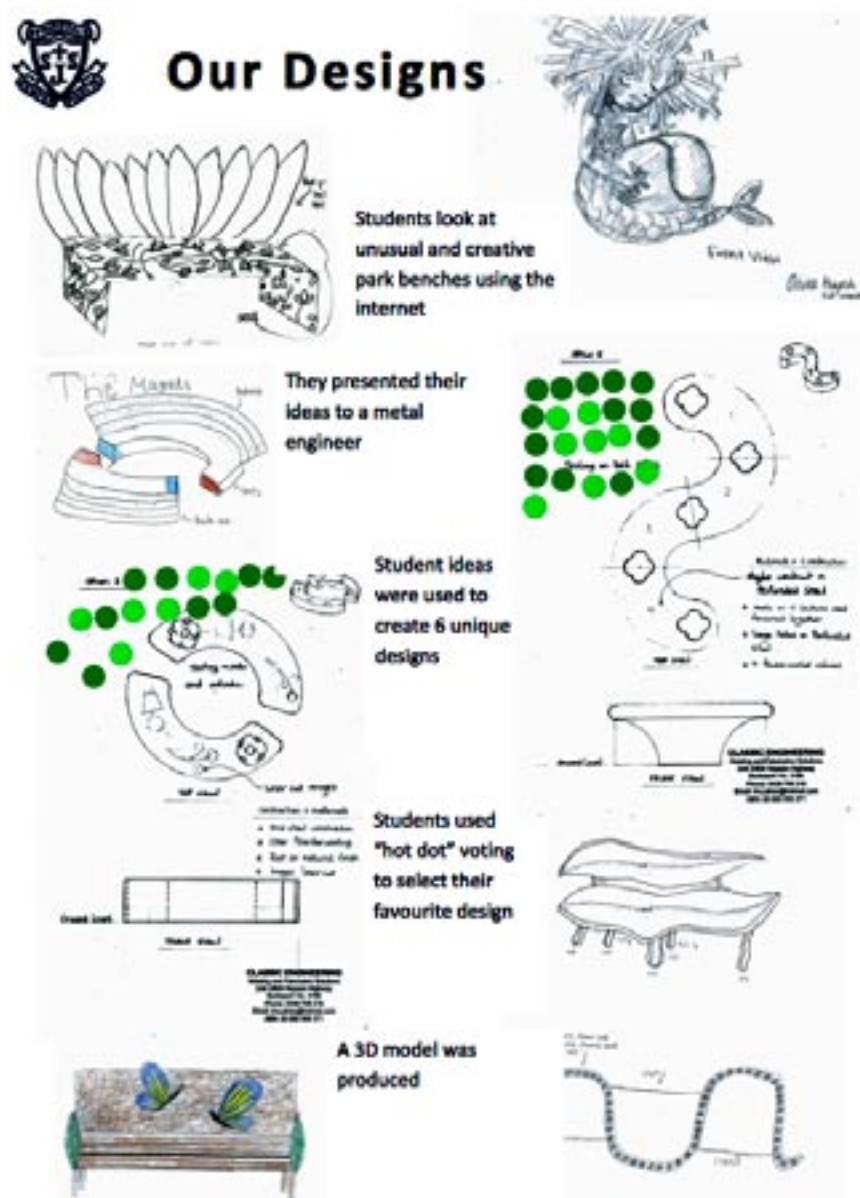
Next the SRC set out ideas for the design: it had to reflect **nature**, be **colourful** and encourage **conversation** ie support people talking when they were using the seating. They asked the 5/6 students to propose designs that met these goals. The SRC then selected the best designs and worked with an engineer (Keysborough welder and fabricator Mick Cuttriss) to narrow these

down to six possible designs that were made into drawings. All the students hot-dotted their favourite design and this was made into a prototype. The final design was for a green bench, with a flowered environmental theme, shaped for users to face one another.

Students described their park bench design:

*The Student Representative Council at St Joseph's Primary School in Springvale has reported in previous issues of **Connect** (##190, 197, 207) about its process of formation and also its development and activities. Here it showcases an enterprising community-based initiative, taken alongside more 'traditional' SRC roles.*

- "The S in our seat design represents Springvale. It was designed with an environmental theme in mind!"
- "It's one of a kind, unique. It's designed by students with kids in mind!"



- "It's good to take the time to sit and relax while at the park or after a busy time shopping!"
- "It has a beautiful floral inlay. We love the vibrant colours and its curved shape."
- "It's something everyone can appreciate and enjoy, both young and old!"
- "Everyone can use and enjoy this seat. The creative shape allows people to see each other while talking."
- "I think it is something everyone can take pride in a real conversation starter!"
- "It's a functional piece of art. Beautiful to look at and fun to use!"
- "A seat like this shows that we take pride in our surroundings! It may encourage others to care for the environment."
- "A great deal of thought was put into the design – over 200 students had input."

Students submitted their plans to the Greater Dandenong City Council. The students all wrote persuasive texts to convince the Council, and presented these to make the case. Council liked the idea but students and the school weren't sure it would go any further. However the students received a pleasant surprise: the bench is now in the final stages of production and will soon be installed in Burden Park.

It is amazing what primary school students can achieve.

For more information, contact:

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(There was also an article in the local paper about the project: <http://dandenong.starcommunity.com.au/journal/2013-12-02/street-seat/>)



Our First Ever School Disco

Recently the St Joseph's Student Representative Council (SRC) put together our first ever **school disco**. This was organised in response to data from our SRC student survey. Through a number of regular planning and working sessions, the SRC organised advertising, music, tickets, and prizes to create a most successful evening.

Titled *The Too Colourful Disco*, the theme encouraged students to wear two key colours.

It was a very memorable night, with everyone on the dance floor. The smoke machine and lighting added to the nightclub atmosphere.

For one and a half hours the students had loads of fun. Each child was given a grab bag with glow-sticks, lollies and a bottle of water. There were lots of competitions, cool prizes and tons of dancing. There was a dance battle where teams of students performed their rehearsed moves to compete for prizes and further prizes awarded to the best dressed students.

Definitely one of our favourite moments was the limbo contest! And how low you could we go as we limbo rocked to Red Foo's number one chart topper? We were Ridiculous!

It was absolutely amazing to see so many people on the dance floor. Some of the songs that we enjoyed were: *Drop it like it's Hot*, *I Gotta Feeling* and *Que Sera* which was used for the finale.

We went around the school the day after the disco and asked everyone what they thought about it all. From what we heard, they definitely wanted another one next year.

This experience has taught us many things as SRC members. You need confidence and must work with responsibility and as a team to get the job done. Also you need to cope with changes and keep to the schedule. We achieved these things and so we are proud to say: "Well done SRC!"

Rebecca and Anthony
Student Representative
Council members





Year 10 SLT: Committed to School and Community

A group of Year 10 students has recently taken our school by storm with an incredible **Student Leadership Team**! The whole school focus on academia has been extended to include leadership and the importance of an independent student voice

The Year 10 **Student Leadership Team (SLT)** is a new student leadership group that came together this year. As leaders, our goal is to be the student voice of Mount Waverley Secondary College. The Year 10 SLT comprises 20 students, all committed to the school and its community. We aim to maximise student participation and involvement, and make sure the school is an enjoyable and beneficial place to every single student.

Our school, Mount Waverley Secondary College, is a non-select entry, co-educational government school in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Our school motto is Community, Choice and Engagement. Our school is an academic school, where students strive to achieve their best in whatever we do. We have a Junior Campus (Years 7 and 8) and a senior campus (Years 9 – 12) with more than 300 students in each year level!

The SLT is a team of students brought together by a common goal, and driven by a shared interest in giving back to the school that we have gained so much from. We collaborate for the efficient functioning

of daily activities, organise, facilitate and participate in community and student bonding events, and assist the staff and student body. We role-model appropriate and positive student behaviour, and work towards making the school environment enjoyable and beneficial to all students.

We do this in many ways. We lead our Year Level Assemblies each week and celebrate the achievements of our students. We use *google forms* to survey students, and present this data to our Principals. Recently we voiced concerns on behalf of the student body about our school toilets ... a few days later all the lights had been replaced.

Other projects we are working on, are a rubbish free school environment, the **Study Group Project** (homework help and tutoring that is run by the students who are keen to help, for the students who would like to get help) and more lunch time activities. We recently met with the **Junior School Leaders** (Year 8) for a combined Leaders' Lunch. We discussed the transition from the Junior to the Senior Campus and how we can work towards

making it a smooth transition. Our Junior Leaders are coming to the Senior Campus next week for a tour so we can show them how great our campus is!

Part of our role as leaders is to increase student involvement in opportunities and events outside of the College. Involvement in **Evatt**, a debating competition run by **UN Youth**, gave us exposure to current global issues and knowledge of the legal and political steps that can be taken to prevent or minimise them. A few of our leaders also participated in the **Rotary Public Speaking** competition, which helped us develop our public speaking skills.

Eight of our leaders attended the **VicSRC Congress Camp**, an experience that was of extreme value and benefit to us. We were highly motivated by the involvement and enthusiasm of all of the members of the camp, and we quickly learnt that the problems we were battling at our school were quite common and widespread in our community. We tried to absorb all the information presented to us and take it back to our school, where we could refine and structure our strategies and action plans.

One of our primary goals – and a key problem identified in the VicSRC Congress – was student motivation. We, as the leadership team, keep coming up





VicSRC Congress delegates

with various ideas to get students more involved and active. We are also starting a social justice group at our school, with the help of **VGen** (World Vision Australia's youth group). Other programs we are getting involved in are the UNICEF *Things That Matter* Project, *World Vision 40 Hour Famine*, **Norman Smith Foundation**, **Foundation for Young Australians** and the *Red Cross Blood Drive*. We have been organising Casual Clothes Days and raising money for organisations in our community. Last term we raised about \$1720, which we donated to the **Heartfelt Foundation**. This term we are raising money for **Monash Youth and Family Services**. On our casual clothes days we have sausage sizzles and sell cupcakes and hot chocolate and play music in the yard.

Other responsibilities of the Year 10 SLT have been:

- SLT students are help with special events such as **Parent Teacher Interviews** or **Information Nights** for younger year levels
- SLT students run the **Year 9 and Year 10 Assemblies** each week. We have assigned specific members to keep in touch with certain departments and relay the information to the rest of the year level. For example, a leader is responsible for relaying information about University Open Days from the school Careers Team.
- **Meet weekly for an SLT meeting.** We run our leadership meetings

quite formally, with a chair person and a minute taker. Everyone speaks in turn, and we use our time efficiently to discuss all our ideas.

- Stay behind after school to work on projects such as **making videos**. At the moment we are working on a farewell video for one of our Principals who is leaving the school.
- **Big Little Ideas:** The idea that we can do 'little' things to make big changes at school. One of our incredibly successful endeavours was a lunch time of blowing bubbles! As soon as we identified that the students were feeling a little pressured by school work, we dedicated a fun filled lunch time to blow bubbles out of colourful tubes. The laughter and happiness was infectious, and we made beautiful memories in the sun as a whole year level (see photos on the next page).

Every member in our team is committed and hard working. We want nothing but the best for our peers and our college community. Communication is a big part of our Leadership team. We communicate formally in meetings and via email, but we chat about details of events and answer any questions using a group *iMessage*. We edit documents and share them using *google drive*.

There is currently no Year 11 Student Leadership Team at MWSC. **Our vision is to form a strong student Leadership team at each year level.** We are hoping to launch a year 11 leadership team in 2015. We want to further push the boundaries and ensure that the incredible potential of our students do not go to waste.



Meeting Terry Roche from Rotary



Combined Year 8 Leaders and Year 10 Leaders lunch

On a personal level, the great work done by my peers and fellow leaders are my inspiration. I am honoured to be a student leader. As a student representative, I think my role is to ensure that our students are well looked after, motivated, encouraged and are appreciated at the correct times. It's important to understand that representatives, however big or small, are important to the society, for they are the pillars of a democracy.

Madu B, Year 10 Leader

Bubbles to boost morale



During this term, I have involved myself in so many activities that I didn't even know existed. From the model UN **Evatt** debate, which really sparked an interest in legal and global politics, to the **Rotary Public Speaking** competition (which I never felt I could do and now am really enjoying it and feeling more confident!) to the **VicSRC Congress Camp**, which was a real eye-opener for me ... having the opportunity to interact with students from different year levels across Victoria has really made me aware of how much student voice has an impact on schools.

Joining the leadership team this term has had a really big positive impact on me. I feel more motivated now to attend school, as I know I can involve myself in many fun activities where I can learn new skills and gain knowledge. I enjoy working with a group of keen, fun and awesome leaders, and listening to a bunch of really cool ideas of how we can simply make school more fun. I have gained so much confidence and new leadership and public speaking skills and knowledge, which will greatly assist me in school and beyond. I am also really excited to be starting a **VGen** group at school with my friends. Knowing that I can be involved in projects and campaigns that will have an impact globally and also my school community is an amazing feeling.

I am really excited about our proposal to have a **Student Leadership Group** for Year 11 in 2015. Having a group of leaders is less stressful, as you are able to share the responsibilities between each other, and you can hear so many different interesting ideas. Having a group also makes more students feel more included and encourages others to be involved in activities in school and beyond.

I'm so grateful to our **Student Leadership Coordinator**, Miss Dureau, for opening up so many opportunities and for being highly supportive of our endeavours. Her encouragement and enthusiasm really inspires lots of us to become more involved in school, step out of our comfort zones and try new things.

Sanjna C, Year 10 Leader

Year 10 Leaders meeting



For more information, contact:

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Student Voice and Challenge-Based Learning



Giving students an opportunity to make a difference in their world is part the culture of our school. When this opportunity is embraced, the results can be very rewarding for the students, the community and the school.

When students have a voice in what and how they learn, learning can be relevant, achievable and have an authentic real world audience. The **Challenge Based Learning** program at St Agnes gives students this opportunity. Here are some examples from recent years.

Impact of Colonisation

Rather than passively learning about colonisation, Year 8 students were challenged to lessen the impact of colonisation on indigenous Australians. Under the big idea umbrella of 'Acceptance', they were to identify a problem and try to solve it at a local level.

Students compared indigenous communities in other countries and wondered why Aboriginal languages were not taught in schools as they were in countries such as New Zealand. This inquiry led to a passion to identify and promote the local indigenous language. To do this, the students formulated a series of guiding questions:

1. What tribal groups are indigenous to our community?
2. What language or dialect is spoken?
3. Who can help us?
4. What do we want to achieve?

Students wanted to keep the local indigenous language alive, by including an Aboriginal language as a verse when we sing the Australian National Anthem.

Working collaboratively, two students contacted government Aboriginal support groups and were told that the indigenous language spoken in our area was **Tharawal**. Excited by this new information, they contacted the Diocesan Aboriginal Support Unit (**Jarara**) for confirmation and were informed that **Tharawal** was a northern dialect and the local language was **Darug**. **Jarara**

then helped the students by advising them of a project to help revive the language and directed the students to a translation of the Australian National Anthem in **Darug**.

The students, with the help of 'just in time teaching' from classroom and support teachers, wrote letters to a Sydney University professor who specialised in indigenous languages, to validate the translation. They also wrote to the author of the translation asking for his permission to use his translation.

Once permission was obtained, the students requested help from our Music teachers to record the **Darug** version of the Australian National Anthem. They also asked the school executive to help promote this dying language in the school by including the **Darug** translation with the English verse of the Australian Anthem, in the student diaries.

Mr Richard Green sent the students audio recordings of himself speaking and singing his translated Anthem. This helped the Music teachers teach the

choir to learn the translation phonetically. Students in the school community who identified as Aboriginal, also helped with the pronunciation. This phonetic translation was taught to the school choir and recorded.

At this point the project 'grew wings' and was embraced by our Aboriginal Support Unit, who invited the choir to sing the **Darug** version of the Anthem at the opening ceremony of NAIDOC week.

Jarara provided further support to this project through the use of teachers who could speak language and actively promoted our recording of the Darug anthem in the Parramatta Diocese. Our choir was invited to sing the English and **Darug** versions of the Anthem at a Principals' conference and were asked to record the Anthem again for use in all school in the Diocese.

This CBL project is the product of Glenn Dajao and Samir Gorgis, two students from non-English speaking backgrounds, who wanted to keep a dying language alive and promote reconciliation with the original inhabitants in our area.

A video of the St Agnes school choir singing the **Darug** translation of the Australian National Anthem can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/kqAPNo5c9bg>



Recording the National Anthem in **Darug**: <http://youtu.be/kqAPNo5c9bg>



Yellamundi waru beranga,

in history's page let every stage, advance Australia fair

Seeds of Hope

Learning about the unique Australian environment was not enough for our Year 7 students; they decided to help the residents of the Blue Mountains after the devastating bush fires in October 2013. Students took the opportunity to make a difference by answering the challenge to help this community.

This was part of the **Challenge Based Learning** program in which students are encouraged to solve a real world problem.

This meant they needed to research the environment and the factors that contributed to this disaster. Students found that this act of nature was a known risk and that local governments had very effective bush fire management plans and awareness programs. This however, did not deter our students from wanting to help the residents.

In preparation for this project an essential question needed to be answered: how can we help this community recover from this disaster? Students also needed to answer some guiding questions such as: what do we know about the environment and the community? What do we need to know and who can help us?

After a week of planning and research, each group decided upon a problem they thought was achievable. Some groups thought residents might appreciate some cleaning products; others thought of the displaced animals; other groups thought that residents might appreciate help regrowing their gardens.

Students divided the tasks among group members and contacted businesses they thought might help

them. Undeterred by the lack of responses from their contacts, they gathered native seeds and asked for donations from their neighbours and friends.

Donations were packaged, well wishes written in Christmas cards and simply signed from 'St Agnes Year 7 students'.

Friends were recruited to deliver the donations directly to residents and a Veterinarian clinic. Nothing more was thought of these donations until a resident made contact with our school via our *Facebook* page to express his gratitude for the thoughtfulness of our students.

The Year 7 students were acknowledged for their thoughtfulness and actions in our local newspaper, but the greater reward was the knowledge that they could and did make a difference.



Contacting businesses



Gathering native seeds



Packing and labelling seeds

Sustainability

When students are given the opportunity to be active participants in their learning, they will often exceed your wildest and highest expectations as a teacher. Learning becomes a dynamic and evolving process and students have little regard for limitations of class time.

Over the past two years, during the implementation of the **Challenge Based Learning** program here at St Agnes Catholic High School, students have voluntarily stayed back at school to work on projects until late into the evening. They have arranged to meet at group members' homes, set up lines of communication, using their media or school networks to ensure everyone is on task, and worked through their recess and lunch breaks.

If students have the support of their school, are given autonomy and control over what and how they learn, even the end of the school year poses no barrier to students committed to a project. This certainly is the case with Jack and Bailey.

As part of a CBL Geography assessment task, Year 8 students were asked to think about a global issue but act locally, as active citizens in the community. Bailey, Jack and their group chose the topic of access to fresh water. They thought about their own access to fresh water in the school and noticed

that many students were opting to buy bottled water rather than drink from the 'water bubblers'. They also noticed that often these plastic water bottles ended up as litter in the school. Their solution was to try to give students access to fresh filtered water and thus limit the amount of purchased plastic bottled water – and consequently reduce littering in the school.

The students found a company offering a product they deemed suitable for the school and, after costing the project, negotiated with the school executive, initially via emails and then in a meeting with the Principal and Deputy Principal, to convince them of the need to fund this filtered water system for students. What began as a project to give students in the school access to fresher water, now morphed into a sustainability issue, as Bailey and Jack persuaded the school executive of the need to foster a culture of re-using plastic bottles, rather than the 'use and discard' habits of students who bought bottled water.

After successfully negotiating the purchase and installation of the filtered water system, fellow student Matthew Reed designed the colour scheme and branding of the station.

Not content to leave the funding of the refill station to the school, the students entered a competition by a company called **Interface** and were one of 20 schools awarded a \$1000 grant for their sustainability initiative.

The 20 award winning initiatives went into another competition, in which the public voted for the best idea. On the 16th of September 2014, Bailey and Jack's project was announced as the winner of the \$20,000 first prize.

Bonita Carlin
*Connected Learning and
HSIE Coordinator
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Jack and Bailey receive their cheque from Brendan Hogan of Interface



Video links about the sustainability project:

Jack Maddeford and Bailey Raymond describing their final product:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRvGCo6Yi1E&list=UUnIO481a75Yin6vx22C_-pg&index=2

Bailey Raymond, Jack Maddeford and Shannen Fenech reflecting on their CBL learning journey:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVE1-nKgc6o&list=UUnIO481a75Yin6vx22C_-pg

Story on the local Diocese website:

www.parra.catholic.edu.au/news-details/latest-news-global/students-recognised-for-sustainability-initiative/true



VicSRC Executive 2014-15

Planning Implementation of Congress Resolutions

The newly elected VicSRC Executive Team has commenced its work on five of the resolutions, selected from a larger pool, passed by Victorian students at this year's VicSRC Congress. These include resolutions about the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), EcoSchools, Extra-Curricular Activities, Inter-School Collaboration and Student Well-Being Counsellors. Action on these resolutions will be developed further during the next 10 months.

The three Executive members who have been working on the resolution: ***To establish links of communication and collaboration between schools*** (Danai, Kristen and Lucas) started planning ways to create local links between schools, so that schools will have the ability and infrastructure to share their resources and to potentially re-establish cluster networks across Victoria. The final aim is that schools will have easy access to the resources necessary for them to function efficiently. This resolution has the possibility of great results; if this dream did come to fruition, all of Victorian students' education would

be significantly enhanced through collaboration rather than competition.

Another resolution is that ***the VicSRC advocate for the Government to provide extra student wellbeing counsellors for secondary schools and equivalent places of learning when requested for by schools***. The team working on this resolution (Qais, Sammy and Sabrina) discussed what the ultimate goal was and their vision for outcomes. After much discussion, they came to the conclusion that their vision was that every single student should feel safe and secure while at school as well as outside

school; however they acknowledged that this would not be done as easily as it was said.

So some of the strategies they decided to employ in order to achieve optimum results included research, which would entail gathering concise information about the current state of student well-being and its support in schools throughout Victoria, and gathering case studies that they would later bring to the attention of key decision-makers. They are also considering the idea of a resource that they could develop, which could potentially redefine how student wellbeing is approached at school – keeping in mind the importance of incorporating student input into this resource and into views on effective student wellbeing support

The team's main aim throughout their term is to ensure that they address this issue thoroughly, as well as work





consistently and collaboratively with the Student Wellbeing Teachers Association. A student-led resource could not only improve approaches to student well-being at schools but also ensure that students have a sense of safety when approaching their student well-being councillors. It would also identify other avenues available that students could utilise – and hopefully create a safer environment for students at school.

The team working on the Education Maintenance Allowance resolution (Demi, Marine and Natalie) have a collective goal for *the Education Maintenance Allowance to be retained or an equivalent scheme to be implemented. This would provide students with the financial support necessary to assist them in finishing their education.* They are currently setting up a petition for people so the community to understand what is happening and so that the VicSRC can collect support for this view, whether through opinions or total numbers.

The fourth group (Margaret, Sam and Tess) are working together on a resolution focusing on environmental sustainability and green initiatives in schools. The resolution is *that the VicSRC support the implementation of green*

initiatives in schools. The aim of these initiatives would be to reduce Victoria's carbon footprint and to create a more positive environment in terms of sustainability. The group plans to create a campaign including a resource to help educate Victorian students and increase awareness generally about climate change and the things that students and their school organisations (SRCs and similar groups) can do to help improve

their school and community – including ways to be more environmentally sustainable. Additionally, they plan to meet and liaise with important decision makers including the Minister of Education and other political parties, and representatives from the Greens and other important environmental groups. Essentially the VicSRC would like to help Victoria become a more environmentally sound place for years to come.

The final resolution is that *the VicSRC establish a website/platform to promote and inform both teachers and students about extra-curricular activities within the community, highlighting the benefits of participation in a diverse variety of activities.* The people working on this resolution (Spencer, Ron and Jordyn) aim to create a website advocating extracurricular activities. This website will be aimed at primary and secondary school students. They're currently in the process of gathering lists of supportive organisations and creating a trial facebook page that will contribute to the prototype for the final website by helping determine what layout and content is optimal for the final product.

*compiled by Sam Ilobuchi
from VicSRC Executive members' reports*



The 'old' VicSRC Environmental Resource Kit

Order in a Meeting: Efficiency and Equity

At the recent VicSRC Executive Camp, we went through a discussion about the structures that assist us to have efficient meetings. In the past, VicSRC meetings have been assisted by three special roles: the **chairperson**, the **co-chair** and the **minute-taker**. These three roles have been essential to our meetings to keep order throughout.

The **chairperson's** job is to direct the meeting in a coherent manner so that everyone has a turn to speak and that arguments do not get too out of hand. They also have the responsibility of getting through everything in the agenda and introducing items in order. The **co-chair**, who sits opposite the chairperson, has the job of helping the chair throughout the meeting. The **minute-taker** takes the minutes (the record of the actions, discussions and motions) of the meetings.

Over the past few years, the VicSRC Executive has rotated these roles every month (with the minute-taker becoming the co-chair at the next meeting, and then the chairperson at the following one). However, last year's Executive began to realise that perhaps this wasn't the best way to go about the meetings. In particular, it didn't allow members to build their skills in the different roles as each role only came round occasionally.



Therefore, at the recent Executive camp, we decided to change the process of the meetings. Rather than having a different person chair or take minutes at every meeting, there will be a designated person who does it for a period of time. It was decided that the chairperson and co-chair would alternate their jobs over a **three month period**, and that the minute-taker would take the job for a **two month period** (we meet monthly). This was agreed because we thought it was necessary that we build upon these essential skills and build upon the feedback that is given.

During the discussion, the pros and cons about these changes were brought up. The benefits were that we would build upon the skills and would have a chance to grow, based upon the feedback that we give each other at the end of each meeting. Another advantage is that the pre-meeting discussion between the co-chair, chairperson and VicSRC co-ordinator will be more consistent over the three month period.

The disadvantage was that, over a year, each person would probably only be able to take part in one role; therefore we wouldn't get to try every role.

We thought that this would be useful information for you if you are running an SRC or student group or chairing any meeting.

Some other useful tips for meetings are:

- Always sit around a round table or, if sitting on the floor, then in a circle. This will ensure that everyone can see everybody and that the chairperson has a clear view of each individual.
- Always have the chairperson and co-chair sitting directly opposite each other so that they can signal to each other if anything goes wrong or they just need help.
- Ensure that everyone has a go at speaking. We started using a 'talking stick' to establish order but found that, after some practice with this, we didn't need it any more.
- The chairpersons should always acknowledge (eg thank) every statement that is made.

We hope that these suggestions and ideas help you in the future to manage your own meetings. Good luck. If you have any problems, please feel free to contact us through: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au

Margaret Tran
VicSRC Executive



Hiring: Teach the Teacher Project Officer



The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) is seeking an experienced facilitator to join our team as VicSRC Project Officer. This 22.8 hour per week (3 days) position will oversee the development and delivery of the **Teach the Teacher** program over the next three years. The role will be responsible for project management, developing and delivering training to support schools implementing the program, and working closely with young people in a school based setting.

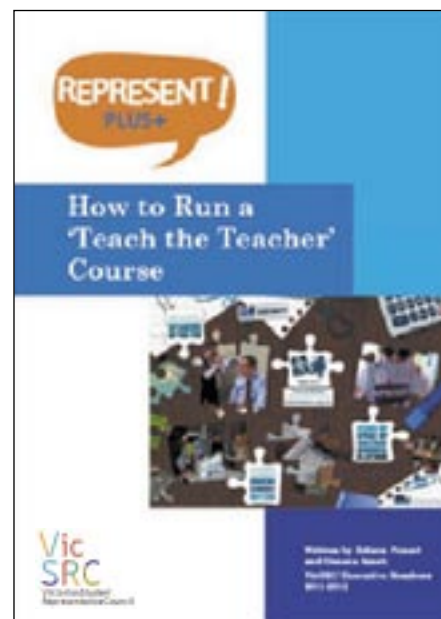
Teach the Teacher is a model of school-based professional development for teachers, which is initiated, organised and run by students at their school, developed by the VicSRC. The program was piloted in 13 schools during 2013–

2014 and an external evaluation was conducted during 2014.

For more information:

www.vicsrc.org.au/aboutus/careers

Applications close: **19 October 2014**



A **resource kit** for students and teachers interested to implement a **Teach the Teacher** program at your school has been developed by the VicSRC. It is part of the **Represent! Plus** resources on the VicSRC website: www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/representplus

Events and Communications Officer



Fiona Campbell joined the VicSRC team as the **Events and Communications Officer** in September 2014, coming with a strong background in not-for-profit sectors in Australia and the UK.

Fiona's professional journey includes interning with Multicultural Arts Victoria, working internationally with MakeBelieve Arts (a theatre and education company based in Deptford, London) and driving communications and media at The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Victoria.

Alongside her experience, is a core belief in the power of good communications to build personal, interpersonal and community capacity. From exploring creative approaches to the curriculum through theatre and education, to planning multi-channel campaigns sharing the voices of young people, Fiona brings passion for creative

content production, event management and social media into the mix.

With a Bachelors Degree in Arts – Drama and a Masters in Communications, Fiona's always looking for new learning experiences. Next up is the pursuit of her teaching qualifications.

When she's not working, Fiona enjoys hatching travel plans, playing social sport and reading a good book. She's also a strong advocate of afternoon biscuit time. In fact, if you're looking for the culprit who stole the last biscuit out of the jar – it was probably her.

Fiona can be reached at the VicSRC at: communications@vicsrc.org.au or 03 9267 3777.



VicSRC Victorian Student Representative Council

The VicSRC has rebranded!

To sign up to the new VicSRC online e-newsletter ... visit:

www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/maillinglist

The **VicSRC** receives funding support from the **Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development** and is auspiced by and based at the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)**. It can be reached there on 03 9267 3744 or, for the cost of a local call from outside Melbourne on 1300 727 176; or by email: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au

News and Reviews

Monitoring and Evaluating Participation Toolkit

This toolkit looks at how to monitor and evaluate children's participation in programmes, communities and in wider society. It is aimed at practitioners and children working in participatory programmes, as well as governments, NGOs, civil society and children's organisations seeking to assess and strengthen children's participation in society.

The toolkit comprises six booklets:

Booklet 1: *Introduction* – provides an overview of children’s participation, how the toolkit was created and a brief guide to monitoring and evaluation.

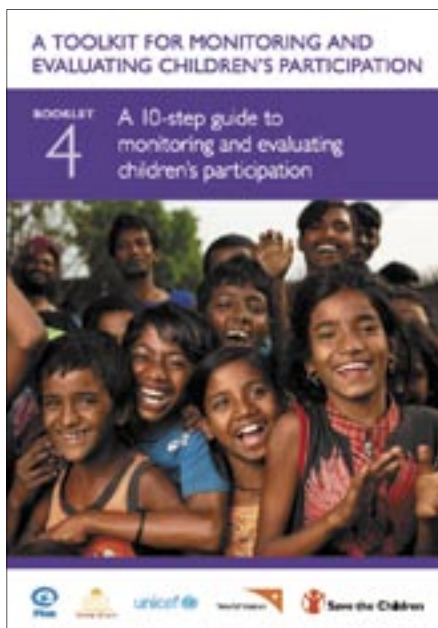
Booklet 2: *Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children* provides a framework and practical tools to measure children's participation in their community and society.

Booklet 3: *How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation* provides a conceptual framework for children's participation and introduces a series of benchmarks and tables to measure children's participation.

Booklet 4: *A 10-step guide to monitoring and evaluating children's participation* looks at involving children, young people and adults in the process. It includes guidance on identifying objectives and progress indicators, systematically collecting data, documenting activities and analysing findings.

Booklet 5: Tools for monitoring and evaluating children's participation provides a range of tools that you can use with children and young people, as well as other stakeholders.

Booklet 6: *Children and young people's experiences, advice and recommendations* has been produced by young people who were involved



in piloting the toolkit. It consists of two separate guides: one for adults and one for children and young people.

Access: Booklet 4, and the whole series, can be found at (respectively):

www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/ME_toolkit_booklet_4-2014.pdf

www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/toolkit-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participation

From Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), Ontario, Canada



Counting down to the 2014 VicSRC Recognition Awards

Taking place on Wednesday 22nd October 2014, the **2014 VicSRC Recognition Awards** are about celebrating the achievements of SRCs and presenting examples of best practice in student voice, student led action and student participation.

Hosted by the Minister for Education, the Hon. Martin Dixon MP, the event recognises outstanding leadership in five categories:

1. Student Leader of the Year
2. Group Action Award
3. Outstanding SRC of the Year
4. SRC Teacher Advisor Award
5. Whole School Focus on Student Voice Award

The ceremony brings together members of the education community, principals, teachers, and – most importantly – students. We look forward to celebrating the achievements of these exceptional young people!

To enquire about the 2014 VicSRC Recognition Awards, please contact Fiona Campbell, Events & Communications Officer: communications@vicsrc.org.au or 03 9267 3777.



VISTA Teacher Meetup

The next Meetup of Victorian SRC Teacher Advisers will be held on **Thursday November 13th at 4.30 pm at Melbourne Girls' College, Richmond.**

This will be a free opportunity for teachers who lead their Student Councils to meet with other teachers and talk about the year they've had and brainstorm ways to reflect with their students about 2014. There will also be time for teachers to discuss and raise other issues of interest and share ideas about their Student Council.

Refreshments provided.

RSVP at: www.eventbrite.com (search on VISTA)

www.vistasrc.org

Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/

This open **facebook** group was initially established by Professor 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

Connect has a presence on **facebook**. Find us at:

 www.facebook.com/pages/Connect/360372760717566

We've been posting some news and links there to complement what you see in the on-line version of **Connect**. It would be great if you could go there and 'like' us, and watch there for news of each **Connect's** availability on-line - for FREE - since we started in June 2013!

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Connect now has no income except donations and sales of literature (opposite). By supporting *Connect* with donations, you keep us going. To make a donation to the work of *Connect*, use the form in this issue or contact us for bank account details in order to make an electronic transfer of funds. We gratefully acknowledge all contributions in *Connect*.

ASPRINworld: the *Connect* website!

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at *ASPRINworld*; *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.

www.asprinworld.com/connect
&
research.acer.edu.au/connect

Local and International 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

Australian:

ParentsVoice (Parents Victoria, Wandong, Vic) Vol 41 Issues 1, 2; March, June/July 2014

Yikes (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 16 Edition 3; October 2014

International:

A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation (Save the Children, London, UK) Booklet 4: A 10-step guide to monitoring and evaluating children's participation; 2014

Democracy & Education (Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling, Portland, Oregon, USA) Vol 22 Issue 2; 2014: <http://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/>

'Student Councils and Beyond' On-Line! **FREE!**

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



Articles from *Connect* are now discoverable through **EBSCOhost** research databases.

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page 28

All back issues of **Connect** from 1979 to the present (that's almost 35 years!) are freely available on-line! Thanks to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), all back issues of **Connect** have been scanned or up-loaded and are on the ACER's Research Repository: **ACEReSearch**.

You can find these issues of **Connect** at:

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.

Connect has a commitment to the sharing of ideas, stories, approaches and resources about active student participation. We are totally supported by donations!



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.

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