supporting student participation

Connect

Number 84: December 1993

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE:
CRUSTACEAN STUDIES
AND SCIENCE SHOWS

- Crabs! Crabs! Crabs! at Newcomb
- Student-Run Science Shows at Werribee
- Independent Living at Lilydale
- School to Work in the Arts at Mornington
- Voices on the Wind at Warracknabeal
- Leisure Time at Collingwood ELS
- Environment Action at Nathalia
- Music Garden at Mentone Girls
- Writing from the Edge at Sunbury Downs
- Literacy Camps and Networks

CONNECT
12 Brooke Street
Northcote 3070
Victoria Australia
$4.00
Print Post Approved
PP 340646/0008
ISSN 0158-4995
This Issue

There are more accounts in this issue of Connect about programs and projects in Victorian government schools which have been funded through the Small Change Foundation. Some are very clear examples of classroom approaches which build active student participation to achieve real outcomes; others demonstrate more potential for student participation than realisation. They are all exciting and worthwhile achievements. We present them here to stimulate discussion, action and growth - towards increasing student participation.

Why Victoria? That’s probably got a lot to do with the physical location of Connect here. It’s so much easier to visit a school, to phone up a contact, to hassle someone to write.

How about other states? Connect urgently needs stories about the exciting developments happening throughout Australia. And to make that happen, are there some of you who could be the Connect contact and hassler for your state in 1994? That would mean keeping your ears open for interesting examples and chasing up someone to document them. Let me know … or just do it.

Seasonal Greetings

At this time of the year, it’s traditional to wish all our loyal and new readers a restful holiday season. May we all return re-invigorated, re-inspired and re-committed in 1994. Faced with the many attacks on conditions, restrictions on school programs, and undermining of student rights, it looks as though we will need all our energy restored to deal with 1994!

But student participation says: together we can!

Next Issue

The next issue of Connect is due in February, with copy due by the end of January please! We were going to include a special liftout for Junior School Councils in this issue, but are now holding this over for the start of a new year.

In this special section, students from several JSCs in the Preston and Reservoir area are writing a series of letters to a new JSC. Dear JSC will be advice on issues such as “how to start a JSC” - from the experts!

We’d also like to hear from you. Don’t wait to be asked to write - your experience of student participation is valuable, and could be read by interested people all over Australia.

Roger Holdsworth
It was science with a difference for forty year 8 and 9 students during 1992, when two separate 'hands on' marine science programs were held at the mudflats of Swan Bay, Queenscliff. The second program, which received funding from the Small Change Foundation, aimed to encourage young women to increase their interest in scientific and technological careers and so was run for Year 9 girls.

The study, devised by the Equal Opportunity Coordinator, Lynne Kidman and the Director of the Marine Studies Centre, enlisted the support of marine biologist, Geraldine Davis, who guided and tutored the students in the programs.

A Student's Account

It was a grey, windy and drizzly day - what better time to put on shorts and go wading around in the freezing water in an area that smelled like a garbage dump! But that's what eighteen girls from Year 9 did every week during the Marine Studies project, and we even began to look forward to it!

At first, most of us were a little apprehensive about handling those vicious little monsters with long nippers. But soon we got used to them and were eager to participate in experiments involving measuring, feeding and observing behaviour.

We had a lot of fun collecting the crabs, especially when we found a big, ugly male crab with nippers who was not afraid to use them and who was in a 'bad mood'. Or when we sank up to our knees in mud, lost our sneakers and ended up screaming and flailing about helplessly whilst millions of these little creatures moved about our feet and between our toes.

Despite these small drawbacks, we all enjoyed the change from the schoolwork and the classroom as we worked out in the field dealing with live creatures. We worked cooperatively, thinking up experiments, testing them, recording data and then graphing results using our own initiative.

Whilst benefiting from the study we also had lots of fun.

Bronwen Lowe
Over the two seven-week periods, the students undertook an intensive investigation of the crabs in and about the mud flats. Through field work, laboratory work and group discussion, they analysed and presented their findings in a variety of formats. Their results have been collated and documented by the Marine Studies Centre and have contributed to an initial study of the ecological and environmental impact of the Swan Bay area on its crab population. The Newcomb students' work has formed part of a greater study of the area by a team of Melbourne university researchers.

The mud flats of Swan Bay are alive with crabs, so this proved to be an ideal investigative area. Under the tuition of Geraldine, the girls developed a variety of skills both in the laboratory and in the field. The girls designed and performed many controlled experiments which provided them with the data from which to draw their conclusions about the various species of crabs in this bay, their breeding and feeding habits and environmental factors affecting the crab population.

Most of the girls expressed apprehension about 'picking up those vicious little creatures' but soon they were wading in the water, searching under rocks and quickly they adapted to handling them. Eagerly they participated in the experiments to test their hypotheses. During the study, the girls' appreciation and understanding of the crab and other marine creatures increased.

At the conclusion of the study, the girls demonstrated their findings and knowledge to all the year 9 students, to parents and teachers.

The value of the project is reflected in these comments:

I enjoyed the field work, wallowing in the mud flats, observing the crabs in their habitat. I have benefited by doing rather than simply reading the information in books. Bronwen

After never wanting anything to do with science, I am now thinking of a career in marine Science. Leah

Lynne Kidman
Equal Opportunity Coordinator (1991-2)
Newcomb Secondary College
Student-run Science Shows

For several years now, primary students in Werribee schools have been treated to Science Shows on an annual basis.

The presenters and 'performers' of these shows have been students from Werribee Secondary College, Hoppers Crossing Secondary College and Galvin Park Secondary College. This year we hope to welcome Werribee Grange Secondary College as well.

There has been a wide variety of approaches, ranging all the way from a visit by a single Science teacher with a 'box of tricks' to a full scale program of static displays, hands-on experiments and demonstrations performed by classes of secondary students.

Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 classes have in the past made excellent program organisers and presenters. The primary-age audience is selected by participating schools according to their own curriculum and philosophy, but combined grade 3/4 classes seem to be most frequently involved.

The value of the shows lies in a number of positive outcomes. Primary students get an idea of both the 'everydayness' and the 'specialness' of Science. Observing ordinary secondary age local students giving performances with confidence and flair makes the subject more appealing and accessible to them, particularly if well followed-up in class after the show. There is some evidence to suggest that primary teachers begin to see Science as a highly motivational activity for its own sake and a valuable component of language and general studies curriculum.

Secondary school administrations have largely welcomed and encouraged involvement in the shows because of the publicity and transition benefits.

Secondary Science teachers organising science shows, while creating additional work for themselves at every stage, at least are constantly aware of the keenness of their students, often with surprising skills emerging. The benefits to the class are both subject-based and sociological. The emphasis is on a team effort based on individual responsibility.

In 1992, the Werribee Science Network was the beneficiary of a grant from the Small Change Foundation and ICI. This enabled us to cover the travel costs involved, transport being the largest logistical and financial hurdle to running a good regionally based program.

Connect 84: December 1993
We have no such support in 1993, and will do what is possible with limited resources. One comforting aspect of our situation is the emergence in Werribee of a number of initiatives by keen primary teachers in promoting Science, Technology and Environmental Studies within their school populations - for example, Family Science events. As a Science teacher, naturally I am delighted by the success of these initiatives at Primary level; as a Science Show organiser, my enthusiasm has to be tempered by the fact that my Primary colleagues have pinched a lot of my best stuff!

Ken Greatares
Convener 1993, Werribee Science Network
Galvin Park Secondary College
Shaws Road, Werribee 3030

As an active member of Werribee Science Network, Galvin Park has provided Science Shows to local primary schools for several years. The photographs in this article show year 7 Galvin Park students conducting the 1992 shows that were run at Galvin Park.

Photographer: Brian Woolard.

Dale Ballantyne and Peter Viney were volunteers who came in on a holiday to help with a Science Show in 1992. The girl (top photo) is a grade 3 student from Glen Devon Primary School whose weight is supported by pyramids made from matches.

This year 4 boy (bottom photo) from Glen Devon was the next to try his luck. The matches held him too - about 10,000 times their own weight!
INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Small Change Foundation was launched in 1989 to support and promote public education. It raises funds from individuals, industry and other organisations and targets the most effective projects in schools with this money. This year Small Change awarded funding of $70,000 for 55 projects throughout Government schools in Victoria.

Lilydale Secondary College was awarded $720 by the Small Change Foundation for a project aimed mainly at independent living - enabling students to develop the ability to prepare nutritious meals on a limited budget. Students were also informed of the resources available from Lillydale Shire and also of their entitlements to benefits and finances. A booklet with this information was made available, along with recipes for budget meals using basic equipment. The program ran over six weeks at lunchtime with the students sampling their culinary efforts. BP Australia sponsored the project and there was a final evaluation of the program at its completion. Three-quarters of the students rated the program excellent and all said they'd recommend it to other students if it ran next year.

Over 30 students originally signed up for the 20 places but funding limited it to the 20 Year 12 participants, although the booklet will be also available for students unable to gain a place in the program.

The lessons covered were: dinner; lunch; snacks; breakfast; entitlements; resources in Lilydale.

Some suggestions for improvement included desserts/sweets, and for a longer time span than the six weeks. Dinner was the favourite lesson, where students sampled six different low cost meals.

Students were presented with Small Change certificates at the October Year 12 awards night and students said they appreciated the recognition of their commitment to the program.

Lilydale Secondary College staff involved included: Wendy Holden (Student Welfare Coordinator), Dinah McCance (Careers Teacher) and Gwen Haritonidis (Home Economics Teacher).

Gwen Haritonidis
Project Coordinator
Lilydale Secondary College
PO Box 536, Lilydale 3140

MAKING YOUR DOLLAR GO FURTHER IN MEAL PREPARATION

1. Plan the basic meals for the week - if you will have a pasta dish, fish meal, etc.
2. Make a shopping list of the ingredients you will need.
3. Check what you already have in your pantry/fridge, so you can delete those items on your list you already have.
4. Do your shopping after a meal, or when you aren't hungry. You are less likely to make impulse purchases because of the appetising food smell or well presented food displays.
5. Take a calculator - totalling up the amount as you select items. You can also take a pen and write the amounts on items to see that the check-out records the price accurately. Alternatively see that the cashier has recorded the item variety accurately - may accidentally put down oranges as mandarins which have a higher price.
6. Don't make purchases whilst waiting at the check out register - these are usually not on your shopping list and you don't need them.
7. Be aware that foods at eye level and at the end of the aisle are usually more expensive. So check the higher/lower shelves as well.
8. Utilise the no-name or generic house brands. Major food manufacturers usually also package these home brands as well as the much advertised, more expensive items.
9. Don't buy more than you need, just because it is on special, unless you can adequately store it/freeeze it. Otherwise you may end up throwing it out, which is a waste of money.
10. Be aware that meat is usually discounted half an hour before the end of Saturday's trading. But again, don't purchase more than you can store/use. Some fruit and vegetables are also discounted in price late Saturday mornings at the Lilydale Market.
11. Make your own lunch for school/college rather than purchasing pre-packaged/prepared lunches. It will be about a third of the price and your hunger will be satisfied so you won't have to snack on high kilojoule foods later on.
12. Restrict purchasing soft drinks as a basic thirst quencher. Have adequate calcium from milk sources, but water is cheap and doesn't have any kilojoules.
Mornington Secondary College, Victoria

SCHOOL TO WORK IN THE ARTS

Mornington Secondary College is a dual campus secondary college situated on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula. 1993 sees its first full year of operation after an amalgamation. The release of the Carmichael, Deveson, Finn and Mayer Committee Reports provided Mornington Secondary College with a vision of a more vocationally orientated schooling for VCE students.

1993 also saw the appointment of Pathways Coordinators, whose job it is - in part anyway - to liaise with community organisations, businesses and industry to develop school-to-work links. As most students, parents and teachers are aware, to complete the VCE studies a number of Work Requirements have to be completed satisfactorily.

Our Arts students have been able to link Work Requirements with ‘real jobs’. They have worked in numerous areas using a contract system whereby a student would be briefed by a client, usually at the workplace, and then complete the task using the facilities at the Senior Campus.

This provides students with the opportunity to gain skills used in the work force and offers a direct link between school and post-school aspirations. A grant from the Small Change Foundation was received which helped towards establishing this program. We have established links with the Mornington Peninsula Arts Complex where students have designed invitations for exhibitions, posters promoting the Gallery to the teenage market, and commentaries given to Gallery Society members about students’ work by students, landscape designs for the Gallery Gardens to senior assemblies, playing at openings of exhibitions.

Connect 84: December 1993
The Mornington Peninsula Community Health Service and Youth Services required students to design a flyer for the service they offer and a cover for the Asthma Awareness booklet which are now published and circulating within the community. A three metre by two metre sign was painted by three students to promote the ‘Life Be In It’ centre at the Peninsula Gym. All of these tasks were linked with Work Requirements in Arts, Studio Art, Graphics and Music studies.

The students have found it of great benefit to them. As Allan Cummins, a Year 12 student, said: “It’s good because it gives me some experience working for someone.”

Art Centre Director, Elizabeth Gleeson, says the project is fantastic. “It smooths the way into the work force. In my day, you would go to school and then out to work!”

Coralie Buckley
Mornington Secondary College
1051 Nepean Highway, Mornington 3931

Lucy Salt, year 11 - designing Community Youth Services booklets
Allan Cummins, year 12 - with poster for the Mornington Peninsula Arts Complex Gallery
VOICES ON THE WIND
Student writing from Warracknabeal Secondary College, Victoria 1993

Late in 1992 it was realised that 1993 would mark the tenth anniversary of the publication of our book of student writing - The Wind in the Wimmera. Would we do another?

After some discussion and plenty of doubts we decided - yes. So was born Voices on the Wind.

An editorial and marketing committee were set up. Students on the former corrected drafts and vetted material for suitability. To help cover printing costs, students on the marketing committee devised plans and incentives for selling the books on a prepublication basis.

Both groups met at regular intervals and slowly, as the months went by, the work was compiled, resulting in a book of 212 pages, and contributors numbering well over one hundred. As in the previous book, the only criterion of suitability was that the writing was to be the very best of which a student was capable.

Such a project only succeeds with the help and goodwill of many people and organisations. The typesetting was done by Ms Lewis’s and Ms Phelan’s Year 11 Information Technology class. Donations to cover incentive prizes and promotional costs were provided by local service clubs. A grant of $1500 was received from the Central Wimmera Country Education Project.

As a result of the marketing committee’s plans, 240 books from a print run of 485 were sold on a pre-publication basis. The four main incentives were:

1) Lower prices if books were ordered before the end of Term 2.
2) Any form which ordered books equalling or exceeding the number of students in the class would receive a Mars bar.
3) The committee would throw a party for the leading form.

4) Students were ‘licensed’ to secure paid orders in the township and local area.

The book consists of six sections:
- The International Year for Indigenous People
- Humour
- Stories and Miscellany
- The Birds and Bees, the Land and Trees
- War
- The Personal Self

The book was launched at an assembly of the whole school on Wednesday, October 20. This was followed by an afternoon tea for invited guests, at which four students read selections from the book.

Student Reactions

Some student reactions to seeing their work in print:

"Having a piece of work in a book has made me more confident about my writing. I am very proud to see my name and a piece of work published in an actual book!" Kerrie Clarke

"Seeing my work in print makes me feel proud that it could be appreciated, instead of being kept in school folders, like everything else I write." Renee Walder

"I think it’s really great. I guess I feel proud. It’s really weird to think that it’s in a real book, that people will buy and read." Kelly

"Fabulous. It is really good. You feel like you have really achieved something good. And also that many others are going to see your work.” Brad Picken

"I feel proud and happy for something of mine to be seen and read by people - in a real book too!” Kristy
Copies of the book are available for sale at the following process:

1) $8 each for orders of 2 or more copies
2) $9 for single copies
3) $10 for Collectors' Edition (Limited to 50 numbered copies)

Postage and handling: add $3 for single copies and $5 for two.

Orders should be addressed to:

Mr. J. Martin
Warracknabeal Secondary College
PO Box 285
Warracknabeal Vic 3393

School Profile

Collingwood English Language School is a school that provides full-time intensive English language courses for recently arrived non-English speaking background (NESB) students of refugee and immigrant status. If there are additional available places, other NESB students in mainstream schools who are still experiencing difficulties with the English needed for school, may attend.

The main aim of our courses is to prepare students for mainstream schooling within the State Education System, and to provide orientation to Australian Society.

For most students, courses are approximately two terms (approximately 20 weeks) in length. However, students with special needs, including students who have experienced severely disrupted schooling, may receive up to four terms' instruction.

Students are taught in classes of usually no more than thirteen students, except during activities/sports when group sizes may be larger. At the primary level they are grouped primarily according to age. At the post-primary level, the grouping criteria includes educational background, English language proficiency and age.

Leisure Time Project

The post-primary section of Collingwood English Language School was funded through the Small Change Foundation by BP to produce a booklet based on leisure time activities.

This book was produced to help newly-arrived NESB students become familiar with leisure activities available in Melbourne.

In this project, teachers worked with a group of newly-arrived non-English speaking background students to produce a combined book focusing on sporting and leisure activities. This book has colour photographs, group writing and individual student writing. The written text is relevant and at the appropriate language level for non-English speaking background beginners. Multiple copies have been produced which are used as a class set.

The project was incorporated into the existing sporting and activities program on Tuesday afternoons.
Collingwood English Language School, Victoria

LEISURE TIME PROJECT

Funded through the Small Change Education Foundation by BP

The following procedures were undertaken:

The leisure activity eg bowling, cooking, badminton was introduced at school using visuals and available equipment, and the rules/directions were explained. Photographs were taken of the students participating in the activity. After the activity, the students talked about their experiences and group wall stories and individual stories were published. After a book was produced by the students about the leisure time activities, multiple copies of the book were produced and shared with other ESL providers.

Students were very enthusiastic about the project and their writing improved as they were able to reflect on their experiences by using the photographs as a stimulus.

For our newly-enrolled term students, the leisure time book has proved to be a valuable resource as they have been introduced to leisure time activities through the booklet.

Collingwood English Language School students have already gained educational and social advantages from being involved in this project.

Copies of Leisure Time can be purchased from the school.

Laima Novackis
Collingwood English Language School
Abbott Street, Abbotsford 3067
Phone: (03) 417 1877
Hayley Morrissey - recycling old books into artwork

Geoff Harvie - rounding off his world in clay planets

Jono Chamberlain
- getting ready to make his calico banner

Aaron Peacock - hard at work tree planting
ENVIRONMENT GROUP

After attending the student Conservation Conference for a few days at Melbourne Zoo in June this year, the two student representatives came back with an idea of starting an Environmental Group for their school - Nathalia Secondary College.

The Environment Group not only has student and teacher representatives from the College itself, but also grade 6 students from the primary school. Nathalia's Community Development Officer has also attended the meetings and has been very supportive and indicated a willingness to attend future meetings. The group decided on fortnightly meetings to be held at the Secondary College during lunch time. One member of the group was chosen to make a report after each meeting, informing readers of the school bulletin about what was discussed and decided on at the previous meeting.

One of our first moves in the group was to organise the play 'Visiting the Relatives' to perform at our school. We were fortunate to receive financial support from the Country Education Project for this activity. The play was quite a success in highlighting how man has affected his environment and threatened the survival of some species.

As a result of the meetings, the group decided to organise a combined Environment and Indigenous Day, as a contribution to celebrating the Indigenous Year for 1993. The idea for the day was to open other students' minds to Environmental and Political issues.

To help finance the day and its activities we had a fundraising barbecue and raffle. The raffle included donations from the Wilderness Society and other environmentally aware shops, groups and societies.

This Environment and Indigenous Day was held on Wednesday November 10th, 1993. The local paper reported:

Environment and Indigenous Day

"Students learned how to make paper and recycle old books into works of art. Unusual calico banners are in the making, which will be displayed in their finished form in the library. Students demonstrated their flair in creating new worlds made with clay and photo frames made with silk ties. The school grounds were also beautified throughout the day with the planting of more trees.

"Samples from the creek were collected and viewed on the video microscope where they appeared 'larger than life' and Bob Barton explained the workings of the town's filtration plant to a number of interested students. Students were also taught about environmentally friendly cleaning methods by the 'clean up with care' group.

"All year 7 to 9 students had the unique opportunity to listen to visiting author of Koori children's stories, Jim Poulter. Students were even 'married off' as a way of explaining the totemic culture of traditional aboriginal students. Jim also addressed children at the Nathalia Primary School, where his storytelling was a 'hit' with the students.

"During lunchtime, entertainment was provided at the Community Centre by very different band 'Raspberry Cordial' with their messages related to racism, urban life and other issues. It was disappointing that guest speaker, Gary Foley, was unable to attend on the day.

"Overall, the day offered a number of challenges, stimulation and interesting educational activities."

The day was very successful and hopefully it will change students' attitudes towards the environment and political issues.

The Environment Group is anxious to hear from other school groups who have formed similar groups or who have any enquiries.

Carolyn Grinter, Libby Ward and Dawn Pocquing, year 9 students
Kaye Whiston, teacher

Members of the Environment Group of Nathalia Secondary College
PO Box 42, Nathalia 3638
THE MUSIC GARDEN

In the early months of the year, when a teacher has a reasonable chance of being enthusiastic, creative and not too exhausted, the Small Change Foundation encourages schools to apply for grants to achieve worthwhile projects in the school that may not be able to happen without the outside support of this wonderful organisation.

When applying for the grant, we believed that we had a project that extended the existing knowledge and skills of all our music students from those in the general music programs to those in the senior specialist courses.

The project involved employing an ‘artist in residence’ for a week, whose job was to:

a) work with all the junior students to enhance their perception of music and increase their confidence with improvising and creating music in general; and

b) work with senior students with special skills to extend their compositional techniques and build a ‘Music Garden’ that would be aesthetic to look at and function as a multi-timbral musical instrument with pitched and non-pitched sounds made possible either from air movements or from the intended hitting of various parts of the sculpture (or both).

The excellent thing about the Small Change Foundation is that they realise that ideas may change with practical application, and although the essence of the original ideas were carried through, some fundamental changes were made, particularly with the positioning and materials of the music sculpture.

Mr Ernie Althoff was our ‘artist-in-residence’. He is a respected, much recorded composer in the contemporary field with some experience in building music sculptures such as the one we had envisaged. However, after much discussion with the senior students involved in the building of the sculpture, it was decided that a more delicate instrument was to be designed, as there were many more timbral possibilities than if using very solid materials suitable for outdoors.

Ultimately, two sculptures were built. One, although made of materials that did need to be inside, was situated in the prominent ‘rehearsal room’, one of the main meeting rooms of the school, where students had easy access to the instrument, and the other, a more complicated affair, made up of many different sound sources, was positioned in the music room for use in classroom composition. Thus the initial aim of the project was fulfilled, ie that students would be exposed to the concept of ‘chance music’ and non-traditional ideas of music making, as well as having access to an instrument that anyone could ‘play’. The senior students, as well as coming to terms with major design decisions, also learnt many acoustical facts along the way, such as finding the node points on plates and in pipes, discovering the divisions of pipes into octaves etc. These students were actively involved in measuring, cutting and assembling the materials. The biggest problem was finding the right ‘frame’ for their ideas - ultimately a portable clothes rack proved ideal, especially as the castors made the structure mobile for easy access to classes.

Whilst Ernie was helping the senior students in their class time (the project ultimately became part of their VCE Creative Organisation), he also attended all of the junior and middle school classes and ‘built’ a musical sculpture with them. He is well known for his old turntables on which he has two strings which rotate on an arm (at 33 and 45 rpm!). The strings have a weight at the end which strikes any object that is placed in its way. The students were actively involved in the placing of a great variety of objects. Of course, every class was different, because a different placing of an object caused the weight to bounce off in a different direction, and possibly hit a different object the next time around. The students were fascinated by the unusual rhythms and effects generated by the ‘machine’ and were opened up to a variety of musical concepts beyond their existing experiences.

Whilst the ‘Music Garden’ went from the great outdoors to inside, the fundamental ideas of the project were retained and we have had great use from the sculptures this year in a variety of classes, and we know that we will continue to reap the benefits of this project for many years to come.

Jenny Wills
Mentone Girls’ Secondary College
PO Box 52, Mentone 3194
Many schools have dropped poetry from English curricula as being too hard. Many English teachers feel it’s too difficult to teach, boring and irrelevant. Many teachers have memories of their own schooling in which English poets were sliced, dissected and reassembled ad nauseam until the poems had no life.

The teaching of writing in general in schools is a paradox. We teach an elemental, social communication craft and never test its product in public.

What other enterprise with eight hundred productive, focused writers at its disposal would fail to publish?

We claim to students that writing is the most useful, important tool for them to take into their adult life. We demand they write paper after paper, and we construct an enormous creative funnel that ends at a single person’s desk under a single marking pen.

Writing, even more than oral communication, is a public medium; there is a profound illogic in teaching writing in isolation from the public context. If we teach letter writing, why not send them? If we teach the argumentative or persuasive forms of writing, why not put it to a practical purpose and teach the function of such writing in the process? This is not new. It seems we must remind ourselves of what we know.

This lack of functional congruence is not limited to the teaching of writing in schools. We have taught science disconnected from the ecology of the local creek, the physics of bicycles and the chemistry of the canteen. We have taught social studies without looking at our own people and place. We have made milk bottle carriers when the school yard needed recreation equipment. We have taught maths with few having a practical understanding of the State budget, the school’s budget or their own.

There are those who are exceptions; there have been some changes and there have been and are places where this incongruity is not in place. Yet the culture of the dissociated, the mode of the theoretician still holds the centre ground.

At Sunbury Downs Secondary College this year, we began a movement to address the poetry malaise and lack of a public face for our student writers. We applied for and gained a grant from the Small Change Foundation and BP’s Government and Public Affairs Division to publish student writing in the local newspaper.

Some teachers offered poetry writing in their classes and this was supported by guest poetry readers and workshops in classes in the junior and middle schools. In Sunbury, many students write poetry for their personal consumption and circulate them amongst their friends. Once we opened the door, many students other than the self-proclaimed poets wrote, read and got involved. In classes, students were encouraged to read poems they liked out loud, both their own and other people’s. Poetry is a form of writing that lives when it’s spoken. Rhythms that don’t take shape on the page, get up and dance when given voice. Some groups in the school really enjoyed the opportunity to perform. The almost rock-star feeling of reading to an audience who’s enjoying your creative effort, infected 9G particularly. Many teachers here really enjoyed and learnt from the project.

We produced Poster Poems and did readings at the local primary school, at a middle school Achievements Night and to other classes. We held a main street poetry reading at night at the youth club. The massive room above the shops in Evans Street filled with poetry sounds and began something out here. Some senior students particularly enjoyed that opportunity to read, listen, discuss and find a group of like-minds at school.

The page of poetry called Writing From the Edge was printed in the Telegraph (October 19th) and the school received many phone calls and congratulations from community members. There were many comments that emphasised the poetry as a positive expression by young people. There was a letter in the following paper contesting the views of a poem called the Australian Republic. There has since been a follow-up article on poetry in Sunbury and the contribution the project has made.

In drawing conclusions from this project, it’s worth emphasising how students enjoyed the opportunity to express themselves in public, how well the community received the product and how having a poetry culture at school brings students who are poets in from the cold.

The teaching and learning associated with poetry is best done in an active way. Poetry affords students many active roles: reader, fellow enthusiast, collaborator, researcher, performer, publisher and editor. To create a product and to declare that product in public is a great act of self confidence and self possession. This makes this kind of project unique. Poetry as a category of writing is inclusive of all subjects, styles and forms. Poetry offers students a vehicle for the expression of thoughts and feelings that is both ancient and direct.

Barry McDonald
Sunbury Downs Secondary College
Nathalia

On December 1st, 2nd and 3rd this year, a Literacy Camp will be held again at the Dharnya Centre near Nathalia. This camp will set up a Victorian Network of students and adults who have experienced learning difficulties, supporting each other.

We have invited St Mary’s Nathalia, Kyabram, St Augustine’s Kyabram, Rochester and Rushworth Secondary Schools to our camp again.

Four other camps are being organised around the State in country areas. They are in: Loddon Campaspe, the Mallee, Desert Fringe and Far East Gippsland. Each of these regions will send representatives to our camp in December if possible.

All of this activity is being funded by the Country Education Project’s Statewide Initiatives Committee and Regional CEP Committees. Our North Central Country Education Project has funded us $1000. More than $20,000 has been allocated for this statewide project.

Dick Smith sent us a book to raffle to raise money.

Contact:

David Heymer or Lyn Loger
Nathalia Secondary College
PO Box 42
Nathalia 3638
Phone: (058) 662 331
Fax: (058) 662 858
SOME OF OUR GUESTS AT NATHALIA’S CAMP

MICHAEL MARQUET

We have funding to bring over Michael Marquet as a key-note speaker. He lives in New Zealand. He left school at 15 unable to read and write. He has now written two books and won the UNESCO gold medal for Literacy, which he went to Paris to receive. He is coming to talk and go for a run with the students.

The Nathalia Art Group, assisted by the Lions, ran a Soup Kitchen for us and raised $250. The Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council in the Goulburn North East region, through Moya Turnbull, are providing funding to help with Michael’s air-fare. Our local Shire Council are to consider making a donation, and Rushworth Secondary College, through their SRC have donated $100.

DARYL ROBB

Darryl is an inventor from Gympie, Queensland. Since he invented a safe syringe, he has gone public with letting people know about his reading and writing difficulties. His maths ability is exceptional. He is flying down from Queensland to come to our Literacy Camp, at no cost to us. He has already been a great support to us.

JOHN O’SHEA

The SPED organisation recommended we ring John O’Shea, a 27 year old executive who learned to read and write only three years ago and still struggles daily with the written word. Now he and his teacher, Jenny Dalton, have written a book about his experience, to be published by Hill of Content this year.

John O’Shea is sending the Literacy Group some copies of his book. He is also driving up from Melbourne to come to our Literacy Camp. He will be coming up for the whole three days and is joining in with all the activities. He has offered to bring up Michael Marquet and Darryl Robb.

He is delighted with what we trying to achieve and so is offering all his help at no cost to us.

ALSO

Mal Sandon, the Shadow Minister for Education has sent us a letter wishing us well. He also wrote to us last year.

David Heymer
Lyn Leger
Nathalia Secondary College
WHAT YOU, AS A STUDENT, CAN GET OUT OF LITERACY CAMPS

READ WHAT STUART ROBINS SAYS.
HE IS A YEAR 9 STUDENT FROM NATHALIA SECONDARY COLLEGE
Written exactly as dictated

The main thing I learnt about the Literacy Camps was that not all the people in the school show their learning problems and I wasn't the worst off, in a way, and that was good for my self-esteem.

I may have had one of the worst reading and writing problems, but others were too afraid to face up to their problem. That taught me that in the short run, it's easier to hide the problem but in the long run, it will be more damaging.

I am 16 now, but as far back as I can remember in school, I've had teacher aides. I've got a letter translation problem, but a high language intellect. I'm only just learning how to read and write.

Before I came here, a lot of people called me dumb, brainless and spastic. Some of those people themselves have learning problems and still won't face up to it.

The Camp, even though it helps those with major learning problems, also helps those at camp who were there with minor problems.

It helps both physically and mentally. Physically, you can face up to the bullies better after the camp, because some of them had weaknesses too and I learnt that they only tease because they are afraid. Some of those enemies stopped being enemies and became friends and some more stopped bullying. Mentally, it helps build self-esteem.

Some of us that go to school here and some from St Mary's school next to us have formed groups - we discuss ideas that we trial in school when we meet outside schooltime. For example, one friend of mine, I didn't know he had a learning problem, but he knew about mine. Now we can talk easily about it.

The camp can help in more ways than you can imagine. You may not notice at the time, but later it may be useful. If anyone teases you about going to the meetings for camps, they're only afraid that you're going to become more powerful than them.

If anyone wants to write to us or fax us, and send ideas, you're welcome to, and we'll try to reply.

We hope to see some of you in December. Good luck with your camp.

Stuart Robins

HERE'S WHAT THE NATHALIA LITERACY GROUP IS DOING TO RAISE MONEY

We're having a Trash and Treasure stall on the Sportspersons weekend. Saturday, 30th October, we will be selling items from our stall in the main street of Nathalia. Please send us in any items that you no longer want. We will pick them up if you would prefer. Ring the school on 662331, or send them in to David Bush or Craig Hunt.

THE WIZARD WASH

Car washing is back for the Literacy Group. It is $5 to wash a car. We will do the vacuuming and not forget the windows and the tires.

So for a good looking car, get the WIZARD WASHERS.

Contact Troy Fabb for bookings.

WE WILL CLEAN YOUR CARS!
WOMEN IN THE LOCAL WORKFORCE

Drouin Secondary College

In Connect 82 (August 1993), Drouin Secondary College reported on a project funded through the Small Change Education Foundation. In this project, year 10 students interviewed a group of local women who had achieved success in their chosen career fields.

The students have now completed and published Women in the Local Workforce. Nine case studies are recorded. "We hope that by reading about the experiences of these women, a number of young people will be assisted in making informed and more adventurous career choices" says the booklet's introduction.

There are a limited number of copies of the booklet available for sale. Mike Jungwirth, project organiser, says: "We consider that it is a useful resource for schools' career libraries. It provides an idea for other schools to undertake as a project with students."

Copies of the booklet may be ordered by sending $3 to cover the cost of the booklet and postage. Please make cheques payable to Drouin Secondary College.

Mike Jungwirth, Drouin Secondary College
PO Box 338, Drouin 3818

A STUDENT GUIDE TO RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

We can become so concerned with the active participation of students in local research - real research about real issues - that we ignore the need to ensure that the student researchers develop an understanding of good research techniques. "Throw them into it and they'll learn," we tend to say.

On the other hand, traditional classrooms have often taught research skills, but detached the exercise of those skills from real outcomes. It would be easy to see Renate Howe and Ros Lewis's Student Guide to Research in Social Science in this light.

This guide is a comprehensive and well-written introduction to research techniques for senior secondary students. It covers project planning, use of existing (secondary) resources, and primary research techniques - surveys, interviews, oral histories, participant observation and material and visual resources. The language is clear and direct, and the Guide is usefully illustrated. Exercises use tables to encourage readers to participate in designing and thinking through their own research approaches.

Where the Guide is thin, is in the application of such research to real and useful situations. "Choosing a research topic" is cast only in terms of an individual student's interest, and the course requirements. Reflecting this, the final section on "Putting your research project together", including "Presenting your research", is the shortest in the Guide.

This is particularly disappointing given the possibilities that have emerged in various schools for students doing research that has significance in their communities, and presenting this research as evidence that supports their recommendations for change and growth. In practice, those real outcomes have a direct impact on the processes of the research.

But perhaps that use is up to the students and teacher in the classroom. This Guide could ensure that such real research is also well carried out and defendable research. It is a valuable addition to the resources available to those serious about valuing the role of students as researchers.

"Democracy and Education"

Calls for Manuscripts

1. Reclaiming Our Traditions

In celebration of the Institute for Democracy in Education's and Foxfire's ten year relationship, IDE and Foxfire are joining forces to publish a special joint issue of Democracy & Education and Hands On. The theme for this issue will be the 1994 conference theme 'Reclaiming Our Traditions' which will be published in (US) Summer '94.

Understanding and embracing the traditions of the progressive education movement provides us with a sense of history, stories to reflect on and a clearer vision of our work as teachers, students and administrators.

Hands On and Democracy & Education are seeking manuscripts which describe educators' work built upon the teachings of John Dewey, Ella Flagg Young, Miles Horton, William Hart Kirpatrick, Carl Washbourne, Jane Addams, and the Lowell Women. Obviously absent from this list are the names of minority leaders in the progressive education movement. We encourage writers to submit articles which would increase our readers' awareness of our silenced and too often unexpressed past.

To be considered for publication essays should be from six to twenty pages in length, and teacher files (specific applications of the theme) should be two to six pages. All articles should be postmarked no later than January 31, 1994.

Submissions may be sent to:
Institute for Democracy in Education
313 McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens Ohio 45701
Fax: (614) 593-0177

or sent via internet to azbell@ouvaxa.cats.ohiou.edu.

Enquiries can be directed to David Luckey at (216) 572-7100 (home) or by internet e-mail at az683@cleveland.freeweb.com or to Susan Walker at (706) 746-5318.

2. Community Service-Learning

Rahima Wade and IDE Associates from the Iowa City regional office are guest editing a special theme issue of Democracy & Education for Fall, 1994. The theme of this issue will be 'Community Service-Learning'.

Connections between communities and schools are strengthened through student and teacher involvement in community service-learning projects.

As students participate in various community organisations, their awareness of their role as citizens is developed. Community service-learning projects can foster democratic ideals for both school and community.

Democracy & Education is seeking manuscripts which describe teachers' experiences with community service-learning programs. What problematic areas have you encountered? What successes? We are especially interested in articles that focus on community service-learning as a vehicle for social change, reflective citizenship, and democratic learning.

To be considered for publication, essays should be from six to twenty pages in length, and teacher files (specific applications of the theme) should be two to six pages. All articles should be postmarked no later than April 1, 1994.

Submissions may be sent to:
Institute for Democracy in Education
313 McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens Ohio 45701
Fax: (614) 593-0177

or sent via internet to azbell@ouvaxa.cats.ohiou.edu.

Enquiries can be directed to Rahima at (319) 335-5118 or via internet e-mail to rahima_wade@uiowa.edu

3. Out on a Limb: Teachers Taking Risks

The Institute for Democracy in Education publishes a series of occasional papers focusing on strategies for changing a particular academic area or process (e.g. whole language, project centred learning). The success of these papers rests in their ability to blend teacher's stories with a sound theoretical base.

Jean Ann Hunt and IDE associates are putting together the next paper in the IDE series. We plan to follow the same format as previous occasional papers, but focus more directly on the issues IDE was founded on: liberty, equity, and community. We are soliciting classroom, school, and community stories that deal with racism, sexism and classism and address issues such as:

- How have you dealt with issues of racism, sexism, and classism and helped your students and/or community understand and confront such complex problems?
- How have schools and communities worked together to address these and other 'isms'?

Dealing in these areas requires that teachers take risks, often stepping into the arena of what has become known as 'family values', and we have thus titled the paper 'Out On a Limb'. Educators are regularly 'encouraged' to be silent. We want to provide a place where you can unleash your voice, and to provide a place for those who haven't been silenced to tell their story. We encourage participation from our international community, as well.

We have no set length for this paper. Issues like this are often involved and emotional, and we don't want to set boundaries on your story. Tell it like it is. We need to hear it.

Our working deadline for this occasional paper is January 1, 1994. Please call us if you have a good story and can't work with this deadline. Submissions may be sent to the Institute for Democracy in Education, 313 McCracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, or faxed to (614) 593-0177.
Local and Overseas Publications Received

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

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Women in the Local Workforce (Drouin SC, Vic)
Voices on the Wind (Warracknabeal SC, Vic)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Foxfire (Mountain City, Georgia, USA) Vol 26 No 2 (#100) Summer 1992

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

Options (Youth Bureau, Canberra, ACT) October 1993
Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Belconnen, ACT) Vol 13 No 4 November 1993
Yanka (Australian Red Cross, East Melbourne, Vic) 2nd issue, 1993
Let's Live (National Youth Foundation, Darlinghurst, NSW) Vol 1 No 3; October 1993
A Lost Generation (Australian Youth Foundation, East Sydney, NSW)
EQ Australia (Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Vic) No 1, Spring 1993
A Student Guide to Research, R Howe and R Lewis (Cambridge University Press) 1993
Update (Victorian Youth Advocacy Network, Clifton Hill, Vic) Vol 2 August/Sept 1993

Overseas:

Natural Life (Ontario, Canada) Issue 33, October/December 1993
AERO-Gramme (AERO, New York, USA) No 11; Fall 1993
National Coalition News (NCACS, New Mexico, USA) Vol 18 No 2, Fall 1993
Hands On (Foxfire Fund, Georgia, USA) Issue 45-46, Fall/Winter 1992
Education Now (Nottingham, UK) Nos 1, 2; Summer, Autumn 1993
Lib Ed (Bristol, UK) No 22, Autumn 1993
Democracy and Education (IDE, Ohio, USA) Vol 8 No 1, Fall 1993

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 fuller list is available in Connect 46/47 - to October 1987. We are currently working on a database that will enable these articles to be accessed by subject, key-word etc.)

Code  Description/Pages/Cost
398  "An Idea Translated Into Policy and Practice"  (1 p; $0.50)

Friends of Connect:

By subscribing at a higher level, the following have helped keep Connect going. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following financial contributions since the last issue of Connect:

SUPPORTING SUBSCRIBER ($50 pa):
Jan Fiedler  Bairnsdale, Vic
Peter Mildenhall  Kangaroo Ground, Vic

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual ($20 p.a.): This rate applies if you take out a subscription for your own, personal use.

Student ($5 p.a.): Subscription rate for a primary or secondary school student.

Organisational ($30 p.a.): This rate applies to a subscription from a school or group, and entitles the school to a discount on consultancy services from Connect.

Student Organisation ($10 p.a.): This rate applies to a subscription ordered and paid for by a Student Representative Council, Junior School Council or equivalent student organisation.

WANTED

Articles for Connect on practices of student participation - in SRCs, JSCs, classrooms, projects, networks. Connect is particularly interested in articles from schools and areas outside Victoria!
Copy or use this form to subscribe to Connect and to order materials from Connect:

To: CONNECT, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia

From: Name: ..........................................................
      Address: ..........................................................
      ..........................................................Postcode: ..................................

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

I enclose my new/renewal subscription to CONNECT: ........................................... $ .................

(circle amount) 1 year 2 years

• an individual or personal subscription $20 $40
• a primary/secondary school student subscription $5 $10
• an organisational (school, library etc) subscription $30 $60
• a student organisation (SRC, JSC etc) subscription $10 $20
• a supporting/sustaining subscription $50 $100
• a lifetime subscription: ... forever: ... $1000

I also enclose a further donation to the work of CONNECT of ........................................... $ .................

MATERIALS:

• Back issues of CONNECT ($4 single; $6 double issue). Circle issue/s required: ........................................... $ .................

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6/7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13/14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22/23, 24, 25, 26, 27/28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36,
37/38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46/47, 48, 49, 50, 51/52, 53, 54/55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65/66, 67, 68, 69, 70,
71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77/78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84

• Cross-referenced index to contents of back issues ($3) ........................................... $ .................

• Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) ........................................... $ .................
• 'Youth Radio' issue of 3CR's CRAM Guide (1985) ($1) ........................................... $ .................
• Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) ........................................... $ .................

• Sometimes a Shining Moment (Wigginton) ($25) ........................................... $ .................
• Foxfire 9 (Doubleday Anchor) ($25) ........................................... $ .................
• Foxfire: 25 Years (Doubleday) ($25) ........................................... $ .................
• A Foxfire Christmas (Doubleday hardcover) ($25) ........................................... $ .................
• Shining Moments - Foxfire video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: $5) ........................................... $ .................

• SRC Pamphlets Set (6 pamphlets; Youth Affairs Council of Victoria) ($5) ........................................... $ .................

• Photocopies of the following articles:

$ .................

• Index to articles available (database currently being computerised) ($3) ........................................... $ .................

(all prices include postage and packaging) TOTAL ENCLOSED: ........................................... $ .................