

# Connect

*supporting student participation*

ABN: 98 174 663 341

Number 157:  
February 2006



## Students' (Public) Voices

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this  
issue

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# Connect

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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.

### Cover:

**Radio Pupitre - Onda Escolar:** seasonal greetings from a Spanish student-run radio station. See page 5 for details and for an Australian example.

### Connect:

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## This Issue:

Welcome to a new school year! I hope it's a busy and challenging year, with lots of exciting initiatives that enable students to be centrally and meaningfully involved in decisions and action about their lives.



Over the holidays I've been steadily working on the 'new' *Connect* book about *Student Action Teams*. There's still a bit to be done, but I'm hopeful that this will be ready in about March or April; the next issue of *Connect* should have further information. This book is based in the experiences of local *Student Action Teams* in a cluster of primary and secondary schools in Melbourne's northern suburbs, and aims to tell their stories and to provide clear 'how to' information about the implementation process at a school level.

*Student Action Teams* will also be the topic for two youth policy forums in South Australia in March, and there is information in this issue about these (page 10). I'd like to expand such approaches and would like to hear from groups elsewhere who might be interested to organise seminars or forums or training sessions about such 'student participation' curriculum approaches.

There are also plans for the production of a further *Connect* book, this time around the learnings from the *Reaching High* literacy camps in northern Victoria.

A previous set of *Connect* books was produced by the Victorian Participation and Equity Program (PEP) in 1985. These are now all out of print except for *Students and Work* (copies of this are available from *Connect* for \$5). I was reminded of these by the article in this issue about student-run radio in Coober Pedy. I went hunting for a copy of the *Connect* reprint book *Students and Radio*, but have just my own copy left! However, the early issues of *Connect* from which articles were drawn for this book are still available and contain much 'gold'.

### Connect website

I've also set up a very basic website for *Connect*, with information about the magazine, content listings of recent issues and an outline of *Connect* books. Have a look at:

<http://www.geocities.com/rogermhold/Connect>

Your feedback is most welcome. Eventually (and slowly), I'll get content listings of all back issues on that site so that you can chase up specific articles or themes.

This issue of *Connect* also contains some tools and resources that will be of particular value for the work of Student Councils. Let *Connect* know about how you have used these ... and about any other resources you have found useful. That's what we're on about: sharing examples and developing support.

Roger Holdsworth

**NEXT ISSUE: #158: April 2006**

**Deadline for material: end of March 2006**

# IDEC in Sydney, July 2006

The International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) is an annual gathering of learners of all ages from many countries around the world. These are people who are concerned and passionate about education which empowers the individual within a caring community and implements democratic values and human rights in their places of learning. **In 2006, IDEC will be held in Australia - in Sydney - for the first time.**

From **10th -16th July 2006**, at St Ignatius' College, Riverview in Lane Cove, Sydney, the Australasian Association of Progressive and Alternative Education (AAPAE), will host the **International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC)** for the first time in Australia.

IDEC is a week long, live-in gathering, where presenters become participants and participants can become presenters. Encouragement

is given for participatory, innovative, creative 'methods' which reflect the principles of democratic and sustainable education.

## **Why Democratic Education?**

The introduction of democratic principles in socially, environmentally and economically marginalised schools and communities has a significant effect in empowering individuals and their communities.

"Only in a democratic environment based on respect for diversity and dialogue can individual self-expression and self-government be secured and freedom of association be upheld... people of all cultures value their freedom of choice and feel the need to have a say in decisions affecting their lives." (*Speech given by Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General in Oslo, accepting the Centennial Nobel Prize.*)

## **Democracy and Sustainability**

2005-2015 is UNESCO's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). UNESCO wants to create what it sees as 'a new vision' of education which respects the dignity of human rights of all and gives a commitment to social and economic justice for all, a commitment to intergenerational responsibility, respect and care for the diversity of earth's ecosystems for cultural diversity, building a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

*Democratic Education and Education for Sustainability* share fundamental key elements: power, participation, partnerships and capacity building of human resources and structures.

***Students, teachers, administrators, consultants, parents - all those interested in democratic education - are invited to the:***

## **International Democratic Education Conference IDEC 2006**

**10-16 July 2006**

***St Ignatius College  
Riverview, Sydney***

**Full week live-in rates available including accommodation and registration;  
or 1-day and 2-day rates -  
with and without accommodation**

**Information:  
[www.idec2006.org](http://www.idec2006.org)**

**Contact: [enquiries@idec2006.org](mailto:enquiries@idec2006.org)**

The **Australasian Association for Progressive and Alternative Education (AAPAE)** is for all those interested and involved in progressive, alternative and democratic education. It is for learners and educators, regardless of age. It is for all in the community who wish to share and extend their experience and knowledge of such education. Those working in AAPAE are deeply interested in building the capacity and passion of individuals and helping develop a community and society of citizens able and willing to actively participate in creating healthier, more equitable and sustainable societies, people skilled in and committed to participating in democratic processes.

**[www.aapae.edu.au](http://www.aapae.edu.au)**



The key principles of the sustainability covenant also are many of those practised and lived in alternative, progressive and democratic education: holistic, inter-disciplinary learning, driven by respect and other values, through critical thinking, problem-solving and locally relevant experience, expressed through diverse pedagogies and methods, with all learners participating in the decision-making.

Sustainability is a conversation about creating a future for all that is healthy. We hope IDEC can bring people together for a part of that conversation.

In a democracy, people have rights **and** responsibilities. IDEC (and AAPAE more generally) is about helping people recognise, live and act on their democratic responsibilities.

AAPAE hopes to link the goals of the Australian IDEC with the current work being undertaken by UNESCO. AAPAE has a dream to participate in this decade through IDEC and to enable many learners within Australia and as many other countries as possible, to come to Australia so that they can join all of us in working towards creating sustainable lives, free of poverty, caring for the planet, full of hope for the following generations.

## Conference Themes

The general theme of IDEC2006 is:

### ***Democracy! What's Next?***

This is a challenging question about the shape of *Democratic Education in the Future*: initiating change for sustainable learning and living.

## Participants

Some of the key participants and speakers will be:

- **Stephanie Alexander:** chef, author and founder of the Kitchen Garden, Collingwood College, Melbourne;
- **Louise Porter:** Australian author and academic;
- **John Marsden:** Victorian author, teacher and school starter;
- **Robin Grille:** psychologist, psychotherapist, author of *Parenting for a Peaceful World* and parent at Kinma, Sydney;
- **Bill and Lorna Hannan:** Victorian educators, authors and school starters;
- **Di Roberts:** Principal, Minimbah School, Armidale and leading Aboriginal educator and community leader;
- **Yaacov Hecht:** founder and organiser of the first IDEC in Israel 1993, and President of the Institute of Democratic Education, Tel Aviv, Israel;
- **Jack Heath:** Inspire Foundation;
- **Rebecca Gallam:** Montessori Association;
- **Dr David Cohen:** co-founder of several alternative schools in Australia including Currumbena; educator and academic;
- **Ian Gibson:** head, Future of Education, Macquarie University, Sydney;
- **Robert Walshe:** long-time community activist for environmental and community issues and advocate for democracy and democratic processes in and out of the classroom;
- **Sally Carless:** founder and director of Global Village School, an international K-12 home-school diploma program focused on peace, justice, diversity, and sustainability;
- **Jerry Mintz:** founder of the Alternative Education Resource Organisation, New York, USA;
- **Nicole Brunker:** ex-teacher from Currumbena and Kinma;
- **Kageki of Tokyo Shure:** Japanese Democratic School;
- **Stuart Hill:** Foundation Chair of Social Ecology and Head of Program, School of Education, University of Western Sydney;
- **Adrienne Huber:** founder and teacher, educational (literacy) consultant, New York
- **Dennis Foley:** descendant of the Capertree/Turon River people, Wiradjuri; lecturer at Koori Centre, Sydney University;
- **Phil Smith:** director, KNOW-HANDS, vice-president, Australian Association for Environmental Education;
- **Kumi Kato:** lecturer, School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies, The University of Queensland;
- **Derek Sheppard:** a founder and elected staff member, Booroobin Sudbury Democratic Centre of Learning, Queensland.

Other participants to be confirmed could be:

- **Yoshiyuki Nagata:** senior researcher, Department for International Research and Co-operation, National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER), Japan;
- **Derry Hannam,** UK researcher and advocate;
- **Ginny Neighbour:** NSW Commission for Children and Young People;
- **Boori Pryor:** author and teacher of Aboriginal culture;
- **Sandy Barnes:** teacher at Preshil, Melbourne;
- **Mandy Cook:** former teacher at Alia College, Melbourne;
- **Amy Mortimer:** former Currumbena student and part-time lecturer at Sydney University;
- **Eric Schneider:** PNYV (Positive News Youth Views), e-zine for Youth Leadership and Change-making, Berlin (official project of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development).

## Contact

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**IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC IDEC**



**R**adio Pupitre: Onda Escolar is a student-run radio station in Orihuela in Spain. There was a short article about the station, which began in 1991 and involves students from ages 3 to 15, in *Connect* issue 130 (August 2001). At the end of last year, *Connect* received this electronic Christmas card from the program and its teacher Antonio Navarro Martínez, so we thought we'd pass it on to all readers.

For more information, contact Antonio on:

[antoni oriola@hotmail.com](mailto:antoni oriola@hotmail.com)

# Student Radio

**R**adio is the most accessible of the media. It caters for all people with many interests. Radio is portable and can be heard in the background, turned up loud, driving in your car, or at the beach on short wave. Radio has been and still is an integral part of young people's experience, therefore it is quite common for students to want to develop some type of 'radio' in their school.

I was fortunate to have the support of the school leadership team in 1997 to organise the establishment of a **radio station** at Coober Pedy Area School. We did a competition for the name with all students and 'Dusty Radio' was selected, as it reflects our environment well.

It didn't happen overnight: it was a long process. A lot of patience is needed to set up a radio station. First the school (students, staff etc) need to decide what *type* of radio station they want to set up. Initially this could be nothing more than a CD player hooked up to a console and connected to speakers around the school (though I don't recommend this).

Another option is to apply for a **Narrowcast Radio Licence**. A **narrowcast licence** allows you to broadcast on FM to a small area on low power output. This can cover a school and nearby houses. To do this you need to check out the ABA web site [www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au) This gives information about temporary community radio licences and also about narrowcasting. Have a good read as there is a lot of information there. Take note of what forms you need to fill in. Phone the ABA with any questions. The process takes a while.

It is too big a job for any one person to do, but sometimes you need a person with a passion for radio to keep it on track in its early stages. Get a group of students involved and keep them informed of the process and where the paperwork is at. Identify students to take on roles and responsibilities. You may need to explain roles but let the students take it on board so they develop a responsible work ethic where they can support each other. My experience is that if you give young people responsibility, they can be trusted.

## Overcoming Barriers

**Bureaucracy** is a barrier: waiting for the licence. It is frustrating, particularly in the eyes of the students. While waiting, hone up skills in media or broadcasting lessons.

**Get staff and leadership on side:** get them involved in some way. For example we used to get our staff to leave homework information in a box each day and we would read it out after school on air so parents knew if homework had been set (he he).

**Funding:** to set up radio station, you probably need around \$5000 for a basic model. This is the cost for antenna, console, CD player, microphones and transmitter. You can buy state of the art gear but then you do need heaps of money!

There are also barriers with **burn out:** if the staff involved do too much; and with **knockers:** some people who will complain once it's up and running well.

## Outcomes

A youth-based radio gives students a voice and empowers them to make decisions about the running of the radio station. This project has meant that the students are working with school, government and community to develop a positive and tangible expression of student voice through student voices on radio - on the air. There are also increased skills in grant application writing.

**Dusty Radio** has become Coober Pedy's Community Radio Station, which is based at the school. (It started as a narrowcast station.) We have interviewed many celebrities, provided jobs for students and community members. We have trained people in radio courses using **Radio Adelaide** as an RTO. We have helped provide workplace experience for many students.

We have also helped development of self concept for students and community members. We have been able to present Coober Pedy and the outback in a positive light. We have developed an amazing learning experience for students - and an experience that is fun.

*Bob Pryce*

## Contact:

For more information, contact **Bob Pryce:** Learning Band Coordinator, Middle and Senior Years, Northern Country District, SA. There is so much in this to talk about over coffee etc. Feel free to contact me as above. Phone me on: 0417 817 612 or e-mail: [Pryce.bob@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:Pryce.bob@saugov.sa.gov.au)

# Student Action About Values

In 2005-2006, grade 4 and 5 students from a cluster of six Catholic primary schools in the Manningham local government area in Melbourne (that covers Bulleen, Doncaster, Templestowe and Donvale), are investigating and taking action around **values**.

The schools are using a Student Action Team approach to make what could be abstract ideas into a concrete and practical area for student investigation and action. The students are working in their individual schools, and then meeting as a cluster at inter-school Student Forums to look at what values are held to be important by families, schools and the wider community, seeing what these values mean and how important people think they are, observing what people do based on these values (or lack of them) and then designing action to make sure that improvements happen.

The cluster has been funded by an Australian Government Values Education Grant through the Curriculum Corporation. The project began in mid 2005 and will continue until the end of May 2006.

## Student Forum One

Initially students in each of the six schools brainstormed about what values are and what they thought the important values were in their school communities. They brought these first perceptions to an inter-school Student Forum and shared them with other students and with teachers.

At this Forum, students were also introduced to the nine national values that the Federal Government has defined. They mapped the values that they had identified against these, and in most cases reached agreement that they were talking about similar things. However the students also decided to change the title and definition of some of the national values for their investigation. The students also discussed what the operation of these values might look like within their schools and wider communities.

At this point, the students made an important decision: that they wanted to investigate this topic further, with a view to **doing something** about making sure that action was taken around these values: *if these are important values, they said, we should be making sure that action ... from our homes to our Governments ... is in line with them.*

## Researching Values

Student Action Teams were set up in each of the schools. Each Student Action Team chose three of the nine values to examine in more detail, with two schools looking at each value. In their schools, some Student Action Teams worked within a single class with a teacher, while others were drawn from several classes across the year level.

The Teams started by discussing their chosen values further, writing definitions to show what they meant to them and asking others about this too) and developing 'Y' charts and similar devices to show what each value *looked, sounded and felt* like.

The Teams then designed various forms of data collection to explore these values within their communities. They were challenged to think at three levels: homes or families, schools and community. They surveyed students and parents and community members, they interviewed people, they observed behaviour in the school and through the local media. Some of the survey questions asked respondents about how important they thought these values were; other questions asked about changes over time, or whether people thought they and others acted in accordance with these values.

## Research Workshop

A student Research Workshop was held in October, and this allowed students to discuss the investigations that they were doing, and gain some new skills in research design, data collection and analysis of information. In particular, some students learned how to use computer software to graph results and display findings, how to look at comments and other forms of qualitative data, and how to get information from community sources. In each team, the aim was to have someone who became an 'expert' in the different areas of research and who would then share that expertise with other students in the Team.

## Student Forum Two

The second major Student Forum was held late in 2005. Here students presented the results of their investigations. Initially they paired with the school that was looking at the same value, and the two teams of students reached agreement on the definition of the value. They then compared their research and findings and produced a poster summarising their work to date.

Students then went on a 'guided visualisation' in which they each imagined a future world where the specific value that they were investigating was strongly in evidence, and compared this to what they saw today. In school teams they then shared their concerns, and started to define some priorities for action: *What big objectives do we have? What action is best suited to achieving that?*

Finally the groups began to brainstorm possible actions that the Teams could take in 2006. The Teams will now meet again to talk about possible forms of action, define directions more precisely and begin their action phase.

**Sue Cahill** is project coordinator. For further information, contact her at St Charles Borromeo Primary School, Serpells Road, Templestowe 3106 Vic Ph: 03 9842 7634; e-mail: [scahill@stcharls.melb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:scahill@stcharls.melb.catholic.edu.au)



## Teaching and Learning

The operation of the Student Action Teams in these six schools has not only had an effect on the students' learning and understanding about Values. It has also involved teachers in some reassessment of teaching and learning approaches.

Here two of the teachers write about their reflections on the first part of the journey:

### Being Challenged

When Sue Cahill invited me to be a part of this project, I honestly did not really know what I had accepted. At the time I probably accepted on blind faith – knowing that Sue had worked incredibly hard on writing this submission – but I knew from past experience that Sue followed very passionate causes. So initially I was happy to come aboard.

I often refer to this project now as being in a 'love/hate' relationship!!! There have been so many aspects of this project that have challenged me both personally and professionally. It has taken me out of my protected and at times small world as a 'primary teacher' into a larger, wider sphere only made up of not only professionals, but people coming from many and varied walks of life.

Having experienced Student Action Teams in the past, through the eyes of my son, I knew that it was a model that I believed in and was excited to be a part of. I was also very keen to be working again more closely with small groups of children.

What I hadn't anticipated was how anxious I became when I realised that I had no idea or maybe 'control' over what would or could evolve at the end!! Many times, when I was feeling frustrated, I would compare the two SATs and would always come up with the response: "theirs is so concrete (raising money for a school in PNG)" and mine was soooooo abstract. It took me ages and many, many hours of debriefing with Sue and the other cluster coordinators to allow the seeds that had been sown to slowly shoot. Once I relaxed and became more affirmed (took the pressure off myself) that it was the **process** that was more important than having a 'super **product**' at the end, I was then much more open to enjoy and develop better relationships with the children.

An insight most definitely for me was that I also realised that they had picked up on my 'tension' and consequently they became tense and unproductive too. When I relaxed, they relaxed also. I also laughed more, and they laughed too. It set up a ripple effect. Children who were not achieving started to really shine. This was also evident at our Cluster Forums. The children now really do believe that they have a voice and can make a difference. I now believe that too.

**Geraldine Butler**

St Charles Borromeo Primary School, Templestowe

### Valuing Values

On reflection, I find it easiest to categorise the project into three distinct areas: the **values** component, **student action team** and my **personal professional growth**.

The **Values** component of the project was a process that made (or attempted to make) the intangible tangible. If a group of teachers were asked to develop a curriculum to lead prep students to not only an understanding of integrity, but also how they could effect change to develop that value in the community,

I'm not sure it would be met favourably. But working with a group of 9 to 11 year olds to explore values enabled us to see, with simplicity and clarity, the words and actions existing in our community. The students' understanding of some quite esoteric concepts was extraordinary.

The **Student Action Team (SAT)** component continually reminded me how blessed we are to have the opportunity to engage with the kids of today. Facilitating a process that empowered all who participated to be better people and lead others to be better people has been a deeply satisfying experience.

On reflection, the greatest teaching point in the SAT framework was the continual challenge to listen actively to what the students had to say and to allow for the information exchange between students to be the crux of our gatherings – not merely an introduction or reflection at the end. By developing a list of 'group operation criteria' with the students, it enabled them to operate independently within the boundaries of how a good group operates. By taking away all of the peripheral 'stuff' that prevents student groups from succeeding, the students took control and developed a focus on the dialogue rather than the elements that often cause distraction.

Some examples of this structure are:

- One person speaking at a time;
- Everyone's voice is valued;
- Recording thoughts and suggestions;
- Working within a time limit;
- Rotating group leadership; and
- Seeking assistance when necessary.

A strong framework enables the students to explore, learn and understand in a variety of ways. It gives students the scaffold they need to take risks and, when things don't go exactly as expected, a soft place to land.

Personally, my **learning** has been bountiful!

As an educator, I have always held as sacrosanct the need to put students at the centre of all I do: that I must ensure I don't teach them just knowledge but teach them the skills to understand the knowledge; that good curriculum allows for this to happen while superficial curriculum allows students to regurgitate facts. It's the connections and relationships that students identify that show us the depth of understanding they have come to. So if this has been my history, then what is my future?

The adage, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got" is so true. However, this year we have attempted to ensure that hasn't been the case. Not only have I operated within a completely new structure within the school by drawing students from six different classrooms, working with multi-age action teams, meeting and communicating with five other schools and outside agencies, **but** the team of students and I have attempted to effect change in our community by **valuing values**. In the years to come, who knows how successful we will be. But in the immediate future, I know it has made me a better teacher. It has made the students believe they have a valid and important voice. And the project has promoted a structure of support and collegiality between schools.

Michael Fullan says, "It isn't until schools really care about the success of other schools in their area that they are truly successful." ([www.michaelfullan.ca](http://www.michaelfullan.ca))

**Leesa Duncan**

Curriculum Coordinator, St. Clement of Rome School, Bulleen

# Auditing the SRC



“How well are you *really* doing?”



There are various ways you can go about checking how well your Student Council is going. Those ways are often called ‘auditing’ your work. Does that sound a scary idea?

The very first thing that must be said here is that auditing is only a scary word if you’re doing something wrong or you exist in the cut-throat world of big business. The word actually means **evaluating your methods, progress, strengths and weaknesses** and checking that all your resources went where they were meant to.

At Second Strike we get excited when the word **audit** is used because to us it represents opportunities to *improve* and *change* the way we work if will bring better outcomes. But people sometimes fear the word ‘audit’ because they know they will be shown something about themselves that could be improved: many people don’t take criticism well. But you and your Student Council will!

The second thing that must be said is that the approaches used in this kit may not all be suitable for you. We wrote this kit because we rejected most of the measurements of success given to us by others: we didn’t value the same things that some traditional evaluation processes did. You may disagree with the direction we are leading you and we expect you to challenge it and disregard the conclusions we point to **if** and **only if** you have good reason to do so **and** if you arrive at other helpful conclusions.

But here is one audit tool you could try using to think about how well your Student Council is going.

*David Mould and Teigan Leonard*

## Audit ”

an examination of accounts by an authorised person or persons; a statement of account; a check or examination; an evaluation of a specified quantity or quality, as in energy audit, efficiency audit. – vt to examine and verify by reference to vouchers. etc.

*Chambers Concise Dictionary*

## Translation:

For an SRC this means that an audit is the process of checking all your records and confirming everything you’ve done:

- The money you said you would spend was spent correctly;
- The things you bought/own are where they are supposed to be;
- Things you said you would do were done.

But, more importantly, it is also your examination of how you do things:

- Are you wasting a lot of time that could be better spent?
- Are you focused on the wrong things?
- Are you going about your projects in a negative or unhelpful method?
- Could you be better? Faster? Stronger? More popular?
- More independent?



## A Quick Check-Up:

# Audit Your SRC

This audit is not designed to make you feel bad about your Student Council's performance or to judge it in any way. The 24 statements are designed for you to think about what your Student Council is currently doing and to give an indication of what it might be able to do.

**A truly successful Student Council will have at least 70% of the following symptoms:**

- All student representatives are elected by students, without teacher input or interference.
- Runs elections during term 3 or 4 of the previous year. The Student Council is functional during term 4 and immediately on return to school the following year.
- Has regular meetings, chaired by an elected student leader. Students prepare and distribute the minutes and agenda.
- Has a logo or mascot or possibly specific Student Council colours as part of its identity.
- Has undergone some training at some point of the year.
- Its Teacher Adviser has attended an Student Council professional development course.
- Students attend inter-SRC conferences.
- Has a constitution that has been written by students, is regularly maintained and is known by all the students in the Student Council.
- Has at least **six** methods of regular communication with the rest of the student body. At least two of these need to be two-way communication.
- Runs a student survey of some type at least twice a year.
- Has pictures of the representatives displayed on the wall somewhere in the school.
- Is considered more important than school captains or prefects.
- Has active representation on School Council and on some of the sub-committees of School Council.
- Runs at least one major event every year.
- Raises funds for its own use, not just for charities.
- Tries to change school policy other than simply student uniforms.
- Has a designated Student Council room or office.
- Representatives can access resources in the school such as the phone, photocopying and stationery.
- Regularly meets with the school administration team.
- Involves other students throughout the year, especially those who stood for election to the Student Council but were unsuccessful.
- Has successfully negotiated with the school for some change that initially the school administration did not want to occur.
- Student Council Members enjoy working on the Student Council and describe it as 'fun'.
- Hosts celebrations just for Student Council members and invited guests after significant achievements or as team bonding exercises. Hosts an end of year celebration for student leaders.
- Has a serious presence at the end of year assembly for students and parents, and not just as a parking attendant or usher.

**Our Student Council score: \_\_\_ / 24**

The ideas in this article and the above tool are based on the **Second Strike Productions Resource Kit: Audit the SRC** and are used here with their permission.

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**Web: [www.second-strike.com](http://www.second-strike.com); E-mail: [info@second-strike.com](mailto:info@second-strike.com)**



## **Buddies at Preston South Primary School**

**A**t Preston South Primary School we aim to have our Preps feeling confident and comfortable, both in the classroom and in the playground. We believe that students, as well as teachers, can assist Preps in their important transition into school life.

Our Buddy Program operates in two major ways:

### **Our Little Buddy Program**

In the first week of the school year, students in Years 1 and 2 are paired with Preps. Initially they meet indoors and engage in simple activities such as eating lunch together. Then they go outside to play together. This means that Preps always have someone of a similar age who knows the school routines and who can help to look after their special needs.

### **Our Cross-Age Tutoring Program**

Shortly after the Preps' entry into the school, they commence a Cross-Age Tutoring Program with Year 5 and 6 students. They meet for a one-hour session each week of the school year. In small groups, they engage in a range of interesting activities such as Drama, Art and Craft, Cooking and computer games.

Each Prep student is matched carefully with one or two of the senior students. It is extremely beneficial for Preps to become familiar with the oldest students in the school. Many great friendships continue throughout the year with the tutors ensuring that their tutees are safe and happy.

*For more information:*

**Thérèse West**  
*Principal, Preston South PS,  
Hotham Street, Preston Vic 3072*

**C**ross-Age Tutoring Program were amongst the first 'student participation' initiatives recognised and formally organised in Australia. In these programs, older students (tutors) work with younger students (tutees) as part of their studies. The tutors receive academic credit for their work; in many cases they are required to prepare lesson plans, organise and implement learning activities and reflect on how their tutee is developing.

While there are many social aspects of cross-age tutoring programs (as tutors provide personal support, advice and encouragement), cross-age tutoring programs go beyond such 'peer support' to acknowledge that students can take responsibility for each others' (and their own) learning.

Many evaluations have strongly supported cross-age and peer tutoring programs for their academic and self-esteem benefits for both tutors and tutees.

Many schools currently conduct such programs, often not formally recognising them as 'student participation programs' any more, but simply as 'things we do'. Here's a short description of one such program that I found on a staffroom wall - it is published with the permission of the school. This is a school where such practices have become the normal part of teaching and learning approaches that trust students as competent young people with valuable roles to play within the school.

However, some schools unfortunately use such programs to 'reward' a few confident and capable students, whereas the initial intent and strength of such programs in the USA and in Australia lay in their ability to recognise the capabilities of all students and, in particular, to provide responsibilities for otherwise marginalised or 'failing' students who can, with support, become powerful tutors.

**Connect** has, in the past, presented stories of cross-age tutoring programs, and summarised resources and research in this area. If you are interested to find these resources, please ask.

**Roger Holdsworth**

## **Student Action Teams: the new student voice movement**

***Two South Australian Youth Policy Forums: with Roger Holdsworth***

**Tuesday March 14th, 2006: 9.00 am to 12.00 pm**  
Radisson Playford Ballroom, North Terrace, **Adelaide**, SA

**Wednesday March 15th, 2006: 9.30 am to 1.00 pm**  
Cooinda Club, Flinders Terrace, **Port Augusta**, SA

**Free - RSVP:** *Kylie Maglica: Office for Youth: (08) 8207 0614; or [kylie.maglica@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:kylie.maglica@dfc.sa.gov.au)*