Connect
supporting student participation

On Reaching 100!

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This Issue

When you turn 100, I thought you got a telegram from the Queen. Connect is still waiting.

So I thought that we should celebrate another milestone with a reflective article. How have conceptions of student participation changed over 100 issues? I pulled out piles of back copies - in bundles of ten. What characterised that 'decade'? I soon found that this was a more difficult task than it initially appeared to be. Themes appeared and moved into the background, only to reappear with extra force that made the initial article uncannily predictive. It was fascinating to see when we first wrote about Junior School Councils (JSCs) or computer technology. It was salutary to see the (natural) local (Victorian) bias in the projects covered. It was particularly difficult to select only a few materials or to reduce a wonderful and complex account to a one-line mention. I was tempted to start all over again and to reproduce all of the articles: "you've just got to read this - it's still so relevant!".

Some of you have 'been with' Connect since that first issue in late 1979; others have seen many of the changes over the years; but some of you may be coming to these articles anew.

Lost History

I've been struck, again and again, and particularly (but not only) with students, how ideas of student participation have a long but easily forgotten history. When I talk of the complexity of the projects that have existed, and perhaps are no more; when I remind people of the extensive and active student networking that existed locally, regionally, statewide and even nationally; when I point to vital resources that have been lost from shelves - in all these cases, I feel as if I am sometimes greeted by disbelief and incredulity.

So the roundup of sources and history begun by Charles Kingston in the last issue of Connect continues with this 100th issue attempt to rescue, remind and revive!

For those of you coming relatively new to Connect, we have plenty of back copies. Maybe this guide will encourage you to seek out interesting copies that you've missed. Or, as noted on page 8, we're prepared to package up complete sets of Connect (photocopying the odd missing page) for the very reasonable sum of $250 (postage included inside Australia). If nothing else - I need the shelf space!

And if any of you have a burning ambition to play a larger role in the production of Connect, note also the comments and invitation on page 8. I can feel the desire to take some time off - in about 12 months. It would be nice to sort out something more long-term by then.

Roger Holdsworth
Secondary Students in Conference:

Poverty - Some More Than Others

On July 8, 1996, about 120 students from all over Australia, ranging in age from 15 to 17 years, gathered at Ormond College in Melbourne to discuss the social issues surrounding Poverty. During the week of the conference, the students were able to share their personal experiences as well as learn about what poverty means. During the conference all students gathered information, ideas and strategies that they could apply back in their own communities.

Monday 8 July: When the interstate and country students arrived, we were greeted by some of the Student Committee members who all had big bright smiles. The students who arrived on Monday morning were able to visit the Melbourne Zoo. As we arrived on campus, we saw it was a huge place. We were then given the key to our rooms and even though we were pointed in the right direction, some still managed to get lost. An evening tour of the Melbourne lights confronted interstate students with the reality of the typical winter weather that makes Melbourne such a national joke. We saw the lights and passed sights such as Parliament House and Flinders Station by travelling on a double tram. For some of the students travelling on a tram was a new experience. Throughout the first day we all met new people from other places. After the trip we all proceeded to our rooms for a relatively early night.

Tuesday 9 July: After an early start to the day for the interstate and country students, the local Melbourne students arrived. During this time people interacted with each other making more friends. Our first lecture theatre was easily found by all as we were directed by signs saying 'this way to the Lyle Lecture Theatre'. Some students from the Sacred Heart College presented a short, dynamic piece of drama to open the conference. Following the presentation The Most Reverend Peter Hollingworth addressed us. He held the audience's full concentration for his entire speech about his personal experiences of poverty. After the lecture, we separated into small groups where we were able to discuss the morning session. Following lunch the student body went on our chosen tour. After the short delay on the buses arrival to the college we left on our tours, which the majority of students thoroughly enjoyed. Following yet another meal we had our small group session and then a mingle session. Many students escaped to their rooms for some quiet time for a much needed break. Tuesday night for all was relatively late.

Wednesday 10 July: The majority of students had a later breakfast than Tuesday morning, opting for a little more sleep after a late night. In the first session Basile Varghese who is a very experienced person in many different areas such as Education, Religion and Social Issues spoke to us about poverty in general. His speech was inspiring, informative and definitely interesting. You could not only relate to what he was saying to poverty but also to other social issues. Following a slight defrost in front of the fire we proceeded to one of the many issue groups. The majority of the students enjoyed their groups however we were only able to learn a small part because of the short time. In these groups we heard about facts on the issue as well as personal experiences. Following these groups we watched WYPIN, a youth group of multi-cultural people perform a drama piece of the issues surrounding immigration. After a much needed break we had home groups where responses to the challenge set in the morning were discussed. During late afternoon we watched the Bharatam Dance Company perform a celebration of the cultural richness of India, China and Malaysia. The audience seemed to be very intrigued by this particular performance. However without a doubt the most enjoyable part was when some students attempted to perform a stick dance. The audience found this ever so enjoyable. Following dinner we had the Great Debate - 'Money Makes The World Go Around'. With very little preparation and notice, all debaters put forward relatively good arguments for and against the topic. The audience thoroughly enjoyed it even speaking up when necessary. When the negative side was
announced as the winners the majority of the crowd agreed with this decision. After the debate was finished we went to our home groups, where the final touches were put onto the performances for the next morning. Following the home groups all students settled, after a chat to friends of course, in bed for another cold night in Melbourne.

Thursday 11 July: At breakfast the students were showing the signs of yet another late night. As the week continued we all seemed to be sleeping in more as a result of the previous late nights. In the morning session we had two guest speakers speak to us about poverty and street kids in general. Following these addresses the home groups presented their results as drama presentations to the rest of the student body. The presentations were of a very high standard putting forward some of the students views, ideas, solutions and interpretations of poverty. The rest of the day was mainly spent in our action groups where preparations were being made for the final presentation on Friday. Thursday night was yet another late night for most of the students.

Friday 12 July: Friday morning breakfast was a re-enactment of Thursday. The morning session consisted of an address from Dr Hugh Taylor, a Professor of Ophthalmology of the Melbourne University. Following his speech, work continued in our action groups in preparation for the Celebration! The Celebration was a really good indicator of what the conference was about for the entire week. After a very enjoyable week, however very tiring some students headed home and others stayed behind in Melbourne to see more of it. Home addresses were swapped and promises were made to keep in contact. All students found the conference to be very worth while as well as interesting and really enjoyable.

Merinda Cuthbertson

Action Against Poverty: An Active Contribution

Poverty, like many other world wide issues, requires both time and money. As part of the Poverty Conference structure, the students were split into small 'Action' groups. As this title suggests, these groups were required to create a response to the issue of poverty in eight individual ways.

Action Group 1: Group one was handed the challenge of creating this conference newspaper. They worked many long hours trying to live up to the expectation that it would be finished in time for the final Celebration!

Action Group 2: This action group was facilitated by Thomas Lee, a renowned graphic artist. The group was stationed in the Oval Wing Tutorial Room 2 at Ormond College. They had approximately 12 students in their group. This particular group was given the task of responding to poverty by the spiritual side and also their personal interpretation by conveying their responses through the use of painting and graphic design.

Action Group 3: This group, together with Katie Bowman, responded to poverty using creative movement. The topic was the evolution and present resolution of poverty. Using this technique they portrayed the beginning of the separation of the rich from the 'norm' and then the destruction of the inequality.

Action Group 4: This group wrote poetry individually on a wide range of topics in relation to poverty. They combined their work to form a final piece which combined the topics covered, for example 'Street kids', homelessness, the aged, children and youth and the unemployed.

Action Group 5: Hazel Edwards steered this group as they wrote their own stories and the group's aim was to make a final booklet. They could choose to respond comically, creatively or on a true story.

Action Group 6: Group Six were given the challenge of responding to the comment 'Poverty - is it acceptable?' through the use of drama. The group of 18 students were split into three groups so they could cover the different aspects of poverty. In the final celebration they bought all three groups together in response to their challenge.

Action Group 7: This action group was facilitated by Graeme Leak. They were given the task of producing a musical performance for the final presentation. Their group had approximately 10 students with many coming from interstate.

Action Group 8: Group 8 had the privilege of being facilitated by Paul Pritchard. Their group was situated in the Lecture theatre, near the conference office in Ormond College. This group was given the challenging task of designing a publicity/lobbying campaign that would effect some change in our community attitudes and responses to the many faces of poverty. Their lobbying campaign had to contain personality and inspiration so that the general public would take notice.

Flight Against Poverty: The Video

In recognition of the United Nations 1996 International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, young people from across Australia gathered to discover for themselves the meaning of poverty.

Their ideas and views culminate in a final exciting performance of innovative, creative expression.

The VHS video of the Conference is available for $35 (including postage and handling, but orders must be accompanied by a tax exemption form) from:

Albert Street Productions
18 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 3065
Phone: (03) 9417 7800; Fax: (03) 9419 8959

These reports are taken from Flight Against Poverty, the conference paper put together by one group of students attending the Poverty - Some More Than Others National Conference, held at Ormond College, Melbourne, 8-12 July 1996.

Further information and copies of the paper are available from Jenny Sharwood, 1/4 Swayne Street, Balwyn North Vic 3104
Phone: (03) 9816 4786 (h); (03) 9830 1388 (school)
Futures....

From the 14-18 July, 100 seventeen year old young adults gathered in Sydney for the inaugural Youth Futures Forum. The youth forum was organised by the Australian Commission for the Future, with funding from the National Bank and Triple J. I was flown from Central Queensland, whilst other participants were flown from all over Australia. Sessions were conducted at the Macquarie University and we lived on campus.

Focus for the forum was the future, providing participants with the opportunity to have their views heard on issues that related to young people, as well as providing an opportunity to communicate their ideas to politicians and decision makers.

During the week, sessions were held where prominent politicians and business people spoke. These included:

- Cheryl Kernot, the leader of the Australian Democrats;
- John Faulkner, the leader of the Opposition in the Senate and the shadow minister for Social Security;
- Kathy Baille, Editor of Rolling Stone magazine;
- Steven Outtrim, the Chief Executive Officer and founder of Sausage Software; and
- John Button, Chairman of the Australian Commission for the Future.

They presented their views for the future. These formed the basis for subsequent workshop sessions in which participants discussed, debated, negotiated, argued heatedly and sometimes reached consensus on these issues.

As well, Triple J's Helen Raiser and Mikey Robins visited and entertained and amused everybody with their antics.

Topics which were discussed with a futures perspectives included:

- Technology
- Environment
- Medicine and health
- Government
- Education
- Immigration
- Multiculturalism
- Unresolved issues such as Abortion, Homosexual rights etc.

We were fortunate to have the Prime Minister John Howard make time in his busy schedule to come to the forum and address us, such importance did he place on this forum. It was disappointing to note that the majority of media coverage of this event focused on the eviction of a rowdy university student, trying to get his point across to the Prime Minister. The student was not actually a participant at the forum. I guess that this highlights one of the reasons why I believe forums such as this are important and why I wanted to be involved. I believe that we are manipulated by the media, who decide what we see and hear in news reports by their choices of items, how they are presented, and which items they choose not to report on.

For those of you that think the Youth Forum sounds boring, I have to tell you that it wasn't. It gave me the chance to do all the above, as well as meet a variety of people from all walks of life, from all around Australia, and to make good friends.

Hopefully this forum will be held annually. This will provide others with an opportunity to attend such a conference.

Hamish Hughes, Year 12, Rockhampton State High School

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Hamish was one of 100 young people chosen to attend the forum from over 700 applicants. His selection was based on the following 200 word application to attend the Youth Futures Forum.

**A statement on the future**

The future could be considered in one of three ways: a possible future, a probable future or a preferred future. It could be said that as a seventeen year old, I have little control over my short-term preferred future as I am dependent on my parents, have no say in the government of this country, and rely on the consideration of other people to make the right decisions on matters that influence my future life.

The probable future brings with it similar concerns to those which currently exist: pollution, escalating crime rates, disease, blatant consumerism, increasing teenage drug usage, and further separation of groups which have or have not resources and money.

My vision for a preferred future includes three items:

- greater access to technology for all, including the Internet, which will enable information to be available and communication instantaneous. This could include cyber classrooms, joining national and international students and fostering greater understanding. It must include the use of all technological advances for the good of all;
- greater understanding of the needs of young people by establishing ways by which the government accesses their opinions by using technology. It must be acknowledged that the opinions of minorities will not always prevail, but they must be heard if the problems of youth are to be overcome;
- better interpersonal skills to address relationship problems and the acceptance of difference.

Hamish Hughes
Year 12, Rockhampton State High School

August 1996
Young people staking their claim

active citizenship
youth culture & diversity
an equal share of resources

30th September - 2nd October 1996

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (City Campus)

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Phone: (049) 25 2624; Fax: (049) 25 2641; Email: 100405.605@compuserve.com

Connect 100:
Starting Connect

Why did Connect start?

There were a couple of reasons in late 1979 leading to the production of the first issue of Connect - strictly on a trial basis.

The first reason was as a way of meeting continuing requests for practical information. At that stage, I was teaching at Lynall Hall Community School in Brunswick (in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne). I’d been involved with the development of a cross-age tutoring program at Brunswick Girls High School, was still part of the regular publication of Ascolta (a multilingual community newspaper published by primary and secondary students), was just starting to get interested in student production of community radio, and was part of a network of schools developing negotiated curriculum approaches through to year 12 (including the STC Group). Requests for information on these and other matters, led me to realise that I’d accumulated a wealth of materials that were being found by others to be valuable, and that these should be shared in a more systematic way.

The second reason grew out of my attendance, with an Ascolta student, at the 1979 National Workshop of Cultural Journalism Projects (organised by Foxfire, and held in St Louis, Missouri). We visited education projects throughout the USA, and collected materials, including copies of the Hands On newsletter published by the teacher outreach section of Foxfire. That impressed upon me material and lists I had collected. The response was so immediately positive that Connect was fated to continue, with articles contributed to issue 2 by many others. At the start, these contributors were mainly teachers, writing about their project experiences, but by issue 3, students were also writing about their schools.

The following overview provides some glimpses - 10 issues by 10 issues - of the projects documented in the pages of Connect over its 100 issues. I hope it is a useful commentary on what has changed and what has remained consistent in almost seventeen years.

Continuing Connect

Why does Connect continue?

I think continued production of Connect is based on a few main points:

- Connect supports educational approaches in which students have increased real decision making - that is, in which they are actively involved in decisions about and implementation of their own education.
Connect believes that students have a right to that participation, that better educational decisions are made when there is inclusive participation of students, and that better learning occurs for all students when they are active participants in their education.

Connect believes that schools must play a part in developing and supporting active roles of value for all students, within schools and within their communities.

Connect believes that reflection on practice is an essential component of educational development, and that public documentation of approaches is a valuable contribution to that reflection.

Connect also believes that increased student participation will come about when those involved in education are able to see practical examples of how such practices operate.

To that end, Connect is written by and for all those actively involved and interested in student participation - whether they be teachers, students, consultants, parents, administrators, or policy makers etc.

Producing Connect

Who publishes Connect?

Connect has always been a sort of lounge-room-table production, though the addition of a work room to the house to store back copies and associated materials has become essential. Similarly, its publication has developed from a hired electronic typewriter and cut-and-paste layout, to a largely computerised production technique.

Connect has never received or relied on any form of organisational or institutional support for its production. Very occasionally, an issue has received one-off funding support for a special occasion. Apart from that, Connect has relied upon subscriptions and donations to support its publication. These rarely cover printing and postage costs; Connect has never supported any editorial costs.

Production of Connect has remained a one person operation - though with loving and invaluable support from those around me. During that time, I have taught in schools, worked as a curriculum consultant, in youth affairs and now in a University research centre. While each of those institutions has provided support and affirmation, Connect has always remained its own entity.

The Future of Connect

Will Connect continue? Yes - but the question must be 'how?'.

I don't think I want to see Connect issue 200 being published just by myself in another 17 years!! That means that Connect needs to think about formalising its organisational basis. While discussions continue with the Youth Research Centre, I am anxious to hear of any ideas or offers in this area, or from people interested to play a more active and regular role in the production of Connect. As always (and perhaps more so than before), the continued production of Connect is in the hands of you, the readers and contributors.

Roger Holdsworth

Back Issues Offer

We have a few complete sets of back issues of Connect available - issues 1 to 100 inclusive.

Cost: $250 per set (postage within Australia included; add $20 for postage outside Australia).
The first issue of Connect attempted an editorial definition by example:

"In recent years, a number of projects have sprung up that involve young people actively and meaningfully in their own education, projects that emphasise participation over passivity. These projects vary in style, format and emphasis. What is such a youth participation is often difficult to define, especially from outside.

"There are, for example, a number of newspapers, newsletters and magazines that are largely controlled by the young people putting them out. They differ from the traditional school magazine in those issues of participation and control - they make an active attempt at every point to involve the students in the operation of the project.

"There are cross-age tutoring programs that, by their very existence, assert that young people can play a central role in their own education and in the education of their peers.

"There are whole schools that involve students in government - not just the traditional advisory SRC, but participation in decision-making by the whole school body. These tend to be the smaller schools or the schools that have broken into smaller units.

"There are drama programs, poetry readings, book publishing efforts - all of which have young people active in their education. All are united in the belief that young people learn by doing and that young people can do things - they have capabilities."

This first issue (November 1979) concentrated largely on publication projects, though it also reprinted a pamphlet on cross-age tutoring from the US-based National Commission on Resources for Youth. These themes continued in issue 2 (February 1980), with stories on the Korumburra High School Flypaper and the student-produced books The Golden Shaft (Ballarat East H1S) and Bludgers (Peterham TAFE), as well as cross-age tutoring programs at Thomastown Primary School, Brunswick East High School and Princes Hill High School.

In the next issues, Connect began carrying articles on student governance issues, on school-work programs and, increasingly through the first ten issues) on student participation in radio program production.

"What youth participation programs try to do" is address the central core of those bonding conditions such as commitment, attachment, belief and involvement, and try to build those into programs. If we have schools that are continually alienating kids and pushing them off to one side, those sorts of things are not going to be met...

"Try to have one eye on the big picture - the sort of world you want to live in, to be able to share those visions with people you’re working with, to be able to demonstrate to the world at large that young people can be useful, that they can be competent and that these programs have a valued place in the school curriculum. It makes more sense to do these sorts of things than other sorts of things in schools. It’s an important part of a school’s curriculum that we have these valuing activities that make sense for young people.

"It’s up to young people who are working in these programs to share your views of the world as widely as possible and to make sense of it in the wider community."

Dr Tony Knight, LaTrobe University School of Education Opening address to the First National Workshop, August 1980

Building on the experiences at the Foxfire St Louis workshop, the first issues also called for expressions of interest in an Australian national conference/workshop of student participation projects. By issue 4 (June 1980) a date and place had been set and advertised - August 26-29, 1980 at the Melbourne State College. Issue 67 (February 1981) carried a full report of the Workshop, including Dr Tony Knight’s opening address, workshops on a teacher-aide program, on media projects and on school and community linkages. The practical direction of the publication was highlighted by a detailed article on the establishment of a school-based radio station.

One hundred and twenty-three people attended this first Workshop, including 55 students. The final session carried a resolution:

"The First National Workshop on Youth Participation in Education Projects expresses its deep concern at the lack of access for youth to participate in decision making on such vital issues as:

- education;
- unemployment;
- maintenance of the environment.

"As representatives of youth participation projects throughout Australia, we are no longer content with token gestures. We see participation as being a sharing of power on the part of all people affected by the decisions...

"Students must have access to participation in decisions concerning:

- curriculum;
- assessment procedures;
- staff selection;
- development of facilities;
- discipline;
- day-to-day running of the school.

"As we represent schools and community groups which are already taking an active part in these areas, we call upon the Education Departments to:

- actively encourage initiatives at Principals’ level;
- fund further and wider youth participation projects in schools and in the community;
- generate situations to bring people together for further development of youth participation in decision making;
- respond to local school and community needs as defined by the local school and community."

The First Workshop was such a strong success that by issue 8 of Connect (April 1981), plans were well underway for a Second Workshop in Adelaide - August 25-27, 1981.
Issues 11 - 20

Not only did issue 11 (October 1981) report on the Adelaide Workshop, it also gave notice of a Schools in Radio Conference sponsored by Connect for the following December. This grew from a strong interest in student participation in radio production shown at both the First and Second National Workshops.

The Adelaide Workshop report pointed to the "overwhelmingly youthful nature of the Workshop. Much more so than the 1980 Workshop, it was dominated by students - students ran sessions, made most of the presentations, made up the great majority of the participants" (95 out of 123). This issue also reported on the third annual Youth Forum, held at Mitchell CAE in New South Wales, and contained articles by teachers and students attending.

The Schools in Radio Conference (December 5-6, 1981) created two large issues of Connect as collections of source documents. These still provide valuable reading and resource listings. For a number of issues, a sub-section of Connect, under the title 'Radio Activity', kept subscribers up-to-date on projects and resources in this area.

Issue 15 (June 1982) reprinted an important pamphlet by Peter Cole, originally published by the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE): Youth participation projects: possibilities and limitations. This not only provided an Australian statement towards a theoretical framework for participation projects and Victorian state government supported initiatives.

The next few issues saw further examples of student participation approaches: details of negotiated curriculum from the STC Group, Community Studies in a TEAC-funded program, a variety of school-work programs (Cobden, Albert Park, Moreland). In particular, Merv Edmunds introduced us to 'Youthcraft' at Cobden Technical School, where students were then rebuilding a sports car, and later would sell it and travel on the proceeds.

Professor Art Pearl was visiting Australia around this time. Art has been influential in establishing both the theory and practice of youth and student participation in the USA. He has written extensively on the subject, and is responsible for the particular focus on the 'value' of students; several issues of Connect carried articles drawn from talks and discussions he gave. (Connect also offered a tape service which provided full audio copies of these addresses.)

Issues 18 and 19 (December 1982 - February 1983) picked up on an earlier theme and presented a 'symposium' on School Governance, in which fourteen schools reported on ways in which secondary school students participated through student bodies (SRCs) and formal school committees. While most of these were in individual schools, the Regional Association of Student Governments (RASG) reported on the development of a significant network of students in the Western Region of New South Wales.

At this time, Connect was also coordinating regular radio programs on Melbourne stations 3CR and 3PBS-FM. For these programs, Connect interviewed students, teachers and others from various student participation projects in Victoria, nationally and (occasionally) internationally, and the transcriptions of these interviews also provided valuable copy for Connect.

"Do I have a useful role? To put it more importantly: do I have an essential role? What happens if I'm not there? Can the meeting go on if I'm not there? If we organise youth participation without any one body in there, it's not an ideal youth participation. If we can function without any youth there, it's a terrible youth participation. So, it's organised so that everyone has a vital role."

Art Pearl, 'Dimensions of Success', Connect 18, December 1982 from talk in Victoria, November 14th 1982
The development of the Student Action in Education Project in Melbourne's western suburbs provided a focus for Connect issues in late 1983. Issue 22/23 (August-October 1983) reported both on the advertisement of a full-time Project Officer position to "establish a network of student groups, teachers and others... (and) plan a program of training sessions for students on participation skills...", and on the outcome of a regional Student Forum (of 150 students), including recommendations for effective student representation on School Councils. For the first time, the issue of accreditation of School Council work was raised, and several important articles published (for example, see # 19, October 1984: 'Towards Accreditation').

At the same time, Connect continued to document programs in the areas of work experience, radio production in primary school classrooms, tutoring, community projects, students as researchers, and, in issue 24 (December 1983), the first reports of student television program production. Merv Edmunds and students (Cobden Technical School) were off to America: Charles Kingston and students (West Wyalong HS) were planning for International Youth Year; later, a Connect visit to the USA resulted in several articles on student media productions.

Issue 26 (April 1984) celebrated the Youth Action Program operating in three outer-Eastern suburban schools in Melbourne and was put together by participants in its conference.

The growth of attention to the role of students on decision-making bodies was reflected in publication (# 27/28, August 1984) of three influential discussion papers about "Students on Committees".

Issue 30 (December 1984) celebrated five years of production of Connect by applauding "the growth of youth participation programs and the understanding of their ideas". As well as looking back at Declarations of Student Rights, this issue also looked forward, through an inspirational address from Merv Edmunds which coined the phrase: "Kids can do remarkable things if they have remarkable things to do".

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**Student Rights: The Next Step!**

1983 has been a big year for students in the Victorian state education system. It has seen a new government with new programs, giving for the first time real status to students and their ability to participate constructively in school-based decision making.

I feel, however, that this is only the first step. The time when students have an equal stake in the process of decision making in schools has not yet come.

Between now and that time, three more things have to be achieved. These are in the form of added rights for students. These rights need to be recognised so as to allow students to participate equally and effectively along with staff and parents.

If this is to be achieved, and students are to participate equally in the decisions concerning them, then these rights must be accepted, supported and observed by all groups involved in education, and in particular, the government.

The first of these rights consists of:

**The right for students to assemble and to discuss issues during school time.**

This is an area which is sorely lacking at present. Students need this support from their schools if they are, as desired, to become constructive, in touch, effective and equal members in the new decision-making process.

**The right to a form of credit to be considered as assessment for students who participate in the new decision-making process during school time.**

Students, it must be understood, are at school firstly to pass and progress. They hold this responsibility to themselves and often to their parents. If involvement has to happen at the expense of academic or scholastic achievement, then it is an oppressive system which will not allow equality for students in the decision-making process.

When these two rights are accepted and supported, it will be much, much easier for students to achieve a third right to be recognised:

**The right to an effective, representative organisation for students, decided on by students, in every school in Victoria.**

For other groups in the community i.e the staff and parents, this right has generally been recognised, especially at high levels in education. For students, however, it is yet to be. Students are seldom supported to be organised at the school level and have never been democratically represented at a state or regional level.

*Greg Thorpe, student, St Albans HS*
International Youth Year - 1985 - and apparently there was a national query to each state Education Department about what they were doing to support student participation, student representation, and student networks. Many responded with formal statements recognising the importance of student organisations as part of educational decision making.

The role of student groups, student networks and student conferences was highlighted in many issues of Connect. In New South Wales, there was steady progress towards a State Association of Student Organisations (Connect 33, June 1985; 37/38, April 1986; #40, August 1986). In Western Australia, the Participation Project began at Fremantle Education Centre (#34, August 1985) and the Youth Affairs Council proposed setting up a state SRC network (#33, June 1985; #35, October 1995). In South Australia, the State Council of Students began (#35, October 1985; #37/38, April 1986). In the Northern Territory, annual Gabfests brought students together (#35, October 1985; #37/38, April 1986). In Victoria, state conferences of students were held in the government and non-government sectors (#37/38, April 1986, #40, August 1986) and around the specific theme of 'Who Owns the Curriculum?' (#39, June 1986).

The most difficult thing about student participation at Prep to 6 level is for adults to consider involving children in the first place. We would encourage student participation. Those who allow it to evolve will be amazed!

Helen Button
Eureka Street Primary School Connect 35, October 1985

In addition, the PEP-funded Australian Network of Secondary Students (ANSS) was developing to link state-based initiatives, and co-operated with Gabfest in a national conference in Katherine (#37/38, April 1986). Important resources were also developed during this period. Issue 32 (April 1985) focused on video resources being produced, including 'Seen and Heard' and 'Girls Speak Up'; a later report (#39, June 1986) outlined a student-produced video news magazine as part of networking moves. The long-awaited booklet Take A Part was released in Victoria with Ministerial approval (#39, June 1986). In addition, issue 36 (December 1995) focused on projects that provided a mixture of school and work.

There were two other important sets of articles in this 'decade'. Issue 35 (October 1995) was subtitled 'The Primary Issue' and its glossy pages carried many articles about student participation in primary schools. The first Junior School Councils were described and primary school tutoring projects outlined. This would emerge as a major theme later (starting around June 1989), as Connect began to work actively with primary school networks.

Secondly, in issue 40 (August 1986) there was, for the first time, discussion of the use of computer networks to link student bodies - an issue that re-emerged many issues later (#95/96, December 1995). The issues of access to equipment were highlighted early in this discussion.

Many common issues were discussed in these conferences: an understanding of credit issues continued to develop (#31, February 1985; #34, August 1985; #37/38, August 1986); declarations of student rights and responsibilities were produced (#36, December 1985; #37/38, August 1986); issues of gender and representation were discussed (#39, June 1986).
Encourage students to have their say

ONE of the weaknesses of the school system is the discouragement of consultation and initiative. The decisions on everything from curriculum to school uniforms are made by the teachers or other adult authorities. The pupils are rarely, if ever, asked to express a view. And even if they were, there is no guarantee that their opinions would be heeded. For pupils, school life is basically anti-democratic. That is the way it has always been; that is probably how most school principals would like it to remain.

However, a Victorian ministerial working party has come to a different conclusion. In a report on student participation in schools, the working party recommends that students should have more say in what they learn, how they should be assessed and how their school is run. It says that students down to primary level should be given a say on the content of courses. It also suggests that where students are represented on school councils, they should be encouraged to become involved in the full range of council responsibilities, including education policy, finance and budget planning, and care of school buildings.

We can see no objection to this. On the contrary, such a policy should help to break down the sense of alienation that many schoolchildren have about the school system. They feel excluded and so they turn their back on it. A second reason is that participation would be a valuable preparation for the workforce and for community life at large. It would boost their confidence and their sense of individuality, as well as encouraging them to speak up and be active rather than mere recipients. Those are all qualities a properly balanced school system should encourage. One major reservation, however, is the suggestion that the work of student representatives should, in some circumstances, be considered as part of their course requirements. This is a bizarre suggestion which, if adopted, could only serve to undermine the value of assessments. Otherwise, this is an enterprising report that deserves the Government's sympathetic consideration.

Connect had not provided much information about student network development within TAFE, but this was addressed in issues 46/47 (October 1987) and 48 (December 1987). In addition, these issues documented primary school radio programs in Brunswick, a student travel and magazine project in Vermont, a student magazine in Canberra, Gabfest in the Northern Territory, the Australian Network of Conway Kohler and Eliot Wiggins) and forward - to use of modern technology in one region, and to a further radio network.

Secondary Students, an SRC at Turana Youth Centre, a video produced by students at Ballyra Youth Centre, and students on regional boards. At this time, the Victorian Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation was presenting its report, and this received some media coverage which was collated in issue 48. As part of the work of this committee, a group of students were commissioned to form a 'Student Research Team' (as a way of ensuring and crediting student input to a high level government enquiry) and their report was included in issue 50 (April 1988).

From issue 49 (February 1988), Bruce Wilson took over publication of Connect while Roger Holdsworth was travelling. This issue looked both back (to papers presented at the Foxfire 1979 workshop by Mary Shireebook Community School in Victoria became the focus for issue 44 (April 1987), describing its curriculum, cooperative practices, school meetings and curriculum negotiation. This issue also carried an example of a work contract to provide credit for students' committee work.
The US-based Foxfire project had provided an impetus for the development of Connect, but had not been systematically explained. An interview with Ken and Yelta Goodman in issue 51/52 (August 1988) provided some commentary, and Roger returned from another visit to the Northern Georgia project (and other areas) with a pile of materials that became a cover story in issue 54/55 (February 1989).

Along the way, Connect also hailed the publication of Credit and Support, provided background material for and detailed reports from the ANSS National Conference of Secondary Students, continued to document school-work initiatives, and promoted the use of a set of six training pamphlets for SRCs.

In 1989, Connect began an active relationship with the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA), particularly in promoting and supporting the participation of students in their biennial curriculum conferences. Issue 57 (June 1989) carried a collection of short articles under the heading 'Students Can Influence the Curriculum'. In addition, there were important articles on local oral history documentation by students, the publication of Unravelling the Maze in South Australia, and the training role of a JSC network in Melbourne’s northern suburbs.

The ACSA Conference was reported in issue 58 (August 1989) with a focus on student participation in the conference and the report of conference workshop on a NSW primary school project.

Student Enterprise in rural areas became a theme explored in issues 59 (October 1989) and 60 (December 1989) - with material collected through the Country Education Project.

Issue 60 also marked ten years for Connect and a major occasion to look back. Amongst several early contributors wishing Connect well, Tony Knight wrote: “Connect started life with an idea that centred around the discourse of possibility - the possibility that schools and local communities could be places where students learn to construct knowledge through cooperative and participatory forms of learning.”

“We must develop curriculum directions along the paths pioneered by the schools and classrooms documented in Connect.... If education is to make sense - if the world is to make sense - and if we are all to learn to exercise control over our lives, then a curriculum that acknowledges the value of students, that affirms that all students can contribute - now - to our society, and that challenges students to learn through a process of shaping their world - then a participatory curriculum is essential.”

Connect 60, December 1989

Two central themes emerged to dominate Connect for many issues. The first was the exciting work being done with Junior School Councils (JSCs) in primary schools. Though such Councils had existed and been documented in Connect for some time, issues 61 and 62 (February and April 1990) were significant in pulling together the training ideas that had been developed in several networks and sharing these as a kit of resources. Some of the materials are also reproduced in this issue.

The role of the Victorian School Community Development Program was crucial in much of this work, and the opportunity to share a wider view of its work (issue 70, August 1991) included further documentation on JSCs, as well as its work in encouraging and supporting negotiated curriculum, participatory classroom projects, SRCs and student networks.

The second theme grew out of the visit of Foxfire teachers and students to Australia in 1990 and 1991. International Literacy Year provided funds for a more detailed collection of articles on Foxfire in association with the first visit (issue 63, June 1990) and further issues provided transcriptions of talks and workshops, which outlined a detailed curriculum process. However, the lasting value of the visits was in the development of local projects and approaches that adapted Foxfire to an Australian environment. In issue 67 (February 1991), Lyn Leger began writing about the Nathalia-Barmah Forest Book, and her work in Nathalia became a local ‘touchstone’ and inspiration for people working in many schools.

We should also note other developments in these issues which also connected the ideas of the Foxfire approaches and networks with the ongoing ideas of student participation that Connect had been supporting: a focus on ‘Sharing Power in the Classroom’ (issue 64, August 1990) talked about curriculum negotiation.
and described the details of a science classroom in South Australia; students at Irymple South Primary School (north-west Victoria) studied then took decisive and exciting local action over environmental issues - the pollution of the Murray River (issue 65-66, December 1990); primary school student production of locally broadcast television was at the core of much of the early development of community television in Melbourne's northern suburbs (issue 68, April 1991) and this later became part of Channel 31; Sherbrooke Community School developed its swamp, and SCoS was commissioned to develop a Green Strategy in South Australia (issue 68).

With the report of a Senate Standing Committee, issues of citizenship were starting to emerge, and Connect made some early connections with issues of democratic classrooms and schools, and with the US Institute for Democracy in Education (issue 69, June 1991). We'd already said: "the best form of education for active citizenship is the practice of active citizenship - within schools, within communities. This means an active and valued role for students in community-based projects they control; that means the 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."

(Connect 56, April 1989)

Recurrent themes ... and new applications.
The approaches raised through the Foxfire visits continued to be visited: Times Have Changed was finally produced at Nathalia Secondary College (issue 71, October 1991) and won Victoria's Curriculum Innovation Award. (The same is reprinted Foxfire's statement of its 'Perspectives and Core Practices'.) Sherbrooke Community School documented the development of its swamp. Junior School Council networks produced two 'lift outs' describing their work (issues 72 and 77/78, December 1991 and December 1992).
The State SRC in New South Wales became a reality (issue 79, February 1993), and further training days were held for student representatives in South Australia's western area (both initially in issue 73, February 1992). Merv Edmunds showed that, ten years after the first articles about Cobden Technical School, students were "still doing remarkable things" - this time producing and marketing an innovative plastics package (and building model planes) as part of VCE Technology Studies (issue 76, August 1992). A visit to Tasmania enabled Connect to outline several examples of student enterprises there (issue 80, April 1993).

In an article that has since been used in a variety of training situations (issue 75, June 1992), an attempt was made to draw together information about what SRCs and similar bodies were doing (and how they were working), and to use this information to present an evaluative framework to challenge limited SRC practices. It was argued that we can only know how well such student bodies are working if we have some criteria to judge what is possible and desirable.

Some new themes also appeared. Issue 73 led with an article about a major local research project on youth homelessness, carried out by 11 students (and an update was included in issue 77/78). Peer Mediation was introduced by Concetta Caruso from Port Augusta, linked with the work of the Peer Support Network (issue 71), and built upon by the experience of the Dispute Settlement Centre which trained young people as community and family mediators (issue 75, June 1992). Nathalia's Curriculum Innovations prize money was administered by their SRC to seed further student projects - including another book and their first student-run Literacy Camp (issue 77/78) - an important development that challenged us to think about ways in which students labelled as having 'learning problems' can be supported to take control of their own learning projects. This giant issue at the end of 1992 also re-visited some of the small alternative and community schools in Victoria that had featured in early issues of Connect.

Earlier articles in Connect had described local government-based youth participation projects, and further examples and ideas were included in issues 77/78 and 79 (February 1993).

An attempt to develop a local Foxfire-style teacher network was short-lived but resulted in several samples of reflective writing on participatory processes by the teachers involved (see issue 74, April 1992). Similar reflection from US teachers were contained in articles reprinted from Foxfire's Hands On, and from Democracy and Education.
Every now and then there are periods of despair about the support for student participation initiatives. Way back in issue 53 (October 1988), Peter Mildenhall asked about student participation: ‘Whither/Wither on the Vine?’ five years later, in issue 83 (October 1993), Allen Jones talked of students as “the dispossessed in the new power relations in Victorian state schools”; and again, in issue 90 (December 1994), Merv Edmunds, reflecting on changes over the 15 years of production of Connect, talked of the ‘under threat’ mentality that characterises the scene here now ... (where) a sort of ‘us and them’ paranoia prevails”. He commented that “when schools are becoming more hardware and less people oriented, young people will be expected to come on line as recipients, rather than participants.”

But Connect survived, even if reports of international developments (cross-age tutoring in Russia - issue 81, June 1993; Russian alternative education - issues 81 and 85/86, April 1994; a French travelling school - issue 88, August 1994) sometimes appeared of greater interest.

Yet local developments also provided reason for continued optimism (a defining feature of Connect over the years). The Literacy Camps run by Nathalia students were inspirational (see issues 81, 82 and 84 - June, August and December 1993) and led to similar developments at Sherbrooke Community School (issue 89, October 1994); JSCs kept developing (see the wonderful photo of Gowerville PS’s JSC in issue 82); SRCs listed a broad range of initiatives (issues 82, 88); the NSW State SRC met regularly as an essential part of that state’s structures (issues 82, 88, 89).

In two special issues, Connect asked JSCs and SRCs to write to others about what they had learnt. Dear JSCs (issue 85/86) and Dear SRC (issue 87, June 1994) highlighted the diversity of approaches, and the expertise and commitment of students in these forums. At the same time, support teachers for these groups are also learners, and Pat Matson’s important article in issue 87 talked of learning about effective SRC support as action-research.

Other projects included the Suntex Company project at Irymple South PS - the design and construction by primary school students of a shade pergola; involvement of students in running school and community expos at the Myuna community farm (issues 89 and 90, December 1994); and the Island work education and training unit in Melbourne (issue 89).

At the end of 1994, Connect marked 15 years of publication with a retrospective look that included republication of some articles from 5, 10 and 15 years before. Contributors of those original articles then commented on their perceptions of developments since publication of their original project descriptions - in areas such as school industry, student publishing, cross-age tutoring, JSCs, curriculum, school governance and student networks.

Yet, lest we were too firmly anchored in the past, this issue also gave notice of discussion of student participation issues at the ACSA Curriculum ‘95 Conference (as well as continuing to support student attendance at that Conference), and called the Third National Student Participation Workshop in association with Curriculum ‘95.

"We are teaching other students with learning problems to face their problems, not hide from them. We support each other and help each other in many things."

(Stuart Robins, year 9, Nathalia SC; issue 81, June 1993)
The Third National Student Participation Workshop and the ACSA Curriculum 95 Conference (Melbourne, July 1995) provided a focus for several issues. Articles on credit for SRC and governance participation (the Leadership Course at Bathurst HS in issue 91, February 1995 - and later in Tasmania, issue 94, August 1995), on students on Quality Assurance teams, and on students as evaluation researchers (both in issue 93, June 1995), provided background reading for presentations at both conferences.

Issue 94 (August 1995) reported extensively on outcomes from these events: the energetic and inspiring student-led workshops at the National Student Participation Workshop; the small but engrossing 'Students - Partners in Curriculum' workshop at the ACSA Conference; the work of students as electronic reporters of the whole Curriculum 95 Conference.

Connect also attended other conferences during the year. One in early 1995 led to work with the Alternative Education Resource Group to produce a joint issue of Connect and the Other Ways newsletter (issue 93, June 1995) - perhaps confusing both sets of subscribers with a 'two-ended' magazine. Another significant gathering was that of NSW student participation support teachers that inaugurated PASTA - the Professional Association of SRC Teacher-Advisers (see issues 91, 94, 95/96, and 99).

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Three words have also emerged in recent issues of Connect: internet, citizenship and futures.

The first of these three words formed the particular focus for issue 95/96 (December 1995) - though this was just the beginning of an on-going thread. What possibilities were emerging for students to have an active and valued role in internet technology? Several articles explored students' use of the internet from governance perspectives (running an IT Centre), as producers of web pages and as international researchers and change agents. Internet access for Connect meant not only discussion of student participation in such projects and approaches, but also access to new contributors. In response to a short expression of interest statement, articles came from not only across Australia, but also from the UK and the USA. An alternative school in Seattle contributed two articles to the next issues (97 and 98, February and April 1996) describing both their school and how they provide an internet resource to other US alternative schools. We can see the internet as an important and accessible medium for student publication: it is the 'what' and 'why' that becomes critical.

The second word: citizenship - has been with Connect for a long time, but received further attention with the release of the Civics Expert Group's report and consequent curriculum development. Connect re-stated its commitment to recognising students as today's active citizens (not tomorrow's citizens in preparation) through documentation of the work of student councils in both primary and secondary schools (issues 97 and 99 in particular, February and June 1996). "It is how we run our schools, rather than what we teach in them, that will determine levels of active citizenship," David Owen reminded us (issue 97).

That same issue of the 'future' was reflected both in a critique of the way schools 'defer outcomes' (asking students to learn for tomorrow's use), and a positive interest in a number of approaches that encourage students to think about and work towards construction of desirable futures (issues 98 and 100, April and August 1996). It is likely (hesitantly predicting Connect's future) that such a theme will remain in focus as Connect passes 100.
School Newspapers: A Voice for the Students
Andrée Innes, Editor MCC News, Mount Carmel College, Hobart, Tasmania

Producing a school newspaper is a worthwhile activity which motivates students to express their ideas and develop organisational skills. In addition, it provides enjoyment for the production team and for readers.

Mount Carmel College believes these are apt reasons for the publication for their student newspaper, MCC News, previously known as The Last Post. The Last Post was established in 1995 by a group of year 12 students, who initiated the paper as part of their contribution to the college as the last group of year 12 students to pass through. Mount Carmel College is now a Preparatory to year Ten College. This year, 1996, year 10 students have kept up the tradition but changed the paper to suit the new atmosphere of the College; hence the new name MCC News. The Last Post was aimed mainly at year 10, 11 and 12 students, whereas MCC News aims to appeal to students from primary to year 10.

students, parents and staff at other schools in Hobart. We believe in writing articles that deal with issues that today’s teenagers are faced with at school but our chosen wider audience does not make this as possible as it was for the editors of The Last Post. Some articles do get censored. Despite this we believe our paper remains very much student oriented.

In the production of the paper, the MCC Committee makes full use of the college’s computing facilities. Some of the computer applications that we use include Desktop Publishing, Word, Works, Scanman and Ready Set Go! English and Art Department resources are also utilised. The production of just one issue of the school newspaper can take months. Much work and tight organisation is required.

As journalists and editors, our aim is to publish articles which are interesting to read and voice the opinions of the students. We write about topics relevant to all students and encourage readers from all year levels to submit articles and creative pieces. We take care to balance our publication to involve a wide audience of readers. For this reason there are some restrictions as to what we can actually include in the paper. Our newspaper is not only read by students and staff at our College, but also by

The MCC Committee labours tirelessly over the production of the newspaper, giving up much time, both in and out of school hours.

The results are certainly worth the effort. We are rewarded by the satisfaction of our readers and the words of encouragement from staff, students and parents. We strongly urge students around Australia to participate in the production of a school newspaper. Even though it is a time-consuming activity, the results and rewards are well worth the effort.
The first issue of Connect attempted an editorial definition by example:

"In recent years, a number of projects have sprung up that involve young people actively and meaningfully in their own education, projects that emphasise participation over passivity. These projects vary in style, format and emphasis. What is such a youth participation is often difficult to define, especially from outside.

There are, for example, a number of newspapers, newsletters and magazines that are largely controlled by the young people putting them out. They differ from the traditional school magazine in those issues of participation and control - they make an active attempt at every point to involve the students in the operation of the project.

"There are cross-age tutoring programs that, by their very existence, assert that young people can play a central role in their own education and in the education of their peers.

"There are whole schools that involve students in government - not just the traditional advisory SRC, but participation in decision-making by the whole school body. These tend to be the smaller schools or the schools that have broken into smaller units.

"There are drama programs, poetry readings, book publishing efforts - all of which have young people active in their education. All are united in the belief that young people learn by doing and that young people can do things - they have capabilities."

This first issue (November 1979) concentrated largely on publication projects, though it also reprinted a pamphlet on cross-age tutoring from the US-based National Commission on Resources for Youth. These themes continued in issue 2 (February 1980), with stories on the Korumburra High School Flypaper and the student-produced books The Golden Shaft (Ballarat East HS) and Bludgers (Petersham TAFE), as well as cross-age tutoring programs at Thomastown Primary School, Brunswick East High School and Princes Hill High School.

In the next issues, Connect began carrying articles on student governance issues, on school work programs and, increasingly through the first ten issues, on student participation in radio program production.

"What youth participation programs try to do is address the central core of those bonding conditions such as commitment, attachment, belief and involvement, and try to build these into programs. If we have schools that are continually alienating kids and pushing them off to one side, those sorts of things are not going to be met...

"Try to have one eye on the big picture - the sort of world you want to live in, to be able to share those visions with people you’re working with, to be able to demonstrate to the world at large that young people can be useful, that they can be competent and that these programs have a valued place in the school curriculum. It makes more sense to do these sorts of things rather than other sorts of things in schools. It’s an important part of a school’s curriculum that we have these valuing activities that make sense for young people.

"It’s up to young people who are working in these programs to share your views of the world as widely as possible and to make sense of it in the wider community."

Dr Tony Knight, LaTrobe University School of Education Opening address to the First National Workshop, August 1980

Building on the experiences at the Foxfire St Louis workshop, the first issues also called for expressions of interest in an Australian national conference/workshop of student participation projects. By issue 4 (June 1980) a date and place had been set and advertised - August 26-29, 1980 at the Melbourne State College. Issue 6/7 (February 1981) carried a full report of the Workshop, including Dr Tony Knight’s opening address, workshops on a teacher-aide program, on media projects and on school and community linkages. The practical direction of the publication was highlighted by a detailed article on the establishment of a school-based radio station.

One hundred and twenty-three people attended this first Workshop, including 55 students. The final session carried a resolution:

"The First National Workshop of Youth Participation in Education Projects expresses its deep concern at the lack of access for youth to participate in decision making on such vital issues as:

• education;
• unemployment;
• maintenance of the environment.

"As representatives of youth participation projects throughout Australia, we are no longer content with token gestures. We see participation as being a sharing of power on the part of all people affected by the decisions....

"Students must have access to participation in decisions concerning:

• curriculum;
• assessment procedures;
• staff selection;
• development of facilities;
• discipline;
• day-to-day running of the school.

"As we represent schools and community groups which are already taking an active part in these areas, we call upon the Education Departments to:

• actively encourage initiatives at Principals’ level;
• fund further and wider youth participation projects in schools and in the community;
• generate situations to bring people together for further development of youth participation in decision making;
• respond to local school and community needs as defined by the local school and community."

The First Workshop was such a strong success that by issue 8 of Connect (April 1981), plans were well underway for a Second Workshop in Adelaide - August 25-27, 1981.
Not only did issue 11 (October 1981) report on the Adelaide Workshop, it also gave notice of a Schools in Radio Conference sponsored by Connect for the following December. This grew from a strong interest in student participation in radio production shown at both the First and Second National Workshops.

The Adelaide Workshop report pointed to the “overwhelmingly youthful nature of the Workshop. Much more so than the 1980 Workshop, it was dominated by students - students ran sessions, made most of the presentations, made up the great majority of the participants” (95 out of 123). This issue also reported on the third annual Youth Forum, held at Mitchell CAE in New South Wales, and contained articles by teachers and students attending.

The Schools in Radio Conference (December 5-6, 1981) created two large issues of Connect as collections of source documents. These still provide valuable reading and resource listings. For a number of issues, a sub-section of Connect, under the title ‘Radio Activity’, kept subscribers up-to-date on projects and resources in this area.

Issue 15 (June 1982) reprinted an important pamphlet by Peter Cole, originally published by the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE): Youth participation projects: possibilities and limitations. This not only provided an Australian statement towards a theoretical framework for participation projects and Victorian state government supported initiatives.

The next few issues saw further examples of student participation approaches: details of negotiated curriculum from the STC Group, Community Studies in a Cobden Technical School, where students were then rebuilding a sportscar, and later would sell it and travel on the proceeds.

Professor Art Pearl was visiting Australia around this time. Art has been influential in establishing both the theory and practice of youth and student participation in the USA. He has written extensively on the subject, and is responsible for the particular focus on the ‘value’ of students; several issues of Connect carried articles drawn from talks and discussions he gave. (Connect also offered a tape service which provided full audio copies of these addresses.)

Issues 18 and 19 (December 1982 - February 1983) picked up on an earlier theme and presented a ‘symposium’ on School Governance, in which fourteen schools reported on ways in which secondary school students participated through student bodies (SRCs) and formal school committees. While most of these were in individual schools, the Regional Association of Student Governments (RASG) reported on the development of a significant network of students in the Western Region of New South Wales.

At this time, Connect was also coordinating regular radio programs on Melbourne stations 3CR and 3PBS-FM. For these programs, Connect interviewed students, teachers and others from various student participation projects in Victoria, nationally and (occasionally) internationally, and the transcriptions of these interviews also provided valuable copy for Connect.

“Do I have a useful role? To put it more importantly: do I have an essential role? What happens if I’m not there? Can the meeting go on if I’m not there? If we organise youth participation without any one body in there, it’s not an ideal youth participation. If we can function without any youth there, it’s a terrible youth participation. So, it’s organised so that everyone has a vital role.”

Art Pearl, ‘Dimensions of Success’, Connect 18, December 1982
from talk in Victoria, November 14th 1982
These cartoon sheets were first developed within the Victorian School Community Development Program (SCDP) Junior School Council (JSC) Networks in the Preston, Reservoir and Lalar areas in 1989. They were printed in issue 62 of Connect (April 1990). Because this issue (and the previous one, which reported in detail on the JSC training activities) are in such short supply, and because the activities worked so well, these resources deserve to be ‘rescued’ and made available to be re-used.

These sheets were provided within student workbooks, or as separate pages for workshop sessions. There was space on the back of each for students to write notes. Here are some comments provided on the backs of these sheets:

**WHY HAVE JSCs?**

"Choose one of your cartoons and write five ideas you could use back at school."

E.g. Because it helps kids have a say at school.

Or: We can help decide what music we play over the school PA system.

**STRUCTURES OF THE JSC**

In this activity, students were supplied with a huge pile of materials (from Reverse Garbage) and asked to work as a school group to build a model of their JSC.

"You might like to use this page to do a small drawing of your JSC and how it fits into the school; or just to scribble down a few ideas, planning for the Structure of your JSC."

These models were then displayed in a 'gallery' and each JSC was asked to describe what they had built and why this illustrated their JSC. Some of these models were illustrated in issue 62 of Connect (April 1990).

**THINGS THAT THE JSC HAVE DONE OR HOPE TO DO THIS YEAR**

"Take one of the ideas from your cartoons and describe what you did last year or would like to do this year."

**THINGS THAT MAKE IT HARD FOR THE JSC TO WORK OR THAT I FEEL NERVOUS ABOUT**

"Make a list of all the things that make it difficult for the JSC to operate or list the things that make your nervous."

**WAYS TO MAKE THE JSC BETTER THIS YEAR**

"List as many things as you can which will make the JSC operate better this year."
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Because it helps kids have a say at school.
Remember, we haven't got long to do this! Use this string...

We should mention our office bearers like....

But how do we show where we fit into the school? Let's try and describe it in a short paragraph.

Let's draw it and start with Senior School Council at the top.

What are those arrows and string for .... and what am I doing here?
Things That JSCs Have Done or Hope to Do This Year

I thought the disco was excellent.

Jsc raised money for computers.
Things That Make It Hard for JSCs to Work or That I Feel Nervous About

People talk about things that aren't on the Agenda.

Some people interrupt while others are talking at the meeting.

I get nervous when...
Ways to Make the JSC Better This Year

All JSC members should get a copy of the Agenda and Minutes before the meeting.

Early in the year, JSC could prepare a plan of things to do for the year and then publicise it for the whole school.

How about....

I you ask me, I think JSC should
News and Reviews

Visit Emerald Primary School Website! ... please?

Hi, we’d like to hear from you. My grade 5 children and I are wanting to see what you think of our site and to find if you have any troubles accessing us!

We are at: http://pbm.net.au/~emerald.ps/

How We Do It

My grade 5 kids decide, plan, then write up what they think is of interest to visitors, ie Aussie Animals, Interview pages (on the way). They also encourage and collect contributions from children and staff throughout the school. At the moment they email (or snail mail for pics) them to Craig Potter (in Sydney ... it's a long story!!) who “type-sets” and makes up a draft page which he then emails back to us for proofing etc. This is working reasonably well, given limited access of one classroom ‘net computer to 28 kids (which is also tied up answering email ... 5-10 pieces a day) - but we do have seven other computers in a sort of “mini lab” off the classroom for wordprocessing and publishing. It seems impractical to teach each child HTML editor basics when they may have access once a term. We haven't got our own version of Hot Dog and have only been up and running on the WWW for about five weeks or so!

The ‘net is also used intensively for environmental research by all our grade 6s. They access the ‘net in our library. Each child has accessed an environmental site and is about to email their study findings to various environmental bodies, politicians, and industries etc.

Greg Wilmot
Emerald Primary School
ph +61 (0)59 684311; fax +61(0)59 685138
email: emerald.ps@pbm.net.au
web: http://pbm.net.au/~emerald.ps

The Cockatoo Trees

By David Clowes and Chris Pape

ps. If you would like to write to us, we will write back!

The Cockatoo Trees (click for Photo) are a group of pine trees along the back of our school. We call them the cockatoo trees because lots of cockatoos come and feed off the pine cones. (See Cockatoos). The cockatoo trees are made up of 29 trees. The trees drop a lot of pine needles. The little kids think that the pine needles are hay (That's what horses eat) and make beds out of it. Puffing Billy goes behind the trees and all the kids race him. The trees form a kind of tunnel. Some of the trees have fairly big roots.

August 1996
Requests for Information

1.

I work here in the US in the city of Boston for an organization that partners with the public school system to create School-to-Career opportunities for youth. This means we create work and learning opportunities for students in High Schools and Middle Schools. This might look like one after-school job or an apprenticeship-style experience that allows students to rotate through different sequences of job options, to learn, observe and take action in hands-on ways (eg hospitals, banks, day care centres, financial centres, utility companies, environmental companies, etc). Then they choose a career pathway area and begin to work after school in a specific area/job and teachers at school tie their curriculum directly to what students are doing in the worksites.

My job is to help teachers and students develop Community Service Learning experiences. This is usually a precursor to work experience but it means again, tying the curriculum in school directly to community learning. It might mean students in a Geometry Maths class deciding to build a handicapped access ramp for a youth centre or students in an English class going to an Elder Centre and recording the senior citizens' oral histories and then reflecting on their own family experiences. I bring together the school staff and students with community organizations to plan projects and complete them. I also provide training for how to do this and provide technical assistance to teachers, students and agency staff.

I am interested to know more about how this type of education is present in Australia.

President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act in 1993 and this has made a big difference in the support of programs in schools and communities across the United States. Can you tell me more about what is happening throughout Australia in this area and especially within the Sydney Public School System. I would so appreciate any information that you could send to me as well.

Lara Haupt Stone
19 Roseway Street,
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 USA
E-mail: LARALINE@aol.com

2.

Could you provide me with some ideas, information or letters about:

- all the different, fun and exciting fund-raisers - also the purpose behind the fund-raiser;
- a way in which we can unite or associate families and friends of the school community;
- getting the interest of all the student body and keeping them entrained.

Our SRC at St Monica's College has been working awfully hard to get a fund-raiser to work, to get families and students involved in different activities, but there are limitations to the extent of our imaginations.

Would it be possible for you to send some ideas about what I have mentioned above, that have been successfully carried out? I would be grateful for your time and effort.

Duy Mai
St Monica's College
16 Davison Street, Epping Vic 3076

AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION GRANT

The Australian-American Community Education Grants are made each year to youth-oriented groups and secondary schools involved with people less than 20 years of age. The grant is to enable an American educator to visit the host organisation in Australia in 1997. It includes a travel allowance of A$3,000 and an allowance for incidental expenses of A$500. The host institution is responsible for accommodation.

For further details and application forms, contact Lindy Fisher on:

lindy@asef.anu.edu.au

The closing date for applications is 30 September 1996.
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) 9489 9052 or (03) 9344 8585

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

MCC News (Mount Carmel College, Hobart, Tas) #2, 16th July 1996

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

AYF Update (AYF, East Sydney, NSW) August 1996
Catholic Curriculum Coordinators Newsletter (Catholic Education Office, East Melbourne, Vic) Term 3 No 3 1996
Curriculum Perspectives (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Belconnen, ACT) Vol 16 No 2, June 1996
DECS Press (Dept for Education and Children's Services, SA) Vol 1 No 6, July 1996
Education Links (Stanmore, NSW) #52, Winter 1996
EQ Australia (Curriculum Corporation, Vic) Issue 2, Winter 1996
Equity Network (ACEE, Darlinghurst, NSW) Vol 2 Issue 3, August 1996
Let's Live (Suicide Prevention Australia, Haymarket, NSW) Vol 4 No 1, May/June 1996
Literacy and ESL Research Network (NLLIA, Melbourne, Vic) - Brisbane 1996 Poster Session
Message Stick (Wangetti Education Centre, Qld)
Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) June 1996
Orana (ALIA, Qld) Vol 32 No 3, August 1996
Other Ways (Alternative Education Resource Group, Chirnside Park, Vic) #68, June 1996
Starlink (Students at Risk Program, DSE, Vic) Issues 6, 7 June, July 1996
Students at Risk Program 1995-1996 (Department of Education, Vic) - Report
Swan Hills Homeschooler's Grapevine (Jane Brook, WA) Issue 9, June-July 1996
YACSARound (Youth Affairs Council of South Australia, Adelaide, SA) May/June, July/Aug 1996
Yakka (Australian Red Cross, E Melbourne, Vic) Issue 1, 1996
Youth Issues Forum (YACVIC, Fitzroy, Vic) Winter '96
Youth Options (Youth Bureau, ACT) July 1996
Youth Studies Australia (NCYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 15 No 2, June 1996

Overseas:

Communication Research Trends (Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, St Louis, USA) Vol 15, No 4, 1995
Education Now (Nottingham, UK) Issue 12, Summer 1996
UNIK-Base 1996 (Sweden) International database 1996

Documents

The documents listed in this column are of general background value. A photocopy is available for research purposes. The length and cost (to cover copying and postage) is listed. Please order by code number.

A full, computerised list of these documents is now available from Connect for $3; this can be accessed and printed by topic, key-word etc or simply sequentially.

Code Description/Pages/Cost

426 Changing the culture: Improving youth participation in secondary schools, Steve Wilson (UWS, Nepean) - paper presented at Youth '95 Symposium, Hobart, November 1995 (13 pp; $1.30)

427 An Interdisciplinary Teams Approach for Year 8, Manjimup Senior High School, WA - paper to the National Schools Network Reform Agendas Conference, Sydney, 1996 (4 pp; $0.70)

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• SPECIAL OFFER: Full back set of Connect - issues 1 to 100 inc. ($250) $ ............
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Miscellaneous Resources:
• 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) $ ............
• SRC Pamphlets Set (6 pamphlets; Youth Affairs Council of Vic) ($5) $ ............

Foxfire Resources:
• 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) $ ............

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