How are we listening to students?

- Student Voice research ... *in a Rio de Janeiro Public School*
- Journey to Agency
- Student Voice & Respectful Relationships *Keilor Downs College, Vic*
- We hold the keys to the future ... and should not be afraid to say so
- Professional Learning: Listening to Student Voices *Merriang Special Development School, Vic*
- Primary School Engagement: An evaluation
- VicSRC: Growing our VicSRC: members/partners *VicSRC Ambassadors*  
  *VicSRC Student Voice Workshops*  
  *Staff and student positions*

Resources:
- Listening: a reflective tool
- *Orrai Kaatha Pasanga*: Indian film
- Primary School SRC/JSC Conference (Vic)
- Civics and Citizenship Conference (Vic)
- Deepening relationships between youth research & practice: USA Conference
- Ask Us...: ACT resource guide
- Amplify: Victorian student voice practice guide
- Student Voice webpage: CEM
- Student Voice Research and Practice *facebook group*
- Connect ... available on-line ... on facebook ... archived ... access to other on-line resources
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There is a particular focus in this issue on listening. As we've pointed out, while 'student voice' is about increasing the capabilities and willingness of students to speak up (amplifying their voices), it is equally about increasing the capabilities and willingness of others (teachers, adults, student representatives) to hear, listen, respond to and act on the issues being 'voiced' by students. To ignore serious listening as an integral intention of voice, may mean we invalidate the whole concept!

In 2017, an article in Connect from Jenna Gillett-Swan and Jonathon Sargeant, Queensland-based researchers, asked, "How can student participation and voice be truly effective if the school culture is ultimately one that does not enable these processes?" They worried that "their [young people's] participation may in itself lessen the child's wellbeing if they experience either antipathy toward their contributions or an outright rejection of their ideas." They concluded that "more work is needed in those schools that do not already have a voice inclusive participatory culture. Only when the value rather than the process of gathering the student voice is more widely accepted, will the potential of the child's contribution be fully realised beyond those adults, schools and industries who already believe in it." (Beyond the project) in Connect 224-225, April-June 2017)

Similarly, in this issue, in their review of the VicSRC's Primary School Engagement project (pp 24-25), Eve Mayes, Rachel Finneran and Rosalyn Black point to "the importance of listening alongside 'having a voice'" and to the need for "attention to what enables and constrains student voice in teaching and learning, and professional learning through student voice."

This has been noted as an issue for some time. For example, when asked at a workshop: 'Why is student voice important?'; teachers largely emphasised that it improved students' engagement, motivation and learning; but students emphasised that it improved the school - ie there were improved outcomes for all. They also drew attention to whose voices are listened to, and whose voices are silenced.

As we noted in the last issue of Connect, we've been working on some approaches that might support 'listening.' The first draft of a reflective tool is contained in this issue (pp 17-21). This can focus upon an individual classroom, or on school-wide practices. We'd absolutely love it if you'd try this out, individually or collectively (eg in a staff meeting), and let us know how it goes. It’s a draft, and we'd love to improve it and to share its use.

Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bimonthly since 1979!

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

Cover:
Student Voice ... but are we listening?
And to whom? And to what? See page 17.

This Issue:

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Next Issue ...

In the next issue of Connect we might include a further tool that we've been working on: an Audit of Practices around Student Voice, Agency and Participation. What are you already doing? What is widespread? What is possible? What are some ideas that you've never considered? As always, we'd love to hear from YOU about practices in your classroom and school!

Roger Holdsworth
Student Voice Research in a Rio de Janeiro Public School: Listening to one another in the context of violence

Violence in public schools in Brazil is a norm, not an exception. Of course it varies from location to location. Commentator Soares State School falls into the first category.

It is located at Nova Iguacu, in the Baixada Fluminense region, which consists of many municipalities where organised crime is mainly present due to the fact that the dealers' sales points are close to Rio de Janeiro City; and where approximately 6,323,037 people live in 763 shanty towns [favelas] (Census of 2010, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE): Rio de Janeiro, RJ.).

Therefore this school is located within the highest violence context in the region. It was not by chance that the research group arrived at the school in the first school semester of 2012 and the 9th Grade students asked us to include the theme of violence as a subject of study, along with gender and poverty.

The research that we arrived with was entitled: “Gender And Poverty: Practices, Policies and Educational Theories: Images of Schools”. It was developed from the period of 2010 to 2013, as a continuation of our previous research: “School Failures: gender and poverty” (2008-2010). Both research projects intended to investigate the impact of gender and poverty on the students' poor performances.

We involved eleven 9th Grade students as primary subjects and researcher collaborators. Their main task was to interview the 6th Graders about those issues. It was not the first group experience including students as primary subjects in our research, but it was the first time in which they had acted as interviewers of each other. That is, their voices accounted for a major source of meaning in the significance of our findings, in our case, about the sorts of exclusion faced by students in public schools.
At that time, the 9th Graders were trained to get involved as interviewers of the 6th Graders about their social educational conditions. The main assumptions of the study were that male students have poorest achievements compared to their female colleagues. In our previous research we hadn’t found major discrepancies between then. Another point of the investigation was to understand the role of poverty in the students’ scholastic performance.

However, as the eleven 9th Graders understood our goals, we included violence as a theme to be researched. The main questions posed were: the interaction of pregnant teenagers at the schools; the involvement of students with organised crime; and the behaviour of the majority of the students who were involved in not only physical but virtual violence. The use of force, fear and other tactics of bullying lead virtually to the same ends, using social networks to spread threats, embrace news and all types of cyberbullying. Our approach was to involve students and professors from the University as tutors for the 9th Graders, and the schools’ teachers and principal as supervisors within the school.

The actions taken included participant observation of two 6th Grade classrooms and interviews with 35 students from the 6th Grade. The criteria for participation were: 9th Graders with poor performance in the school, and 6th Graders who were involved in violent acts and at risk academically (poor grades and bad behaviours according to the school principal).

We also conducted workshops about violence for teachers and students, and workshops about cyberbullying with the eleven 9th Graders. The workshops occurred in the school and the University settings. The following is a report of the cyberbullying workshop that was conducted by Adriane Matos Araujo (first author) at the University when she was an undergraduate under a scientific initiation scholarship grant as part of the research group. The work was directed toward the eleven 9th Graders. It involved the University research group (approximately 10 associates were present) as well as the school principal, who had participated as a member of the group since 2004, and therefore carried a great deal of knowledge about ethnography and was very supportive of the action involving those students.

The main goal was to present the theoretical concepts of bullying and cyberbullying, making clear the events that showed evidence of those actions and emphasising the gravity of its
consequences for students and any other person who suffered it. It also explained the main line of action shown by the bullies, with the intention of alerting the participants about their responsibility to identify and inhibit those acts. In subsequent weeks of this workshop, nine of the eleven students developed their own initiatives, which were understood by our group as the result of their empowerment due to the fact they were involved as collaborators in the data gathering process.

The workshop had a great impact on the students. They reacted as if they were responsible for spreading the news of what they had learnt in their school and the school’s community. They felt the need to create new instruments to approach the problems of school violence. As a result, they decided to create instruments to face the violence in their school.

The first was a blog in the school webpage. The blog was entitled: “The Difference Sum”. The goal was to explain their involvement in the research and its object of study, including some of the concepts of bullying and cyberbullying that they had learnt. (Access to the blog can be through the link: http://menteabertaumnovoolhar.blogspot.com.br)

The second instrument they created was a theatre role-play. It was written by Marcelo, one of the students, and performed by his 9th Grade classmates. The play, called “It is in the network”, has the goal of reviving actions against bullying and cyberbullying developed by some of the students who participated in the interviews. It was so successful that it was presented several times in the school and travelled to the University to be presented in one of the community events that annually occurred at UERJ.

The third instrument they create was a Digital Booklet [Cartilha]. The initiative for the preparation of the book began in the activities of the Portuguese Language discipline, when the teacher requested a written production on school violence. After the production of the texts by the students, posters were made with written excerpts and drawings, thus creating the basis for the production of the booklet.

The proposal of the group was to report perceptions about school violence. The goal was to create actions for better coexistence in school, and to alert the school community and its surroundings about violence, highlighting the collective effort involving the school and community. Access to the booklet is available on the website at: http://www.youblisher.com/p/659705-Mais-amor-Por-Favor/. The language and the drawings facilitate the comprehension of the text, where the document, written by the subjects of the school, and distributed to the school community, aim to minimise school violence and emphasise the importance of Education for Peace.

Students’ voices to each other

The comments about cyberbullying during the interviews with the 6th Graders varied enormously according to their own experiences with digital tools and their level of understanding about what violence is. For some students, daily occurrences of violence in their homes and neighborhoods became trivialised, therefore they were not aware of its dimensions. Nevertheless students of the 6th
Grade were alert to the scope of violence among them. They said:

**Maria:** Cyberbullying causes a bigger problem than just kidding; it leaves everything on the Internet for everyone to see.

**Marcos:** My mother always says she has a first time. You are educated in the first, and in the second. When it arrives in the third, it is already a little more difficult - you already speak with the voice a little higher; arrive at the fourth, there already gives that cry; when arrive at the fifth, there are already bursts of the hand in the face. I’m a little disobedient.

**Teresa:** I hate my uncle! Dude, my dream has always been to kill him; I do not know why. It’s because I hate him, *** up my mother. I do not like it; I always defended my mother. He beat my mother when I was not around. I already pulled the knife on him; I almost stuck the knife in him the day he went to hit my mother. Then he went and said it was not going to happen again. Then he expected me to go to my father so he could beat my mother.

**Carolina:** There on the hill of the Complex it is being pacified, but it still has gangs that do anything, so cannot be touched; cannot be touched in the foot in their territory that already joins and hits, hits even to kill. The boys hit the others with cowardice, beat them to death. My mother even says that I do not want to go out much, to these things like that, dances, because of cases of violence.

**Roberta:** The world is very violent. There is a lot of violence on the street, at school, at home; everyone wants to fight.

**Larissa:** The boys are playing tricks on these things. When it hurts, the others already want to hurt, then the fight begins. That’s why I do not like these jokes.

The 9th Graders, however, focused their voices on the experience of being researchers. Marcelo said:

**Marcelo:** The trip to UERJ was a very great experience; from that day on I could really understand what I want to do in my future. As soon as I got in the transport to go to UERJ it already gave me a cold in the belly; my plug had not yet fallen. But getting there, I got used to the environment with the people; I was feeling a college student. The most striking hour was the presentation of Elizabeth’s research, because I could see how it is out there, how people are treated. It was very important to have participated in this event. Another part that marked a lot was also the tour of the University, where we saw the rooms, the jaw of the whole ... In conclusion, it was very good!

**Mary:** What I learnt best was from listening to other colleagues. Before, I did not learn from any one; I just wanted to talk. I gave no importance about what they felt. Now I know that if you learn carefully we may find that your colleagues think like you and together we can change the situation.

The most important result of the research was that nine among the eleven participants are today (December 2018) enrolled at undergraduate school, a fact that was never recorded before in that school. That is, the Commentator Soares School was created in 1975 and, until then, it had never had a student who made it into superior education. The 9th Graders who worked as research collaborators from 2010 to 2013, become the first High School students to enter the University.

As a result of all this work inside and outside the school, the research fellows worked together in a poster format and presented their campaign against cyberbullying at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC) in the city of Recife in the state of Pernambuco. The work was entitled: “The School’s Action in Combating Cyberbullying”, making this academic participation an incredible opportunity to spread the voice of students within their own school community and adding singularly to each of their lives. Besides being the authors of the process, they were able to experience an academic experience of having a work published in a scientific event of great importance in the educational area, and to know a city of another state, in the northeast of Brazil.

It was understood that to allow students to express their voices and guide them in the solutions of awareness so that they create their own tools, is a positive action that facilitates the dissemination and clarification of information, making the school community active and directly involved with the welfare of every school, thus combating violence at school.

Thus, in the field research, we sought to ‘hear’ directly from the students about the questions related to the school and social daily life of which they are part. They demonstrated sensitivity and knowledge about their life situations, indicating how they perceive teachers, school, and family in the context of gender relations, violence and poverty.

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The term ‘student agency’ can produce mixed responses from teachers at high schools. Some teachers might be worried it will mean they are being asked to lose control of their class to the whims of a teenage rabble. Alternatively, others might think it means they don’t have to worry about a student’s progress; after all, with ‘student agency’, a student is responsible for their own learning. Yet a great many teachers, particularly those of us in the Connect community, relish the opportunity to provide the space that allows active student participation.

As mixed as the responses can be from teachers, so too are the reasons for promoting student agency. Some stand on the well-trodden ground of potential economic benefits: an individual who knows they have agency is someone who will have strong self-efficacy and self-regulation and be just the type of entrepreneur or employee we want in this 21st century economy.

Others see that cultivating agency enhances wellbeing, that a person who feels in control is a person less likely to feel depressed or anxious. There is also research that agency increases academic motivation and from this positive cycle of learning comes better academic outcomes.

And of course, when agency is hand in hand with community involvement, it can empower the citizens and activists who will change the future for the better.

The Victorian Department of Education has included student agency as part of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO), which is now the central focus of government schools in the state, and how school improvement is measured. This is reason enough for government schools to implement student agency, regardless of other possible benefits.

It is with these many mixed responses and reasons that I have taken on the role as a Learning Specialist in Student Agency at my school. The role of the ‘Learning Specialist’ position, introduced to government schools in 2018, is even more amorphous than the reasons for what I am charged with being a specialist in. From what I hear at other schools, a Learning Specialist is a position that ranges from a Head of Faculty or Learning to a bit of pay bump for an experienced teacher who is good at their job. At my school, the Learning Specialists have been aligned with the Strategic Goals of the school – a strategic move too as it gives extra support to seeing improvement in those areas. At its foundation though, one role common to any Learning Specialist is that they are to work with teachers rather than students. So my position in the school is not to promote student agency directly with the students but rather to help teachers build and improve practices that embody and cultivate student agency.

Given the various attitudes of teachers, and reasons for student agency, how should I approach this?

The Department’s guide, Amplify, has suggestions and advice on how teachers can do this in their classroom. It is primarily linked to teachers allowing students to make decisions about what and how they learn. This same Department issues the Victorian Curriculum, which stipulates what students must learn. For example, in Level 7 History in the Victorian Curriculum, students can choose between learning about Egypt, Greece and Rome as an ancient civilisation. Even if the student is content with sticking to ancient civilisations, what happens if they want to do Persia? These are tensions that schools and teachers must navigate, with no clear
indication of priority but with a clear tradition and subsequent inertia that tends to favour sticking to the curriculum over promoting agency.

So even before I am working with the teacher on promoting agency, there are structural road blocks.

Then there is each teacher’s own motivation and ability to implement agency, which can be a confronting proposition. It would seem incongruous with the entire point of what I am trying to achieve to have a top-down approach to helping teachers cultivate agency, to state that because it is a Strategic Goal of the school they must then follow a prescriptive agency structure in their classroom.

Instead, the zone of proximal development for each teacher’s capacity to build agency in their classroom can be established and improved. For some it could start with simply providing more student choice and differentiated activities within the existing curriculum and practices. For others, they may feel more comfortable allowing students to direct the learning of the program. At the least, teacher agency can foster student agency.

I recently provided an overview to teachers at my school of what my position entails and how this fits with overall school progress. As an introductory engagement activity, I used an online tool to have them anonymously propose what they believed student agency meant (see above). Responses included: “Being capable,” “Real-world challenges” and “Empowering students to learn what they’re interested in.” Fortunately, most of them included something to do with autonomy and self-efficacy. One simply said: “Power.”

My favourite definition of agency is “The opposite of helplessness.” With this as a guide, it is possible to see how agency can connect to wellbeing, academics, employment and activism. It does a nice job linking to what the purpose of educating young people might be in a holistic sense. If curiosity is what inspires learning, then agency can be what puts it into practice.

I am very curious to see what will eventuate from having a focus on student agency in a government high school, that has additional motivations and limitations. I am also curious to see how schools use their new Learning Specialists, and if they will be deemed as important as other positions within government schools in the long term.

What I am most curious about is to see what happens across the state as schools implement FISO with growing attention on student agency and student empowerment more generally. It is an exciting time and if there are other Learning Specialists out there, who have been entrusted with leading student agency at their school, I would love to get in touch.

Adam Brodie-McKenzie
Learning Specialist: Student Agency
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We hold the keys to the future – and should not be afraid to say so!

There are two pillars to Democratic Education.

Pillar number one consists of self-directed and self-managed learning and education that is free from coercion, competition, compulsory testing and fear of failure where, above all, young people learn to manage their own time.

We aim to bring an end to meaningless schoolwork that is preparation for meaningless work. Much meaningless paid work in the wider world is coming to an end anyway, which I am totally in favour of, so long as we have democratic control of the consequences. We in the democratic education movement aim to create schools where children can think and choose for themselves and no longer produce obedient factory workers and soldiers. Though having said this, in my opinion we need to extend our educational vision into a wider political and socio-economic vision then we currently do. This first pillar I think of as Student Participation in Decision Making (SPDM).

Pillar number two, which is equally important for the future of sustainable societies on our planet, is democratic process grounded in respect for human rights. A process in which every member of the school community has an equal vote or opportunity to participate in decision making. A process where disputes are resolved through some form of judicial committee or restorative justice system. I call this second pillar Student Participation in Democratic Decision Making (SPDDM).

Then there are two parts to our task. Pioneers of Possibility

First we need to continue to develop and support fully democratic schools and learning centres that are “Pioneers of Possibility” – places that go a long way fast; places that will often be small and privately owned. Though this will not always be the case, for in Denmark for example, it is still possible for a group of parents to get state funding for a democratic school. Israel is now providing state funding for democratic schools such as Hadera School pioneered by Yaacov Hecht who spoke to us earlier in this conference. There are whispers that a little known government fund in the Netherlands that exists to fund otherwise unfundable projects might soon be funding the strong network of Dutch democratic schools. These pioneers of possibility need to stay within the law of our nation states, even though at times this can be difficult and we may have to defend ourselves from the law on occasion.

We have had some success in this regard such as the famous Summerhill case in England where an aggressive inspectorate was defeated in court. In the Netherlands the initial hostility of the Dutch inspectorate to the Sudbury model led to the closure of De Kampanje School but, after much struggle and negotiation, it has been resurrected in the form of the New School at Harderwijk which is now used to train those self same inspectors. Sadly there is a darker side to this picture, such as the closure of the highly successful Amersee Sudbury School confirmed by the Bavarian court this week. I love the story told by the Bulgarian group at this conference where the Minister of Education is reported to have said that “...everything that you propose is illegal – but do it anyway.” Funny but not without risk!

Public School Systems

The second part of our work is crucially important and easy to neglect when we come together to enjoy each others’ company – namely to never give up on the struggle to change our state public school systems. Here we will probably not be able to bring about great change overnight but will need to work incrementally in achievable smaller steps. Not giving up when two steps forward seem to be followed by one and a half steps back. Why? Because it is where most of the kids are!

Some European systems are already better and more amenable to democratic change than others. Finland, where the school students themselves have created a Demokrati I Skolan project jointly with the education ministry, and the other Nordic countries may be the most potentially democratic. Even Sweden, which is currently recovering from its socially catastrophic neo-liberal experiment, is producing a literature supportive of more school democracy.

More typically, the school system in my country England (we have four different education systems in the UK) and yours in Greece are probably amongst the worst and most resistant to change. In England, the high stakes testing industry has ‘occupied’ our school system and we have an exponential increase in mental health problems and self-harm incidents among school students that justifies the use of the term epidemic. The figures increase when the schools are open and decrease during the holidays. We are about to commence the testing of 4 year-olds if the government can find a testing company corrupt enough to do it. The evidence of all early years research shows this to be predictively useless as far as future school success is concerned, while it is certainly damaging to the self confidence and well being of the children. So we have nursery schools dividing children into ‘fast tables’, ‘average tables’ and ‘slow tables.’ That of course will have a predictive effect on the future of those children, especially those sat at the ‘slow table.’
and the arts are being driven out of the state curriculum by the STEM (Science, Technology and Mathematics) subjects. The good news is that there is a growing resistance from parents at what they see being done to their children.

Maybe I could mention here the “20% Campaign” which Yaacov and I launched at the World Forum for Democracy through Education in Strasbourg in 2016. The idea is simply that all state schools everywhere should allocate 20% of curriculum time, or one day per week, to be negotiated around the interests and enthusiasms of the students, and perhaps also the staff. Nearly all the 2200 delegates at the Forum voted for the idea and some of those who did not say it was because “...twenty percent is not enough!”

I recently wrote an article for Democracy Day in England in which I argued that young people needed time to think, time to find themselves and discover their passions, and that currently most state schools do not allow this. In fact they even follow the students home with more and more homework. The “20% Campaign” represents a ‘Universal Basic Income of Time’ for school students if you will! – and of course the 20% is just a start.

The idea was not just well received by the Forum participants, but it has been taken seriously by teacher union representatives that I have discussed it with – though not yet by politicians, which is my next step in England. I know it can work. I have done it in the school where I was a deputy headteacher and I have seen it work in other schools when I was an inspector. It sounds like a perfectly reasonable idea as, after all, it leaves the state still controlling the other 80% of curriculum time, yet its implications can be revolutionary, as it changes the relationship between staff and students from an authoritarian to a negotiated one.

We have to devise as many such ‘reasonable’ demands as we can and be prepared to argue our case in the national educational press. We need to push to gain access to policy makers. This can be done and I will give an example later in this talk.

Looking back on my time as a state school teacher I sometimes ask myself ‘Why Did I Bother’ with this struggle for school democracy.

Here are some of my answers:

- **Children’s Rights** – though I was working before the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child existed;
- Jerome Bruner’s three ‘C’s describing the nature of the young human animal: Curiosity, Collaboration, Competence;
- And my own belief, supported by psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg and now our own Peter Gray, that many important things can only be learned experientially, such as Morality, Responsibility, Human Rights, Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law, Social and Economic Entrepreneurialism, Human Relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect, and above all perhaps how to find and follow your own deepest interests and passions in order to create your own identity rather than being dependent on others for it.

**My own experience**

My own experience of school was like that described by Yaacov in his talk. “Why are you only interested in what I can’t do but not in what I can do and in what interests me?” Though, unlike Yaacov, I could pass their tests, but I just found them tedious and pointless.

My first experience of a democratic institution was a therapeutic community in a psychiatric hospital in the 1960s in Oxford. You can figure out for yourselves whether I was staff or patient! The treatment was living together in a democratic community rather than pharmaceutical, electrical or surgical. I have no time to go into detail but it worked.

If it can work in a psychiatric hospital, then why not a school I thought. So I decided to train to be a teacher. This was not so simple and, as a student, I had many arguments with my instructors, not least in psychology which was all behaviourism and behaviour management. “I want to work with children, not Skinner’s rats or Pavlov’s salivating dogs,” I said and was more or less thrown off the course. In exchange for not questioning lecturers, I was permitted to use the library for private study, where I discovered a gold mine of unread dust covered books by John Dewey, Tolstoy, Montessori, Pestalozzi, Bertrand Russell, Homer Lane and most wonderfully A.S. Neill.

Time to follow my own interests was the key. Once during my teacher training, I drove past Summerhill School by chance but was afraid to enter the ‘Holy Shrine.’ That is no longer the case!

I managed to do crazy democratic ‘Summerhillian’ things on my teaching practices as a student. Two, in primary schools, were highly successful and one in a secondary school was a catastrophe where once again I was nearly thrown out for ‘allowing the school students to talk about their feelings towards school in a history of democracy class.

As a young teacher I had a truly wonderful first job. I was able to create a democratic class with 35 kids who had just failed the high-stakes 11-plus test which decided whether 10% would be selected for university entrance geared grammar schools. Instead of being fired, as I half expected, the support from parents who saw the self-confidence of their children recover was so great that I was put in charge of all seven classes in the grade – 240 kids – in the following year. We controlled 60% of the curriculum, as traditional English, history, geography, social studies and religious education was rolled up into integrated humanities. It was really possible to follow both pillars of democratic education. Kids studied whatever interested them in a context of democratic process. I called it a ‘democratic learning community’ and have just finished a book about these two years. I am still in touch with some of the ‘kids’ in that first class – now 56 years old and coming up to retirement – and they have contributed their memories to the book. Some define the democratic experience as life defining though it was only from the ages of 11 to 13.

I do not have time to go into much detail about this class but I will just mention a couple of anecdotes. Firstly, as a demonstration of democratic competence, one of the ‘kids’ who has contributed to the book was class chairperson when a group of visiting teachers came to the class. I was not in the room but the class was busy with its projects without any sign of the teacher.

The visitors, with the head teacher, asked about their feelings towards school in a democracy day class. I was permitted to use the library for private study, where I discovered a gold mine of unread dust covered books by John Dewey, Tolstoy, Montessori, Pestalozzi, Bertrand Russell, Homer Lane and most wonderfully A.S. Neill.

Time to follow my own interests was the key. Once during my teacher training, I drove past Summerhill School by chance but was afraid to enter the ‘Holy Shrine.’ That is no longer the case!

I managed to do crazy democratic ‘Summerhillian’ things on my teaching practices as a student. Two, in primary schools, were highly successful and one in a secondary school was a catastrophe where once again I was nearly thrown out for ‘allowing the school students to talk about their feelings towards school in a history of democracy class.

As a young teacher I had a truly wonderful first job. I was able to create a democratic class with 35 kids who had just failed the high-stakes 11-plus test which decided whether 10% would be selected for university entrance geared grammar schools. Instead of being fired, as I half expected, the support from parents who saw the self-confidence of their children recover was so great that I was put in charge of all seven classes in the grade – 240 kids – in the following year. We controlled 60% of the curriculum, as traditional English, history, geography, social studies and religious education was rolled up into integrated humanities. It was really possible to follow both pillars of democratic education. Kids studied whatever interested them in a context of democratic process. I called it a ‘democratic learning community’ and have just finished a book about these two years. I am still in touch with some of the ‘kids’ in that first class – now 56 years old and coming up to retirement – and they have contributed their memories to the book. Some define the democratic experience as life defining though it was only from the ages of 11 to 13.

I do not have time to go into much detail about this class but I will just mention a couple of anecdotes. Firstly, as a demonstration of democratic competence, one of the ‘kids’ who has contributed to the book was class chairperson when a group of visiting teachers came to the class. I was not in the room but the class was busy with its projects without any sign of the teacher. The visitors, with the head teacher, asked what was going on. Andrew explained: “Well you see, our teacher Mr Hannam is a bit soft and so we have our own self-government. If we didn’t it would be chaos.
He remembers this incident and is very embarrassed about it, whereas I love it as it encapsulates what I was trying to achieve. On another occasion, we were visited by a reporter from a national newspaper. One normally well behaved boy called Ian broke every class law in the days before the visit. I wondered why. I got my answer when the press photographer took pictures of the class court in action and, of course, the chief offender was Ian. It was his picture that got into the paper the next day!

Not everything went smoothly of course. As a new young teacher I was not very good at explaining my democratic methods to more traditional teachers and, on one occasion, the class used its ‘quiet time’ law in the lesson of a maths teacher who regularly shouted at them. Because they were having a self-imposed quiet time, they refused to explain to her why the room had gone quiet. This led to me being reprimanded by the teachers’ union for undermining another teacher’s discipline, even though I had told the class to only use the democratic class laws in my lessons.

Sometimes I was amazed by the moral sense that developed in these young people when given some power and responsibility to run their own affairs. There was a deeply moving event when a troubled Roma girl, let’s call her Pauline, was put into my class. She befriended a troubled Roma girl, let’s call her Pauline, and never stole again.

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In retrospect it was great fun and the kids learned a lot. Several eventually went to university, although this was theoretically very unlikely for ‘11 plus failures.’

After two years in that school I was head hunted to be Head of Department in a newly built school of 2000 students nearby. It was possible to introduce democratic methods on a wider scale. For example, students would take over parts of the curriculum in examination classes that they would research and teach to the rest of the class. Each student was given part of the library budget, which they could spend alone or combine with others to buy a more expensive book or books. This being 1973, there was little knowledge of or interest in computers, but one boy, Nick, ordered two computer books that he read over and over again. A few years ago he appeared on my doorstep as a man in his late forties – now CEO and owner of a large and highly successful software company in Bristol.

In my third school I was at first in charge of a democratic ‘House’ of 180 kids aged 11-18. We set up a House Council and a House Court. We reorganised the House building. House assemblies were democratic affairs where major decisions were made directed by the House Council. The House teachers were both tutors of groups of mixed ages who, to some extent, chose their own tutor. Wherever possible these teachers taught different subjects to House classes with an emphasis on choice of topic and democratic class management.

Later I became Deputy Director and Acting Director of this school and with the help of older students turned it into a Community School. We opened the school to the local community, a small country town in the English midlands, and, in turn, the organisations, clubs and societies of the community opened themselves to the school. Adults began to attend some school classes and students became interns in the town. We set up the first Community Education Council, always chaired by an older student, to manage everything. This was followed by combined school/town projects like a Community Newspaper edited by adults and students and a magnificent all-age Community Orchestra with 80 players. With adults in classes it became absurd for the young people to have to wear school uniform – so we abolished it. This was in 1978.

Three years ago I revisited the school and found that with the full support of the parents and the town it was still the only secondary school in this part of England to have no school uniform, that the school had a waiting list for places, and that the Community Education Council was still going strong.

I then became a school inspector – possibly a mistake, as I came to dislike much of what I saw and much of what I had to do. Occasionally I was able to support and encourage head teachers who were trying to fight the waves of centralised curriculum and testing that were beginning to corrupt the system or individual class teachers who were trying to be child-centred or democratic in a small way. When I found a school that was allocating 10% of time to student-led elective activities, I was able to say ‘well-done’ rather than ‘you’re fired.’

And then, after 250 inspections, I discovered why I had become an inspector. The government tried to close Summerhill School in 1999 – one of only two fully democratic schools in the UK. The principal, Zoë Readhead, daughter of A.S. Neill, and by now a good friend, asked me if I could work for the school against the hostile inspectorate. I did and we won the ensuing court case – though I must emphasise not just because of me!!
Many many people came to the aid of the iconic school and, as well as advising the legal team somewhat secretly, I was also proud to be part of a high-powered and very effective ‘alternative inspection team’ put together by another friend, lan Cunningham from the Centre for Self-Managed Learning. I am no longer afraid to go into the ‘Holy Shrine’ when I drive past as I had been 30 years before!

I would now like to come back to a story that is an example of how sometimes it is possible to change policy at national level if we are sufficiently opportunist. In the 1990s and early 2000s I had been working on numerous Council of Europe projects to introduce ideas of democratic methodology to teachers, often from the ex-communist countries and often with the help of teachers from the Nordic countries. I was involved in the launch of the EDC/HRE (Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education) project. I was also running courses on school democracy for OBESSU (Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions) and involved in research into the curriculum reforms in Norway known as Reform 94 and Reform 97, which introduced more democratic processes into primary and secondary schools. In addition I was advising the students in Finland who were planning the Demokrati i Skolan project.

This was the moment of the electoral success of the Labour Party in the UK which led to the Blair government. The new minister of education was David Blunkett who knew that England was one of the few countries in the world to have no citizenship curriculum. He turned to his old university teacher Bernard Crick to be his adviser and, by a series of coincidences, I became one of Crick’s semi-official advisers because of my growing European experience.

I brought one simple idea to the role: ‘If teachers just talk to students about democracy, it goes in one ear and out of the other. It has to be practised in the everyday life of the school to be of any value. Otherwise it is like reading holiday brochures in prison.’

Crick bought the idea from me and Blunkett bought it from him. When the law introducing the new curriculum was created, it included a requirement that all students in state-funded English secondary schools should have the opportunity to ‘participate in democratic decision making and in responsible action.’ When the chief inspector heard of this, the same one who attacked Summerhill, he claimed in the right-wing press that this requirement would reduce the time for maths and thus would reduce ‘academic standards.’ The minister wobbled and I was asked if I had any evidence that schools that were already quite democratic had results that were at least as good as those that were not at all democratic. I only had anecdotes so I was given a fairly large sum of money and told to see what I could find – by yesterday!!

I found 20 schools in all kinds of socio-economic environments that were significantly ‘more democratic than most’ and compared their examination results, attendance figures and exclusion rates with the average for all other English state secondary schools in similar environments. In every case the results for the ‘more than usually democratic schools’ were better than the average. This became known as the ‘Hannam Report’ and is available online in several languages. The minister was able to say to his critics: ‘I have some evidence that you are wrong – do you have any to support your view?’ They didn’t and the democratic participation requirement passed into law – until it was removed in 2010 by an incoming conservative government. However during that ten years, thousands of English secondary students had an experience of democratic decision making and action that they might not otherwise have had. For me it was worth the effort.

Additionally the Report has made it into the final 30 studies (of 3200) of student participation research published by the University of Innsbruck meta-review of Nowak and Mager in 2012. google tells me that it has been cited in about 80 other studies before and since – so … not a complete waste of time, even though I am not a professional researcher but just an enthusiast with a modest M.Phil.

The Democratic Citizenship Education experiment in England has led to other research, mainly in state schools, that supports our convictions though we need much more of it! Overall I think it can be said that grabbing an opportunity led to meaningful policy change even though It has not survived a change of government. Nothing lasts for ever.

It is very pleasing to see our movement beginning to build its own research base such as the doctoral work of Charlie Moreno-Romero and the proposals of Freya Aquarone, both of whom are here at this conference.

But now I come to my main point in this talk. (At last, do I hear you say?)

**Floods of change**

There is a growing awareness that the nineteenth century industrial/factory model of education is not good enough to cope with the **floods of change** that are already washing around us. Finland, Canada, Singapore and a few others are already doing something about it, but more widely, creativity, innovation, smart communication and digital skills are not being developed or even valued in our schools. In fact unusual talent is sometimes being labelled and medicalised as attention deficit disorder or ADHD or other ‘on the autistic spectrum’ conditions. They are given medication such as the soon-to-be ubiquitous Ritalin and only 14% ever gain employment.

At the same time, the UK electronic spy agency GCHQ has released figures showing that 120 of its most brilliant cyber defence employees have had precisely these labels when they were at school but, by good luck and serendipity, have found their way to an employer that understands and values them.

The most common response of UK politicians is: “OK the current 150 year-old industrial model of education is not working – so – let’s have more of it!” “Let’s re-arrange the deckchairs on the Titanic!”

But the ship is sinking. The CEO of IBM said in a recent panel discussion at the World Economic Forum at Davos: “It is a waste of time setting young people tests that could easily be answered by computers – they should be learning to do things that computers can’t do.”

**Fourth Industrial Revolution**

So we come to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and what democratic education has to say to it.

The First Industrial Revolution was based on steam and iron. It created the first industrial cities at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. It led to rapid changes in production and distribution through railways and shipping, together with a vast increase in capitalist wealth.
The Second Industrial Revolution came at the end of the 19th century with electricity, oil and steel replacing coal, steam and iron, leading to the internal combustion engine and powered flight.

The Third Industrial Revolution brought the power of digitalisation in the second half of the 20th century. I have heard Alan Turing's breaking of the Enigma Code described as the key event leading to personal computers and the internet, the effects of which are still washing over us.

But we are facing a veritable tsunami of change as the Fourth Industrial Revolution reveals its emerging power. Klaus Schwab, the creator of the World Economic Forum, only invented the term in 2016, yet Google shows 36 million results for a search today and there is a very large and rapidly growing literature already.

Some of you, mainly under 30 years probably, will know and understand more than me about blockchain and its rivalry with Holochain, Crypto-currency Wallets and Bitcoin (how many of you have one or can tell me who Satoshi Nakamoto is? That is a trick question!!), Machine Learning, Robotics, Nanotechnology, The Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and Technological Singularity (the day that robots become more intelligent than the collective intelligence of human beings – maybe 2035 or sooner?), 3D Printing, Autonomous Vehicles or Drone Delivery, the Turing Test.

Schwab says these new and enormously disruptive technologies could enormously expand the numbers of people connected to the worldwide web and that this, in turn, could massively improve the efficiency of business, of production and distribution. He believes they could even regenerate the natural environment through better use of resources. But – he says less about the increase in the accumulation of wealth by the already super-rich and the potential impoverishment of millions as paid labour declines or disappears. I have seen many figures for this and some optimistic economic historians argue that every industrial revolution leads to the loss of some redundant jobs but that this is always counterbalanced by the creation of new ones.

Most serious students of what is beginning to happen now predict that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be disruptive on a wholly new scale. They talk of anything between 18% unemployment (OECD) to 54% (latest Oxford study) with 33% of men between the ages of 25–54 years being out of full-time paid employment by 2030. The Hi-tech industries, the Silicon Valleys of the world, will need only 1-2% of us to be highly qualified to maintain and develop the new system and even they are more interested in creative aptitude than qualifications and examination scores. The rest of us will probably need no more than GCSEs or high school diplomas.

Uber has already ordered thousands of driverless cars. Deliveroo riders will soon be replaced by drones. Paid labour is declining as digitalisation, automation and robotics proliferate. Careers are no longer lifelong. Wages have been falling for many, together with growing job insecurity in the ‘gig economy.’ At the same time, inequality of wealth is rapidly increasing, as we see the rapid exponential rise of the ‘precariat’ (those whose paid work is without benefits such as paid holidays, sick pay, pension and is in every way precarious). Their jobs will be the first to go – and they vote for Trump or Brexit.

We know from the work of epidemiologists such as Wilkinson and Pickett that gross inequality of wealth produces ill-health and social instability for all. Thomas Piketty in his encyclopaedic ‘Capitalism in the 21st Century’ argues for taxation on an international scale. I sometimes feel that the rich liars who sold Brexit to the British people are motivated by fear of the EU at last beginning to close in on their tax havens.

We have tried austerity and harsh welfare reforms in the UK. It has been a disaster just as your Yanis Varoufakis said it would be. We know that societies moving rapidly in this direction are not happy places – the world has Trump, the British have Brexit, and Europe has Hungary, Poland, Austria and now Italy. Who knows what Brazil will add to the cocktail. More walls, nationalism, xenophobia and racism.

But Varoufakis is also an optimist. He says: “I have a very deep respect in the capacity of human minds to work things out for themselves – so long as they do not have to live in terror.” Sounds to me like a pretty good justification for democratic education.

If governments can find a minimum of rationality (which I am pleased to see growing in the English opposition Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn), they will turn to Universal Basic Income to achieve some kind of social stability as paid employment disappears. All around the world there are a growing number of pilot schemes for Universal Basic Income (UBI), some supported by wealthy silicon valley entrepreneurs such as Sam Altman of Combinator. These show that wealth, if regarded as a kind of commons that has been created by past generations rather than by hedge funds, can be shared as a basic income for all. When this happens, there is a widespread feeling of equity, social justice and well being, a reduction in economic insecurity, and a growth in social, political and economic entrepreneurial activism. All aspects of a good society.

After all, it is well known that much of the wealth of the super rich has actually come from publicly funded research. It is only right that some of it should be shared unconditionally to provide basic income for all humanity as a right. This could at last set people free with the time to pursue activities of their own choice. Unemployment from paid labour would no longer be a self-diminishing curse but an opportunity – to start a society, to become active in a political group, or to play music or paint.
pictures – as one of my own sons has done. After years of struggle his paintings are now selling well and he is paying a lot of tax. Something the mega-rich need to be prepared to do.

But – for Universal Basic Income to work, people will have to be able to take responsibility for their own lives and be able to create their own identity and meaning. They will have to stop relying on employers and paid employment to define their identity. Secure paid labour that will last unchanged for many years no longer exists for the majority of people.

People will have to be able to redefine work as what they want to do with their lives – to do what they are good at; to create community with others who also know how to manage their own time; people who can reflect and participate as active citizens in democracies, both local and direct and regional or national and indirect or representative. All with a deep understanding of human rights and respect for diversity.

These democracies will be under threat from demagogues like Trump and Putin. They will have easy answers as to who is to blame for the uncertainties that surround us: the Roma, the Jews, the immigrants, the homeless, the disabled etc etc. To resist their nostrums and snake-oil we will need a young generation deeply grounded and experienced in respect for democracy and human rights.

Well – I ask you – what kind of schools already exist that know how to nurture such young people, to provide the soil for such people to grow? What kind of schools are going to be needed for all young people if the planet is to have a future? Exactly! The bi-pillared democratic schools. Schools where young people are learning to construct their own identities, where they can make time their own to discover and deepen their interests and celebrate their creativity and curiosity, while developing competencies that are meaningful to them – who do not rely on others to instruct them and tell them what to do and when to do it. This is for sure where the 1-2% needed to create and develop the technology of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be found. If they have been to democratic schools they will have the ethical and rights based values to support their work in a sustainably viable way.

But what about the other 98%? For them it will be even more important that they have learned to collaborate in democratic rights respecting schools where they can develop the will, understanding and determination to ensure that this new wave of technology benefits and liberates humanity and not destroy us all. To ensure that it is subject to the democratic control of people who have the time and the capacity to think for themselves.

If we don’t change our schools there is a real danger of insurrection, as millions find themselves ill-equipped to deal with the new uncertainties despite the best efforts of those advocating a gift economy, or a sharing economy, or a circular economy – all of which I approve.

**Dystopian thoughts**

Here are some dystopian thoughts.

In the US there are some 3.5 million truck drivers. They are a well-paid working class elite, most of whom own guns. Over the next 5 to 10 years much of their work will disappear as trucks become automated self-driving vehicles. Who will Trump and his ilk tell them to blame? This will happen in many occupations. Already computers make more accurate diagnoses than most medical doctors because they can review so many case histories so quickly. When secure crypto-currencies replace banking, where will the millions of bank clerks go – and where will the Uber drivers go when taxis are driverless. If we are not careful we will fail victim to what Darrell West calls ‘Trumpism on steroids’.

It seems to me that as a revolutionary democratic schools movement we can either retreat into the woods with our small happy schools and hope that the ‘real world’ will forget about us and go away. We can take up ‘folk politics’, leaving the woods from time to time to occupy Times Square until we get bored and go home, having changed nothing. We can become ‘survivalists’ without benefits and liberates humanity and not destroy us all. To ensure that it is subject to the democratic control of people who have the time and the capacity to think for themselves.

So – others are beginning to recognise the importance of our existence and our message. Let’s amplify our voices a bit more to ensure that we communicate more effectively. In this age of disruption, let’s think hard about how we can disrupt our national school systems. Most of them desperately need it!

Derry Hannam
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Professional Learning: Student Voice

Teachers at Merriang Special Developmental School, in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, have been investigating and acting in the area of ‘student voice’ in 2018. They started 2019 with a Professional Learning session for all staff, and a focus on how they listen to what students are saying.

Listening Tool
The staff group trialled the new ‘Listening’ tool (see the next pages of this issue), completing responses individually and then sharing these in small groups. In about a 20-minute session, most staff members worked their way through the first two sections - and all agreed to take the resource with them to complete as their work progressed.

They wished to emphasise that the tool should be used to reflect on practices at either the classroom or whole school level - depending on where one was working. So for most staff members, this was in their individual classrooms – as teachers or as Education Support staff – and so they completed the ‘In my classroom’ column; but for some staff, who were involved with the Student Voice Group of students across a campus, the ‘Across my school’ column would be more appropriate.

What is Student Voice?
The first set of responses focused around the literal meaning of students speaking up and expressing ideas. Within the setting of this school, it was important to recognise that ‘voice’ can be non-verbal for some students:

- Students’ opinion and thought
- Providing a forum for students to express their opinions, expectations, experiences, feelings and responses
- Each student has the right to be heard
- Likes versus dislikes; verbal/non-verbal; opinions; choice-making; feelings
- Ability/opportunity to express likes/dislikes/make comments/offer opinions/perspectives – emotions, body language, verbal language
- Students having a choice and say
- Preferences, requesting, likes/dislikes, commenting, how do you feel?
- Being heard, expressing individual opinion, being valued
- Expressions
- Having an opinion
- What students think, feel, share
- Think, feel
- Students expressing needs/wants; students expressing opinions on school environment/activities/peers
- Being given the opportunity to express what they are feeling and thinking!
- Expressing wants, needs, desires, emotions
- Letting the students communicate in a way that is meaningful to them
- Body language, emotions, reactions, verbal and non-verbal
- Other ways of communication
- Students advocating for themselves

A second set of responses extended on the literal meaning of ‘voice’, to ideas around students taking action or having control over their circumstances:

- Control of their own learning
- Children having control over what happens to them
- Self assurance
- Have a friend to guide us
- Empowering choice
- Input and being in control of their communication wants/needs
- Having the opportunity to express what they need and want; being able to have a say in what they want and how they want to learn

A variation of this saw responses around democratic decision-making with others:

- Self-expression, communication, leadership, democracy, participation, making choices
- Involved in decision-making/choices, advocate, leadership
- Every student has the right to be heard, individually, as well as collectively; Student Voice is the representative body that facilitates the hearing an sharing of their needs

And finally, some responses recognised the reciprocal nature of voice and the importance of being listened to:

- Hearing what children have to say and their ideas
- Being heard, respecting opinion or choices
- Expression, acknowledgement

A few responses noted other aspects of ‘voice’:

- Sense of belonging
- Student voice is across all settings, not just in the classroom or Student Voice Group
- Power

Starting the Discussion
To establish shared understandings, the PL session started with work around two questions. This was important to revisit ideas from 2018, but also to ensure that new staff were ‘on the same page’ – and to recognise that there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers here.

Here are the staff responses to these questions, loosely grouped:
Why is Student Voice important?

Some staff responses started from the principle of the right of the student to have a voice and participate:

• The child is the centre of education; a child has a right to be a part of the program/s being planned for their development
• Child is the priority in education

One set of responses focused on the way in which having a voice improves students' skills:

• To provide skills necessary for when they leave our school
• Helps improve lifestyle and daily skills
• Understanding democratic processes; everyone has a say and their voices are important
• Teaches them about civics
• Open to opinions

In a related area, responses identified outcomes for students' engagement, learning and behaviour when their voices are heard:

• Engages students – improved learning, improved behaviour
• Students learn best when engaged and interested
• So they have ownership of their learning
• Ownership of learning
• Promotes independence and self worth
• Empowering, building confidence, valued, individual approach, team work
• Engagement in learning, school pride, self-empowerment
• To give students the opportunity to give opinions; some students may not have a voice, but they may still be able to show through positive or negative behaviours

And similarly, it was recognised that such recognition means students can feel valued and have a sense of belonging:

• Sense of belonging and community
• When a child is accepted, able to reach their potential
• To feel valued, to be heard, empowered, control of their world
• Students feel valued and listened to
• Express an opinion
• Makes our children feel wanted and needed
• So they feel their voice matters
• To be respected, heard, valued
• To be heard – input of ideas; expression of feelings, likes/dislikes

And finally, staff recognised that students' voices can improve teaching and school practices:

• So we know what they want
• To inform teaching and to know whether students are engaging or whether changes need to be made; to gain a better understanding what their wants and needs are
• Can improve teachers' skills when we ‘hear’ what students are saying
• How do we know the best way students learn if it doesn’t come from them?
• It makes being an educator easier and more fun
• So we can understand what they value
• Feedback allows teachers to modify learning
• Student feedback directs teaching and learning, students' interests and ways of learning
• Student feedback informs teaching practices
• Their voice informs our practice

Staff comments compiled, grouped and introduced by Roger Holdsworth
Listening

How do we listen to students?

When we think about ‘student voice’, we pay a lot of attention to the ways in which we can increase the capability and willingness of students to speak up - how we ‘amplify’ student voice. However, equally important is to think about how we increase the capability and willingness of teachers and others to hear, listen, and act in response to those voices.

When Connect asked schools some time ago to write about “ways in which students’ voices are heard in your school”, we received lots of detailed examples of the ways in which schools supported their students to present individual and collective voices (through Student Councils and so on); but we received NO examples of the ways in which adults and others heard and listened to those voices.

This resource aims to start a conversation about listening. We’d love to hear your feedback, as you use it to reflect on your own practices, and as you use it with other staff and students.

This is a first draft of a tool for teachers (and others) about how we are aware of, listen to and respond to students’ voices and agency. It could also be used by student representatives to reflect on how they also are aware of, listen to and respond to other students.

There are two ‘levels’ for using the tool: within the classroom, and within the overall school. Most people will choose one of these to respond to, depending on where you are working.

The structure of the tool is simple: it is a series of prompts, in response to which you are encouraged to write down some dot points. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

1. Awareness
   - recognising that many students’ voices exist and that there are various ways in which they are expressed

2. Listening
   - being willing and able to listen to all students’ voices and to acknowledge that they have important things to say

3. Responding
   - acknowledging what students are saying; clarifying, discussing and agreeing or disagreeing

4. Acting & Changing
   - being willing and able to act and change in response to students’ voices - and to work with them on changes
Stage 1: How am I aware of students’ voices?

This is about my **awareness** of students’ voices in my classroom and across the school – the range and form of them.

*In my classroom:*  

**What** student voices exist in my classroom/school?  
**Where and when** am I aware of students’ voices?

*Across my school:*

**Whose** voices am I aware of in my classroom/school?  
Whose voices *don’t* I hear?

**How are these voices being **expressed**?**  
Eg what forms of verbal and **non-verbal** voices (including behaviour) exist?

**What stops** me from being aware of students’ voices?
**Stage 2: How do I listen to students’ voices?**

This is about my willingness to listen to the content and style of students’ voices in my classroom and school, and about my understanding of what students are saying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my classroom:</th>
<th>Across my school:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What topics/issues are these students’ voices communicating about in my classroom and school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are these students’ voices actually ‘saying’ about the classroom and school? (including non-verbal statements)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I understand about what I am listening to? What <em>don’t</em> I understand about what I am listening to? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Whose</em> voices am I listening to in my classroom and school? <em>Whose</em> voices am I ignoring in my classroom and school? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 3: How do I respond to students’ voices?

This is about my engagement with what I am listening to from students in my classroom and school.

In my classroom:

How do I let students know that I’m listening to them?
How do I acknowledge what I’m hearing?

How do I ask for clarification about things that aren’t clear?

How do I provide reasons or arguments to students in response?
How do I do this respectfully, with logic and evidence, and continue listening to students?

How do I enter into discussions (dialogue) with students about what I am listening to?

Across my school:
Stage 4: How do I act and change because of students’ voices?

This is about my willingness to change our classroom and school practices in response to what I am listening to.

**In my classroom:**

How do I acknowledge the need and possibilities for change in my classroom and school?

How do I initiate changes to my/our practices?

How do I collaborate with students (and others) to make shared decisions about changes to our classroom and school practices?

How do I/we reflect on the processes and outcomes of changes to our classroom and school practices?

**Across my school:**
Keilor Downs College, Vic

Student Voice and Respectful Relationships

Keilor Downs College, in Melbourne’s western suburbs, had a newly established student voice team of 12 students in 2018, elected to represent the views of the student body. Our aim was to introduce student voice to the school community and to improve the connection between students and teachers.

Term 1: Establishing Student Voice
In the first few weeks after being elected, our team had already begun planning ways we were going to take action at the school. We were determined to work hard towards creating action.

Term 2: Respectful Relationships
In May, Keilor Downs College Student Voice attended the Respectful Relationships Leadership Forum, hosted by the VicSRC and the Department of Education. The workshop’s aims were to empower Year 9 to 12 students with ideas and knowledge on how to lead change in Respectful Relationships back at their school. The workshops inspired our student voice team to focus on promoting Respectful Relationships at our school for the remainder of the year, whilst also teaching us the steps involved in creating change through the A.L.T.E.R. process.

During this term, our team had the opportunity to provide feedback on the school’s reporting system, parent-teacher interviews and the library refurbishment. This allowed us to contribute to a stronger student involvement in school-based decisions.

Term 3: Developing our Leadership Skills
In August, Keilor Downs College Student Voice attended the Respectful Relationships: Peer Student Training - a session focused on developing our peer facilitator skills and knowledge, as well as focusing on leadership skills and action planning. Using the knowledge developed from the previous workshop, Student Voice was able to establish how exactly we were going to take action in our school community.

Our goal was to encourage respectful relationships by focusing specifically on gender stereotypes. We wanted to change the culture at Keilor Downs College to one that encourages respectful relationships and is accepting of all. From our aims, we created four student action ideas that would directly address this goal.

After completing our training course in August, Student Voice had the opportunity to facilitate the Respectful Relationships Student Voice Forum 2.0: Bringing Ideas to Action. The forum was designed to support students who attended the first Respectful Relationships Student Voice Forum in Term 1 to bring their ideas into action. Student Voice applied their knowledge, teaching other students how to identify issues faced by the student body whilst also inspiring others to enact change in their schools. This forum enabled the student voice team to develop confidence, facilitation and leadership skills.

Term 4: Turning our Ideas into Action
Utilising all the skills and training we had gained throughout the year, it was time to take action back at Keilor Downs College: We decided to involve students directly in our work with Respectful Relationships in order to make a positive change in the school community and culture.

- Because change happens when issues are addressed early on, we planned and delivered the Year 7 Gender Equality Explore Classes; each workshop covered the gender stereotypes we see at school and we could address these with fun, interactive activities, such as through a Kahoot Quiz and poster making.
- Student feedback that we collected showed that the Year 7s were able to understand the consequences of gender stereotyping: the importance of gender equality. Overall the Student Voice team found these workshops really engaging for the Year 7s while also being very enjoyable to deliver.
- Student Voice had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop for the staff, aiming to encourage staff to lead positive change in ending gender-based violence and stereotyping at Keilor Downs College. We were able to emphasise the importance of respectful relationships to the staff as well as build on our confidence and public speaking skills. The workshop was one of the first ways that Student Voice broke through the barrier between students and teacher decisions.
One of the other major projects that student voice focused on was **White Ribbon Day**, a global movement to put an end to violence against women and men. On the 23rd of November we distributed ribbons to each home group. Members of **Student Voice** also gave a speech at staff morning tea informing teachers about the aims of the event and the action we had taken to promote respectful relationships throughout the year.

As a team, we decided that a creative way to promote the aims of **White Ribbon Day** at school was to host a banner creation competition. Students were given the opportunity to submit their own banner design promoting gender equality, having a chance to win and have their flag officially created. The banner was launched on **White Ribbon Day**, for the whole school community to see including students, staff and parents emphasising positivity of gender equality!

The **Student Voice** team also got the school community together to end men's violence against women through a **photo booth**. Staff and students were able to voice their ideas about the importance of respect and equality for women and men through writing their message on a blackboard, which they held up to be photographed. This action idea was really successful as the team photographed over 72 students and staff in a matter of three days. We were able to raise awareness about respectful relationships in a meaningful and engaging way.

It wasn't an easy process turning our ideas into school projects. It took hours of planning and dedication from all members of the committee. Overall, our team's hard work throughout the year turned out to be really successful, as our projects were finally turned into reality. I believe that for the first year of student voice at Keilor Downs we did achieve our goal: to give the students more of a say in the school community, and to establish ourselves as a group.

**Student Voice** grew immensely as a team this year and we hope to continue to take action in the school to resolve issues that the student body faces.

**Imarsha Pathirana**  
*Year 10 Student*
Primary School Engagement (PSE): An Evaluation

The concept of student voice has been enthusiastically embraced in the past 20 years in schooling. In the Victorian context, the Department of Education (VicDET) included the notion of student voice into its Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) in 2015, following a large-scale consultation.

The state-wide expectation that classroom practices will include student voice, and that empowering students will lead to improved student outcomes, has encouraged schools to seek further support for the enactment of student voice. The VicSRC has recently sought to support primary schools in the enactment and embedding of student voice practices.

The VicSRC Executive, working with funding from the Victorian Department of Education, commissioned this evaluation study of the VicSRC’s Primary School Engagement (PSE) project. This evaluation study investigates the situated accounts of students, teachers and school leaders of their student voice initiatives, and their participation in the VicSRC’s PSE project. This Executive Summary of the report summarises the findings of this evaluation study. (Contact the VicSRC at eo@vicsrc.org.au for the whole report.)

Aims and methodology

This evaluation study took a multi-sited case study approach. Research engagements with three case study schools included:

- Interviews with the three case study school principals.
- Two interviews with the case study teacher facilitating each school’s student voice initiatives.
- Two focus groups with participating students about student voice at their school, and their experiences with the VicSRC. Of the 23 participating students, 13 of these students were in Year 6 (the final year of primary school), and 21 were in their school’s SRC (or equivalent). Of the 23 participating students, there were 16 females and 7 males.

- Participant observation at VicSRC events where teachers and students were engaged with the VicSRC (eg a VicSRC student voice workshop, and a Teach the Teacher workshop).
- For each school, at least one of these teacher interviews and student focus groups were conducted on school grounds. During these school visits, photographs were also taken of key artefacts relating to the school’s student voice work.
- Other data generated by these schools for the VicSRC – eg videos produced by schools for the VicSRC as Student Voice award entries.

Findings

Examples of student voice work in these case study schools

The evaluation study found that schools engaged students in a range of roles as part of their student voice initiatives, including:

- Students as data sources: For example, through student completion of the Attitudes to School Survey.
- Students as active respondents: For example, teachers inviting their class to negotiate when to study particular subjects over the school day, or staff inviting students to be part of discussions of the choice of a new item of uniform.
- Students initiating action, and acting as mediators for other students: In this role, representative students sought to support, mediate and drive action on behalf of other students – for example, through speaking to younger mentor classes, or representative students taking action following students’ written suggestions in a suggestion box.
- Students as co-enquirers and joint authors: For example, teachers and students jointly constructing and sharing learning goals for both parties, and a joint student-teacher inquiry into the question: ‘What is deep learning?’

Intergenerational learning as participatory democracy: For example, whole school planning, designing, building and maintenance of a chicken coop involving students, teachers, parents and the wider community.
Accounts of positive impacts at case study schools

Personal benefits for students, including:
  o Confidence, empowerment, students’ improved skills in giving feedback, students feeling greater ownership of school processes
  o Strengthened peer relationships and relationships across year groupings, and respectful relationships among students.

Benefits for classroom learning and student-teacher relationships, including:
  o Student voice practices supporting inquiry-based learning approaches
  o Students perceiving that teachers are using new strategies based on student input
  o Student involvement in decisions about classroom seating arrangements and structures (eg timetable for the day) helping students to focus and to feel ownership over classroom processes.
  o Mutual respect between students and teachers.

Benefits for teacher professional learning, including:
  o Shifts in how teachers analyse data (and include students in this analysis)
  o Professional reflection on current practices.

Benefits for school improvement:
  o For example, changes to timetabling and classroom structures, to the built environment of the school, to uniform decisions, as well as to overall student-teacher learning and relationships.

What has supported these schools to see these positive impacts:
  • School leadership that actively supports student voice work
  • A facilitating teacher who mobilises and supports students and staff
  • Training and support for students
  • Strategically using and modifying available resources
  • Sustained, repeated opportunities for engagement with the VicSRC.

Accounts of challenges at these case study schools

Younger students and the concept of student voice:

Engaging younger children (Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2) in student voice work is a particular challenge for schools. These schools have experimented with a range of practices to engage younger students (eg older students working with a younger mentor class, and modifying student voice resources).

Distinctions between students:

Student representation raises questions of which students get to represent other students, and the potential for representative students to inadvertently underestimate the capacities of other students. There continue to be challenges in including all students – not just students who express themselves according to the implicit accepted communicative norms of schooling.

The scope of student voice for teaching and learning:

Student voice at these case study schools had strongly permeated student leadership and student representative groups, but teachers and principals were open about the need for a more participatory ethos to infiltrate teaching and learning practices across the school.

Teacher concerns:

There were reports of some teachers at these schools finding student voice practices challenging, and of needing to take student voice cautiously.

Assessing the ‘impact’ of student voice: Approaches taken at these schools

Assessing the ‘impact’ of student voice practices was acknowledged to be a challenge for schools. These case study schools sought to find ways to demonstrate the impact of the student voice practices which they valued, making use of current evaluation measures and modifying and inventing their own, for example, through:
  • The Attitudes to School Survey
  • Schools developing their own modified instruments – for example, for younger students
  • Generating their own documentation, including conducting interviews and focus groups with students about particular programs
  • Material products of student voice work
  • Recognition by the VicSRC
  • Noticing whether or not more students beyond the SRC are approaching the school leadership with ideas.

Recommendations

• Development of resources for younger students, and to the importance of listening alongside ‘having a voice’
• Attention to distinctions between students and the limitations of representational models of student voice
• Attention to what enables and constrains student voice in teaching and learning, and professional learning through student voice
• Further consideration of multilateral modes of evaluation of student voice initiatives
• Ongoing work between the VicSRC and Victorian schools.

Eve Mayes, Rachel Finneran and Rosalyn Black
Deakin University
eve.mayes@deakin.edu.au
Growing our VicSRC

The VicSRC to me is a place for students to heard and action to be taken in response to our voices. Although I’ve only been a part of the organisation since July 2018, every day I am excited to contribute and help grow the VicSRC.

As each day passes, the VicSRC grows a bit more. I’ve witnessed the Ambassadors program expand to 50 members. And seen the hard work of both the past and present Executive teams, as their efforts have succeeded in students being able to be heard.

In such a short period of time I’ve seen the launch of the Student Voice Hub (SVH) and phase two revealed. This is an online space for students to share and motivate one another, creating a state-wide conversation and amplification of student voice – all online. The SVH is an amazing tool for every student, especially since technology is abundant in this day and age; students can find a practical and appropriate platform to discuss and discover new ideas to take back to their own school.

Additionally, the VicSRC has grown to enable students to become a part of the organisation’s family, with the launch of free student memberships, allowing more students to have access to information, opportunities and to be a part of the VicSRC.

The VicSRC hasn’t been around for a long time. The need for a state student representative council has been demanded since the 1980s however it wasn’t until much later, in 2003, that we were officially established. Although time has changed since the 80s, and the trends that students follow are dramatically different between now and then, the one thing that has always stayed the same, is the need for student voice – which is the foundation of the Victorian Student Representative Council.

However we’re always growing, progressing, always creating new things, and always exploring new possibilities. It’s passionate students who ensure that we will never stop growing, so that young people have a voice, and are able to use it and be heard. Everyone has a right to be listened to.

Beth
VicSRC Executive
We want you to sign up! Applications opened Friday 8th February! Check https://bit.ly/2SxyVYu for the application form!

What is a VicSRC Ambassador?
VicSRC Ambassadors are champions of student voice at the school level. You will work with your teachers, student leadership body and other student populations to bring student voice and student-led initiatives to life in your school and local community. VicSRC Ambassadors have the support of the VicSRC staff, Executive and other Ambassadors from across Victoria.

What does an Ambassador do?
As part of the VicSRC Ambassadors team you will work together to pick, plan, problem-solve and reflect on student voice initiatives in your schools. You will learn new skills to help you advocate for students at all levels and also collaborate with the VicSRC on what student voice looks like at your school and across Victoria.

Each VicSRC Ambassador will have a flexible role and multiple opportunities to participate in VicSRC advocacy, initiatives and events.

Over the year, you might:
• run different student voice initiatives or events at your school,
• report to the VicSRC on the state of student voice in your school,
• represent the VicSRC at different activities (for example, meetings with the Department of Education or the VicSRC’s Student Voice Awards),
• support the VicSRC Executive in their advocacy work in the education sector,
• write articles for the VicSRC website or Student Voice Hub.

Most importantly, Ambassadors get to connect with a fantastic group of like-minded students from across Victoria!

“I loved every minute of being a part of the Ambassadors for VicSRC and the challenges. I have so much more confidence and have taken more opportunities. Being a part of something so big - to make a change for not only me but for others too - was awesome.”

Who can be an Ambassador and what is the commitment?
Ambassadors must be completing secondary schooling in Victoria and will need to commit to attending two meetings per school term as well as working on Ambassador duties in their own time as needed (approximately one hour per week).

Ambassadors are a link between the VicSRC and their school, and so we ask that you be endorsed by a teacher at your school. This process can be completed once you have been accepted into the program. If you are worried that your school will not endorse you, we encourage you to speak to a supportive teacher independently.

An Ambassador’s duties involve:
• planning and implementing student voice initiatives in your school,
• communicating between your school's student body and the VicSRC Executive and staff,
• participating in a range of VicSRC engagements such as reference or advisory groups, surveys in school, panel discussions, volunteering at VicSRC events (like the Student Voice Awards, Student Voice Workshops etc) and media engagements,
• volunteering approximately 1-2 hours each week to work on VicSRC Ambassador tasks,
• attending VicSRC Ambassadors’ meetings (approximately two per term).

Please note that we can only accept up to two Ambassadors per school.

The proposed first meeting for 2019 is Saturday the 9th of March at the VicSRC Office in Melbourne CBD.

If you have questions, or would like to chat further, please get in touch with Benita at or 0487 085 668.
The VicSRC is currently advertising for two staff positions:

**VicSRC Programs and Events Coordinator**

This exciting, evolving Coordinator role is a key part of the VicSRC leadership team with oversight and responsibility for VicSRC’s variety of training programs, events and partnerships.

The key projects and events include **VicSRC Congress**, the **Student Voice Workshop** series, the internationally recognised **Teach the Teacher** program and the **Student Voice Awards**. You will also regularly travel around the state and potentially interstate to deliver workshops, training and events.

**Sponsorships and Partnerships Officer**

This brand new role is an exciting step forward in VicSRC’s long-term sustainability, responsible for developing and maintaining sponsorship agreements to support VicSRC programs and events.

You’ll be working with schools, community organisations, philanthropic organisations and local government to support and sustain the ongoing work of student voice.

**Apply**


Applications for both positions close at 9am Monday 4 March 2019 with interviews to be held on Thursday 7 March and Friday 8 March 2019 in Melbourne CBD.

If you have any questions about the role, please contact Nina Laitala, VicSRC Executive Officer on 0411 679 050.

The VicSRC Student Voice Workshops will operate again across Victoria in 2019. Location and dates are coming soon!

If you would like to host a Student Voice Workshop, get in touch at [events@vicsrc.org.au](mailto:events@vicsrc.org.au) with your school name and location.

**Stand up. Speak out. Spark change.**

Delivered around the state by the VicSRC, this series of workshops ensures students are consulted and heard on the issues that matter in their education, no matter their location.

We bring educational leaders – students, teachers and principals – together in a unique learning space to collaborate, co-create and spark practical strategies to transform their schools and learning environments.

**Dates and Locations (more coming soon!)**

**BARWON**
- Thursday 14 March | Geelong High School
**METRO NORTH**
- Friday 22 March | Roxburgh College
**MALLEE**
- Wednesday 8 May | Kerang Memorial Hall

**What happens at a Student Voice Workshop?**

Student Voice Workshops are designed to help you to work collaboratively to tackle the **how** of student voice and agency. During workshops, participants collaborate, co-create and spark practical strategies to transform their schools and learning environments. **Student Voice Workshops** give every Victorian student a chance to explore how to use their voice for positive change in their community.

Workshops are suitable for all school leaders (students, teachers and principals) who want their voices heard.

Do you have an enquiry?
Contact us at: [events@vicsrc.org.au](mailto:events@vicsrc.org.au) or 0447 691 300.
Meet some more VicSRC Executive members

**Bri**
My name is Bri, I’m a Year 11 student and this my second year as a VicSRC Executive member. I live up in North-East Victoria in a little town of under 4000 people, with my school less than a tenth of that.
Growing up in a rural part of Victoria has inspired me to help change the education of all students across the state, something that I’ve had the pleasure of already doing with the VicSRC for over a year now. It is my firm belief that everyone has the right to a high quality education that will aid them in whatever future they choose, regardless of where they live.

**John-Paul**
Hey you!
My name is John-Paul (you can abbreviate it however you like, just not to Paul...) and I’m a Year 11 student from the Western Suburbs of Melbourne.
I’m so excited to work alongside 14 other amazing individuals to empower students in Victoria to have a say in how their education system runs! There’s something to be said about how student voice is so powerful, and I chose to run for the Executive to grow as a bold leader and exercise the ever-so-important voices that students hold, not only at my school, but all across Victoria.
My hobbies include all things sports related! I enjoy the thrill of sport and the (sometimes) friendly competition, but you can mainly find me playing badminton and tennis. I also work part-time shaking up bubble tea, so you know where to go for them discounts.
Being on the Executive is such a privilege and I believe that everyone is capable of creating change – it’s just a matter of finding the courage to voice it.

**Julia**
Young minds can make changes in what matters to us, whether it be big or small.
Hi there! My name is Julia, and I’m a VCE student in Melbourne’s west. Believe it or not, I actually love school and everything that it has to offer, but I know very well that this isn’t the case for all Victorian students. I guess that’s one of my priorities as one of your Executive team – to make all students’ education experience as enjoyable, fulfilling and likeable as possible.
Some fun facts about me: I play the cello; I have a passion for musical theatre; and I enjoy playing all sport!
Our lives now are a part of our future, and I believe that every Victorian student is entitled to have a voice during their time at school. I’m grateful for the opportunity to be able to serve all Victorian students during my Executive term and am ready for some good times ahead!

**Laura**
Hey hey, my name’s Laura and I’m in Year 12. I’m so excited for this 12 months of being on the Executive team and getting to work with amazing new people all the time. I’m super passionate about helping people and making a positive change in society so I can’t wait to see what opportunities this year brings to do exactly that. Throughout my Executive term, the thing I’m looking forward to most is just advocating for student voice and showing people that what we have to say as young people, does matter too, if not more!
The VicSRC has overhauled the way we engage with schools and students to make our support of student voice bigger, bolder and better.

We now have both Student Members and Partner Schools.

Itching to get started? Great!
You can sign up at: https://bit.ly/2HZAx9l

Excited but confused?
Not sure what this means for you?
Great!
Check out the FAQ pages below for more info!

Student Members FAQ: https://bit.ly/2SfOvZk
Partner School FAQ: https://bit.ly/2l0jRi1

Are you a VicSRC Partner School?

Partnership discounts
Did you know that you can receive discounted event prices if you have a VicSRC Partnership?

If you are not a Partner School and would like to take advantage of discounted ticket prices to VicSRC events, simply select ‘VicSRC Partnership (Annual School Partnership)’ at the start of your online registration. Or check about Partnership on-line at: http://www.vicsrc.org.au/student-opportunities/membership--partnership

Join the conversation now!
Students can join for free!

https://studentvoicehub.org.au/

The VicSRC receives funding support from the Victorian Department of Education and Training and Catholic Education Melbourne.
It 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: eo@vicsrc.org.au
Orrai Kaatha Pasanga

A Participatory Film created by Children in Rural India

I wish to share a participatory short film that was created by a few children from a rural village in Southern India, who were identified by their community as having special needs.

This work came out of my PhD thesis project, which utilised participatory filmmaking as a research methodology within a participatory action research project with children with special needs.

This 15 minute short film shares their first hand experiences about issues they want changed for themselves and for their community.

At this point in time, we are hoping that this film may reach the right organisations or individuals who maybe interested in moving some of the action plans forward in their own creative way or willing to collaborate in the action phase. Please feel free to share it with people who you think may be interested.

Link: https://youtu.be/sPyiQCj82Qs

Tanya Elizabeth Benjamin
Faculty of Health Sciences
Western University, London, Ontario
tbenjam4@uwo.ca

I wish to share a participatory short film that was created by a few children from a rural village in Southern India, who were identified by their community as having special needs.

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Tanya Elizabeth Benjamin
Faculty of Health Sciences
Western University, London, Ontario
tbenjam4@uwo.ca

IJSV

We are pleased to announce the new issue of the International Journal of Student Voice, featuring: Creating Spaces for Youth through Student Voice and Critical Pedagogy: The Case of RunDSM by Jason Salisbury, Kristopher Rollins, Emily Lang, Daniel D. Spiokes.

You can access the article at: https://bit.ly/2WDNuca

Dana Mitra
Professor of Education
Department of Education Policy Studies
Penn State University

Founding editor of the International Journal of Student Voice
http://ijsv.psu.edu/

Australian Students as Partners

News from this University-focused Network:

Roundtable

The 5th Annual Australian SaP Roundtable event will be hosted at The University of New South Wales, Sydney on Friday 2 August. The 2018 Australian SaP Roundtable brought together 150 people from 23 universities with 17 case studies and 15 posters highlighting the breadth and depth of practices unfolding across Australian universities.

iSapi is coming to Australia!

After three successful years of being hosted by the McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, the International Students as Partners Institute - iSapi - is heading down under with the University of Adelaide hosting on 10-12 July, 2019. https://bit.ly/2GgKsoa

International Journal of Students as Partners:

In Issue 2.2 (https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap/) you will find an editorial, two opinion pieces on equity and inclusion in pedagogical partnership practices, four research articles, three reflective essays, six case studies, and two reviews.

Editorial: What we talk about when we talk about Students as Partners

The practices of partnership will always be more complex than the words we use to describe them... This piece explores the emergence of the term "students as partners" and illuminates different perspectives on the term itself. The intent is to affirm, challenge, and, in some cases, change the discourse around how the term "students as partners" is used to enable the creative translation of partnership principles across an array of practices.

Kelly Matthews: k.matthews1@uq.edu.au
March 15 2019: Melbourne Business School, Carlton

Come and join us for a whole day of professional learning on the Victorian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship Levels 7-10. The day will include a keynote speaker, presentations, workshops and access to resources, all targeted to the three strands: Government and Democracy, Laws and Citizens, and Citizenship, Diversity and Identity.

The professional learning day will focus on strategies and ideas on developing and implementing the Victorian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship, developing and adapting units of learning, introducing and managing whole school events that activate student civic participation, as well as examples of best practice in the classroom.

The keynote speaker will be:

Hon. Justice Lex Lasry AM,
from the Supreme Court of Victoria.

Workshops by subject area from experienced teachers and academics include:

VCAA Civics Resources Project
Showcasing one of several units of work that has been developed for 7-10 civics and citizenship

Ancestry Atlas (Cultural Infusion)
Demonstrating a unique secure digital tool that maps and measures cultural diversity in your classroom or for the entire school. Relevant to 7-10 Civics especially the Citizenship, Diversity and Identity strand

Ask Us ...

The first resource launched under the ACT’s Students at the Centre Strategy is the Ask Us... Student Voice Resource Kit, developed by ACT students from all sectors in association with Youth Coalition of the ACT. This process was supported by the ACT Government, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools.

This resource provides numerous strategies and processes to embed student agency in schools and the wider community.

Resources available on-line include:

Ask Us... Poster (A3) pdf (1.1 MB):

Ask Us... Student Voice Resource Kit pdf (2.3 MB):
https://bit.ly/2UCxRzF

More general information at:
https://bit.ly/2D3Y43c
Have a say and contribute to how your school is run. Participate by putting forward your views, concerns and ideas.

For more information see _____________________________

For great student ideas and more go to www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education
The International Conference: Student Voice: Deepening Relationship between Youth Research and Practice will be held at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education in Philadelphia, USA from May 28-May 30, 2019.

This international seminar will convene experts from education, research and policy realms from around the world to consider the pressing questions of the inclusion of student voice and the development of the youth-adult research paradigm. We will look at the nexus of research and practice through a conversation across researchers, youth, teachers/administrators, non-profit leaders and more.

Who Should Attend This Event?

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS:
committed to integrating student voice in the teacher education process

POLICY ADVOCATES & FUNDERS:
with a mission to elevate youth-adult partnership in school redesign efforts on a large scale

PRACTITIONERS:
(field based) with a mission to elevate youth voice and partnership in learning and school redesign efforts

RESEARCHERS:
youth voice/youth-adult partnership

STUDENTS:
taking a leadership role on state, national, or international levels to further the role of young people in learning and school decision-making

Please register at: http://www.cvent.com/d/8bq5vb

A limited number of scholarships exist for youth attendees at the meeting. Please contact us if you have a request for bringing young people.

Questions can be directed to:
Seyma Dagistan: seyma@psu.edu
Dana Mitra: dana@psu.edu or studentvoice2019@psu.edu

Dana Mitra
Professor, Education Theory and Policy
Penn State University
https://danamitra.net/research/

Catholic Education Melbourne: Student Voice Webpage

A Student Voice webpage is now live and accessible for Melbourne Catholic schools. The pages can be found on the CEVN website - once logged in (only accessible by teachers in the Catholic system) follow the left hand tabs via Curriculum & Student Support/Student Wellbeing/Student Voice.

The ‘main page’ provides a general overview of Student Voice including the rationale, ways of working and key messages. The resources are accessible via the ‘Resources’ link near the bottom of the ‘main page’. This page houses a wide variety of content related to Student Voice, and reference to some tools currently being developed for upload when completed. Over time it is planned to upload new and related resources.

Please feel free to share with colleagues in the Melbourne Catholic education community.

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

PRIMARY SCHOOL SRC/JSC 'LAUNCH' CONFERENCE 2019!

A FUN & ENGAGING CONFERENCE FOR GRADE 4 – 6 STUDENTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT VOICE AND SRC/JSC OUTCOMES IN THEIR SCHOOL

APRIL 1ST, 2019
9:30-1:30
St. Charles Borromeo Primary School
Serpells Rd, Templestowe
Facilitators:

**KATE WILDE**

Kate is an educator and development worker with over twenty years’ experience working with young people. In 2005 she co-founded 'The Workshop' and has gone on to become a respected provider of programs to schools, LGA’s and community organizations. Kate has facilitated SRC Training for over a decade and was the Primary Facilitator of Student Voice Workshops for the VicSRC from 2014 - 2018. Kate is a sought after speaker and facilitator with recognised skills in engaging and empowering students of all ages.

**ROGER HOLDSWORTH**

Roger Holdsworth has been a teacher, curriculum officer, community youth sector worker, University researcher, writer and consultant for many years. He is editor and publisher of Connect, a practice journal supporting student participation (since 1979). He is currently a retired teacher, acting as a critical friend to the VicSRC and working with a variety of schools around student voice, agency and participation. Roger is an internationally recognised expert and leader in Student Voice.

**TRAINING FOCUS:**

- What is Student Voice? How can students effectively represent their peers as SRC/JSC members.
- ‘Campaigns’ - how to get other students, teachers and the school community ‘on board’ to achieve goals.
- Skills Recognition - what talents, skills and potential are in your SRC/JSC team?
- Teamwork and Decision Making - working together and having fun.

**THE DETAILS:**

Cost per participant: $25.00

Time: 9.30 – 1.30pm

Venue: St. Charles Borromeo Primary School, Templestowe

Morning tea provided

Schools may book up to 8 students per school but numbers are limited so book early!

**BOOKINGS:**

To book email Sue Cahill at St. Charles Borromeo at scahill@scbtemplestowe.catholic.edu.au

If you would like further details or for any queries please don’t hesitate to contact Kate Wilde on 0419 810 002 or via email k.wilde@theworkshop.org.au
Amplify: A student voice practice guide

As Connect announced in last June’s issue, a practice guide for schools about student voice, agency and leadership called ‘Amplify’ has been produced by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET).

Copies have been distributed to schools, and print copies are now out of stock, pending a reprint. However, Amplify is still available on-line as a Word document or a PDF from https://bit.ly/2y4JGrX.

Amplify represents an opportunity to reflect on the current status of student voice, agency and leadership in classrooms, and to identify improvement opportunities and implementation ideas. It brings to the fore the central role that student voice, agency and leadership have in improving student outcomes.

‘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 (see: 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

Connect on facebook

Connect has a presence on facebook. Find us at: http://ow.ly/L6UvW

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

Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group

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 Publications: Order Form

**Tax Invoice:** ABN: 98 174 663 341

**To:** Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote VIC 3070 Australia  
*e-mail:* r.holdsworth@unimelb.edu.au

### Connect On-Line Subscription (all 6 issues annually e-mailed to you FREE):

Simply supply your e-mail address (below or by e-mail) and name and phone number (in case of bounces). There is no cost; however donations to support Connect's work are appreciated and acknowledged.

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**or:**
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Contribute to Connect
Anyone may submit an original article to be considered for publication in Connect provided he or she owns the copyright to the work being submitted or is authorised by the copyright owner or owners to submit the article. Authors are the initial owners of the copyrights to their works, but by successfully submitting the article to Connect, transfer such ownership of the published article to Connect on the understanding that any royalties or other income from that article will be used to maintain publication of Connect.

ASPRINworld: the Connect website!
www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at ASPRINworld. The Connect section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, index of recent back issue contents (hyperlinked to PDFs) and summaries of and order information for Student Councils and Beyond, Student Action Teams, Reaching High and Switched On to Learning.

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

All issues of Connect are archived through the ACER Research Repository: ACEReSearch. Connect issues from #1 to the current issue 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.

Articles from Connect are also discoverable through EBSCOhost research databases.

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 and we’ll work something out.

Australian:

Ask Us... Student Voice in the ACT (ACT Government, AIS ACT, Catholic Education - Canberra and Goulburn, Youth Coalition of the ACT, ACT) Resource Kit, 2018

Engaging student input on student engagement in learning (Maggie Callingham, Victoria University, Vic) International Journal on School Disaffection, 2016

From discrete intervention to engage marginalised students to whole-school initiative to engage all students (Maggie Callingham, Victoria University, Vic) International Journal of Inclusive Education, 21:2, 131-145; 2017

Imagining an ideal school for wellbeing: locating student voice (Catharine A Simmons, Anne Graham, Nigel Thomas; Southern Cross University, NSW) Journal of Educational Change, 16:2, 129-144, 2015


Re-conceptualising youth participation: A framework to inform action (Helen Cahill, Babak Dadvand; Youth Research Centre, MGSE, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Children and Youth Services Review, forthcoming 2019

Research Developments (ACER, Camberwell, Vic) December 2018

Student voice in an age of ‘security’? (Eve Mayes; Deakin University, Vic) Critical Studies in Education, April 2018

Student voice in school reform? Desiring simultaneous critique and affirmation (Eve Mayes; Deakin University, Vic) Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 2018

International:

UP for Learning (Vermont, USA) 2019

What we talk about when we talk about Students as Partners (Alison Cook-Sather, Kelly E. Matthews, Anita Ntem, Sandra Leathwick; Bryn Mawr College, USA; The University of Queensland, Australia; Democracy Prep Public Schools, USA) International Journal for Students as Partners Vol 2 Issue 2; December 2018
Connect On-Line!

All issues of Connect from 1979 to the present (that's now over 39 years!) are freely available on-line! Thanks to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), all the issues of Connect have been scanned or up-loaded into the ACER's Research Repository: ACEReSearch.

You can find these issues of Connect at:

http://research.acer.edu.au/connect

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

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.

Most importantly, please USE this resource.

All copies of Connect are available on-line ... for free!

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