Supporting student participation

Connect

Number 87: June 1994

SRC Forum

Descriptions and Difficult Issues

- Increasing the Status and Image of the SRC
- Student Representative Councils at 11 Schools Report
- "Dear SRC": Facing Some Difficult Issues
- "Know Yours Rights at School"
- Junior School Councils

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This Issue

Following up the special issue on Junior School Councils, here’s a secondary special ... where students and teachers associated with Student Representative Councils write about their operation.

We also asked the SRCs to discuss some of the difficult issues facing them, and their responses are collated in a four-page ‘liftout’.

The final word? Hardly! As one response to the last issue noted - it is instructive to see the diversity in approaches. So ... what do you do? How do you tackle those difficult issues? What other issues are important for you? We’d like to follow up this issue with some more comments from other schools, from other areas.

To add to the list of ‘Further Resources’ (page 11), hunt out Connect 74 - there’s a large list of publications and videos there.

Back Issues and Articles

We’ve now managed to put together two databases: one contains all articles published in Connect (1979 to date); the second contains all the ‘extra articles’ listed in the Clearinghouse. Both databases can be accessed in various ways: you can get a whole list printed out; you can select and print by subject; you can search by keywords; you can select certain states or between Australia and other countries etc. Each printout costs $3 sent to you. Send, phone or fax requests to Connect.

Consultancy Services

Connect offers a consultancy service to schools around student participation issues - training for teachers, and for SRCs and JSCs, project advice, etc. Schools that are organisational ($30) subscribers to Connect receive a 20% discount on the (already low) consultancy fee. Phone or fax Connect for further information.

Next Issue

We already have a fascinating article about Sherbrooke Community School’s participation in the great Victorian Bike Ride, and hope to build on some information about the New South Wales State SRC - its 1993 Conference and 1994 plans.

Publication date for Connect 88 is August; deadline for copy is the end of July 1994.

The end of 1994 also marks 15 years of publication of Connect. Any early thoughts about articles that review the last 15 years?

We’d also like to hear of any responses to the proposal to hold a national student participation workshop in Melbourne in association with the ACSA Conference in July 1995 (see page 26).

Roger Holdsworth
Student Representative Councils, Student Action Groups, Student Unions ... they have many names.

How do student bodies in secondary schools and colleges operate?

What is their structure?

What have they achieved and what difficulties have they met?

*Connect* invited some student groups to tell us about themselves, and to give advice to new SRCs.

Here are their responses:

**Dear SRC**

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**Batemans Bay HS, NSW**

Batemans Bay was founded by Captain James Cook in 1770. It is situated on the south east coast about two hours' from Canberra and four hours' from Sydney.

Batemans Bay is a popular tourist destination for Canberrans and Victorians alike. Our many beaches and our vast bush give it a unique beauty.

With a population of just over 10,000, there is only one high school: Batemans Bay High School.

The Batemans Bay High School SRC has twelve members and one willing and brave teacher assistant. Members are from years 7 to 11, and serve from July to June. There are two representatives from each year of the junior school and four from year 11.

Our current SRC consists of:

year 7/8:
- Adam Smith, Emma Connell

year 8/9:
- Emma Seaton

year 9/10:
- Ernest Jackson, Kate Leeds

year 10/11:
- Adam Wade, Sarah Vardon

year 11/12:
- Kirsten Ward, Matthew Seaton, Greg Holmes, Cindy Mass

Each year in June, each school year is required to vote for both a girl and a boy from a list of nominated candidates to be their representative. This is usually an effective system - depending on the nominees.

The School Presidents are then also appointed to the SRC. Our SRC meets once a fortnight or weekly if required, during lunch times or in our regular meeting period.

Each Wednesday we hold an assembly in which a representative of the SRC is required to speak about upcoming events and issues.

Students are aware of their SRC members and report their needs through morning roll calls or through individual members.

The SRC at Batemans Bay High School runs fairly efficiently, but really does not attempt to tackle too many issues. We find that much of our time is spent fundraising, running socials and BBQs for visitors to the school and so on. At the same time, many of our activities are not profit making. We take an active part in the improvement of our school, and organisations such as those about the environment and racism, Amnesty International and many charity groups are high on our agenda.

SRC can be lots of fun for the students involved, and it adds to the spirit of the school.

*Connect* 87: June 1994
Burra Community School, SA

Burra Community is an R-12 school in South Australia and hence has two separate SRC groups. Firstly, there is the senior SRC in which three students per year level (must have male and female) must be elected. Secondly, there is the Junior SRC where two students per year level (one male, one female) are elected.

Elections are held mid term 4. Nominations are held before the voting occurs.

Structure

Meetings are held every two weeks at alternating lesson times. SRC members from each year level discuss ideas and suggestions in pastoral care lessons when all classes are together. With these ideas, the students then go to the relevant subcommittees and then consult the appropriate people. Such subcommittees are:

SRC Executive:
Coordinator (president)
Assistant Coordinator (vice pres.)
Secretary
Treasurer
Executive Assistant

The Executive meets with the Principal every two weeks to discuss the running of the SRC.

Prom and Social Committee: Two people are to gather a Prom/Social committee of interested students who are willing to assist in the organisation of Proms and Socials.

Environment Committee: Two people are to get a group of interested students together to help the school upgrade its surroundings and to get the school involved with such organisations as Environment Day and The Wilderness Society Badge Day.

Publicity: Two SRC members are to arrange assemblies and publicise up-coming SRC events.

Drink Machine: Two members to order drinks, fill up the Drink Machine, collect the money and contact Coca-Cola when maintenance and up-grading is needed.

Sports Committee: Two members to organise sporting events and lunchtime activities within the school, eg Fun Run and lunch time basketball.

Junior SRC: Two senior SRC members are to act as liaisons and assist with the running of the Junior SRC meetings.

Radio Station: The two nominated members are to report back to the SRC any information regarding the school radio and also assist with the D-Jaying.

Fundraising: These are the organisers for fundraising events to help support the SRC in all of the costly events that they run.

The SRC also hands out other smaller responsibilities so that tasks are equally shared among all members.

Other School Committees

The SRC is represented on several other committees within the school to ensure that the students' opinions are heard. For example:

School Council: Two members go to every meeting to help decide on major decisions made throughout the school.

Curriculum: Two members attend every meeting to give opinions on changes made to the curriculum.

Staff Meetings: One member attends whenever there is an issue regarding the students and their role in the school.

Executive: One or two members go to support or object to proposals that either students or staff have put through.

Comments

The orientation camp, which we held when the new SRC is elected, helps us to organise the structure of the SRC and enables members to get to know each other. The camp has proven to be very successful and worthwhile.

Overall, the SRC has established a strong student body which, over the years, has improved with the experience and knowledge that we gain from each year. Recently the SRC has accomplished many goals such as our new drink machine and the right to make more important decisions on behalf of the students in our school.

Our SRC works efficiently together. We are successful in making the needs and requirements of the students apparent to the other members of the school staff and community.

Emilee Westover & Kara Phillips
on behalf of the Burra SRC

Heathcote High School, NSW

At Heathcote High School, our SRC consists of thirty-five members from years 8 to 12. Representatives from year 7 are elected in the middle of the year. The SRC has replaced the prefect system.

In representing students, we publish articles in the school newsletter and local papers, conduct assemblies, and are active on the environment, school values, uniform and school canteen committees.

Our SRC also has its own committees - sport, social relations, fundraising and publicity. Through these committees, we have achieved a great deal.

from Mosaic,
Metropolitan East Region, NSW

Connect 87: June 1994
At Camden High School, our SRC has representatives from each year. The School Captains are the Presidents; Secretary and Treasurer are elected. People nominate themselves to be on the SRC, then they need someone to second them, and their parents and the Year Advisor to agree. Each year then votes on who they want to represent them.

We hold informal meetings every Thursday fortnight at lunchtime in the school library. Now and then someone braves getting up at assembly to let everyone know what’s happening. Students also visit roll calls to get input.

Year 11 students head the Social Committee, with others from year 11. We also liaise with the Sports Council, canteen ladies and other groups through both teachers and students. The SRC works well at Camden High and has achieved a lot of things over the years.

Our SRC’s main source of income is our two Coke machines. We have been able to do a lot with the money from this. We have helped to fund the paving of seating areas, barbecue settings, new garden seats, and have been involved with the change of uniform and organisation of socials.

These have all been successful because so many students wanted them and because of support from the principal and staff. We have also been able to send a number of students on leadership camps to enhance their skills. What we haven’t been able to do is install a student telephone or a coffee machine. Both of these have been because of impracticalities and disagreement from the principal. Other than that, we have been able to meet costs through profits from the Coke machines and socials.

Mirella Manna
Year 8, Camden HS

Catholic Regional College, St Albans, Vic
The Student Leadership Program

The Level Councils

Year 7 Year 8 Year 9 Year 10

Two students from each Homeroom are chosen as Student Leaders to form the Level Council. They meet on a fortnightly basis (alternately with the Executive) with the Level Coordinator to discuss level/school issues. Meeting time alternates between a class period and a lunchtime.

House Leaders

There are four houses: Reis (red), Guelen (green), Corbett (blue) and O’Reilly (gold).

Only Year 10 students are able to nominate for House Captain. Year 9 students are eligible to nominate for Vice-Captain. There are four representatives for each house so the membership of this group is sixteen (8 males/8 females).

They also meet once a fortnight with the Sports Coordinator, and have a representative on the Student Executive. This group may meet during lunchtime or an alternate class period.

The Student Executive

Three student leaders from each Year Level Council, and a House Captain are elected onto the Executive. This group (13 students) meets with the Student Coordinator on a fortnightly basis. These meetings are held at lunchtime or after school to allow visitors/guest speakers to attend the meeting.

This group also elects a President, a Correspondence Secretary and a Treasurer.

Curriculum Development Group

One student leader from each of years 8, 9 and 10 may nominate for membership of this group. If there is no interest shown from Student Leaders, any student from the level may nominate to be on this group.

Meetings are held after school and occur approximately twice a term.

Induction of Student and House Leaders

Students are inducted at a College Mass where they play a very active role in the ceremony. They each receive certificates and badges.

Following this, a Student Leader Orientation Day is planned, where we hope to achieve the following:

a) give the students the opportunity to get to know each other;

b) give the leaders some understanding of the structure of leadership in our school;

c) work through various workshops to get a taste of the skills necessary to be good leaders.

This day is planned and run by the Year Level and Student Coordinators. Time: whole day; venue: away from the school (may vary from year to year).

Reporting Back to Students

The time set aside for student and house leaders to report back to the class is only ideas from them is the Pastoral Care period. This is a weekly, timetabled, 35 minute period.
Student Views

What has been achieved:

1. Various fundraising activities and out-of-uniform days.
2. School Assemblies planned by Level Councils.
3. SEARS program becoming study as well as reading time.
   (CDG)
4. Amendments to school rules and uniform eg boys able to wear earrings, slacks for girls.
5. Involvement of Leaders in the planning of the College Feast Day.
6. Staff versus student lunchtime basketball matches.

Difficulties: attending meetings after school. Some House Captains being voted for due to popularity not commitment.

By Joanne Gima, Fiona Borg and Denise Del Rosario, members of the Executive

"I couldn’t remember any failures but I knew we had difficulty with some things. The main reason was because suggestions were irrelevant or there was no student support. Motivation is the key, I think, to getting more things done but it’s so difficult when the students in your class are one-minded and agree with things that only they want.”

Tracey Darmanin,
past Student Leader

The Curriculum Development Group

The Curriculum Development Group (CDG) is an assembly of student representatives and teachers collaborating to improve or change the current school curriculum. It is made up of elected members of Staff and one student from each year level (except Year 7).

This particular council at Catholic Regional College has contributed to a number of improvements that have affected the school, in particular, the introduction of a LOTE (Italian) in Year 7, and the re-arrangement of Pastoral Care time at all levels which created time for English and Maths at Year 8, as well as modification of the SEARS (Stop Everything and Read Silently) program to a study time too.

The kind of improvements and changes the CDG hopes to achieve take time and patience to plan, prepare and present to the Administration Team, who ultimately decide the outcome of any proposals that are presented.

Support from the students and the Student Executive, who represent the year levels, is quite important, especially when proposals are rejected or withdrawn.

Sometimes, the lack of resources prevents the course of action. Supplying new equipment and school materials can take a considerable amount out of the school budget. An example of this situation was when it was proposed to set up an English cabinet in each class (Year 8) containing sets of books etc. The fact also remained that the Library already supplied the texts, but in a limited supply.

Overall, the CDG is a vital member in representing and addressing the students’ and teachers’ ideas and concerns about improvement, however small in the eyes of critics. This group does not impose solutions but encourages negotiations to better the school.

By Marie Vida del Rosario, Year 9 representative for 1993

The constitution of the Student Leader Executive at Catholic Regional College, St Albans, is available from Connect - see articles listing on page 27.
Keilor Downs Secondary College, Vic

The SRC I headed was made up of students of all year levels, although it was mainly composed of students in the intermediate year levels. These students were nominated by their home groups - two from each class; a male and female were suggested. However, males seemed to be less inclined to be involved.

The group met every week at lunchtimes however, due to declining numbers throughout the year, a during-class meeting was scheduled (after approval from the administration) and every member turned up, even new members! (It’s amazing what people do to get out of Maths!)

Other students either reported their concerns to their homergroup representatives or saw the Coordinator or myself - since we were both well known in the school - about any issues which they thought were up to the SRC. We reported our progress through the school newspaper (which had one page devoted to the SRC due to the President’s position on the Editorial staff), where we informed other students of upcoming events, achievements and general agenda details.

The SRC itself began with its own internal subcommittees eg Fundraising, Charities, the school disco etc, but when it came to events, we just all ended up chipping in.

The SRC also allocated responsible intermediate and senior members to each staff committee. These included the VCE Implementation Committee, Curriculum Committee, Whole School Planning, Environment, Resources and Finances, and lastly, I and another senior member were coopted members of the School Council.

The SRC functioned reasonably well, although it tended to focus more on fundraising and not so much on what it stands for: a Student Representative Council. However, we did manage to be one of the first vocal student members on school committees, and this impressed staff immensely, as they gained a lot from student opinion. Students could give more informed opinions as to how students would feel about certain issues.

Achievements

The SRC gained an office for storage of a typewriter, filing cabinets for meeting minutes and various other correspondence. The room adjacent to this office was also turned into a Games Room, where students could come at lunchtimes (especially popular during winter) and play board games such as Monopoly, Chess etc which had been bought by the SRC. To ensure that no dominance would occur between the year levels or the sexes, we organised Mondays for year 7 and 8, Tuesdays for year 9 and 10, Wednesdays for year 11 and 12, Thursdays for boys only and Fridays for girls only. This proved most successful amongst the junior levels, so the timetable was dismissed.

Our first out-of-uniform day, held during Environment Week (where students who didn’t wear green paid 50 cents), together with the Easter raffle, raised $2300 and this went towards the school’s library extension.

We also raised money for homeless kids in a staged ‘Winter Sleepout’ where students were sponsored for ‘sleeping out’ at the Melbourne Town Hall, like a homeless kid, and then they had to collect the money which went towards the further creation of refuges.

An SRC-organised Student Forum for the schools in the Western Region was organised, with the intention of providing schools with ideas on more efficient ways of running their SRC, as well as a variety of suggestions for future activities. This was held in the library for the whole day, with Roger Holdsworth speaking. It was a very interesting day, which proved enjoyable for all.

Our second out-of-uniform days raised $300 for the Salvation Army and $300 for Community Aid Abroad.

We also sold ‘Smile for Life’ badges which raised $100 for Life Education Centres, which provide positive health and anti-drug abuse programs to school-age children.

Our third out-of-uniform day raised $450 for flood victims of Shepparton.

Our only unsuccessful venture was the annual school disco which was preceded by teacher strikes (which I fully support) and therefore ticket-selling days, particularly the last day which was renowned for frantic sales in previous years, were unattended by students.

Good luck to all aspiring SRCs.

Ms Hattie ‘Hutch’ Hussein
Former President
Keilor Downs SC SRC

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL REPORT

The SRC gained an office for storage of a typewriter, filing cabinets for meeting minutes and various other correspondence. The room adjacent to this office was also turned into a Games Room, where students could come at lunchtimes (especially popular during winter) and play board games such as Monopoly, Chess etc which had been bought by the SRC. To ensure that no dominance would occur between the year levels or the sexes, we organised Mondays for year 7 and 8, Tuesdays for year 9 and 10, Wednesdays for year 11 and 12, Thursdays for boys only and Fridays for girls only. This proved most successful amongst the junior levels, so the timetable was dismissed.

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Good luck to all aspiring SRCs.
Lyndhurst Secondary College, Vic

My name is Jasmin Templin and I am a member of the Lyndhurst SRC (Student Representative Council). I'm one of twelve hard working members who have committed themselves to a lot of work.

I was elected onto the SRC by my year level. Everyone had to fill in a form and vote for the students at each year level who you thought would be good at this role. The three people with the most votes then prepared a speech on why they wanted to be elected and what things they particularly hoped to do. After the speeches there was a ballot where everyone had to vote for one of the nominees to be their representative. I was lucky enough to be nominated. This is my second year on the SRC, and I hope to be on it for many years to come.

As SRC members, we have regular meetings with the Form Captains so that we can get information about students' concerns and comments. Some of us have organised sub-committees that we all take part in, for:
- School Uniform and Rules
- Sports
- Free Dress
- Canteen
- Fundraising

Last year, the Cranbourne Junior Council, which I was also on, had seven grants to give away to hard working people in need of them. Lyndhurst wanted the money so that we could run a few night discos for the community. After we applied for the money, we received $300 which helped us to organise and run the discos.

We have also done a lot of successful fundraising for school supplies, and for the school's Rock Eisteddfod production. We had an excellent fundraiser called the Give-a-Can Appeal where we had a free dress day, but instead of paying 50c to come in free dress, we asked everyone to bring a can of food. These were then donated to needy people in the community.

We've also had some fundraising discos at lunchtime where teachers have been kind enough to give up some of their time so that we can enjoy the discos.

This year we have also made changes to the SRC constitution. Instead of electing new people every year, we have now staggered the elections and voted people on for two years, so that we always have some experienced people on the SRC as well as some new ones. We also tried to get shorts put in as part of the sports uniform and this has been successful.

Basically we're working hard at the moment, and intend to keep trying to make the school a better place for everyone.

Jasmin Templin
Lyndhurst SC SRC

Macalister Secondary College, Sale, Vic

A Recent History

Macalister's SRC consists of boys and girls from each year level. We have open meetings when any student may attend and contribute. At the present time, our SRC consists of over twenty students from years 7 to 12. (There are about 600 students in the school.)

Meetings are held every Wednesday lunchtime. If someone feels that they would like to be on the SRC, they come along to a meeting. If we think that they would be good in the SRC, we vote them in. Everyone is voted in because new SRC members are always welcome. They must answer two questions, so that we can find out how committed to the SRC they will be. These questions are: "Why do you wish to be in the SRC?" and "What comes first - SRC or school work?" The answer to the second question is "Schoolwork!"

Our executives are elected every new year. At the present time, Rachel Wheeler is President, I'm Vice-President, Anthony Kouco is Treasurer and Allison Shields and Adam Bell are Secretaries.

The SRC plays an active role in helping around the school and community.

Some activities that we have arranged around the school are: Joint socials with Sale High, casual days, BBQs, St Valentine's Day roses delivery, Easter hat parade, MSC Cup (like the Melbourne Cup), Fashions on the Asphalt, the longest kick (with guest footy stars), a bus shelter and minor school works, two canteen murals, money for the year 12 Valedictory, the Rock Eisteddfod, and students to go to the Perth National Basketball titles.

We also send SRC members to informative camps and seminars such as Peer Support, Leadership seminars and the Gippsland Regional SRC camps (these haven't been held for two years, but are a great way of gaining new ideas).

The biggest fundraisers for these are the Joint Socials and casual days. Each are held once a term and raise: Joint Social - over $200; casual day - over $100.

We have annually donated between $20 and $50 to the following community appeals: Gippsland Base Hospital, Red Cross, the Heart Foundation, Red Nose Appeal, Royal Children's Hospital, Amnesty International,
Remembrance Day, ANZAC Day, State Schools Relief Fund, Christmas Toy Appeal, Bishop of Gippsland Appeal, the Peter McCallum Clinic. We also help organise events like the 40-hour famine and McHappy Day.

We also have students on committees all around the school e.g the College Council, Equal Opportunities, Curriculum, and Student Services.

Outside school, we are represented on the local City/Shire Junior Councils.

Admittedly, there are some events that haven't really succeeded and this lack of student participation has led us to cease some activities.

In the future, we hope to put up another bus shelter, hold more joint socials (with different schools) and do what we can to keep the student body of our school happy.

Belinda Petrynyuk
Macalister SRC

Padua College, Mornington, Vic
The Senior School Council

Padua College has two student representative groups - a Senior and a Junior School Council. While the Junior School Council is based on class representatives, the Senior School Council comprises student representatives who are leaders of different Committees (see the diagram below). There are year 11 and 12 representatives for each of the positions except Facilities and Board Representative.

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<tr>
<th>Senior School Council</th>
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<tr>
<td>School Captain</td>
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<td>Vice Captain</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>College Board Representative</th>
<th>Social Events</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Liturgy</th>
<th>Social Action</th>
<th>Arts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Days</td>
<td>Represent student viewpoint at Board level</td>
<td>Year 12 Dinner</td>
<td>Common Room</td>
<td>Monthly Reflections</td>
<td>Fund Raising</td>
<td>Art, Graphics, Media, Musical Activities</td>
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<td>Lunch Activities</td>
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<td>Year 11 Social</td>
<td>Classroom Facilities</td>
<td>Masses and Liturgies - start of year</td>
<td>St Anthony of Padua Activities</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports-person Evening</td>
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<td>Monthly Activities</td>
<td>Student Facilities</td>
<td>Liturgies - end of year</td>
<td>College and Local Environment</td>
<td>Drama Production</td>
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<td>Students and Staff Matches</td>
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<td>Outside the Classroom</td>
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<td>St Vincent de Paul</td>
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Total Composition of SSC - seven to ten year 12 students; five to ten year 11 students (including two students from Rosebud).

The School Captain and Vice-Captain will be elected by the SSC and teachers (after the election of the SSC).

The elected Councillors are required to form volunteer Committees from the student body. Until this year, there were two School Captains - one female and one male. The Captain and Vice-Captain hold these positions, in addition to their position as leaders of a Committee.

The position of School Board Representative is the only official position on a Padua College Committee. However, we have Senior School Councillors unofficially represented on the Environment Committee and the Uniform Committee.

This year the size of the Council was increased to accommodate some shared leadership positions and an

Connect 87: June 1994
honorary year 11 representative from the Rosebud campus of our College.

Elections

The Senior School Council members are elected at the end of the school year, during our Orientation Days. Any student can nominate for any position. However, all students are required to prepare and present an election speech for VCE students. Both staff and VCE students are able to vote for Senior School Council nominees. Students are able to vote for the nominees at their year level only. However, only Senior School Council members and staff are able to nominate and vote for the School Captain and Vice Captain.

Meetings

The Senior School Council meets weekly - on Tuesdays from 10 minutes prior to recess, until 10 minutes after recess. This gives us up to 40 minutes for our meetings and only cuts into two classes by 10 minutes in each case.

Reporting to Other Students

Members of the Senior School Council are responsible for conducting the weekly Senior School Assemblies. We use these assemblies to give reports on the different committees and announce forthcoming Senior School Council events. We also use the daily bulletin to communicate information to other students.

Less successful methods of communication have been visits to each homeroom during morning/afternoon meetings, and the use of noticeboards or classroom windows.

How Effective is our Structure?

Overall, we believe that our SSC works quite well. Individual SSC members have the chance to focus on activities which interest them and help out other Council members when time permits. However, we sometimes do not work effectively as a team, but in isolation from each other. Some members sometimes feel that they are not being supported by other members of the SSC.

The Committee structure of our Council enables all VCE students to involve themselves in decisions and in Senior School activities. In reality, most of the Committees are small and comprise the friends of the SSC member.

Each Committee has a contact teacher who advises us on how we can effectively plan activities. Most of these teachers are helpful, but it is up to each SSC member to find the teacher and follow up on the details of activity planning.

Prior to the nomination of SSC members, an outline of the duties associated with each SSC position is advertised. However, some job descriptions are more clearly defined than others. For example, the Liturgy Representatives are responsible for organising or assisting with all School Masses and other liturgical activities. However, the School Captain, Vice Captain and Social Events Representative are less clear about their responsibilities.

We are also unsure of our relationship with the Junior School Council. We have discussed this during a meeting and we are attempting to visit their meetings.

One of our main difficulties is with communication. Although we are given plenty of time to speak during assemblies, it is often difficult to discuss issues with students. The best way to do this is to use the forum of individual homerooms - with the support of Homeroom teachers. Unfortunately, not all homerooms have an SSC member. Another communication difficulty occurs during our weekly meetings, when sometimes the SSC seems too big, and quieter members withdraw.

Our Achievements - or Otherwise - So Far This Year

This year we have attempted to maintain a high profile by speaking regularly at assemblies and keeping SSC sponsored activities constantly happening. Some members have maintained a very low profile and it is difficult to know what to do about this.

The SSC has been involved in a wide range of activities:

- lunchtime arm wrestling competitions;
- working bees for the common room and a new pathway to the Senior School;
- a staff/student pool competition;
- a visit to the local Blood Bank;
- organising new facilities for students, including carpet for our common room;
- liturgies, including beginning of the School Mass, Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday celebrations.

We have found that the best way to organise these events successfully is to ask for initial approval from the Head of School before wasting time on the organisation of activities which are not possible. Teachers are our best way of getting things done, because they can help us with booking transport, telling staff, setting dates etc. Also, we have found that keeping students informed through assemblies and daily bulletins is the best way to get them involved. Another option we have considered is an SSC Newsletter.

The School Captain and Vice Captain have taken a number of questions and complaints from senior students to the Principal - they have a regular meeting with him. Our Principal has listened to and reported back to them on all of the concerns raised. At least we are being heard!

We are not always able to achieve our goals. We have requested a telephone for student use in the Senior School - but the funds are not available this year. We have requested some casual clothes days to raise funds for school facilities; after speaking with the Principal, who reminded us of the School Policy, no casual clothes days have been permitted. We are pleased that the Principal has promised to reconsider the issue after discussions with his Administration Team.
Sometimes we feel that we are not achieving much as an SSC perhaps we need to take more time out to list all the things we have achieved and discuss how well we have done this. Another disappointment is that we have not yet organised any activities which bring all VCE staff and students together. We have yet to organise any social activities for year 11 and 12.

Upwey High School, Vic

At Upwey High, each home group elects a male and a female representative. These representatives meet regularly with their year level coordinator to discuss issues and problems relevant to that year level.

The home group representatives at each year level then elect a male and female SRC representatives and deputy representatives. The deputies can attend any SRC meetings they want to, but have to attend when the SRC representative is absent.

The SRC elects two members to School Council. It meets weekly.

In 1993, the Upwey High School SRC worked very hard and tackled 49 issues, resolving 31 of them and deferring others to 1994 for completion.

In 1992, the SRC had organised for plans to be drawn up for an under-cover eating area - a student initiative. A highlight in 1993 was watching the construction of the area by Mr Reid's year 11 Building and Technology class. It now has its own BBQ, available for student use. The SRC hopes it will be a key social area for present and future students of the school.

Other achievements of the SRC in 1993 were:
- organising out-of-uniform days to raise money for State Schools Relief appeal, Sherbrooke Youth Resource Centre, Belgrave Friendship House, the Rainbow Appeal for disabled people, and for more basketball rings in the school;
- fundraising for Harrison Youth Services and Legacy;
- organising sports jackets as an optional item of the uniform;
- advising the school administration on issues related to thefts in school, year 7 and year 10 curriculum, ways to recognise student achievements, discipline in school, wet weather lunchrooms, bus issues and places to kick footies;
- organised having more bike racks installed;
- working to improve our relationship with the Upwey Primary School;
- making suggestions for the students and teacher codes of conduct for the school charter;
- purchased a big school banner for use by groups in the school.

The SRC also tried to provide sporting equipment for students to borrow at lunchtimes, but ran into problems. It will be tried again in 1994.

The SRC has consulted with various staff and School Council members during the year and appreciates the help and assistance always given.

It was a good year for the SRC. Meetings were well attended (average of 12 members) and enjoyable, and plenty of work has been done. The SRC is pleased that it is taken seriously by the school community. It looks forward to continuing to play its part in helping Upwey High School be the high quality school that it is.

Grant Nichol, Coordinator
Natalie Sheelian, President

Vaucluse High School, NSW

Vaucluse High SRC has four representatives from years 7 to 11 and eight from year 12.

Our SRC conducts fundraising activities for charities such as Legacy, Kids Help Line and the Autistic Association.

We also have a program called the 'Talented Child Program', where we sponsor a student to help them develop their skills and talents.

We are very much concerned with the school environment and creating better conditions for students.

from Mosaic
Regional SRC Newsletter
Metropolitan East Region, NSW

Further Resources:
The SRC Pamphlets - six training pamphlets for Student Representative Councils. Contact: Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Suite 1, 250 Gore St. Fitzroy 3065. Phone: (03) 419 9122.

Take A Part: A Student Action Resource Handbook - a copy should be available in secondary school libraries in Victoria; check also the Victorian Education Shop.

The Student Representative Council Kit - NSW Department of Education; a copy should be available in every secondary school in New South Wales.

Unravelling the Maze - Student Participation Training Manual - from the Education Department of South Australia.
And in Primary Schools ...

Southvale Primary School, Vic

Thank you for Connect. As teacher in charge of our Junior School Council, I have found it very useful—especially the last edition. I find it fascinating that so many schools operate in very different ways. Reading about how others do it has been very helpful in reviewing our own practices. I have enclosed a summary of how our own JSC operates:

Membership: At Southvale PS our Junior School Council members are all from grade six, but each one is a representative of a particular grade level. We have eight members (one for each grade level and, one emergency) who are elected by their classmates at the end of grade five.

Portfolios: In addition to their responsibility for a grade level, each member has a portfolio. The portfolios are: Canteen, Computers, Facilities, Finance, Staff, Parents and Friends Association, Outdoor Education, and Library. Any suggestions made to JSC in any of these areas must be handled by the person with that responsibility, who reports to the appropriate person or committee.

Grade Meetings: Twice a term each grade level meets with their representative. The representative takes the suggestions from these grade meetings to the JSC which meets the following week.

JSC Meetings: We have a roster to take it in turns to be chairperson and minute secretary. We have one teacher attending our meetings and most of the time the principal is there too, but they don’t take an active part in the meeting. We consider all suggestions and make recommendations. At the next grade meetings these recommendations are passed on. Sometimes there is some follow-up work to be done. We keep a job sheet to remind us of what has to be done and who should do it. We look at this at the beginning of each meeting.

School Council: The following week, two of our members go to the School Council meeting to report on our meeting. In this way our recommendations are dealt with immediately. For the first and the last School Council meetings for the year, all JSC members attend.

Other Duties: On many occasions we are asked to represent the students at adult functions, such as farewell celebrations for staff members, parent helpers’ morning tea at the end of the year, and City Council functions. The School Council often asks us to conduct surveys among the students and the PFA ask us to promote their activities.

Jan Hughes

Balmain Primary School, NSW

Our Student Representative Council consists of two representatives from every class. SRC elections are held every term and the SRC then select their executives.

We meet on a weekly basis to discuss any problems or student suggestions that arise. We have improved playground usage and have campaigned to have particular foods included in the canteen menu. We are presently working with the community to gain council approval for the construction of play facilities in our neighbouring parks, and we are having a meeting with the Mayor for this purpose.

from Mosaic
Regional SRC Newsletter
Metropolitan East Region, NSW

Many students join the student council when they are in primary or lower secondary school.

Preston/Reservoir JSC Network, Vic

At least eight primary schools in the Preston/Reservoir area of Melbourne continue to operate a network of Junior School Councils. This network means that both teachers and students can share information and resources, have joint training days, meet to provide mutual support and publish a quarterly newsletter.

The first issue of the newsletter for 1994 will include an article from Preston Primary School JSC on how to organise a book stall. The newsletter is produced by students from the JSC at Kingsbury Primary School.

Contact Wayne Bolton at Kingsbury Primary School, Maryborough Avenue, Kingsbury 3083. Phone: (03) 462 2711.
How do you avoid being tokens?
How do you avoid spending all your time on fundraising and socials?
How do you get to take part in decisions about the important things that go on in the school?

"My two main aims in taking up the Presidency in my SRC last year were to boost the profile of the school's SRC, and to make sure it exercised all its political muscles within the school. Hence we set aside time to deal with fundraising as well as Committee issues.

"We ensured representation on each committee and allocated committed and vocal members. This guaranteed us notice within the school, especially when the deciding vote for things rested with the SRC reps.

"Another example was how an SRC representative from each level also participated in an Environmental Education in-service, held at the Organ Pipes in term 3. This was the start of a series of continuing meetings aimed at forming a liaison between three neighbouring schools: Keilor Downs Secondary College, Keilor Downs Primary School, and Mary McKillop Primary. In the Organ Pipes theatre we were given an environmental awareness show by Vox Bandicoot, and then we all discussed and exchanged information on the ways in which we implemented environmental education in our curriculum. This was a most successful afternoon attended by both staff and students."

Hatice Hussein
ex-Keilor Downs SC

"There have been times this year when we have felt cut off from the 'real' decisions which happen in our school. For example, there is a Curriculum Review occurring this year for years 7-10. Although two year 11 students are represented in a Whole School Planning Group, we as an SSC have not been officially invited to participate.

"One of our SSC members is a representative on the School Uniforms Committee. A number of students have recently complained about how cold they are during the day. However, this Committee has not met this year.

"Students taking Units 3 and 4 have lunchtime classes this year. We feel that we should have been able to contribute to the discussion before this decision was made.

"On the other hand, we have already been invited to one staff meeting this year. During the meeting, we were able to tell staff what our goals are, and how we are trying to achieve these goals. It was quite exciting, being in a staff meeting - seeing how teachers relate to each other. We found teachers very interested in, and supportive of, our ideas.

"We are also represented on the College Board. Even though we don't hear very much about what goes on during the Board Meetings, our SSC representative has taken a couple of our ideas to the meetings."

Padua College SSC

"Our SRC has got time for other things apart from fundraisers and socials, because the Social Committee organises the socials with minimum help from the SRC."

Camden HS
Dear SRC

How do you get the right students on the SRC?
How do you stop elections being an irrelevant popularity contest or a chance to ‘dob in a dag’?

“Our SRC composition wasn’t related to either of these phrases, however, it just seemed irrelevant to students. The SRC wasn’t seen as anything powerful, and therefore just a waste of time. However, with the issues taken up by the SRC, such as another photocopier is immediately needed, and a more beneficial service funded by the SRC like the Games Room, students saw the SRC was more concerned about students - as in it’s really working for them. So students joined as the year went on, although since fundraising tends to dominate the SRC agenda, some soon got bored, so it seems that those who are committed end up staying on, in my case anyway.”

Hatrice Hussein
ex-Keilor Downs SC

“We think it is inevitable that popular students will have the edge over less popular students when it comes to elections or selections for Student Councils. Even if a student is capable or hard-working, he/she must be accepted by the students if he/she is to be a successful representative.

“Unless students are able to vote for their representatives, they are unlikely to show much interest in the SSC. Our teachers are able to vote for SSC members and we think this provides a good balance - reducing the risk of a pure popularity contest.

“However, many of our students do not think much about the best person for the job when voting. Perhaps we should have non-compulsory voting for the SSC?”

Padua College SSC

“This doesn’t happen. If a student wants to become involved in the SRC, they take home a note to get it signed, then they must get a friend to second you. This way we don’t get the popular or dags dobbin in.”

Camden HS

“These will always be a problem. People who don’t want the job will nominate as a joke, and others will nominate people who are not suited. The only way to overcome this would be for teachers to nominate students who they have spoken to about it.”

Batemans Bay HS

“The SRC is not seen as daggy (well, maybe a bit in year 9 and 10) as SRC members get some perks eg hot chocolate at meetings, two free lunches at training days and break-up days, students miss some classes - and the SRC actually gets things done! It is seen as desirable by a good number of students to be on the SRC and competition is sometimes fierce. For example, in 1992, all the year 7 homegroup representatives wanted to be on the SRC, and names had to be drawn out of a hat.”

Upwey HS

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IN GENERAL:

--- Make meetings work for you - Don't get stuck on lots of confusing issues and rules!

--- Make decisions work when all members co-operate, take part and listen!

--- Once a decision has been made, it's a decision of the whole group - Even if you personally disagree with it.

--- Meetings only when all members co-operate, take part and listen!
Dear SRC

How do you get results and achieve things?
How do you avoid:
• having ideas knocked back?
• results taking too long?
• not following things through?

"The SRC has earned the respect of staff, who regularly consult with it. The SRC is part of the school's consultation process. The Deputy Principals have played a key role here - they are very SRC conscious."

Upwey HS

"Sometimes the SRC knocks back ideas, or it always seems to take so long. If this happens, bring it up at the next couple of meetings and ask why it's taking so long. Or if your idea gets knocked back, do some research as in a survey and get some figures (how much it will cost etc) then persist with it again."

Camden HS

"Due to the fact that I was a well-known, respected, vocal and influential student, as President I was generally taken seriously with my SRC concerns. You have to show that you're serious and committed to your issue and that it's something both students and parents want (principals are especially interested in parent wants)."

Hatice Hussein
ex-Keilor Downs SC

Dear SRC

How do you afford the time? Doesn't it take you away from your studies?

"The SRC is a commitment, and if it interferes with your study (which it rarely would because you do it in roll call or lunchtime) get somebody to help you."

Camden HS

"This is another common complaint from SRCs, and this one is easily solved. Much of the workload is heaped onto one group of students. This can be overcome through sharing the workload and again having more suitable students."

Batemans Bay HS

"I took up the position as President, and membership on the VCE Implementation Committee, Curriculum Committee, Resources and Finances and the School Council. This meant at least two meetings a week during my lunchtimes, two spare periods devoted to organisational matters and one meeting from one committee each week. However, as a year 12 student, I managed to fit these in as well as being the Dux of the school with my VCE score. And I never regret the experience I gained from my roles in all positions."

Hatice Hussein
ex-Keilor Downs SC

"Our year 12 SSC members are experiencing more problems than the year 11s, fitting in work for the SSC. The problem is getting worse at the moment because so many CATs are due. Because the year 11s have less pressure on them at the moment, this may be a good time for them to take more responsibility for the Committees.

"We have discussed with the Head of Senior School ways of initiating and being involved in activities without having to spend a lot of time actually doing all the work. There is also an understanding that, when a student feels pressured by school commitments, she/he should make school work the top priority."

Padua College SSC
Dear SRC

How do you get other students interested and involved?

"Developing the profile of the SRC and its potential power is crucial. Show them how it can be beneficial with some of the money raised from an out-of-uniform day devoted to something for their use eg a Games Room or a Cafeteria with chairs and billiard table etc."

Hatice Hussein
ex-Kelloe Downs SC

"We're not good at reporting. Reports are given once per term at whole school assemblies, and reports put in the weekly newsletter (about once per term). Copies of minutes of meetings go to all representatives and deputies, plus principal, deputy principals, year level coordinators, welfare people etc. There is an SRC suggestion box, but the SRC noticeboard never seems to work."

Upwey HS

"We have found it really difficult to interest some senior students in our work as Senior School Councillors. This is probably our biggest challenge. When we try to organise events or facilities, we are often criticised for the decisions we make. Sometimes we feel we are being asked to please all students. It is really annoying when students don't seem to care at all about the things we do to improve life for the Senior School students. One of the best examples of this is how students leave rubbish around the common room, even after the new carpet was laid, and a facelift was organised by the SSC.

"One of the difficulties we face as an SSC is that we do not all agree on our responsibilities as SSC members. Some representatives feel that we should not be asked to set a good example eg uniform, punctuality etc. Others feel that we not only need to work hard and be enthusiastic as student representatives, but we also need to try to model good student behaviour. This does not mean that we should be 'goodie goodies'.

"These different viewpoints occur because there is such a range of personalities within the SSC. At times this variety is good and we gain a great deal from hearing different views. However, on other occasions, we clash and cannot come to an agreement. What we need is a bit more tolerance and open-mindedness."

Padua College SSC

"If the majority of the school, the SRC and the principal decides that the school needs it and it's a good idea, then we do it, whether the others are interested or not (this usually doesn't happen)."

Camden HS

Sunsmart
Silly Hat Day
(out-of-uniform
day) organised by
Upwey High
School SRC,
December 1993
INCREASING THE STATUS AND IMAGE OF THE SRC

Pat Matson, Croydon Secondary College, Vic

This Action Research Project is centred on the Student Representative Council (SRC) at the school where I teach. The SRC has existed for many years at the school but has not been particularly active and effective. I volunteered to be SRC Coordinator in order to work with the students to try to build and enhance the image of the SRC.

BACKGROUND

The college on which this project is based has over a thousand students and is generally considered by our local community to be a caring and reasonably academic institution. The problem as I saw it was that we have had an SRC at the college for several years, but it has never been very active, or considered important by members of the college community. There could be several reasons for this, for example there has never been continuity in membership of the SRC executive committee from one year to the next. Another problem has been that the staff member appointed as convener changed frequently (three times the previous year) and was often a person who didn’t see the SRC as a high priority amongst their list of responsibilities.

The SRC met irregularly, meetings were unstructured and rarely resulted in the implementation of suggestions that were put forward by the student body. There was little formal recognition of SRC members. Staff and students accepted that the SRC existed but it held little status in the school.

I volunteered to be SRC convener because I wanted to see the SRC working within the school and was willing to make a strong commitment to the task.

My vision for embarking on this project was to improve the feeling of general pride in the school and at being a member of the SRC. I believe that if students feel pride in their school it will increase their self esteem and self image, enhancing their future prospects, socially, educationally and vocationally. It is my opinion that the whole school community will benefit if we can make even a little progress in lifting school morale. I asked myself how can this be achieved? I believe morale could be lifted by involving students in the decision-making processes of the school and by giving them direct responsibilities for specified school projects. They would feel that their contributions counted towards the organisation of the system around them. I hoped they would obtain gratification from taking on responsibility and being involved in the decision-making process.

I realised from my reading that change will only take place if the stake holders, in this case the students, want it to happen, are involved in the process and are willing to make a commitment towards action. This issue is important to me because over the last few years it seems that the majority of students have become very self or peer group centred. They do not identify with the school as a group and are unwilling to do things to help each other or the school community unless they can see a personal benefit.

I wanted to help the SRC to be proactive to teach them to be advocates for the whole student body.

RECONNAISSANCE

As part of my investigations I researched the operations of SRCs in other schools. I spoke to students and teachers in three schools where the SRC was structured in different ways. The main characteristics of their structures were:

School A:

- Any student who chose could be a member of the SRC.
- All meetings were held out of class time.
- Very little staff involvement.

School B:

- Three students per year level were democratically elected.
- Meetings held out of class time.
- No Year 12 on the executive.
- Staff coordinator worked closely with the SRC.

School C:

- One democratically elected representative from each form.
- Meetings held in class time.
- Staff coordinator worked closely with the SRC.

I came to the conclusion that the structure of the SRC had no relationship to success. Success and power within the school were strongly related to the degree of organisation of the committee, the self esteem of the students and the dedication of the staff member working with the SRC.

During my research phase I made contact with a group of people at the Eastern Metropolitan Region who were working towards developing a policy for the recognition of student participation in the decision-making process in all post-primary schools in the region. My goals as outlined below incorporate many of these suggestions.

Participation in the decision-making process was a key...
feature in current Ministerial policy. Ministerial Paper No. 1 aims to facilitate the involvement of students in decision-making.

I researched information prepared by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. Some of this material was distributed to the SRC representatives at the first meeting. My reading also included Psychology and Community Change. I consider it vital that the SRC see me as somebody who will be supportive of their needs but not intrusive or dominating in any way. My aim was to be a facilitator and not the doer of any task they wish to undertake.

I read about Student Operated Organisations in other schools in Roger Slee and was concerned to learn that 'tokenism' had been the experience of many active students and led to a large degree of frustration and suspicion of 'representative democracy' in school.

My final research was in my own school. I considered that by talking to staff and students I would be able to avoid some of the problems that they had experienced. After much searching I located and read past minutes and correspondence, and this gave me an insight into how the SRC had operated.

The SRC at our school had achieved some of its goals in relation to fund-raising, mainly by means of casual clothes days, and had successfully organised several social functions. It suffered from poor promotion in the school community and lack of interest from both teachers and students. Discussions with students continually brought the response: "Nothing really happened last year". It took me six weeks to trace the SRC account because no-one knew what had happened to the book. On reflection I consider disorganisation and lack of leadership skills were the main reasons for the lack of status of the SRC.

I discussed my research with the principal, his deputy and several members of staff. They were supportive and expressed an interest to help with my project in any way they could.

(This study was carried out using Action Research approaches, requiring the specification of goals, field of action, and detailed cycles of plan-action-observation-reflection-revision.)

STATEMENT OF GOALS

My general idea at the beginning of this project was to work with the SRC to increase its image and status within the school.

My general aim was that by the end of the year the SRC would be seen by the school community as an effective and respected group who were working on behalf of the whole student body and contributing to the decision-making processes of the school.

I intended to achieve this by teaching empowerment and leadership skills to the SRC representatives.

Therefore my specific goals were to:

- enable students to convert the ideas of the SRC into action;
- develop leadership, public speaking and organisational abilities;
- promote decision making as a co-operative venture;
- increase the recognition given to members of the SRC;
- develop a sense of empowerment in the students through the application of the democratic process;
- ensure continuity of the SRC executive;
- develop group identity.

INITIAL PLAN

January
Background Reading

February
a) Discussions with Staff and Administration
b) Visit other schools
c) Elect SRC representatives
d) Hold first meeting and elect executive
e) First recognition step

March-May
a) Visit another school with SRC representatives
b) Invite another school to attend our meeting
c) Implement an idea suggested by SRC
d) Feedback on implementation of first idea

June
Review SRC structure

September
Analysis of feedback from school community

October
Writing up and presentation of final report

On-going
a) Regular well structured meetings
b) Implementation of ideas
c) Recognition

FIELD OF ACTION

My research as described in the reconnaissance phase had shown that there was no noticeable link between structure and status of SRCs in other schools. As a result of this it was decided, after consultation with the deputy principal and the school captain, that the same SRC structure as in previous years would initially be adopted.

The structure was: one representative from each form democratically elected by the form; the school captain holds the position of president of the SRC; meetings are held during class time.

The first Action Step would be to elect the SRC representatives, hold a meeting and elect the executive. After the meeting I would meet with the executive to discuss the success of the meeting and decide the next course of action.

FIRST ACTION CYCLE

PLAN

a) To elect the SRC form representatives.
b) To hold the first meeting to elect the executive committee.

ACTION

I negotiated with the Deputy Principal for an extended form assembly and placed a notice on the daily bulletin two days prior to the SRC elections. This gave students time to think and talk about who they wanted to represent them.

Each form teacher was given ballot papers and an instruction and suggestion sheet to assist them with the election process.

In preparation for the first meeting the school captain and some interested Year 12 students met with me to plan the agenda.

The aims of the first SRC meeting were to:

- tell the representatives about the SRC;
- elect the executive;
- provide the representatives with a meaningful issue to discuss with their forms.

The meeting was held in class time and chaired by Chris the school captain. During the meeting information was distributed to the representatives.
OBSERVATIONS

- The room in which the meeting was held was not a suitable venue. It was too small to hold 50 students and did not have enough chairs to seat everyone. The room had not been prepared for the meeting.
- Only Year 12 students were elected onto the executive committee.
- Students sat anywhere in the room.
- Some students appeared uninterested.
- Speakers did not speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and did not appear confident or assertive.
- The set agenda was followed, but there was insufficient time to complete all the agenda.
- The issue raised was the selection of house names within the school.
- There was very little input from the floor.
- I talked too much.
- Students were talked at so there was not much opportunity for discussion.

REFLECTIONS

I consider that I tried to cram far too much into the first meeting. I learned that the students would need a lot of guidance and support to attain the confidence and assertiveness needed to carry out their plans. We must move slowly and tackle one small issue at a time.

Our school had reintroduced a house system and the principal asked the SRC to conduct a student survey to name the houses. I foolishly attempted this procedure at the first meeting because I was keen to give the representatives a practical task to do in their forms. At our first meeting the SRC voted on the suggestions for house names put forward by students in the school. Four suggestions were then presented to the whole school by the representatives. The executive collated the results.

The final suggestions that the SRC put forward were, in the opinion of some staff and students, boring or inappropriate. I realise now that I should have put far more time and consultation into the process of choosing suitable names. Because the SRC was seen at the time as ineffective, the choice of house names (that the whole school democratically voted on) was dismissed.

The outcome of this was that the first task the SRC had undertaken had failed in its main aim - to give the students a sense of achievement and raise their self-esteem through making a decision and seeing it implemented. I made the resolution not to rush into a task without testing the ground beforehand and giving more thought to the consequences.

During discussion later with the staff, especially the Year Level Coordinators, it became evident to me that many of the representatives were there because the meeting was held in class time and there was nobody in the form who really wanted to be a representative. This again reflected the view that the SRC was seen in the school as unimportant and held no status. The students were not objective in their choices of house names and consequently inappropriate suggestions were put to the whole school. I considered at this stage of the development of the SRC that the students were not ready to handle such a task.

A representative from every form plus the executive meant that there were over 50 students at the meeting. In retrospect I felt that this was too large a group to develop a relaxed and communicative atmosphere where free and open discussions could take place.

REVISED PLAN

The executive committee and I agreed to meet after each meeting and discuss what had taken place in order to work out our next step.

We agreed that the meetings in their present form were unsuitable because the group was too big and the only available venue was too small. If we were to progress we needed to have well organised meetings where everyone had the chance to express their ideas.

Our revised plan was for the form representatives to meet with their Year Level Coordinators and elect three students as Year Level Representatives who would attend SRC meetings. They would then meet with the other form representatives and the Level Coordinators and subsequently report back to their forms.

This procedure had the advantage that only a small manageable number of students would be at SRC meetings and the Year Level Coordinators would become directly involved with the form representatives and informed of the activities of the SRC.

SECOND ACTION CYCLE

PLAN

a) To approach Year Level Coordinators to conduct elections of Year Level Representatives for the SRC.

b) To implement revised SRC meeting plan.

c) To take some SRC representatives to another school to attend one of their meetings.

ACTION

I approached the Year Level Coordinators and they all agreed to meet with their form representatives to discuss the procedures and elect year level representatives. They were happy to do this because they felt that although some of the elected students were genuine, some needed to be carefully steered in the right direction. Early in March, the Level Coordinators met with their form representatives who selected three students to represent them at year level meetings.

During March and April SRC meetings were held with year level representatives.

In March a representative from the junior, middle and senior schools and myself attended an SRC seminar at a nearby college.

OBSERVATIONS

I observed that the SRC was becoming recognised by the administration of the school. The Principal was concerned about the level of thefts in the school and asked a Year 10 SRC representative to speak about it in general assembly. This was a positive move in the right direction because the SRC had never been invited to speak about an issue of this nature before. Nicole spoke well. This was a small step towards improving public speaking skills.

SRC meetings of year level representatives were well attended. The atmosphere was relaxed and the students were willing to discuss ideas. Some of the ideas that evolved out of these meetings were implemented and have resulted in changes within the school. These include the following:

- At the March meeting an issue under discussion was how to encourage students to pay for casual clothes days. A Year 9 student suggested a system of collecting money which has since been implemented and has resulted in a
95% payment rate. It is seen fair and just by the students.

- It was considered important by the students that some of their money was being used on a way that would benefit the school community in a caring way. Ideas were sought from the students. One of the ideas was to use some of the money to set up a student loan fund. The PWC was consulted and she agreed that there was an urgent need for such a fund in the school. A committee was set up and the SRC loan fund was established. The fund has been used by several senior students, especially those awaiting payments of Aystudy money. Confidentiality is protected as our PWC is the only person to know the name of the recipient of the loan. The fund also includes a float of $20 so that the PWC can lend small sums to students who have forgotten lunch money or bus fares. This has been extremely well received by our office staff because previously they were often requested by students for small sums of money. Our PWC considers the fund a great idea because it keeps her in touch with a variety of students and she becomes well-acquainted with the forgetful ones.

On the other hand there were communication problems and I realised that the Year Level Coordinators were having difficulty in organising meetings with form representatives and some information was being confused in the process of communication from year representative to form representative to class.

By talking to Level Coordinators, I realised that the present system of year level representatives was not working to the benefit of the whole school. Some year level meetings with Coordinators were not well attended and some students felt they could not talk freely in front of their Coordinators.

By talking to students who were not year level representatives I realised that for most of the students in the school nothing had changed. The SRC was now seen by some as a small elite body who did not communicate effectively with the main student body.

The SRC President wrote regular SRC Reports in our weekly Newsletter. He reported the names of the elected year level representatives, outlined the revised structure of the SRC and wrote a report about the SRC seminar he attended with other representatives.

I considered this was an important step in informing the student body and the parents about the SRC and contributed to its recognition within the school.

Comments made by students who took part in the SRC seminar day included:

### Dayna (Year 8): “I think it is very important that SRC reps. get rewarded for their efforts. One school in the group that I was working with go to the Swagman (Restaurant) at the end of the year”.

### Leon (Year 10): “I’ve got so many ideas I just want to go back to school and tell everyone”.

### Chris (Year 12): “SRC reps. from different schools should regularly go to each other’s meetings. We can learn so much from each other”.

As a result of these comments I anticipated some further action steps: inviting representatives from other schools to attend our meetings; and developing recognition.

The students were getting ideas that they wanted to see implemented in their school. I considered it vital that if the image of the SRC was to improve some of their ideas must be implemented and seen to be working. I considered my highest priority should be to ensure that ideas put forward by representatives were put forward and acted upon.

**REFLECTIONS**

My ideas were changing again and I was really getting to know the year level representatives. I realised how much they really did care for the school and its environment and how much they had to offer. On reflection I could see both the positive and negative sides to the present system.

The SRC year level meetings were working well, the year level representatives were putting forward ideas and these were being implemented which was developing their self esteem and organisational skills. However I felt the negative points were that communication between the year level representatives and the forms was not taking place and that the school in general did not see any change in the SRC.

All the objectives for the second Action Cycle were successfully attained but the main aim of the project to improve the image of the SRC was not being achieved.

The monitoring processes used up until now had basically been discussions with Year Level Coordinators, SRC executive, form teachers and students. I considered this monitoring system had been successful because it had shown some of the shortcomings of the SRC meeting structure. However I believed a more formal system of monitoring would be required and I planned to distribute questionnaires to staff and students at a later date.

I anticipated that, because of probable changes to the SRC structure, Year Level Coordinators would have a lesser role. I did not believe this would be a problem to them because they found it very difficult to find time to meet with the student representatives.

It appeared that the system of year level representatives had not worked well in the development of the SRC as a whole. Some of the problems were that Year Level Coordinators differed in their approach to meeting with their representatives. Some took over and dominated proceedings while others did not offer any support at all.

What could I do to make the SRC more accessible to the whole school?

I decided to discuss the problem with the executive and to suggest having all form representatives present at the next meeting. At least this would solve the communication problem!

**REVISED PLAN**

The executive and I met and they agreed that a communication problem existed with the current SRC meeting structure. We decided to hold an SRC meeting and invite all the form representatives to attend. We considered it was important to find a venue that was big enough to accommodate everyone sitting comfortably. We decided to organise the room before the meeting to enable representatives to sit in year level groups which we felt would develop the feeling of group identity and encourage the year levels to discuss some issues as a year level group. The layout was as shown opposite.

We wanted to make the representatives feel that they had an important role to play in communicating to their form what was going on in the SRC and the various committees within the school.
It was decided to approach the Deputy Principal and request an extended form assembly after each SRC meeting where the representatives would report back to their forms. We also decided to invite representatives from another college to a meeting.

THIRD ACTION CYCLE

PLAN
a) To find a suitable venue to accommodate all the SRC form representatives.
b) To conduct meetings with representatives sitting in year level groups to enable them to take part in small group discussions, and report ideas to the whole meeting.
c) To extend form assembly after SRC meetings to allow representatives to report outcomes to forms.
d) Invite representatives from another college to attend our meetings.

ACTION

Chris (the President) negotiated with the Physical Education Department for us to hold our meetings in the canteen. (It was normally used as a classroom by the PE Department.)

Meetings took place involving all form representatives regularly for the remainder of the year.

Mike (Vice President) consulted with the Deputy Principal who agreed to form assembly being extended by ten minutes after meetings to enable representatives to report to their forms. Extended form assemblies took place after each meeting.

Kim (the Secretary) wrote to Mooroolbark Secondary College and invited members of their SRC to attend our May meeting.

OBSERVATIONS

Our school is very crowded and teaching space limited. The only available room for the P.E. class to go to was the Year 12 common room. Chris had to negotiate with Year 12 and persuade them to give up their room for a period. This really developed his skills of diplomacy and assertion!

Each student on the executive was taking responsibility for tasks: they were working as a team, encouraging each other and communicating well in meetings with the SRC representatives.

From observations I made in my diary I could see the development of group dynamics over the course of a few meetings. When students were first put into groups they were reluctant to talk to each other and report back their ideas to the meeting. However after a few meetings the whole feeling changed. Students huddled in group discussion and were keen to share ideas.

The year group arrangement at meetings was helping to develop the communication and personal skills of the representatives in the following ways:

- it gave students confidence to express their ideas because they only had to tell a small group;
- it provided an opportunity for leadership and public speaking because each group appointed a reporter to put forward the ideas of the group;
- students showed respect for each other’s opinions by being attentive when groups reported to the meeting;
- the junior forms were seen as equals in the reporting process;
- the group system developed a feeling of empathy within the group. For example students who reported their group’s ideas to the meeting said things such as: "This was Joe’s idea but he wants me to tell everybody about it".

It appeared to me that the venue played a major role in the success of meetings. On one occasion we could not organise to hold the meeting in the canteen. The room we had to use was far too small, students could not work comfortably in their groups and the atmosphere of the meeting was restless.

There was not the same feeling of unity and purpose that was normally present. It has surprised me to realise what a major part the venue played in the success of a meeting.

Ideas that have been suggested and subsequently implemented as a result of group discussions include:

- a fund raising environment day to improve the school environment. The money raised was spent on terracing a section of the oval embankment. This provided seating to view sporting activities and improve the drainage;
- "Opportunity Knocks". A talent show held at lunch time. The money raised was donated towards covering an area for playing games in wet weather;
- a new system for the collection of money raised from the 40 hour fumine appeal.

Students from a nearby college attended our meeting and our students went to theirs. This only occurred once due to staff and transportation difficulties. It was unfortunate because the communication between the schools which earlier in the year was strong has virtually stopped.

The extended form assemblies provided an opportunity for form representatives to develop their public speaking skills. In a survey that was conducted, all the representatives replied that they reported the minutes of the meeting back to their class and asked if there were any issues that anybody wanted raised at the next SRC meeting.

The SRC executive were very active and taking on a lot of responsibility and many practical commitments. Comments from staff indicated that their academic work was suffering due to their strong commitment to the SRC.

REFLECTIONS

By now the SRC had reached a more mature stage and appeared to be moving towards achieving some of the major goals of the project, for example leadership and organisational skills.
An unforeseen problem had arisen with some of the more active members of the executive due to their enthusiastic commitment to the SRC. Although one of the key objectives was to increase the opportunities for leadership and empowerment, we must not lose sight of the fact that they are students and must keep on track with their studies and this must be their highest priority.

The problem as I saw it was how could the executive maintain the status of their position and yet reduce their workload. An idea was to appoint somebody to help each member of the executive. I needed to discuss this problem with the SRC executive with the view to a possible change of the SRC executive structure.

Consultation with form teachers had made me aware of further unanticipated consequences of the improved image of the SRC. A few students had approached their form teachers and expressed concerns about the poor performance of some form representatives. I felt it was important that the students were given the opportunity to re-assess their choice of SRC representative, because one of the specific goals of this project was for representatives to be working on behalf of the whole student body. In thinking about this problem I realised that this would need to be handled carefully as there was a danger of upsetting current representatives.

The problems encountered in this cycle made it clear to me the importance of regular communication with all members of the school community and I realised that I must strive to maintain the monitoring processes already in place.

REVISED PLAN

- To hold a meeting with the executive to discuss the problem of their workload and to suggest the idea of ‘helpers’;
- To address the problem of the poor performance of some representatives.

FOURTH ACTION CYCLE

PLAN

1. To hold a meeting with the SRC executive to resolve the workload "helper" issue;
2. To implement procedures to enable alternative form representatives to be elected if desired;
3. To set tasks to increase the visible responsibility of SRC representatives;
4. To discuss an 'End of Year SRC Function' in order to enhance recognition of SRC representatives;
5. To administer a questionnaire to staff and students to evaluate the progress of the SRC.

ACTION

An SRC executive meeting was held. As a result of this it was decided to propose at the next full SRC meeting the election of a transition executive committee. This was supported by the full SRC.

This committee which would be elected half way through the year would be composed of one person to support each member of the executive and initially provide assistance with some of the more practical tasks, eg photocopying minutes. By the end of the year the transition committee would be fully trained and ready to take over the reins on their own next year. In the middle of this year a new transition committee would be elected and the whole cycle would be repeated. The diagram below explains the principle.

A low key election of some new representatives took place.

Form representatives were encouraged to read the daily bulletin to their forms at form assembly each day.

It was decided that an 'End of Year Luncheon' would be held at the 'Sizzler' for all SRC representatives. The President wrote a letter to School Council requesting a contribution to the cost.

A questionnaire to staff and students was distributed and the results analysed.

OBSERVATIONS

The students elected onto the transition committee were from Years 9, 10 and 11. This was an interesting change from the beginning of the year when all the executive were from Year 12. This committee served four main functions:

- provided assistance to the executive in the second half of the year when their workload was at its highest and they were under the greatest stress;
- provided an opportunity for younger students to play a leadership role within the school;
- provided cooperative learning opportunities;
- ensured continuity of the SRC into next year.

The significant change in the roles of the executive did not at this stage present too many problems because everyone could see benefits both for themselves and the SRC. After the introduction of this committee the executive were more relaxed because some of the burden had been taken off them. However some members worked more effectively with their helpers than others. In the case of one executive member, too much responsibility was handed over to the helper and I had to negotiate with the executive members and remind them of their role as a leader and teacher.

I felt it was important that the election process of new form representatives, where required, was handled with care and discretion, as I did not want to upset incumbent representatives. A notice was placed on the daily bulletin which read as follows:

"Form assembly will be extended by 5 minutes today to enable forms to appoint or affirm their SRC representative and deputy. Your representative is a very important person and should be someone you
know will do what is expected and will attend all meetings."

As a result of the low key election only a small number of representatives changed, which indicated to me that the development of the SRC structure was meeting the needs of the students.

It was during this cycle that SRC representatives from the junior, middle and senior school took part in a curriculum day led by Bill Rogers on classroom discipline. Staff were amazed that students gave up a day’s holiday to join with them and look at the discipline problems in the school. This act alone has had favourable consequences far beyond what I envisaged when I first invited the students to attend.

I observed that staff now frequently requested to talk at meetings to seek the help of the SRC. The students appeared to be proud that the staff were seeking their help.

The questionnaire to staff showed that 36 of the 46 staff who replied to the survey felt that the SRC had demonstrated ability within the school to change things. They believed that the SRC had power within the school and saw it as a vehicle that could assist them.

It was also during this cycle that the Principal attended an SRC meeting. He had been invited many times. Chris, the President, had written to the School Council on behalf of the SRC requesting a contribution towards the cost of a Luncheon at the 'Sizzler' for all SRC representatives. The Principal congratulated the representatives on their work and told them that the Council would pay 25% of the cost in recognition of the fine work the form representatives had done that year. This was a major achievement as it was the first time in the school’s history that the School Council had financially contributed to recognition of the SRC. The students were visibly elated at the news.

At each meeting we asked how many students were reading the daily bulletin to their forms. The staff questionnaire showed that less than 50% of representatives were doing so. Analysis of a questionnaire given to representatives showed that most of that 50% were in the junior levels, with one or two at years 11 and 12. I consider that if the public speaking and leadership skills can be fostered at the junior levels, then in time it will be seen to be acceptable by the middle school.

**REFLECTION**

Due to time constraints this must be the final cycle, which I feel is unfortunate because the more I use this Action Research Method the better it seems to work.

On reflection a number of problems seem to have been solved by the major change in the structure of the SRC, that is the introduction of a transition executive committee. A situation which at first seemed to be a problem has had unanticipated benefits and has become an opportunity for the executive to work co-operatively with others in both a teaching and a caring role. It has assured the continuity of expertise in the executive from year to year and has encouraged younger students to take on more responsibility. I consider the introduction of this committee is one of the most important changes to evolve from this project.

**DISCUSSION**

My vision at the beginning of this project was to raise the image and status of the SRC within the school. My goal was to bring this about by teaching empowerment, leadership skills and by raising the self-esteem of the SRC representatives.

The results of staff and student surveys taken at the end of my project are for me very rewarding. 76% of the staff replies indicated an improvement in the image of the SRC this year. On the student survey, 58% fell the image had improved, while 35% felt that it was unchanged. 68% of form teachers considered the leadership and organisational skills of their form representatives had improved over the year. Comments made by both staff and students confirmed that many people in the school community had seen a positive change in the SRC this year.

I consider that the leadership and organisational skills of the executive have also developed during the year. As their confidence grew they spoke more assertively at meetings and encouraged the representatives to report to their forms what was happening in the school and invite all students to join in the organisation of projects and committees.

Comments from a few students indicated that they did not feel they had power to change things in the school, however the majority - over three quarters of both staff and students - thought that they had the power, and had demonstrated the ability to implement change.

I have been extremely fortunate this year to be working with a fantastic group of students. The executive and now the transition executive are enthusiastic, efficient and reliable. The transition treasurer who is in Year 9 is
a delight to work with. His teachers
tell me that last year he directed his
considerable energy into "mucking up
the class". He told me recently that
working in the SRC had shown him
that he got further by helping people
and, by being involved in the school,
he felt good and enjoyed school more.

Initially I played a fairly
leading role, but as the
year progressed I managed to relax and
let the students take over the
responsibility. Now they decide when
a meeting is needed and check to see if I
am able to attend. Sometimes I
am tempted to interfere but increasingly I
am able to stand back, act as a mediator
if required, and let the students learn
from experience.

The major goals of this project
appear to have been achieved. The
reasons for this I believe are that my
aims were clearly defined from the
outset of the project.

I had taken time early on to do
the relevant research and appropriate
reading and discussed my aims and
sought feedback from fellow staff
members and SRC Coordinators in
other schools. I read the Action
Research Planner and noted the
words of caution: "Once you begin
you will easily become preoccupied
with the practicalities of the project
itself. There is a danger that you may
miss steps, accidently through
preoccupation, or deliberately as your
confidence grows. Take care that this
does not happen." I did not fully heed
this warning and at first lost sight of
my goals and became too involved in
the mechanics of running the SRC.

Early in the project I tried to do
to much too quickly. I have learned
through experience and the application
of the Action Research Model that it is
important if effective change is to
result that time is taken at each step to
evaluate and reflect on the action taken.
I consider one of the main reasons for
the success of this project was because
continuous monitoring took place to
check that the aims were being met and
that it was on track to meet the long
term goals.

It is essential to remain open
minded and impartial for Action
Research to succeed. You must be
prepared to change your plans to meet
the changing circumstances. Often a
situation that first presents as a
problem becomes an asset. The major
structural change in the SRC executive
is an example of such a situation.

A goal I feel has not been fully
achieved is a sense of student
empowerment in the school. I consider
that this can only happen in a longer
time frame because at our school it will
require a radical shift in emphasis -
résistance from some staff members is
high. Reflecting on what my vision
was, I now realize I was far too
ambitious in trying to achieve this goal
in one year.

A major change in the SRC this
year has been the involvement of
younger students in the executive and
various committees within the school.
I consider this is a very positive step
because the younger students in years 9
and 10 now feel that they can play a
much more important role in the
decision-making processes in the school.

A motivational book that has
inspired me during this project is The
Miracle Man. Morris Goodman
lives by the motto "Inch by inch it's a
cinch". I think this is true of most of
the tasks we attempt and particularly
true for this project. Succeeding in the
small aims, and continuing to work
through Action Research towards the
broad goal of student empowerment
will, in the long term, make our school
a great place in which to learn and
work.

This project has been an
excellent learning opportunity for me.
I have been able to put into practice
the skills that I learned during this course.
Skills learned in Conflict Management,
Mediation, Group Dynamics and Team
Building have been particularly useful.
The experience of getting to know and
working with students from every year
level in the school was extremely
rewarding. This Action Research
Project has taught me there is a time
for action, but more important is the
time when we stand back, observe and
reflect because only then can we go
forward in the right direction.

This article is adapted from a report
presented as part of studies carried out
towards a Graduate Diploma of Student
Welfare.

Pat Matson
Croydon Secondary College

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Know Your Rights at School

Knowing your rights as a young person means you can change things that affect you.
“Know Your Rights at School” is a kit produced by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre, and launched in Victoria on 26th May. Support for the Victorian issue is provided by the Victoria Law Foundation.

The kit covers ten topics: bullying in schools, choosing a school, discrimination, suspension and expulsion, going to school, religious instruction, discipline and punishment, school rules, school uniforms, and searches and confiscations. It also suggests some people to contact for further help and advice. Much of the advice in the kit flows from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC).

The information sheets are in lift-out form, and can be photocopied by students.
Copies have been sent to the libraries of all Victorian government secondary colleges; kits for other states will follow.
Copies can also be ordered from:
National Children's and Youth Law Centre
Level 4, 173 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 221 4361; fax: (02) 221 4403

RASCL: Fremantle Education Centre

RASCL - the Regional Association for Student-Centred Learning - was initiated at the Fremantle Education Centre, WA at a conference on 13th-14th August 1993. The Centre reports:
“RASCL, so far, is a loosely linked network of people who have some things in common: they believe that students should be involved in the planning, organising and evaluating of the work they do in their learning process; they believe that students learn better when they are consulted and considered, and when their self-esteem, creativity and motivation are enhanced by working in partnership with, instead of in servitude to, their teachers.”

The Association has adopted a Mission Statement: “By the year 2000, student-centred learning to be an accepted method of teaching at all age levels, rather than an alternative approach.”

The second RASCL Conference was held in late March 1994, and we hope to bring a further report in the next issue of Connect.
For further information, contact:
Fremantle Education Centre
PO Box 452, Fremantle WA 6160
Phone: (09) 335 5444; fax: (09) 335 5656

Sherbrooke in Writing

The publishers of this 1993 anthology attempted to gather together a piece of writing from the community of Sherbrooke Community School, in Sassafras, Victoria. Their aim was to have every student and member of staff select their own piece of writing for publication.

Roxyne Walker and Ambry Wood have demonstrated in their enthusiasm when collecting this work, not only their love of writing, but care and respect for others’ work as well. While they may not have succeeded in gathering work from everyone, they have succeeded in presenting a wonderful anthology of student and staff writing which reflects the nature of the people who work in our school. Every time we put pen to paper, we give a part of ourselves away with the words we choose, and in Roxy and Ambry’s anthology is the soul of the school.

Viv Hammat

For information about Sherbrooke in Writing, contact Viv Hammat at:
Sherbrooke Community School,
311 Mt Dandenong Tourist Road, Sassafras 3787.
Phone: (03) 755 2007

Schools “On Air”

1994 is the year for radio in Victoria’s Goulburn Valley! Schools across the region - primary and secondary - regularly broadcast their own programs on ZONE FM, the local community radio station.

A celebration of student/community participation was held on March 23rd at the Kyabram Community House, at which a Schools “On Air” kit of video and manual was launched. This is ideal practical information for schools planning to broadcast their own radio programs. It’s available at a cost of $25 (address below).

The next issue of Connect will contain a longer article about Schools ‘On Air’ For more information, contact Mary Moore, Curriculum Consultant, at:
Nathalia Primary School
PO Box 5, Nathalia 3638
Phone: (058) 662 820; fax: (058) 662 749

IS YOUR CONNECT SUBSCRIPTION UP TO DATE?

The number on your Connect wrapper tells you the issue with which your subscription expires. Please renew promptly - renewal notices cost us time and money!
A Student Participation Workshop in 1995?

The Australian Curriculum Studies (ACSA) will hold its 1995 Conference in Melbourne. For past Conferences, Connect has assisted in helping students to attend these Conferences, and to have a voice in debates about curriculum issues.

A frequent request has been for a preparatory conference for students, in the few days before the ACSA Conference.

In addition, there haven’t been any national student participation conferences - for students and/or their supporting teachers and others - since two held in 1980 (Melbourne) and 1981 (Adelaide).

I know it’s some time away still - July 1995. But ... Is there interest in attending? Is there interest in helping to plan and organise it? What would such a Workshop/Conference look like?

Connect will be a forum to talk over ideas, with a view to getting a planning group together later in the year. I’d be interested to hear from you now!

Roger Holdsworth

Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070

The One Hundred Languages of Children

Museum of Victoria

A new exhibition is coming to the Museum of Victoria in the next two months. The One Hundred Languages of Children features creative works of young children from the children’s centres in Reggio Emilia in northern Italy. These centres are renowned for educational innovation, cooperative enquiry learning, and child care.

The exhibition will feature paintings, drawings, writing and photographs of the children, an interpretation of the philosophy of the programs at Reggio Emilia, and several participatory displays.

For more information, contact Education Officers David Jay and Yolande Kerridge on (03) 669 9881.

Bathurst Regional SRC News

Student representatives from the Bathurst area (NSW) took part in a one-day conference in September 1993. Issues discussed included the development of a Junior Secondary/Primary School SRC package.

Selected students combined with others from Forbes, Dubbo and Broken Hill areas to form the Western Region SRC which met twice in 1993 to discuss student issues and to prepare for the State Conference held in Sydney in August. These representatives were Susan Jensen, Elizabeth Phegan (Bathurst High), Matthew Ryall (Orange High) and Belle Forino and Wendy Cooke (Kelso High). Charles Kingston (Bathurst High) accompanied the group throughout preparation and the conference.

The focus of the conference was Students - United in Action and workshops included ‘Anti-discrimination’, ‘Dealing with disabilities’ and ‘Promoting the school’. Student Welfare Consultant, Nick King and Margaret Wood, held ‘Conflict Resolution’ workshops.

Students representing Bathurst, Kelso, Orange and Oberon High Schools took part in the development of a video: ‘Students on School Councils’. Funded by a grant from the Western Region School Council Association, the video is the result of research and phone interviews by students earlier in the year.

from Bathurst Education Resource Centre newsletter
PO Box 143, Bathurst 2795
Local and Overseas Publications Received

**Australian:**

*Connect* receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on (03) 489 9052 or (03) 344 8573:

**AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:**

*Sherbrooke in Writing* (Sherbrooke Community School, Sassafras, Vic) 1993

*SRC 1989 Annual Report* (The Hutchins School, Tas)

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS:**

**Australian:**

*Options* (Youth Bureau, Canberra, ACT) February, March/April, May/June 1994

*Network News* (Surrury Hills, NSW) March 94

*Yakka* (Australian Red Cross, E Melbourne, Vic) Issue 1, 1994

*Let's Live* (National Youth Foundation, Haymarket, NSW) Vol 2 No 1, March 1994

*Education Links* (Stanmore, NSW) No 47, Autumn 1994

*Curriculum Perspectives* (ACSA, Belconnen, ACT) Vol 14 No 1, April 1994

*Rights NOW!* (National Children's and Youth Law Centre, Sydney, NSW) Vol 2 Nos 1, 2, February, March 1994

*Know Your Rights at School (Victorian Edition)* (National Children's and Youth Law Centre, Sydney NSW) kit

**Overseas:**

*Foundation Update* (ANPA, USA) Vol 19 No 4, Winter 1994

*Travelling Children* (Enfants du Voyage, Scelestat, France)

*Hands On* (Foxfire Fund, Mountain City, Georgia, USA) Issue 47, Spring 1993

*Democracy and Education* (Vol 8 No 4) and *Hands On* (Issue 48) (collaborative issue - IDE, Athens, Ohio and Foxfire Fund, Mountain City, Georgia, USA) Summer 1994

*Lib Ed* (Bristol, UK) # 23-24, Spring 1994

*Education Now* (Nottingham, UK) No 3, Winter/Spring 1994

*Options in Learning* (Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education, New York, USA) Vol 4 No 2/3

*AERO-Gramme* (AERO, Roslyn Heights, USA) #12, Spring 1994

**National Coalition News** (NCACS, New Mexico, USA) Vol 18 Nos 3, 4; Winter, Spring 1994

**Articles:**

The articles listed in this column are of general background value or otherwise not appropriate for reproducing in the columns of *Connect*. However they are available on photocopy for research purposes. The length and cost (copying and postage) are listed. Please order by code number. (A full computerised list of articles is now available; this can be accessed and organised by topic, key-words etc.)

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<thead>
<tr>
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