NOBODY'S CHILDREN?

ALSO: Student Researchers; School & Work;
Primary - Junior Councils;
Using SRC Pamphlets; Peace

.... more
The debate over the purpose of Australian education still rages between States and Commonwealth. For teachers and students, this might cause a 'ho hum' reaction, yet the outcomes will be critical - directly affecting why we are involved.

Just contrast the positions inherent in the Federal position reflected in Lynne Kosky and Terry Kennedy's article in this issue (...) in order to maximise the talents of the nation's youth and to improve our national economic competitiveness... in order to both compete internationally in an economic sense and to have a flexible workforce ..") with that expressed by Colin Goodwin in The Age (31 March): "Schools exist to meet the needs of students for initiation into a wide range of intrinsically worthwhile activities that focus on enhancing intellect and imagination, cultivating taste and feeling, improving physical well-being and developing life-promoting relationships. An extrinsic consequence (not intrinsic purpose) of such initiation is a young person's preparedness to pursue a job, career, or profession."

It is an important debate! And being so, it must be a debate that is open and accessible all - including students. We cannot assume that the debate is over.

SURVEY

The centre pages of the last issue of Connect were our survey about this newsletter - what you think of it, where it's going, some basic dilemmas. Did you miss it?

We want to hear from you! Please get it out, fill in any comments you want to make and send it to us. Pronto!

CREDITS

The article on page 10 is from Options December 1988 - the Youth Bureau's newsletter (DEET, GPO Box 9880, Canberra.)

The article on page 17 is from the SCIP Newsletter No 5 (1989). Contact Heather Bane, Student Community Involvement Program, Red Cross - Victorian Division, 171 City Road, South Melbourne 3205. Ph: (03) 616.9999.

Roger Holdsworth

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Cover:

A young graffiti artist leaves his mark on a suburban train - from the opening of Part One of ABC-TV's Nobody's Children. Connect is edited and published by Roger Holdsworth, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070. Phone: (03) 489.9052.
When I was commissioned to conduct an education action research project in Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond, my first impulse was to establish contact with the 'experts in the field' - a local group of 13-15 year olds. This was done in the belief that young people are well placed to identify their needs rather than have them described for them, as is the usual approach for 'experts' or consultants to adopt.

At the beginning of 1988, the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service wanted to:

(i) identify the educational needs of young people (13-15 year olds);
(ii) evaluate their existing education program.

This article will concentrate upon the first phase of the project.

HOW WE DID IT

Approaches were made to Collingwood Education Centre, Fitzroy Secondary College and Richmond Secondary College, as these schools were all served by the Agency sponsoring the project.

At Collingwood Education Centre, Michael Metcalfe's year 11 Social Studies class volunteered to design, implement and evaluate a survey of year 7-10 students randomly selected from the three schools. They were assisted by five year 11 students from Fitzroy Secondary College.

The project was to become a part of those students' year 11 curriculum, their work evaluated and contributing to their assessment. It is essential that such endeavour be recognised and accredited as legitimate academic work.

In this preliminary stage, one student asked what would happen to their work upon completion. His cynicism about students being used for other people's research was abundantly clear and legitimate. My response was two-fold. Firstly, the results would hopefully be heeded and acted upon by their school administrators and the Agency servicing their school. Secondly, I would attempt to have the students present their results to senior personnel in the Victorian Ministry of Education, to be incorporated in their deliberations about the 7-10 curriculum. Satisfied, the work commenced.

In the preliminary discussion, it was decided that the target population for the research would comprise:

In each of Collingwood Education Centre, Fitzroy Secondary College and Richmond Secondary College: 10 students from each of level 7, 8, 9 and 10 (N=40 for each school) - total sample population = 120 students (N=120).
This purposive sampling was designed to gauge the levels at which issues emerged or became more critical for students. It also allowed for variance between the inner urban Melbourne schools. Students were selected by teachers on a random basis, save for an attempt to make gender representations as equal as timetabling would allow.

TRAINING THE RESEARCH TEAMS

The students from Collingwood Education Centre and Fitzroy Secondary College engaged in the research teams, attended two training sessions at the Melbourne College of Advanced Education. The two teachers and the Social Policy Officer from the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, Bachelor of Education (Primary) students from the Ballarat College of Advanced Education and Diploma of Education students from the Melbourne CAE, were involved in the project, in observing and evaluating the learning process. Tertiary students also questioned teachers on the themes identified at the training day. Tertiary students made a video of the proceedings.

The Melbourne CAE was chosen as the venue for the training days as it provided a new and comfortable working environment for all the students. This was preferable to using either Collingwood Education Centre or Fitzroy Secondary College where one group of students would feel more at ease than the other. The setting provided an opportunity for students to work within and observe a tertiary education institution. The involvement of lecturers from Ballarat CAE, Melbourne CAE and the University of Melbourne extended upon this tertiary orientation for the students. Implicit was the notion that learning is not unique to the classroom.

Following introductions and further explanations of the aims of the project, Dr Ken Polk from the Department of Criminology, University of Melbourne, addressed the group. He spoke of his extensive experience with student participation projects in the United States and Australia. Outlined were a range of projects focusing upon issues such as drug education programs developed by young people for their peers, to issues of transport and truancy, concentrating upon their aims, methodologies and achievements.

Jim Williamson then led the students through a series of activities to develop their research skills and to identify the students' perceived educational needs. The range of issues canvassed included:

- work skills orientation and education;
- human relations and social development;
- teaching methods and school organisation;
- school governance and student participation;
- school amenities for students;
- gender related issues; and
- multicultural education.

This list is more indicative than exhaustive.

Michael Metcalfe and I (Roger Slee) led the second training day where students, in mixed groups (ie schools were interspersed), further explored the issues listed on the first day in order to identify key themes and to eliminate those of lesser significance. This provided the basis for students to commence formulating questions surrounding these critical educational and youth issues. Students were familiarised with the importance of avoiding 'leading', 'ambiguous' or 'superfluous' questions. A significant feature of both of these days was the students' diligence, enthusiasm and attentive application to the tasks.

The draft survey instrument was devised by the Collingwood Education Centre students with the assistance of Michael Metcalfe. Students considered the importance of the format and language of the survey. The Project Coordinator discussed the draft survey with the Fitzroy Secondary College students and incorporated their recommendations in the final draft. The exercise was beneficial as the questions were negotiated, some having to be deleted when found ambiguous in a test run conducted by the Collingwood Education Centre students. The collation of results indicated to the researchers further problems that they had not discovered in that test run.

What has to be stressed is that the students, after discussion of schooling and educational issues, themselves determined the questions for the survey. This process was valuable as it enabled students to interpret their own experience and articulate their understandings in a larger forum and to test these perceptions against the experience of their peers. Students owned both the research process and, in turn, the results of their questionnaire.

The mechanics of the survey are easily summarised:

The Research Team from Fitzroy Secondary College interviewed the year 7-10 students at Collingwood Education Centre while the Research Teams from Collingwood Education Centre interviewed the Fitzroy and Richmond students.
The Research Teams, with the guidance of Michael Metcalfe, met at Collingwood Education Centre to collate the data from the surveys. Following these sessions, Jim Williamson and I joined the Research Teams and Michael to evaluate the data. Put simply, we wanted to find out what the results meant and to contemplate the implications for schools and young people.

WHAT WE FOUND

The significant findings from the data may be summarised as follows:

(i) The schools from which the sample was drawn offer a comprehensive 7-10 curriculum.

(ii) Respondents identify Mathematics and English as the most important features in the schools' curriculum offerings.

(iii) Respondents indicate the need for curriculum development in:

Work Education
Computer Studies
Technology
Human Relations/Personal Development

(iv) Increasing student commitment to study of science has not filtered down to school level amongst this sample group as evidenced in the slippage of its perceived importance for the older students.

(v) Compulsory attendance should be increased to 16 years of age.

(vi) The majority of respondents aspire to the completion of year 12. National data on school retention rates suggests that the cohort is over optimistic.

(vii) There seems to be an implied anxiety about leaving school and vocational destinations.

(viii) Higher Education is not considered to be an option available to most of the cohort.

(ix) Links between the labour market and the school curriculum are not made explicit to the students by the school. This should be considered in the context of Federal Education priorities (In The National Interest, 1987 and Skills for Australia, 1987).

(x) Students generally indicate their 'happiness' at school.

(xi) The factors which contribute to 'unhappiness' at school may possibly be ameliorated without involving fundamental changes to school life and its administration.

(xii) Teaching methodology represents a major focus for student dissatisfaction.

(xiii) Rules are seen to be remote and formulated devoid of student contribution.

(xiv) Students continue to express a need for the recognition and extension of their rights.

(xv) There appears, to the cohort, to be room for improving student/teacher relationships. This will contribute to an improvement in school life in general.

(xvi) The cohort was inclined to believe that girls got as good a deal from school as the boys. Dissenters pointed to critical gender issues. Girls were more likely to feel a need for an extension of student rights and the development of participatory structures in the schools.

(xvii) Respondents observed that their participation in school decision making would: contribute to an improvement in the quality of school life; improve the quality of educational delivery and achievement; enable students to face other issues more responsibly; and generate more positive relationships between students and teachers conducive to an improved learning environment.

The findings were augmented by discussion with young people at the Fitzroy Community Youth Centre who had dropped out of schooling. That the Research Teams focused upon students still in school does not imply that the needs of
this group are inferior to those canvassed in the research. In fact, their needs are more urgent, their position more vulnerable and their lives more dramatically traumatic. This research reiterates the need for more extensive inquiry and action.

A number of issues emerged which marginalised these young people in schools and led to their total withdrawal:

- access to information about financial assistance for impoverished students is scant within schools;
- when such assistance is arranged, it is insufficient to meet the needs of families seeking to extend their children's education;
- institutional inflexibility leads inexorably to the 'exclusion' of many young people;
- students who have to assume home duties for periods of time, experience little assistance in re-entering school life. This problem is not uncommon in the Fitzroy/Collingwood area;
- discipline procedures induce dossiers, labels and sanctions which are segregative rather than inclusive;
- teaching methodologies were identified as inflexible and teachers as remote. Students believed that teachers often misunderstood the problems students experienced. Whether this is true or not does not matter if the perception is established;
- curriculum seemed irrelevant to the needs of young people to gain worthwhile employment and housing;
- families felt 'unwelcomed' by the school or were reticent to approach the school because they felt 'deficient' or inadequate;
- there was no, or severely limited, support for students in crisis in schools. The provision of one Pupil Welfare Coordinator is considered inadequate;
- schools do not, through their curriculum, establish a climate of acceptance of students in different or difficult circumstances. Social ostracism leads to many feeling little option but to leave school;
- attempts at 'remedial education' are frequently humiliating.

WHAT WE DID WITH THE RESULTS

These results from the students' research are given more lengthy discussion and analysis in a published report of the project. This Report is available from the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, 74 Johnston Street, Collingwood, Victoria 3066.

A video was made by tertiary teacher education students and is also publicly available.

A highlight of the project was the report phase. The student researchers were invited to the Rialto Building to address senior personnel from the State Board of Education, the Ministry of Education's Resources and Policy branches, academics and students from the Student Participation Working Party.

The experience was of mutual benefit. The research teams engaged in public discussion of their work had to articulate and defend their findings. Moreover, they ventured forth recommendations for school improvement. This was a very practical application of the knowledge and skills they had acquired through the project.

According to one observer, Ministry of Education personnel were 'moved' by the confidence and competence of the student researchers. Moreover the issues raised were indeed pertinent to policy discussions throughout the Ministry. Testimony of this is implicit in the invitation that was extended to the students to address a forum hosted by the State Board of Education Standing Committee on Social Justice's 'Barriers to Participation Working Party' at Brunswick East High School.

The importance of the students' endeavour, the incisiveness of their findings and the legitimacy of the recommendations were acknowledged by the response of those to whom they had targeted their report.

As mentioned, the tertiary education training students had themselves evaluated the project in order to determine whether the student researchers had benefited from the project. Their reports corroborate the reflections of the student researchers on the video concerning the challenge and value of applied learning and worthwhile curriculum. What I haven't mentioned is that the students were told that funding may be available to pay them for their work. When it was clear that the funding was not available, the students were informed and told that they were free to withdraw from the project. None did! They remained because "the project was relevant"; they believed that "they were applying new skills that were useful to know" and "because what they found out may help other students and teachers".

This must be what is meant by 'responsible action research'.

Roger Slee
Brisbane College of Advanced Education
Kelvin Grove, Q
Issues of work and school links, work experience and effective transition have long been and remain a challenge for those in the public sector concerned with education. In recent years, the focus of the debate within the Youth Affairs sector has largely been directed toward the difficult transition between school and work experienced by particular groups in our society. Concerns about adequacy, accessibility and coordination of information, counselling, training and bridging programs and income security arrangements have all been addressed in this school to work transition focus.

More recently, a new emphasis has been introduced to the debate about school-work issues. The release of several government and union documents (Skills for Australia, Australia Reconstructed, the Education and Training Policy of the Business Council of Australia and the Commission for the Future's Skilling the Australian Community project, to name a few) all signal a growing political interest in education and work. The more recent interest in the work-education debate by business, unions and Government is directed toward the re-structure of Australian industry and the consequent re-organisation of the education system in order to maximise the talents of the nation’s youth and to improve our national economic competitiveness. In order to both compete internationally in an economic sense and to have a flexible workforce which can adapt to a rapidly changing work environment and economy, it is believed that a broad base of skills are of vital importance.

The skills being referred to are not narrow and vocational but represent a range of competencies which are transferable across a variety of work, social and personal situations. Those skills which have been identified include: literacy, numeracy, research (analysis and problem solving), ability to translate thought processes into practical application, communication, team work and technological literacy. It is believed that all these skills will provide the Australian economy with a flexible and adaptable workforce which is required to face the key future challenges that Australians need to be addressing today. It has been signalled that Commonwealth funding for education and training will be closely linked to performance, labour market demands and national economic and industry development objectives. Thus at a national level, a great amount of interest has been shown towards skill formation issues.

In attempting to relate the skills debate to education, much of the energy to date has been directed at the tertiary education and training sectors. Consideration of the consequences for schools, whilst referred to, has not yet proceeded to any great extent. However, for the first time, the practices that industry (employers and unions) is advocating for the secondary education system are similar to those of the school sector (unions, parent organisations). The debate no
longer centres around a classical, conservative approach to education; the emphasis is now on a liberal education shared across the industry, education and Government sectors. A recent conference hosted by the Australian Teachers Federation and the Commission for the Future, entitled 'Skilling the Australian Community: Future for Australia', acknowledged the strength of this emerging agreement between industry and education and began to consider the implications of the skills debate for schools.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW ALLIANCE WITHIN A SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

Given the changing emphasis of the education-work concern and the absence of an agreed relationship between the skills debate and schools, a number of concerns relating to social justice need to be addressed.

Questions such as the following all require attention:

- How will those young people currently disenchanted with schools have access to information and thus opportunities relevant to emerging industries?
- How will the multi-skilling approach cater for young people who are alienated from the formal school system?
- Will the focus of participation and equity be lost in the changed emphasis?

Not only does the role of schools in the provision of a skilled society need to be considered, but also the responsibility of work and the nature of a continuing relationship between school and work. It is vital that some of the current debates, particularly about participation, equity and access, be kept high on the agenda.

The Victorian Government has developed several programs aimed at helping young people prepare for and enter the world of work. A number of projects have been established through the Government's Youth Guarantee to link schools, TAFE and industry so as to broaden students' options at school and at work. Project School Industry has been taken up by many schools and been successful in developing links between schools and local business. Likewise, the School/TAFE Integrated Project has encouraged combinations of school-TAFE programs for young people.

The Victorian Youth Affairs Division has recently developed a proposal which is attempting to address the call for multi skills and the need for stronger school industry links, whilst locating its emphasis within a social justice framework.

This project, entitled Curriculum Development Within an Economic Social Justice Framework, aims to encourage young people from year 7 to 10 to develop a greater understanding and analysis of likely emerging industries as identified in Victoria, the Next Decade, the Victorian Government's Economic Strategy, as well as a knowledge of the related skills, qualifications and experiences.

In line with the concern raised in the Victorian Government's Social Justice Strategy, this project seeks to promote the issues of equity, access and participation. Whilst the project will direct attention to areas where school retention is low and thus work/career options are reduced, the specific issues related to equity, access and participation will be addressed as follows:

Equity:

By targeting this project at years 7 to 10, it is anticipated that a knowledge and analysis of changing work patterns, expanding career opportunities and a greater understanding of work related issues will be encouraged in all students. Negotiated curriculum processes, non-competitive assessment and a variety of teaching approaches will be used to promote successful experiences for all students. The skills of independent thinking, ability to
research and analyse information and to develop new solutions to old problems will be promoted for all students. Likewise, the need to encourage young women's participation in non-traditional areas of work and in emerging industries will be an important influencing factor in this project.

Access:
It is hoped that the development of curriculum by young people for young people, will create a greater understanding of the emerging industries by complementing existing industry materials developed by adults. It is also anticipated that the relationships between the identified industries and schools will continue to develop and spread so that young people in years 7 to 10 will have continued access to up-to-date information about the emerging industries.

Participation:
The focus of this curriculum project is upon the participation of students in the research, analysis, development and production of information and materials that will be of relevance to themselves and to others. The skills of working cooperatively with others, negotiating and decision making will all be promoted.

The two industries which are being targeted for this project are Hospitality/Tourism and Metal/Engineering. They are located in East Gippsland and the Western Region of Melbourne respectively. Commonwealth funding has enabled a project officer to be located in each locality. The role of the project officers is to establish and support links between the schools, industry, TAFE and local Government authorities as well as develop relevant resources.

The project has three phases. The first would involve students gaining a greater knowledge about the economy and the impact that technology has had on work. The second phase would focus on the particular industry. Students would consider the impact that changes in technology and the economy have had on that particular industry. They would also research new areas of work, career structures and training options and consider a range of work related issues relevant to the industry.

The third phase would involve the students choosing a particular area of research within the industry and developing related curriculum materials for schools.

The role of students as producers of information is a strong focus of this project as has been previously outlined.

It is intended that the curriculum materials, when developed, would be available to other schools and community organisations to increase their knowledge of the industry. The content of all materials would be thoroughly discussed with the relevant Foundation prior to production.

The project is to commence in schools at the beginning of 1989 and to date has been incorporated into a number of subject areas - Maths, Humanities, Commerce, Trade areas, Drama and ESL have all been proposed. This indicates the relevance that work can have across a number of disciplines and variety of curriculum.

The Youth Affairs Division believes that it is neither desirable nor fair that only those who remain at school until the completion of years 11 and 12 gain access to information regarding work in new and/or expanding areas. In addressing the links between school and work, this project is aimed at encouraging all young people to have access to information and opportunities about future work.

The project is in its early stages of development and when the project has taken on more shape and direction within the school communities, we will provide more information. If you would like further information, please contact the project officers: Terry Kennedy (located in the Western Metropolitan Region) on (03) 655,6358 or Geoff Preston (located in East Gippsland) on (051) 52,6155.

Lynne Kosky and Terry Kennedy
Youth Affairs Division
Victorian Department of Labour
Marrickville students know ‘About Work’

Marrickville High School students, Sydney, enjoy their Career Education program so much they write about it in their own newsletter, About Work.

The newsletter includes articles about senior students’ experiences in career seminars and programs which are part of their careers education.

Accounting, the Defence Forces, zoo-keeping, the police force, baking bread, and engineering are a few of the careers written about by students.

About Work is distributed to all students, teachers, local employers, and to local organisations like the CES, Marrickville Rotary Club and Petersham TAFE.

School careers advisor, Joe Denaro, says he introduced the newsletter for two reasons.

“Firstly, it’s a good way to highlight Careers Education to the younger students in the school, and get them thinking early about what they’d like to do.

“Secondly, as about 90 per cent of our students come from a non-English speaking background, it provides a medium for them to develop their writing skills.”

Around 50 different ethnic groups are represented at the school.

Other careers resources developed by Joe include work experience booklets and posters of Marrickville students in career programs. Joe believes they are more relevant as role models to younger students than unknown people on existing promotional posters.

Employed ex-students are invited to speak at presentation day each year, giving current students the benefit of their experiences in the work-force and emphasising the importance of school.

Joe contacts every Year 10, 11 and 12 leaver after four months to find out their employment situation.

From this survey he produces detailed notes for teachers with breakdowns of students’ situations.

Joe has found that Marrickville High School leavers have an unemployment rate of only five percent. About half go on to further education.

Inquiries: Joe Denaro, (02) 569 2444.

Secondly, our About Work newsletter also involves student participation. It is produced on a regular basis throughout the year (eg three editions in 1988). The newsletter promotes the many career education activities attended by our school students. The students write their accounts for the newsletter.

The information is also included with photos in the layout by students.

These publications are widely distributed in and out of the school, developing a closer school-community link. Students relate much better to information on careers presented by their fellow students.

The role of students is important to these publications, because they feature by having their reports published and contribute by their artistic layout. It’s also a lot of fun participating.

Connie Polyhronis
Year 11 Marrickville HS
USING THE SRC PAMPHLETS

Simple resources to assist the training of students on Student Representative Councils have been hard to find. Some excellent publications exist - Take A Part still springs readily to mind. However, students had often complained about the motivation needed to search through even such an accessible book, for material directly relevant to a simple need.

And so, late in 1987, we began to develop a set of pamphlets for SRCS.

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria had foreseen the need for such materials some time previously, and the allocation of funds from the Youth Affairs Division made their development possible.

Our intention was simple and limited: to develop a set of short pamphlets, each around a single topic identified by students as critical to their ability to be effective members of an SRC. These would complement rather than replace existing materials, would be easy to use and understand, would provide simple and direct advice and would encourage students to look further into topics by giving cross-references to other materials.

The pamphlets were released by YACVic early in 1988 and have been eagerly sought and, we believe, used.

DEVELOPMENT

The pamphlets were developed in collaboration with students from Exhibition High School, Glenroy High School and Preshil. Approaches were made to several schools in 1987 and eventually, members of the SRC at Exhibition High School indicated a willingness to work on them.

I met with these students over several weeks, explaining the intention of the project, brainstorming around possible topics and, finally, developing detailed content for the first of the series.

At each meeting, the students allocated themselves tasks - usually to write out lists of possible content or wording of sections. I would then take these, write linking statements or expanding upon ideas and bring them back for discussion and modification. Some items were deleted, some added - many clarified. The students insisted that the language be simple, and tested drafts with younger students at the school.

The process wasn't all 'plain sailing'. We started too late in the year and end-of-year school arrangements intervened. Meetings were postponed, some turned up one day and not the next and so on.

At the end of the school year, the first pamphlets were still in draft form.

At that stage, Jo Wood (who had been President of the Glenroy Technical School SRC) and subsequently Sally Warhaft (from Preshil, but who had been involved in an in-service on 'Negotiation') contacted me and offered assistance. The pamphlets went through further drafts, the un-started ones were started - and drafted, and drafted, and taken to schools, and re-drafted until, late in December, we were as satisfied with them as we could be.

We then contracted Mark Ryan (who'd had a long involvement with secondary student networks) to illustrate them - and we (Sally, Mark and myself) finished off the jigsaw puzzle of putting them together. I delivered the art-work to the printer on the day before we left for a year overseas - and only saw the finished products months later in Paris!

IDEAS FOR USE

We've been frequently asked for some ideas as to how the pamphlets might be used. The following is an attempt to give some initial approaches. We also want to learn how you have been using them.

The pamphlets were written with a particular order in mind, but this is not essential. They can and should be used in ways that adapt to your situation. Thus, no hard and fast rules can be given for their use. We wrote them in the order: Why Have An SRC?, Making Decisions, Meeting Procedures, A Good Representative, Getting Ideas and Reporting Back and Making It Happen.

1. To be most effective, develop long-term plans for the development of the SRC. These should build in time for the group to consider what they are doing, the results they are achieving, recognition of difficulties, what is being learnt and so on. That might mean a series of sessions over the year, during which the pamphlets can be introduced either on a regular, pre-planned basis, or in response to specific needs.

2. It is important (even essential) to put time aside for SRC development.

(a) When? Depending on when SRC elections are held - as soon after that as possible. One school I know of elects most of the SRC in term 4 of the preceding year, with only year 7 representatives elected late in term 1. This means that the SRC can be in effective operation...
from the start of the school year.
(b) How much time? A full day is useful - or a couple of half days. Particularly the first occasions - there needs to be time for group-building activities (there are many examples around) as well as substantive discussions - time to feel we have got somewhere!
(c) Where? Important: it should be pleasant, well set up, preferably away from the school; possibilities for lunch to be provided. All this makes the SRC realise the importance of the day - and their importance in the school.
(d) Who? Students should feel in charge of the day, so not too many 'outsiders'. But it is probably important for the Principal to be there for at least some of the day, and to structure a session that encourages an exploration of SRC-Principal links. Outside support can be useful - as a resource (skills), as a focus (importance), as a relief (gives the support teacher a 'breather'). In various schools, this role has been played by a parent, the School Community Officer, a regional consultant etc.
(e) What? It is useful to have a mixture of 'external' material and material generated in response to school-specific needs. A video might go over well (Seen and Heard, I Dream of Meetings and the Moooroopa High School videos are all useful - see the list in Connect 32). Before the day, the planning group should define the questions that need to be answered. Try not to deal with too much on one day - but balance that with the need to feel that 'we have tackled substantive issues.'

The pamphlets could be used specifically to structure sessions - one to a day, or one to a workshop.
(f) How? As indicated above, a planning group from the SRC will ensure that the day is relevant to needs, the approaches are comprehensible and the students are committed to the process. Anyway, it's a Student Representative Council.

3. So, a couple of detailed examples:
(a) Why Have An SRC?
The situation here might be the beginning of a year, or the beginning of an SRC.
Make sure there are enough copies for all members of the SRC - either singly or sharing.
Start off with some 'ice-breaker' activities. The group may not know each other and it is important they work together throughout the year, in harmony and with trust. These are also useful 'talk starters' for shy people.

Perhaps then read the first section of the pamphlet. Break into small, mixed-age groups. Do we all understand it? Do we agree with it? What are our reasons for having an SRC?
Share these - make a central list.
This could then lead to one of the listed activities eg making a decision-making map of the school. Where are students?
Onwards: 'What Can An SRC Do?' Read this section and again discuss for understanding. Prepare a list on 'What can our SRC do?' Then to make it 'real', groups develop posters either on what the SRC has already done or what it plans to do. These are real posters - they go up round the school to promote the SRC.
What difficulties do we envisage in being able to do these things? How are we going to overcome these difficulties? What do we need - either resources or knowledge? These follow-up workshops can lead into planning to use other pamphlets in the series.

(b) Getting Ideas and Reporting Back
This pamphlet might be used later in the year or when such a 'problem' arises.
Break into two groups. One group brainstorms (see the techniques outlined) on 'what are the problems in reporting?' while the other group brainstorms 'how can we make good/interesting reports?' The groups then swap the results of their brainstorm and match items.
The whole group then might read page 2 of the pamphlet and again go through a clarify/discuss/agree-disagree/brainstorm approach.
Have a clear aim from this - perhaps a list of creative approaches to reporting.

There can be similar approaches to each of the pamphlets - more details than I can include here. (Consider hiring Connect to help in planning or running a student in-service.)

4. Practise the techniques outlined. In Getting Ideas and Reporting Back there is an outline of how to 'brainstorm' and
in Making Decisions, the 1:2:4 and ADU techniques are briefly explained. There is nothing magic or special about these approaches - make up ways of your own. But practise them and review how they went.

5. Re-iterating: ALWAYS build in:
(a) reflection time: study-do-reflect.
(b) consideration of what next we need to know. You may find that the pamphlets lead automatically to each other. We hoped they would.

6. Here are some other approaches for using the pamphlets:
(a) Have them available for individual reading and study. Perhaps give each member of the school their own permanent set.
(b) Give a particular pamphlet to a small group from the SRC. Their task is to read it and report back to the whole SRC - perhaps to take the SRC through the issue or through solutions to a problem. The group could use the pamphlets in running a workshop at an SRC development day. They could 'interpret' the pamphlet for the particular school circumstances.
(c) Write your own pamphlet for the school - either for new members of the SRC, or for a 'this is the way we do it' guide.
(d) Write a new pamphlet around a topic not covered by the series. YACVic is looking for ideas - perhaps your pamphlet could be developed for state-wide use.
(e) Use the pamphlets in writing speeches and reports about the role of the SRC and so on. Local papers are always looking for good stories and the ideas in the pamphlets could be used as a focus for publicity. (It would be useful and polite to acknowledge sources.)
(f) Run workshops around the issues, using the pamphlets, at inter-school/network meetings. What is a common problem? What are some ideas to overcome them? Standing up and showing how well 'our SRC' is going, provides an enormous boost in self-confidence.

This has been the first attempt to share some ideas on using these resources. It would obviously be possible to write a whole 'manual' on student/SRC in-services (we may), so this is only an introduction.

YACVic has sent a survey to all those who bought the series. The intent is to draw together ideas from those who have actually used them and share that information through Connect. Please contribute to that!

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**src pamphlets available**

"The establishment of student organisations in all of our post-primary schools is to be encouraged, and their use as a desirable component of the school decision-making process should be taken seriously."

Victorian Director-General of Education 22 March 1985

Six pamphlets, produced by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, are essential resources for SRCs. Topics covered are:
- Why Have An SRC? - what you get from an SRC; what an SRC can do;
- Making Decisions - different ways; small group approaches;
- Meeting Procedures - roles in a meeting; formal procedures;
- A Good Representative - what a representative does and how;
- Getting Ideas and Reporting Back - ways to work with a class/group; being creative;
- Making It Happen - action plans; getting resources and support.

All pamphlets also contain suggestions for discussion and activities and a list of further references.

The pamphlets are available individually ($1 each) or in a packaged set of all six ($5). Each pamphlet is also available in a 'class-set' of 20 copies ($10). All prices include postage.

Order from:
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
14-16 Gertrude Street
Fitzroy Victoria 3065

or phone Annie Bourke on (03) 419.9122.
The producer of the highly acclaimed program *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* - David Goldie - has now made a powerful and compelling documentary series looking at our children and their future.

The series - Nobody's Children - will screen on ABC-TV over Wednesday and Thursday, 17-18 May, at 8.30 pm.

Nobody's Children reveals for the first time the growth of an army of dispossessed and alienated young Australians who are forming a new youth 'underclass' in this country.

The most obvious members of the underclass depicted in Nobody's Children are homeless kids - those forced from violent homes to somehow survive on the streets. But these kids represent just a fraction of the growing underclass.

There are up to a million other young people who have homes and families but have failed at school and are now failing to cope with a collapsed youth job market.

In some communities of Australia every second young school leaver is out of work.

Then there are the kids who find their future so bleak that they are simply giving up. Suicide is now claiming young lives at the rate of one every day. It's a death toll second only to road accidents.

Aside from those children who extinguish their own lives, there are an estimated 50,000 others who will, this year, attempt suicide and fail. Such is their sense of hopelessness.

All these young people feel that they are Nobody's Children.

The first program in Nobody's Children: No Place Like Home screens on ABC-TV on May 17 at 8.30 pm.

This looks at the massive changes in the past twenty years which have shaken a lot of kids loose from their families.

In that time divorce has trebled - and along with it there have been disturbing increases in neglect, abuse and sexual offences against young children.

More and more often, home is a battlefield and the child has no option but to leave.

A recent inquiry estimates that up to 70,000 children are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
Kids on the street slide quickly - within days, in many cases - into a world which has no ethics and no rules beyond the simple law of survival.

It's a world in which crime or prostitution are almost unavoidable - this is the story of their survival.

The second program in Nobody's Children: Making It Work screens on Thursday, May 18 at 8.30 pm.

For every child on the street, there are another hundred who cling precariously to home, but suffer alienation and failure at school or the indignity of chronic unemployment.

With a majority of schools shackled to academic priorities and 1950s economic principles, the Australian education system has largely failed to keep pace with the rapidly changing work environment.

More children are staying on at school - clogging up an under-resourced education system in the scramble to gain the qualifications needed for survival in a shrinking youth job market.

Many young people are drifting from school failure into permanent unemployment, delinquency, drug abuse and crime.

Here is a growing underclass of poor, purposeless, bitter and increasingly dangerous young rejects.

The new prosperity of Australia is uneven, missing out whole communities and many young people, leaving severe pockets of poverty and social breakdown.

Unemployed teenagers easily drift into deviant and dangerous behaviour and, in recent years, Australia has seen a massive increase in juvenile crime - particularly violent offences.

Nobody's Children goes inside juvenile prisons to find out why a growing number of children coldly commit acts of violence.

All is not bleak, however.

Making It Work looks at pilot schemes linking education directly with personal experience in the workplace; and at a college where senior students are enabled to broaden their base skills by choosing from a wide range of complementary subjects.

The program also looks at an unusual institutionally-run scheme for young offenders: the Northern Territory Wilderness Camp.

ABC Publicity TV
which way for the curriculum?

The Curriculum '89 Conference (of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association) will be held in Canberra from 6th to 9th July. Registrations are well advanced and you are urged to enrol early.

An effort is being made to encourage student presence and active participation in the Conference. For example, there has been a reduction of $155 in the registration fee for full-time students; the opening panel (see below) will be a session by students; a conference newspaper will be produced by students; the organisers are interested to offer workshops led by students.

The Conference is directed towards those currently involved in practical curriculum development: teachers, parents, students, educators and others. The three major components of the Conference will be:

PANELS

Panel sessions throughout the Conference will provide input, discussion and questions around the major themes. They will include:

#1: Thursday 6 July; 2.15 - 3.30 pm
Student Views on the Curriculum
Jane Folliott (YACA), Lisa Neville (NUS), Jayne Pilkington (ANSS), a representative of the youth network, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia and of the Foundry Community Youth Support Scheme, ACT.

#2: Thursday 6 July; 8.00 - 9.15 pm
Productive Partnerships
Eric Willmot (ACT Schools Authority), Shirley Allen (ACSSO), John Lester (Griffith College of TAFE), Senator Margaret Reynolds, Dahle Suggett (Commonwealth Youth Bureau).

#3: Friday 7 July; 4.00 - 5.15 pm
Powerful Pedagogy
David McRae, Clem Annice (Canberra CAE), Margaret Brandl (Australian National Gallery), Tony Mackay (IARTV), Barry Newell (Mt Stromlo), Shirley Randell (ACE).

#4: Saturday 8 July; 4.00 - 5.15 pm
Persuasive Priorities
Lyndsay Connors (Schools Council, NBEET), Sandra Brown (WA Ministry of Education), Ruth Dircks (ASTA), John Nolan (AHSPA), Kaye Schofield (St George College of TAFE).

#5: Sunday 9 July; 11.00 am - 12.15 pm
Which Way for the Curriculum?
Dean Ashenden, Colin Ball (CRISPP, UK), Marie Brennan (Vic Ministry of Education), Di Foggio (ATF), Michael Middleton (Brisbane CAE), Terri Seddon (Monash Uni.).

WORKSHOPS

Extended workshops - four 90-minute sessions - will enable knowledge and experience from around Australia to be shared. Some examples are: Action Research: Reflections and Projections; Curriculum Implementation in the 1980s; Girls and Mathematics; New Directions in Social Education; Primary Education; School-Industry Links; and so on. Full details are available on registration. As noted above, the organisers are anxious to encourage students to present workshops within this band.

PRESENTATIONS

Papers will be presented on a variety of topics: Student Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Year 12; Problems with Critical Pedagogy; Towards an Integrated Primary Curriculum; etc.
The school had 110 students in year 10 in 1988. Half of these were to take a role as Peer Support Leaders for one period per week and the concern was with the other 55 students. After receiving some encouragement and written material from the Student-Community Involvement Program (Red Cross), we undertook a community involvement program.

In the first semester, students participated in a training course designed to prepare students for community involvement. Students underwent this training period in groups of 14 or 15. Staff chose particular topics such as self-esteem, communication, assertiveness and group dynamics and the students rotated in their groups.

The second semester saw the commencement of the Program with 55 students being placed in 18 different centres. The Traralgon City Council employs a community volunteer coordinator and the school received great assistance from this person.

There was a great variety in the placements and this enabled us to place students with particular talents at specific venues. This was exemplified when a group of musicians were able to go to an old people's hostel to lead a sing-along each week, while some students with artistic ability were placed at the local YMCA where they designed and painted a large mural.

Other agencies included: three local primary schools with some tutoring under supervision; a kindergarten; the Red Cross; Community Resource Centre; Special Development School; Neighbourhood House; and the O'Mara Home for the Aged.

The students remained in the same agency for a five week period and then changed to a new placement. This broadened the students' experience, which on some occasions proved to be a real challenge and generally kept the students' interest high.

The feedback from the agencies, students and parents was very positive throughout the semester. Allowing the students some choice in their placement seemed to have worked well. It has also been pleasing to note some students have taken initiative and continued their involvement outside of school time.

To conclude, it is obvious to us all that the program was both successful and valuable and will be continued in 1989. We are fortunate to organise for the local Mayor of Traralgon to be present at the end of the year to thank the students on behalf of the City and to present them with Certificates which recognised their efforts.

Peter Chalkley
School Coordinator
JUNIOR COUNCILS REPORT

As reported in last Connect, students from the Kyneton and District School Community Development Program Network had a 'development day' in 1988. The students reported on their Junior Councils and SRCs - their achievements, needs and plans:

METCALFE JUNIOR COUNCIL

We've achieved: ideas on the location of the shelter shed; badges; request to School Council about stamps and branches; entered the Garden State Awards. We have started (only been in existence for two weeks), have elected office bearers and have attended the Cool Day for Kids.

We need to improve on how to run a meeting and learn to write letters properly.

From today, we'll report back to Junior Council, make suggestions about new projects and think about fund-raising.

TYLDEN JUNIOR COUNCIL

The good things we've achieved: chook shed, soccer ground lined, computer, soccer goals, pet show, bike stands, equipment, garden tools, backboard for basket-ball ring. We make decisions on what is good for the school and develop team work.

The bad things are people not cooperating in meetings, in fund-raising, grade reports, wanting unreasonable or silly things. If you listen, elephants, and that some people don't listen.

From today, we plan to have more discussions, report back about today, make more grade reports and invite Metcalfe Junior Council to one of our meetings.

KYNETON TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SRC

We have got sports equipment, might be getting a phone for students, helped the 40 hour famine, had a jeans sale, a chocolate drive, collected aluminium cans, got electric typewriters, a new computer, goal posts for the oval and new music equipment, and are having a red nose and a red faces day.

We haven't yet achieved a boys' hockey team, the completion of the year 7 complex, a boys' netball team, all rooms carpeted, more bins down on the oval, heating and we need to have more meetings.

From the day, we plan to organise more meetings, provide a report on the day to the SRC, and get more bins.

KYNETON PRIMARY JUNIOR COUNCIL

The good things we've done are mirrors in the boys' toilets, got clean toilets and introduced the buddy system. Students get a say about what students need. The other kids know you more. The Junior Council gives us more responsibilities and we feel pleased with the job we do.

Some problems are that grade 3 have too many votes, we have too few classrooms, European wasps need to be eliminated, healthy foods are needed in the canteen, Junior Council takes up too much time and some members don't turn up. We also need furniture in the rooms and a music room and we have to do something about poor equipment, vandalism and loners.

From today, we'll report back to Junior Council, make suggestions about new projects and think about fund-raising.

LANCEFIELDS PRIMARY KIDS' COUNCIL

The good things include quick decision making, fundraising, appointing action people, getting a say about the school, being included in school activities, feeling important and learning how meetings run. It's good because you help the school.

The bad things are following up action people, sticking to the point, everyone not getting a turn, teachers being unorganised, not always having time for representatives and that the same things keep coming up eg war.
Our achievements have been: a sand-pit; a rebound wall ($900 raised); mulch removed; monkey bars removed; school rules reviewed; soap and paper in toilets.

We now plan to: improve our meetings and decision making; make everyone join in by brainstorming problems; follow up getting basketball and a badge-making machine; show the Kids' Council the decision-making sheet.

Edited from reports in the Cool Day for Kids skill development day report.

A further series of training days for students on (primary school) Junior Councils is being held in Melbourne's Reservoir-Preston Networks. At the first day early in March, students from Gowerville, Reservoir East, Rosebank, Preston, Preston North, Preston West, Preston North-East and Bell Primary Schools were involved.

Students shared information on the methods of operation of their Junior Councils and on what they'd achieved. While some schools were just in the process of establishing their Councils, others spoke of impressive achievements: taking responsibility for the introduction of new people to the school, influencing the development of school rules, introducing a fun and fitness track, getting locks on toilet doors, fund-raising, putting student views to the (senior) School Council and so on.

Most of the operating Junior Councils had opted for a small structure, meeting weekly or fortnightly and paying particular attention to reporting back to grades. While most met at lunchtime, some students reported that this deterred the involvement of boys and at least one school was scheduling meetings during class time.

The student representatives will be meeting again at the Waterdale School Support Centre in term 2 for another training day around issues identified at the first one - how to do surveys, how to talk with the Principal, reporting back to classrooms, being a good representative, keeping minutes etc.

For further information, contact the Reservoir School Community Development Program, C/o Kingsbury Primary School, Maryborough Ave., Kingsbury 3083.
Reflecting these areas of work, the BYC produces printed and other material. We collected some examples, and these are available for perusal and use through Connect:

Women's Papers: fact and answer sheets on sexual harassment, assertiveness, sex and the law, participation and money.

Politics? No Thanks! - posters, games and action sheets which introduce politics to young people and show how young people can do things.

The Election Pack - discussion leaflets and fact-sheets on political parties, voters and systems of voting in elections.

Racism - What's It Got To Do With Me? - anti-racism training materials for use with groups of young people: information, discussion exercises, role plays, poster.

Censored - personal relationships and sexuality materials: discussion exercises, role play, quiz and quote sheets, facts sheets on the law, contraception, STDs, AIDS, and action and campaign ideas.

Anti-Sexism Training Materials - active exercises to explore the roots and mechanics of sexism; background notes.

A variety of other kits and videos are also available.

Contact the British Youth Council, 57 Chalton Street, London NW1 1HU, UK. Phone: (01) 387.7559.

hands on

The article on Foxfire in Connect 54-55 mentioned their networking publication Hands On. The Spring issue (#31) presents a great diversity of case studies from schools throughout the North Georgia area. These case studies include:

* student production of a child safety booklet by a grade 6 class;
* 11th grade American History;
* local history in a grade 2 classroom;
* academic advisement in a secondary school;
* ghost stories and beyond - 6th grade;
* saving the Kilgore Covered Bridge.

In addition, student oral history projects in Kentucky, New York, South Carolina, Wisconsin and West Virginia are described. Resources and current projects around the world are also listed.

Subscriptions to Hands On are US$5.00 (for 4 issues) from The Foxfire Fund Inc., Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568 USA.
We met members of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools at the small Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire, USA. This was their North-East Regional Conference and drew over 100 participants from seven states.

The Coalition has developed from the growth of small alternative schools in the United States, particularly in the 60s and 70s. In 1976, an 'Education for Change' Conference in Chicago adopted the following statement:

We are a national coalition of schools, groups and individuals committed to creating an egalitarian society by actively working against racism, sexism, ageism and all forms of social, political and economic oppression. The objectives of the Coalition are:

1. To support an educational process which is alternative in intention, working to empower people to actively and collectively direct their lives.

2. To support an educational process which is alternative in form, requiring the active control of education by students, parents, teachers and community members who are most directly affected.

3. To support an educational process which is alternative in content, developing tools and skills to work for social change.

The National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools now lists around 500 'educational alternatives' in its directory. It is directed by a national board, consisting of nine adult and nine student members, elected annually and representing three regional coalitions. In addition, the coalition holds regular conferences to network between schools and individuals.

The Coalition's National Directory describes these:

The conferences of the NCACS are different from other educational conferences in that students are equal participants. The schools of the NCACS are non-discriminatory and participant controlled, with parents, teachers and students controlling the schools. The students are involved with every aspect of the conferences, from planning to giving workshops. It is the participation of the students in all decision making that seems to separate these schools from traditional education.

As well as the National Directory, the NCACS publishes a quarterly newsletter, National Coalition News, and a journal, SKOLE. To contact the Coalition:

Michael Traugot
(National Office Coordinator)
58 Schoolhouse Road
Summertown TN 38483 USA
Ph: (615) 964.3670

or

Jerry Mintz
(National Field Coordinator)
417 Roslyn Road
Roslyn Heights NY 11577 USA
Ph: (516) 621.2195

GUST is 'Give Us a Say in Things', a group of workers with young people - educators, community workers, youth workers, community education workers and so on, in the Taunton area of Somerset in Britain. They have produced a booklet titled Give Us a Say in Things in which arguments for and examples of youth participation are outlined in areas such as work, schools, youth groups, the family and so on.

GUST can be contacted through:
Marion Silverlock
Taunton Dean Community Education
25 Priory Avenue
Taunton Somerset TA1 1XX UK
Phone: (0823) 252.089
“Peace is something students are really concerned about and they need all the support they can get. Going out and talking to students is the first step in encouraging them to form peace groups and organise various activities and I am really excited about doing this.”

Sally Warhaft, Youth Project Officer

Sally is employed for two days a week to go out to schools and talk to students and teachers about developing and implementing peace activities. This project is supported by the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD) and the Ministry of Education’s Peace Education Centre (PERC).

This new position of Youth Project Officer has been created to provide students with direct access to information promoting classroom discussion, a general understanding of the concept of peace and related issues that promote incentives for active participation. Peace Education is broadly concerned with disarmament, environment, development and human rights issues.

“Analysis” and “action” kits will be produced to act as a basis for discussion within schools. Work has begun on the development of these kits and students are welcome to contribute ideas to their production. We hope to stimulate discussion of the many different views and issues related to peace.

“I invite anyone with an idea or interest in the project to contact me through CICD and the Ministry of Education’s Peace Education Resource Centre (PERC). I believe this project has the scope to promote some real action among students.”

Contact Sally on 663 3677, 4184524, 4184503, 418 4545
CICD GPO BOX 114A Melbourne 3001

If you want peace - get involved !!!

A CICD Youth Committee has been established to co-ordinate the project. To be involved phone Sally.
This project is funded and coordinated by CICD
Youth Peace Project

Powerlessness is a wide-spread feeling among young people in relation to issues of peace. Often, young people don't know where to begin in becoming actively involved in the peace process, and are unaware of the range of activities through which they can express their support for a secure, just and safe world.

But now, all over Victoria, secondary school students are establishing groups to inform themselves through responsible activity about the issues that concern them in this far from perfect world.

The majority of these groups are student initiated and the subjects they choose to focus on vary greatly, ranging from domestic and street violence to the global problems we face in the world today.

Some of the concerns these groups share are:

a) Their need and desire to be informed about these issues of concern to them;

b) The lack of resources and often support and encouragement readily available to them.

The common denominator above all else is the fact that these groups are comprised of young people.

The main objective of this project is to get into the schools to talk openly with students and offer direct and relevant resources and advice on common problems such as approaching people with power and running a group effectively.

It is intended that every second secondary school in Victoria will be touched in some way by this project.

Empowering students to seek information that is their right as individuals to seek, and giving them the opportunity to actively voice their opinions and protests on the issues they see undesirable, is long overdue.

Students want to examine the injustices they see and hear about.

It is important that at some stage during the year, all of the people touched by the project have the opportunity to come together and see for themselves that they are not the only ones out there working hard within their small groups - when they network and work together, there are many, many thousands of young people with similar needs and feelings.

The project has been funded for a year by the Reichstein Foundation and is supported by the Ministry of Education, CIDC and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Winsome McCaughey.

Sally Warhaft

RACISM!
A Journal & a Poster

The Autumn edition of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria's journal Youth Issues Forum is totally devoted to the theme 'Multiculturalism, Racism and Young People'. Challenging articles focus on Young People, Social Justice and Multiculturalism; the Asianization of Australia - Fact and Fiction; Young Muslim Women; Strategies for Multi-cultural and Anti-Racist Youth Work, and more.

In addition, the cover story features a 'round-table' on 'Racism: The Australian Experience' in which young people and workers talk of incidents, reactions and responses.

Included with this Youth Issues Forum is a large, dynamic and colourful poster: Your Racism Affects Us. Developed by a group of young people in Richmond, this poster will serve to focus attention on what young people have to say about a critical issue affecting us all.

Together, the poster and the journal provide a valuable teaching resource - and an example that other school groups could emulate.

Copies of the journal and the poster are available separately or as a package:
Youth Issues Forum: $3 ($4 posted)
Poster: Your Racism Affects Us: $5 ($6 posted)
Both (YIF and Poster): $7 ($8 posted)

Contact:
Annie Bourke
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
14-16 Gertrude Street
Fitzroy Victoria 3065
Ph: (03) 419.9122
Students produce community newspapers and radio programs on public radio projects than encourage participation in real media and that present student research and comment to a wider audience. The development of equivalent projects in the visual media has been hindered by the lack of a public outlet for productions.

Videobeat goes some way to overcoming that.

Videobeat is a video magazine prepared by students and produced by Sydney's DSP Productions (based in the Disadvantaged Schools Program's Metropolitan East Region Resource Centre in Erskineville). The style of Videobeat is fast moving and 'newsy' in the mould of the ABC's 'Edge of the Wedge' and 'Beatbox'. The programs present news and views from DSP High Schools and their communities, for an audience in those communities and broader. The magazine is then a means to enable students to present information back to other students (and others).

For example, Videobeat 1 includes contributions from Canterbury Girls', Marrickville, Dulwich and Cleveland Street High Schools on issues such as 'student rights', 'education', 'Tailor Made - a school rock band' and 'the Aboriginal and Islander Theatre Company'.

TV news gathering techniques have been used by student production teams to present research results and interviews that are short and to the point. These programs and their content can be integrated into curriculum areas such as language, media, social science, ESL and society and culture.

The DSP Centre provides training, resources, editing and distribution, and encourages DSP high schools in the Metropolitan East Region to become involved and submit contributions to Videobeat. To this end, a small manual ("A Guide for Production Crews") has been produced to support the work within schools.

For more information or to have your contributions included, contact DSP Productions, DSP Resource Centre, C/o Erskineville Public School, Swanson Street, Erskineville NSW 2043. Phone: (02) 517.6815, 517.6816.

THE REAL MATILDA
WOMEN OF THE WEST

The Communication and Resources Project, based in Dubbo, has provided a resource for the production of local and outback heritage material for many years. Connect first came across CARP in relation to student produced stories and oral histories.

The Real Matilda: Women of the West is the latest video production commissioned by CARP as part of their Outback Heritage Project. A 60-minute video, it presents interviews with ten diverse, interesting and remarkable women of outback NSW. From Bourke, then west of the Darling to Wanaaring, to Hamilton Gate on the dingo fence, White Cliffs, Tarella Station, Wilcannia and Murree Station on the Darling, this documentary presents a fascinating social and personal history of women of the west.

The video is available from CARP, PO Box 1014, Dubbo NSW 2830, for $39.50 including postage and packaging.
Education Links

The most recent edition of Education Links (#34, Summer 1988) is devoted to student action, principally in New South Wales. Changes to education in 1988 angered students and sparked off organised protests. In the western suburbs of Sydney a determined group of secondary students formed a School Students Union (SSU) which set about organising a student strike. Elsewhere, other students formed the Secondary Students’ Coalition (SSC) and organised a large rally of students. Students from both these groups are interviewed in Links about reasons for and methods of their groups.

In contrast, an article from Charles Kingston outlines what happened to the development of the Regional Association of Student Government in the Western Region of NSW, particularly when the Department of Education became involved.

Other articles in Education Links outline the demise of the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) program from TAFE and student reactions to the restructuring changes within tertiary education.

Connect hopes to bring you further information about the NSW secondary student movements in a future issue. Copies of the current issue of Education Links are available for $4 (address below).

Recent issues of Education Links have also focused on:

#33: Anti-racist Education
#32: Demystifying Maths and Science
#31: Education Under Labor
#30: Aboriginal Education.

A subscription to Links is $15 (individuals and schools) for 4 issues, from:

Education Links
C/o Inner City Education Centre
37 Cavendish Street
Stanmore NSW 2048
Ph: (02) 516.3550

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The Meat in the Sandwich

Brunswick has a long tradition of the production of imaginative, hard-edged and relevant writing by students - the Ascolta newspaper (until its demise at the end of 1987), As We See It (see Connect 8), Brunswick: A Long Way From the Bush (Connect 3) and so on.

The latest publication continues and expands that proud tradition!

The Meat in the Sandwich (and other stories) is "a collection of writing by young people", published by Brunswick Technical School. A glossy and fat (200+ pages) volume, it contains stories and poems from 12 to 18 year old students from that school, collected over the past eight years.

The pieces reflect both the sharp reality of inner-city living (eg "Life at the Barkly Street flats" or "Na, Wogs don't bother me") as well as the flights into pure fantasy ("Wild dreams" or "Mouse Cafe" for example). And the cultural diversity of the school comes to a sharp and sometimes shocking focus in "I was a King" and "Remembering the War in Lebanon".

Copies of The Meat in the Sandwich (edited by Marian Lees and Michael Hyde) are available from Brunswick Technical School, Dawson Street, Brunswick 3056. I paid $6 for a copy, but it might be wise to check with the school about cost and postage: (03) 387.6133.
**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

Education for Active Citizenship is a report by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training issued in February 1989 (available from the AGPS).

The Committee issuing the report has pointed to what they term 'a crisis which Australians cannot afford to ignore' - the ignorance, apathy and powerlessness identified by young people in relation to their political knowledge, skills and motivation. Recommendations advanced in the Report cover the need for a national program in education for active citizenship, particularly in schools and for resources to be made available for teaching/learning and for particular projects in this area.

The Inquiry heard from 135 groups and individuals, including several submissions from students - and the Committee was keen to pursue this aspect.

While lacking specificity about school-based programs, the Report does make positive general reference to 'the concept of youth involvement' within school systems. It would seem logical to encourage and develop learning approaches that support the active participation of young people in their education and in decisions about their education.

The argument of Connect (and this was supported in submissions to the inquiry) is that the best form of education for active citizenship is the practice of active citizenship - within schools, within communities. That means an active and valued role for students in community-based projects they control; that means sharing of curriculum decisions in collaborative classrooms; that means student organisations which, at all levels, are recognised as having a vital role in the direction of education.

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**SOMETIMES A SHINING MOMENT**

In the early 70s I read about education continually - Kohl, Dennison, Holt etc etc. But for a long time now I've found little to excite me in education writing. Maybe it's me.

But reading Elliot Wigginton's book has re-awakened that excitement and enthusiasm. Sometimes A Shining Moment is subtitled: 'The Foxfire Experience' and 'Twenty Years Teaching in a High School Classroom'. In a packed and illustrated volume, Wig not only tells 'the Foxfire story' - how a small literary magazine from a small rural school eventually swept onto the 'best-seller' lists, but also goes on to analyse, with anecdote and blunt talking, the 'over-arching truths' that go beyond the experience of Foxfire and can illuminate and transform all our teaching and learning practices.

The book is beautifully and movingly written. Each section rings true and real - based in the experiences and reflection of a current classroom teacher.

I could write at length about the sections of the book - the story, the philosophy, the lesson plans. I could lift out whole sections that speak eloquently about youth participation. I could hold up copies at teacher in-services and say, 'Just listen to this!'

Read it.

Sometimes a Shining Moment is a Doubleday Anchor Book. It may only be available on import. Failing that, copies can be ordered from Foxfire, Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568 USA - for US$10.95.

Hopefully, if current plans eventuate, we may see Wig and a Foxfire student in Australia in 1990. Watch for more information in Connect.
Local & 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:

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:
Workabout (Marrickville HS, NSW) 1987, 88
About Work (Marrickville HS, NSW) Nos 1, 2, 3; April, July, Nov. 1988
The Meat in the Sandwich (Brunswick TS)

OTHER SOURCES
Hands On (Foxfire, Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA) No 31, Spring 1988
Update (VYAN, Vic) Vol 2 No 1; Jan 1989.
NIE Update (ANPA, USA) Vol 15 Nos 1, 2; Jan/Feb, March 1989.
Inner City Flyer (ICEC, NSW) Term 1, '89.

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Youth Services Unit, City of Springvale Springvale, Vic
Mervyn Edmunds Cobden, Vic
Marg Cattanach Daylesford, Vic
Bob Semmens North Carlton, Vic

Rod Maher

With enormous sadness, we learnt of the death of Rod Maher late in 1988, after a long illness.

Rod was a long-time friend of Connect and supporter of student participation. He was an initiator of and teacher within the School Work Program at Moreland High School and there and elsewhere showed his commitment to the active participation of young people in their education. His work will be remembered for its sharp analysis and creative innovation. Rod's warmth, vision and humour will be greatly missed.

Roger Holdsworth

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