Student Participation
THE PRIMARY ISSUE!
A general 'call', a few specific invitations, a word in a few helpful ears - and the articles about student participation in primary schools came pouring in.

So a few observations:

First, it's interesting that so many of the schools interpreted 'student participation' to mean 'Junior SRC' or 'Junior School Council'. It's pleasing to see so many examples of the formal involvement of primary school students in school decision making, but what about the other forms of participation? We've heard on the grape-vine or know of schools where students are involved in producing community publications, making radio programs, doing community research. Are they so busy doing it that there is no time to document it?

Which leads to the second observation - that classroom negotiation of content, methods and assessment may be so widespread in primary schools that that form of participation in decision making has entered the 'of course' category. I'd like to test out that observation - any comments?

Thirdly, a narrow concern: so many of the 'junior councils' are other institutions (high school SRCs, local government etc). Is that the most appropriate form for primary schools? Are there any inventions of forms that mirror the specific circumstances within primary schools?

What is already apparent is that this issue is not going to be our 'token' representation of what's happening in primary schools. Further articles are promised for future issues.

One hope is that as the schools that have contributed to this issue read of experiences elsewhere, possibilities for action will expand still further. And that future issues of Connect will carry the stories of this expansion.

And many thanks to: Marg Cattanach, Dick Haire and Bill Horrocks - whose names don't appear on any articles, but who chased up accounts and sent them on!

Roger Holdsworth

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Connect is edited and published by Roger Holdsworth, 12 Brooke St., Northcote 3070
The school has five staff and 90 students and is located in a semi-rural low rental town adjacent to a town of 7000 people. The parent group is supportive of the school, with some parents being involved in assisting with school programs. The school sees the parents as caring and supportive and concerned with school policy issues that affect their children's education. Over a three year period, up to 20% of the student population could move in or out of the school but this situation is stabilising.

ISSUES

The school wanted to find further ways of reducing negative or aggressive attitudes to schooling that some students experienced.

The principal (a teaching principal) had worked with his grade 6 at a previous school on issues of student decision making. He was convinced it could help create a positive attitude in students as well as provide the school with quite significantly different student viewpoints about the school's policies. Initially teachers at the school who had not experienced student participation were sceptical but supportive.

ACTIONS

In 1983 and 1984 the program was started and extended in a variety of ways:

* grade 6 (then grade 5) students became part of both the Supplementary Grants Proposal Committee and the School Improvement Committee. Parent support was needed as these meetings were at night;

* a working party of grade 6 students was established to develop a student policy on school rules. Every grade had input through a teacher-led whole grade discussion. A working party of six students considered all the grade issues and developed a policy. Just previous to this, the staff and parents had reviewed the school's discipline policy;

* a working party of grade 6 students surveyed the whole school to find out students' ideas about school grounds, buildings, school policies and equipment. This group gathered information from peers, collated and processed it and then presented it to the Supplementary Grants Proposal Committee and to the School Council. Grades 4 and 5 completed a written survey while preps to grade 3 were surveyed verbally;

* in their general classroom work as well as in programs taken by non-teacher adults such as clubs and drama.

OUTCOMES

* The school discovered how different the students' viewpoints could be from adults';

* The program resulted in many students developing more positive ways of relating to adults in their school community;

* The program demonstrated that primary students could contribute useful insights into their needs. The School Policies group of students put forward the views that more physical education equipment was needed as well as more time on the computers. Their reflections on the need for different maths texts were also enlightening;

* The Buildings group put forward plans for improving the student toilets by roofing them and upgrading them;

* The school has noted that the success
of involving students in decision making can vary from year to year, does need to be linked back into other curriculum experiences and does require strong parental and school staff support;

* It was important that students could see that their efforts had resulted in improvements to the toilets and grounds as well as the maths texts and physical education equipment;

* There was always student involvement in projects. For example in landscaping, grade 6 assisted with the excavation, prep to grade 3 mulched the garden and grade 4 and 5 moved pavement materials.

Meg Dillon
Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region

Working Together

THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

This is the starting point to the challenge of seriously involving students in decision making. How this is done determines what level of input you receive.

When we first introduced students to the processes of involvement, we were unsure of what to do with them.

We had no plan of action so they blended into the system where there was an opportunity for them to discuss issues that adults had identified.

From the start, we found the students had a serious commitment in their own level of involvement. This involvement aids in developing students' self-esteem, leadership skills and has made them aware of school-community relationships.

Committee students now see themselves as a group within the school establishing the needs of all students.

JUST ASK THE KIDS

It's not just balls and cricket bats! Students experience the daily routine of school life. They know the interesting and enjoyable aspects, as well as the improvements needed:

You get a say in what goes on in the school.
Leah Cusack, grade 5

You can have your own opinions.
Leanne Heard, grade 5

They use your ideas; action is taken on some of the things.

Melanie Holden, grade 6

We know what's going on in the school.
Christine Hooper, grade 5

Due to the open-ness and availability of student involvement in our school, on the 2nd July 1985, two ex-Campbell's Creek students took it upon themselves to spend their correction day off from high school at Campbell's Creek Primary - uninvited and without collaboration between themselves.

The students 'came along to help out!'

Feeling comfortable at the school inspired this action and the staff accepted their initiative warmly.

Kris Browning, Chairperson
School Proposal Committee

A REPORT FROM THE JUNIOR COUNCIL

HOW CUTE - KIDS WILL BE KIDS!

GREAT SCOTT NOBODY ELSE IS TO SEE THIS - OK?

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Courtesy of YACVIC.
Pupil Participation 1984: Attitudes to Process

Pupils at the school were involved in the school's proposal committee for Supplementary Grants. There were six boys and two girls at grade 6 level. Participation was by choice. A rather loose feedback system to the class operated. Meetings were held approximately monthly and went from 7.30 to 9.30 pm for students but often up to an hour longer for adults. We now meet from 7 to 8 pm once a month, with prologue and epilogue meetings for the bulk of grades 4 to 6 in school time.

At the end of the year, a survey was done with pupils participating, their parents, teachers involved and other adults on the Committee. The results are summarised below:

1. Pupil involvement in decision making is:
   - very good idea: 19
   - OK: 0
   - not good: 0
   - no answer: 0

2. The best level is:
   - grade 6: 12
   - grade 5/6: 7
   - grade 5: 0
   - grade 4/5: 0
   - all grades: 0
   - no answer: 0

3. Pupils have opinions which should be valued:
   - highly: 17
   - a little: 0
   - not at all: 0
   - no answer: 1

4. What were some good points about pupils on proposal committees in 1984?
   - everyone agreed the children's ideas were valued and some good ideas came from there;
   - all agreed (including pupils) that pupils learned the value of equipment and the process to acquire items through decision making;
   - children's ideas are sometimes different to adults', but do coincide with adults' views, but along a different parallel;
   - teaches pupils to speak up for themselves;
   - satisfaction of seeing our idea 'come to life'.

5. What were some bad points about pupils on proposal committees in 1984?
   - lateness of meetings was the main point;
   - two other points:
     - parents' criticism;
     - too many big words;
   - grade 5 pupils should be encouraged/welcomed to participate.

6. What changes would you like to see in 1985?
   - more parents/adults involved in meetings/submissions; also more pupils;
   - more grade 5 pupils involved so as to ensure continuity;
   - a few grade 4 pupils will ensure continuity;
   - more equipment - library books, computer software, video;
   - pupils' better understanding of how a school/school programs are run;
   - pupils having their own projects.

7. PUPILS: Write what you have learned or what changes because of your involvement:
   - learnt to make decisions;
   - better views/ideas because of pupils' involvement;
   - learnt where money goes/what happens to it;
   - more contact with other students/understanding of their needs;
   - pupils view of themselves in meetings have changed/given them more confidence in themselves;
   - learnt that 'old foggies' can be fun/and ideas are along parallels - how to conquer boredom.

COMMENTS

A favourable response with these points coming through:
1. Pupils have learnt how to make major decisions and have confidence in themselves and their ideas;
2. Pupils having more pride in their school and the equipment;
3. The value of pupils on the proposal committee;
4. Meeting times need to be reviewed as nearly every response commented on the lateness of meetings.

Only two survey sheets were not returned.
A further survey was carried out in July 1985. This was pupil originated, formatted and conducted. The school has a summary sheet available for the whole school and grade by grade summaries and recommendations.

The School Improvement Plan and the Proposal Committee held a 'tea meeting' in July 1985.

This meeting was our first attempt at including interested parents and students not on the committee. The night went off without a hitch; tea was enjoyable - totally enjoyed by the 33 attending.

The business was low-key but we reported what was happening in a few areas of school life.

The students reported on their involvement with the student survey. Students were commended on their great effort which has given us a priority listing of equipment and valuable subject input.

STUDENT COMMENTS ON THE EVENING

We had a great turn-up.

I thought it was good to have tea then the meeting and video.

It was good to see the ex-students here last week.

Parents should have had more to say.

It was good to see the education officer come and see what we do in our school; it was good to hear what she had to say.

It was good because all the parents came and saw the equipment used and how good our school is.

It was good – everybody enjoyed the night.

STUDENTS' PLAN OF ACTION ON SURVEY RESULTS

1. Read survey and make notes.
2. Read survey and discuss with parents.
3. Discuss survey with teachers.
4. In-school meeting in two weeks to formulate recommendations on survey results.

WHAT I HOPE TO SEE HAPPEN:
1. Staff and School Council consider their recommendations;
2. Implement those which are relevant;
3. Assess the outcome of the implementations;
4. Hold another team meeting in third term and discuss the whole process of student involvement.

COMMENTS OF PARENTS ON TEA MEETING:

It was a really enjoyable evening and I was pleased to see how the kids were confident enough to have a lot to say.

I would like to see more of these evenings, perhaps one a term. Wouldn't it be beast to see more fathers turn up.

Kathy Davis

The night was good and worthwhile attending. The kids need to be congratulated on their efforts in their survey. The kids made a strong point of saying what was needed in Maths and English and where they see teachers could help them.

Heather Stutchbree

I enjoyed myself; the kids spoke up well; we've got pretty smart kids to be able to put their point over without being embarrassed; it must help students in their future to be able to do this.

Betty Heard

The video we saw showed the comparison of Woodend school to ours. Woodend concentrated on parents' involvement as a resource, where here the students make a large contribution. The students did well in being able to speak out. I was unable to go to the tea, but the meeting was good.

Ine Sharman

Pupils are now on the School Improvement Plan/Proposal Committees, Children's Week Committee and the School Video Committee.
Over the past three years, there has been an increasing awareness of the value of involving pupils in the decision-making processes of schools.

This school is highly regarded by some of our own parents for the efforts that we have made to involve pupils. We also enjoy a position of high regard in the district, region and further afield.

It is time to reflect on the current dynamics of the situation. It is also an appropriate time to reflect on our level of commitment to the process and the actual benefits that accrue.

We are currently attempting pupil involvement at:
- SIP/Proposal/curriculum committee;
- pupil surveys and analysis;
- grade 4, 5, 6 general meetings;
- class follow-up to surveys;
- Children’s Week planning;
- video planning;
- sub-regional inservice.

SOME CHALLENGES:
Are we creating illusions? Who carries the process? Who should? How effective are our processes? Is it worthwhile and sustainable?

John James, Headteacher Campbell’s Creek Primary School Main Rd., Campbell’s Creek 3451

The Campbell Creek Primary School, a relatively small school in the Castlemaine district, is showing what a positive difference student participation can achieve for the school, the children and the future community.

At first glance the primary school is relatively similar to any other small school, some improvements are being carried out and it seems to be average.

Closer inspection shows a close bond between teachers and students, trust and responsibilities being placed on the students and many changes taking place.

Some very innovative ideas are also being employed in the curriculum.
Fifteen students from Grade four to six are involved with the school’s Proposal Committee and School Improvement Plan; taking an active part in discussions and decision making.

This approach involving students has been so successful that Campbell Creek has been used as a case study in Melbourne and so far seems the most successful primary school in this area.

Proof of their success can be seen through student attitudes and much of the recent changes and improvements throughout the school.

The new school building which encompasses a kitchen, library and art centre is the work of the committee as it approaches for a new building made by the students themselves. Various items of gym equipment are also proof of the pudding as is the new video unit and camera now owned by the school.

STUDENT IDEAS
The many programs conducted by the school involve a large amount of student participation with the main contribution of ideas coming as a result of the students’ ideas and to meet what they see as needs within the school.

The school magazine, Community News, is also an effort by the school as a whole to involve the whole community and is circulated to all Campbell Creek residents whether they have children at the school or not.

The Ballarat College of Advanced Education undertook a study of Campbell Creek Primary School last year entitled “A School and it’s Community.”

The project was initiated by representatives of the school in an attempt to identify community attitudes towards the school.

It was interesting to note that many of the males interviewed felt that involvement in the school was mainly the role of the children and their mothers.

The children involved in the committee at the school have also noticed this point and are currently making plans to involve fathers in school activities.

After a recent open day they decided that a fathers day or p.e. night should be held with the emphasis on fathers and grandfathers’ participation.

The general feelings concerning the school were very positive with 82 per cent of those interviewed giving the school the top level in a range of options.

This year, the children have compiled their own survey to find out what the students think is needed in the school.

Some of their questions are very interesting, asking the children such questions as “are you satisfied with the level of our learning skills?”

Not bad for primary school children!

MIDLAND EXPRESS, TUESDAY, MAY 14, 1985
Yarrambat Primary J.S.C.

Yarrambat Primary School's Junior School Council (JSC) has been meeting weekly for two years. Membership is hotly contested and elections for grade reps are now held twice yearly in response to popular demand so that more students have a chance to be elected.

The Physical Structure

How they do things at Yarrambat (nuts and bolts)

Elections: A formal ballot is conducted twice yearly in each class for one boy and one girl rep. All elections held so far have been contested.

Composition: Grades 3 to 6 elect two reps per class. Total: 16 reps - 8 boys and 8 girls.

Office bearers: Junior School Council elects one boy and one girl president from the 6th grade reps. They chair and take minutes at alternate meetings.

Term: Half year (previously full year but students wanted more chances to participate). Cannot be re-elected for a second term.

Meeting place: One meeting of the Junior School Council reps is in the library. The alternate meeting is conducted in a classroom with the class as audience.

Meeting procedure: Reasonably formal - hands raised to speak. Chair indicates speaking order. Motions put and voted on if necessary. Minutes taken by non-chairing president in 'key words' to indicate matters discussed.

Representing/Reporting back: Reps report back to their own grade each week in class time. Students raise issues for discussion at next meeting. Opinion canvassed, votes taken. Grade 6 reps report back to grades prep, 1 and 2 reps report to whole school at assemblies.

Meeting Time: Half-hour weekly in school time.

Teacher involvement: Principal attends most meetings in advisory capacity. Alternate meetings held in class; teachers form part of audience. (Previously not included, but curious.)
The Political Structure

Issues discussed: Issues, complaints raised by students in reporting back sessions or raised by the JSC and taken back to classes. For example, a number of preps complained sand was being removed from the sand pit; bullying in the playground; broken or missing equipment; roster for computer time.

Issues - processed: Decisions/recommendations communicated to the Principal or School Council. Constant access to Principal. Regular reports made by grade 6 reps to School Council.

Fund raising: Activities initiated and organised by students. Students decide how money will be spent. Control grade 6 fete money - learn to budget.

Role: Meet weekly "to discuss all aspects of school programs, organisation and children's requests" (school newsletter). Organise and conduct discussion of student opinion and make recommendations to Principal or School Council.

Yarrambat past and present Junior School Councillors are writing an account of what they do on their Council and why. The account is aimed at students in their own school and other primary schools and other interested people.

This work is assisted by the Curriculum Partnership Project and will be made available when complete. Watch this space for future developments!

Dorothy Reading
Curriculum Partnership Project
C/o VIOSSO, 1st fl, 225 Bourke St., Melbourne 3000
Specimen Hill Primary

Each year at Specimen Hill Primary School, grade 6 enjoy a five-day excursion on the 'Train of Knowledge'. The rationale for this excursion is twofold:

1. To give children the experience of seeing parts of Victoria not usually visited unless to visit relatives, and therefore to appreciate the industry, agriculture, tourism etc that supports the economic structure of that area.

2. To allow children to mix socially with each other and children from another school in a 'live-in' situation.

In order to qualify for this tour, our policy is that the grade 6 must raise as much money as possible towards the $135 fare and not expect a handout. We believe that the personal growth and self development that results from this endeavour far exceeds the trip itself. In fact, the tour is a very minor part.

Grade 6 are organised into committees whose responsibility is to arrange the particular fund-raising activity of their choice, and see it through its development and planning, to the eventual counting and banking of the money. So far we have had:

* the trash and treasure committee;
* the hot dog day committee;
* the 'disco' committee;
* the cake stall committee;
* the spaghetti lunch committee;
* the sausage sizzle committee;
* the car-wash committee; etc.

Each committee has had meetings, written communiques to firms to order goods, to advertise or to request assistance. They have had to use the telephone, respectfully and intelligently. They must work with each other, other staff, and sometimes antagonistic members of the public.

Half the amount raised is handed back to the school, the other half subsidises their fares.

Much development has been noticed already. Children, who were once loath to take on responsibility have learned to persevere and carry a plan through. Others have learned to support the efforts of another committee while working on their own.

They are finding it difficult to hand over hard earned cash, but that is part of their development, in that they are working to benefit others not just themselves.

I submit this to you, not because it is new - I know it is not - but because I believe in the concepts and self development this philosophy highlights and because I want the efforts of these children to be noticed.

Lois Angus, Acting Principal
Specimen Hill Primary School
Inglewood St., Golden Square 3555

North Melbourne Primary

'The North Melbourne Primary School has a very well organised Junior Council,' said Mrs Anderson (teacher in charge of the SRC).

The school has had an active student council for three years now. Teachers in the school thought the students should have a say in the running of their school.

Meetings are every second Wednesday and all the twenty members from the Junior Council attend. Two teachers attend although they do not run the meeting.

The students on Junior Council were approved by majority vote and two representatives (a girl and a boy) were taken from each grade.

The children believe that it is important to be in the council and that they are proud to serve their school and fellow students. When I asked them what they thought about the Council and their role, this is what they had to say: "It's fairly interesting," said Steven. Monique commented, "I like helping my friends; it's a good chance for decision-making!" Marina: "Being on the Council makes me feel proud because I am representing the students of North Melbourne Primary School."

The Junior Council has arranged many fundraising projects to buy equipment for the school.

reported by Bradley Newton, year 9
McKinnon High School

- reprinted from Broadly Speaking No 4
South-Central Region Student Press Project
Kensington Primary

At Kensington Primary School, two students from each homeroom attended a meeting about discipline issues.

Some students had trouble with teachers who always use big words that students don't understand. For example - a teacher told a student to apologise. The grade 3 student couldn't understand what 'apologise' meant, so she was punished.

Students decided to tell the teachers what they like: teachers who are fair, teachers who help, and being given the chance to have things explained and then if they break the rules they should be given a fair punishment.

Students wanted to know which punishment went with which rules. So the teachers and the parents rewrote the rules and punishments. For example: if any of the students were late to school without having a good reason, they would have a warning and then make up the time they missed after school or at recess. Also, if students don't do homework they would have detention or miss out on something they liked doing.

In the new policy, students all have a chance to put forward their views on discipline.

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Redan Primary: THE SCHOOL THAT LISTENS

BACKGROUND

During 1984, Redan Primary School in Sebastapol (Ballarat, Vic) conducted an evaluation of school communication between home, teachers and children. Children who were interviewed during this process indicated a strong desire to have a mechanism whereby their concerns and viewpoints would be collectively expressed in a wider situation than at class level. A course undertaken by all staff in the first half of 1985 ('Systematic Training for Effective Teaching') highlighted the need for improving pupils' self-esteem and feeling of 'belonging' to the school. It was decided to embark on the formation of a Pupils' Council at the school.

IMPLEMENTATION

Each class elected a member to serve on Pupils' Council. (It was felt that preps were not ready for involvement through a member on the Council, however all other year levels from 1 to 6 were represented - a total of 12 members.)

Meetings were arranged fortnightly, generally during the last hour of the school day.

It was agreed that membership would change for the second half of the year, to give other pupils the opportunity of serving on the Council. Meetings are always held with the Principal and Deputy Principal and, at this stage, they are chaired by the Principal.

Members have meetings with their class to agree on items to be brought forward and to discuss proposals made by Pupils' Council. Notes are taken of each meeting and given to each member to remind them of the outcome of each meeting. These notes also serve the purpose of informing staff of decisions made. The School Council in its budget provided a grant of money to the Pupils' Council to help pay for the implementation of pupils' suggestions.

The Pupils' Council has been very active in its first year, bringing forward suggestions and making decisions on a large number of matters generally related to equipment, playground, school maintenance, canteen, burial of time capsule and a project to be carried out in term 3 - painting a mural.

Considering this is the first year for Pupils' Council, I believe there have been benefits to the school pupils as a whole and to the individual members serving on the Council. Further development might be:

(i) meetings being chaired by one of pupils, with Principal, Deputy and staff present;

(ii) matters relating to the school curriculum being considered - class activities, discipline etc.

Support by class teachers (willingness to hold 'class meetings') has been an integral feature of our project.

Some thoughts of current Pupils' Council members are:
Redan Primary School has started a Pupils' Council. It's a program where the children of grades 1 to 6 get a say in the future of Redan.

Gayle McKenzie, grade 3

The Pupils' Council is an organisation which listens to the pupils' point of view. The pupils give us ideas and we act upon them by discussing them at our Pupils' Council meetings which are held every two weeks.

Ronald Thoge, grade 5

Three people were nominated - they voted for the one they wanted to be the pupil council member. We talk about things to make the school better for us. The things we talk about are the future planting of trees for shade, painting murals etc.

Susan Burnett, grade 5

The Pupils' Council is a good thing because it gives the children a say in things that could be improved. The pupil council members are chosen by their classmates. So far we have planted some new trees around the school, obtained a new outdoor clock, planted lawn seed. We go to the meetings every fortnight.

Robbie Henderson and Kate Ritchie, grade 6

We have a Pupils' Council because it is a good way for children in the school to have their say in the running of the school. Already the Pupils' Council has achieved things that the pupils are glad about. If this keeps on going, the school will be a brighter place in the future.

Glenn Douglas and Mark Howlett, grade 6

John Corbett, Deputy Principal,
Redan Primary School, Hertford St, Sebastopol 3356

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Back: Kellie Farquhar, Melanie McCarthy, Matthew Bird, Kate Ritchie, Mark Howlett, Cory Woodyatt, Kellie Hopkins.


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We have a Junior School Council in operation. There are seven members, one Chairperson and one Secretary. We are currently trying to improve the state of the children's toilets and other dangers. After all our meetings we have a discussion with our Headmaster, Mr C Smith. Sometimes he does something about our problems.

We have had discussions with other grades. If you have any addresses of other Junior School Councils, we would like to meet with them or write to them.

There are 94 students at our School. On the Junior School Council are representatives from grade 6. We feel that a Junior School Council is important because the smaller children can talk to us about their worries. We are learning how to run meetings and look after small kids' problems.

Thank you for letting us talk about our Junior School Council.

Kerryn Henderson, Secretary,
Dunolly Primary School, Tarnagulla Rd.,
Dunolly 3472.

Dunolly Primary

The Kangaroo Flat Primary School's Junior Council has been operating since late last year.

It is made up of elected representatives from grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 (two from each grade).

The Council meets for one hour during school time, once a month. Two interested parents attend the meetings to help and advise the children. The Council has an elected executive including a President who chairs the meetings and a Secretary who takes minutes and handles correspondence.

Representatives hold grade meetings to gain ideas from students and to report on Council meetings. Suggestions from Junior Council are taken to School Council via the Liaison Committee (a sub-committee of School Council) and decisions on these are reported to Junior Council through the same committee.

Any section of the school (eg Parents Club, staff, School Council) can call on the Junior Council when information on student attitudes is required or when a particular task, within the school, could be carried out by the students.

Changes which have occurred as a result of Junior Council suggestions have included improvements to the school grounds and facilities, entertainment at lunch times, re-structuring of swimming timetables and generally an increased awareness of student concerns.

Junior Council has become a valuable learning experience for students and has provided an excellent link between students and other sections of the school community.

Sue Williams, Kangaroo Flat PS,
PO Box 39, Golden Square 3555
Newstead Primary

The Junior Council began during a study of local government. The Principal and Shire Secretary devised a program which could allow students to experience various aspects of local government, including Council meetings. Initially this was envisaged as a short-term project, but the Junior Council proved so successful it has continued to function.

The school is divided into three 'ridings' or team houses, comprising prep to year 6 students and each riding elects three representatives to the Junior Council. The Council has 1 Health Inspector, 1 Recreation Officer, 1 Engineer, 1 Foreman, 2 Typists and a Minute Secretary. A computer program has been established to type out the minutes.

Early in 1985, the School Council invited a representative of the Junior Council to be a member of the School Council, with full voting rights, hence students are now represented on the School Council.

The aims of the Junior Council include:

* to teach kids how to make important decisions;
* to help kids learn to manage things for when they get older;
* to give children a sense of responsibility;
* to learn how to communicate with other people in the community;
* to provide contact with and an understanding of, many different aspects of life.

The activities of the Junior Council include:

* grounds management and improvement;
* recreation activities;
* safety and welfare of students;
* raising money for students' activities and school equipment;
* camping and excursions;
* suggestions for schoolwork.

The Junior Council welcomes many visitors to its meetings which are held in the Newstead Shire Council Chambers. As one Junior Councillor commented, having the use of such a venue makes us feel that we are trusted and responsible.

Maldon Primary

Grade 6 students have been involved throughout 1984-85 by offering their suggestions to School Council. The children met before each School Council meeting after surveying the children for ideas. Many of these suggestions were followed up by School Council and the students were invited to attend a School Council meeting.

On Tuesday, August 6th, interested grade 5 and 6 students travelled to the nearby school of Newstead to watch their Junior Council in action. After attending their excellent meeting the students were keen to form a Junior Council. Elections were held and the following were elected:

1 President: Dean Lakey
1 Secretary: Tammy Daniels
1 Treasurer: Julianne Halpin
2 Typists: Ben Butcher & Matthew Sheldon
1 Health Inspector: Sally Loftus
2 Entertainment Officers: Robert Shellie & Kate Loftus
1 Grounds Person: Brad Nolan
8 Councillors: Jim Wilson, Leah Panos, Jayson Cook, Nicole Pitch, Cherie Fricker, Leanne Drake, Suzzie Horton & David Gullick

2 Representatives to attend School Council meeting: Dean Lakey & Tammy Daniels

The other students in the school were divided into four groups and two councillors appointed to each group. Children would take their suggestions to the appropriate councillors.

The first meeting proved to be very successful. Many ideas were discussed and plans made to organise a spellathon and a disco. Grounds works included cleaning out a pipe in the playground and this work was carried out by the children.

At the meeting, the children decided upon their aims:

a) to be recognised as part of the school administration;

b) to improve the school;

c) to be respected by School Council, parents, teachers, community and fellow students;

d) to be trusted.

As the teacher involved with these students, I have been impressed by their keen-ness and sincerity. I feel sure the school will be greatly improved by their participation in the organisation and activities of their school.

Lyndal McClure, Maldon Primary School
WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?

The involvement of children in the decision-making process operating within the Eureka Street Primary School community began with an expressed concern.

Three years ago, the parents and staff were settling down to assess the Supplementary Grants Program (Disadvantaged Schools Program) within the school when a comment made by one of the children in the playground was overheard. The comment was in relation to the toilet facilities and the conditions the children had to endure each time they went to the toilet, especially in wet weather.

A meeting was set up between year 6 students and three teachers.

What the teachers discovered was that not only were the children extremely articulate with regard to toilet facilities, but that they had constructive ideas and opinions which were original and valuable and which covered the areas of curriculum and administration as well as works items.

In 1983, a Children's Supplementary Grants Committee was formed. The children were elected from years 5 and 6 and numbered 13 including a person in the chair.

This committee sought the opinions and ideas of the other children in the school (approx. 160) with particular focus on ways to improve the toilet facilities.

The committee wrote a capital works submission, the result being approx. $30,000 allocated for roofing of the toilet area. The children assisted with the original concept drawings and their participation was the subject of a state-wide distributed video entitled What About the Kids.

1984 saw a broadening of the age-range of committee members. Two elected representatives from prep to year 5 and the six year 6 students who had sat on the committee as year 5s in 1983 were elected. In that year, a Children's School Council was elected with P-6 representation. This arose from discussion with the Supplementary Grants Committee and was designed to leave that committee free to work on programs and work items. The two groups worked alongside one another and collaborated in the area of curriculum.

The Children's School Council concentrated on entering the school in the School Community Award. The children prepared a photographic submission and the three children spoke to the judges about the Eureka Street School Community (see article in The Age).
1985 has seen the continuation of the Supplementary Grants Committee and Children’s School Council.

The members of the Supplementary Grants Committee attended and spoke at public meetings, worked on proposal teams, assisted in the writing of programs. The Council are working on school/community initiatives, planning curriculum areas and organizing social functions eg discos, assemblies, parent days etc.

COMMENTS

* Children from prep to year 6 have opinions and ideas about school operations;
* They are articulate and know how to work for goals;
* Children want to have input into the workings of the school community;
* They are responsible people who can, given the opportunities, speak for a representative group at public meetings, in interview situations and within meeting settings;
* Children need to be invited to join in the decision-making process;
* They have well developed social skills and cooperate well within project teams.

Student involvement at PS 1071 Eureka Street, Ballarat East, is a relaxed kind of involvement.

Meetings are conducted on a fairly informal basis - a student in the chair, a student as secretary - whenever is convenient. Teachers and/or parents attend and contribute occasionally. Two teachers meet with the Committee and the Council every two months to discuss directions and goals.

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
PO Box 64E, Ballarat East 3350

Eureka! This is what it's all about

TALKING SHOP

IS not an easy task being a teacher. Having the lives of future citizens in one’s hands must often seem daunting.

“Whenever I enter a school,” wrote Leo Tadashi, “and see all those ragged children, thin, dirty with bright eyes and often anguished expressions, I am gripped by the anxiety and terror I would suffer in seeing people drown.

‘Ah, how to drag them out and who were we first, who next? And the thing about poverty is precisely the most precious, most spiritually and the most thing to be found in children."

How teachers respond to that challenge is a measure of how effective they are. It is undeniable that some give up and sink into a kind of quiet despair, seeing all children as clones and all children alike. But others are different. In them there is a joy about imparting knowledge and understanding, a delight in contributing to the growth of and a sharing of new experiences with young minds, which have not yet lost the first bloom of innocence.

I met such teachers recently on a visit to Ballarat. On the eastern side of town, among the yellow clay hills thrown up when the Gold City was formed, is the Eureka Street Primary School. Here, on a handkerchief-sized, asphalt-covered block, just down the road from where the diggers made their last stand 130 years ago, is one of Ballarat’s earliest little red-brick schools.

My visit to Eureka Street confirmed Helen Button’s assertion that the teachers were spunky, as well as the impression the children had generated that they were also extraordinarily competent.

To achieve what Maslow called the “self-actualizing” individual — someone able to take charge of her own life without the institutional props many of us need — is not easy. It is especially difficult when teachers are expected to impose a sort of order and uniformity of behavior on their classes just because there are so many children in them.

Yet the teachers in Eureka Street appear able to allow each single flower to blossom — even when 39 are crowded together in a 10th century classroom. Melanie, for example, met me by chance in the hall as I entered and, taking my hand, led me to the prep grade to introduce me to her friends. “If you sit properly,” she told them, “you can come out and tell Mr Maslen who you are.”

Later, in another grade, Helen Button unexpectedly asked the school’s itinerant music teacher to put the kids through their paces. In a moment, without music or rehearsal, the children put on a performance that would have done credit to the cast of “Fame.”

John Holt once said that children (like all people) would live better, learn more, and grow more able to cope with the world if they were not constantly made to feel incompetent, stupid, untrustworthy, guilty, fearful and ashamed; if their interests, concerns and enthusiasms were not ignored or scorned; and if instead they were allowed, encouraged and (if they wished) helped to work with and help each other, to learn from each other, and to think, talk, write, and read about the things which most excited and interested them.

In short,” Holt said, “if they are able to explore the world in their own way, and in as many arenas as possible direct and control their own lives.”

John Holt does not much like conventional schools; indeed he would do away with them if he could. But somehow I think he would approve of Eureka Street Primary School in Ballarat.

— GEOFF MASLEN

The Education Age
Castlemaine Primary

Castlemaine Primary School recently set up a Junior Council consisting of ten members – three each from the senior grades (6 and 4/5) and two each from grades 3/4 and 2/3. Only two meetings have been held so far, but the two senior Council representatives will be attending their first School Council meeting next Wednesday evening (21st August). The Junior Council meets fortnightly operating with teacher guidance.

Regina Saville, Acting Principal, Castlemaine Primary School.

Yarraville West Primary

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Yarraville West Primary School has been developing its school policy over the last 12 months. This includes asking parents, teachers and students what they think the school should be offering to its students.

It has been an exciting process for the school, particularly because the students throughout the school were involved in saying what they wanted to happen at the school.

As the school is physically located on two different sites, the policy-making session with students was firstly organised with the senior students and then followed up with the junior students.

Parents and teachers were in this process also.

HOW?

A morning was set aside for students to develop policy guidelines. The senior students had been informed about the importance of the policy making by their teachers in class. On the day all senior students came together and were addressed by the principal who emphasised the importance of the students’ input for the school. Students then went into their classrooms where they spent one hour discussing policy. Two parents and a teacher went to each classroom and students were broken into groups of three. They were asked the following questions:

1. What do you like about Yarraville West Primary School?
2. What would you like to have changed?
3. What would you like to have added?

Parents and teachers assisted groups if they were having difficulties; a student writes up the responses for their group. After 10 minutes, each group of three joined with another, forming a group of six. They then shared their ideas on each question and further developed responses. Each group of six joined with another group after 15 minutes and repeated the same process.

Following this, all students came together and reported to the entire class.

A similar process was repeated with the infant school children. However, older students ran the sessions with the younger children. They divided into groups of seven to eight brainstorming on each question. Parents and teachers assisted the older students who were having difficulties. The task was performed in about 3/4 hour; the children in this case did not report back to the entire class.

The results are now to be collated by the School Council subcommittee and returned to the older children for them to prioritise according to 'important' and 'not important’. It was believed that prioritising by the younger children would be too difficult.

It is hoped that out of this process, a Student Representative Council will be established so that students may continue their participation in decision making in a permanent manner.

This process was extremely exciting for the students, parents and teachers at the school. The students had to think about how all children can learn and what they should learn. They also had to work cooperatively with other students.

The experience has been very valuable and will hopefully continue as part of the participatory process of Yarraville West Primary School.

Lynne Kosky, Community Education Officer. Phone: (03) 314.9385
Cross-age tutoring operates in two areas in our school: the Junior School Applied Maths Program and the Physical Education program from grades prep to 6. Both programs were initiated in term 2 but operate quite differently at each level, although the rationale behind them is the same.

The children in our school need a wide range of experiences to facilitate learning and mastery of certain skills. Cross-age approaches were introduced in Applied Maths to enable each child to have 'hands on' or first-hand experience, thus leading to a better understanding of the topics covered.

In the Applied Maths Program, all lessons are prepared by teachers and administered by grade 6 children and parents. The children teach the same lesson for seven weeks and they are responsible for any preparation required and for collecting their groups. These sessions are evaluated at regular intervals with children, teachers and parents involved.

The main problems encountered by the children have been of a disciplinary nature and this has led to discussion and the development of strategies to deal with these. The tutors have demonstrated responsibility and reliability and this has been particularly evident with the so-called 'trouble makers' in grade 6.

They themselves find it very satisfying. It has increased their confidence and their feelings of self-esteem and has made it possible for the children in the upper school to get to know the juniors. This is particularly relevant to our school as the junior and senior school buildings are on separate sites.

It is too soon to make any general comments about what the tutors themselves have learned but some areas of improvement such as reading rosters and timetables, giving instructions clearly and specifically and adjusting the language used to meet the level of their students have already been observed.

From the teacher's point of view, the program works much more successfully with the grade 6 children than with the parents as they (the parents) have many more demands on their time and are not as reliable.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The grade 6 children were expected to plan and organise lessons in gymnastic skills for prep, grade 1, grade 2, grade 3 and grade 4 children. The class was then divided into five tutor groups, each group responsible for one week's Physical Education.

Tutor group 1 planned the first week of gymnastic skills around the use of hoops. The hoop skills were taught to prep and grade 4 children. Therefore the tutors had to take into account the differing abilities of the tutees.

Group 2 planned skill sessions on the
forward roll, group 3 on the side or pin roll, group 4 canes and group 5 the backward roll. At the conclusion of the five week segment, a further week was used for revision purposes. Each group was asked to prepare a planning sheet for the day's tutoring:

PLANNING SHEET: WEEK 1
Level: Prep Date: Tuesday 16th June
Tutors: Willy Barra, Michelle Seaman, Michelle Vidot, Jordan Agnostopoulos, Steve Lyons
Theme: Gymnastics - using hoops
Activity 1: Willy Barra: crawling through hoops
1. Jordan Agnostopoulos: rolling the hoop
2. Michelle Vidot: jumping into hoops
3. Michelle Seaman: rocking in the hoop
4. Steve Lyons: moving the hoop around the body

Equipment: Markers, ribbons, hoops (25).
Set up by 1.50 pm.

The prep children were divided into five tabloid groups, each spending eight minutes with a tutor. The tutors then led the children into their next activity. At the conclusion of the day's tutoring, the tutors were expected to comment on their particular activity. This was done in Process Writing time. Tutors were encouraged to write about the success of their lesson: did the children learn the skill? did particular children have difficulty with the skill? did you find instructing difficult? could you have provided or planned a more suitable activity for your group? did you provide adequate equipment for the skill? did you set up for your lesson before 2 pm? did you pack away your equipment?

After the week's tutoring, the tutors would evaluate their performances and discuss their experiences with the rest of the class.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

Tutoring enabled the grade 6 children to improve their social skills and made them more confident in contributing to class discussions. Tutors expressed feelings of confidence, achievement and an understanding of others' feelings. They were more patient and accepted responsibility more readily. Younger children looked forward to their lessons with their tutors and seemed to master the skills.

DRAWBACKS OF THE PROGRAM

Some parents tend to be uneasy about their child's time spent on tutoring. The attitude that learning only takes place in structured sessions is still prevalent.
CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

It was good with the grade sixes. I felt good but when it was my turn, I felt even better.

Linda Burbay, tutee, gr 2

I liked the grade sixes teaching us because we could get into four groups and do more.

Michael O'Connor, tutee, gr 2

My name is Michelle Vidot. I am in grade 6 at Sacred Heart Primary School in Oakleigh. I tutored grade 3 for sport. During my lunch hour, I set up the equipment I needed – tables, hoops, chairs, mats, beams. Our teacher split the grade 3 children up in groups of seven. There was four different activities other than mine. The children would start at one activity and do that for six minutes, then change to the next group and do that for six minutes. My activity was to skip through the hoop five times then I would hold up the hoop and they would do a forward somersault through it onto the mat. They walked along a bench, turned around, crawled under the chairs, hopped into the hoops, crawled under the table and tug the next person. Most of the group were good and listened, but in my second group, some boys started to show off and run through the course, so I told them they would miss out if they didn't smarten up. There was one girl that kept saying to me that she couldn't do the activity. At first I didn't know what to do with her so I told her that she could do it very well. Then she seemed to try a little harder. For most of the time I was very nervous but soon it began to wear off. I think that the children thought they could get away with things just because I was not a teacher but after a while they started to do what I asked. I really enjoyed Cross-Age Tutoring and I liked it when the children said they enjoyed the activity. Most of them did very well.

Michelle Vidot, tutor, gr 6

My name is Maria Balalas. I am in grade 6. I attend Sacred Heart Primary School. I have tutored grades prep, 1, 2 and 4. I found that the prep and grade 1 children were most interested in my activity. I was tutoring physical education. My activity was gymnastics. I enjoyed tutoring because the children were great, even though a few thought they could fool around just because I wasn't a teacher. I think that they did learn the activity because they were enjoying it.

Maria Balalas, tutor, grade 6

My name is Michelle Sooman. I attend grade 6 at Sacred Heart Primary School in Oakleigh. I tutored grade prep in physical education.

I put out the equipment I needed – mats and hoops. Then I got the preps into their lines and went through the activity with them: jumping through a line of hoops, hopping through the hoops, doing a somersault and walking through hoops. After a while, they were pretty good at it. I felt really happy that with my help and their skill they could do it. I had no problems at all except for when they were being a bit cheeky. I think they had that attitude because I wasn't a real teacher. If they were naughty and not cooperating I would give them one more chance. If they took advantage of it I would send them out. From my point of view, I saw myself acting responsibly when I could control my group without yelling at them every 5 minutes. If I had the chance, I would do it again.

Michelle Sooman, tutor, gr 6

For further information, contact:

Noreen Harrison
Sacred Heart Primary School
76 Warrigal Rd., Oakleigh 3166
QUALITY AND OWNERSHIP

During first term of 1983, I started a unit with my grade 6 class called Origins which engaged the students in historical research. Although it involved the historical growth areas of local and oral history, that was secondary to my major aims. I wanted the pupils to:

* take increased control over their own work, including correcting and improving it;
* take increasing responsibility for the direction and quality of their own work, thereby increasing their sense of ownership;
* recognise that they had access to information beyond the classroom and the skills to win that information;
* involve their parents and friends in their work.

The overt content of the unit was that the students should interview one or more of their relatives about his or her 'origins' and then organise and narrate the information into a continuous story. It wasn't a one-shot interview; they had to keep going back as they formulated new questions or perceived deficiencies in what they had.

First the class had to learn about interviewing, specifically interviewing about the past. Everybody wrote down possible interview questions and we categorised, collated, adapted and deleted until there was a workable list of 30 questions including such things as how and by whom the household work has been done, how left-handed children had been treated in school, what had constituted luxury items and so on.

The next stage went very slowly. The children carried out their interviews and endeavoured to turn the answers into paragraphs prior to linking the paragraphs into a narrative. However, the slowness wasn't due to conceptual difficulties as much as to extra interviewing and careful checking of the writing.

The final stage emphasised the presentation of the product. The students read each other's work in order to comment on the findings, to look for similarities and to gain new ideas about extending their own work. I asked the pupils not to bring their work to me until they and their friends had thoroughly checked it. To help them with this, I drew up a sheet to guide them through the process.

HAVE YOU REALLY FINISHED 'PROOF READING'?
What is proof reading? It is you being the teacher. It is you being in charge of your work.
What do you do?
Read for meaning!
Ask yourself 'Have I said everything I want to say? Does it make sense?' Ask a friend to listen to the part you are worried about.
Don't worry about anything but MEANING!
Then ...
When you have your meaning figured out ...
Work on your:
(a) Punctuation - 'Have I put in all the full stops, capital letters, commas?' PUT THEM IN.
(b) Spelling - underline the words that look wrong. Check on their spelling (if you can) in a dictionary. Try to find all the incorrect words before you bring your work to me.
(c) Style - do you like your story? Do you want to add to it?
(d) Do you think you are finished?
You are now an author!

Eventually the class members did become conscientious and careful about reading each other's work. If they became 'cross' at other students' muddy writing they became more inclined to work on the clarity of their own expression.

The level of involvement was high, as shown by the amount and quality of the work they did at home. It outstripped what they did at school. Another indication was their refusal to let me keep the 'projects' as they called them. Once I returned them to the students, I was never again given access to them.

The unit wasn't particularly successful in having kids arrive at a sharper understanding of time, change and continuity. For example, they couldn't readily distinguish between the exotic and the mundane in their interviews. However there were very real gains in the area of their taking responsibility for the quality and direction of their own work - but it took a long time.

Stephen Duggan
Fairfield North Primary School (Vic)
- reprinted from Study of Society, April 1985
Students ready to make airwaves

On 2SER-FM in Sydney, a new student program goes to air on Thursdays at 12.45 and 6.30 pm, called Blackboard Radio. Fifteen minutes of magazine type segments, Blackboard Radio is made by students from Cleveland Street and Miller High Schools.

And on SER on Saturdays at 7.45 am, another new program is Underaged. The producers say: "Most people think that teenagers shouldn't be seen or heard, but we say: "We are Underaged?" Our program is made entirely by teenagers and takes two formats. One is that of a talk show where we discuss issues of concern to both teenagers and adults. The other is a music program in which we discover teenage cults, fads and musicians. There are two components of our Underaged? team - the producers and the listeners. To listen, tune to 2SER-FM 107.5. To learn about radio and help make the show, ring 2SER (02) 218,9993 after 12 noon on Saturday and ask to speak to Ceres or someone from Underaged? But don't tell the oldies!"
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S.A.: Student Conferencing

Student consultants

by Amanda Lambden

Adelaide Area Student Consultants (AASC) are a group of students from schools in the Adelaide area. These students, as well as teachers, have got together over the past few weeks to organize a conference at which students can come forward to ask questions and receive answers which will help them strive for success and power within their schools.

The conference was held on August 13 at the South Australian Institute of Teachers building. AASC felt there was a need to collect information on student concerns, impressions of what was happening in schools at the moment and what role students have in decision making already.

AASC are interested in students sharing their views with others to achieve better school governments. The main aims of the conference were: ideas on how to obtain rights and recognition; what SRC’s can do for a school; how to get things done; how to get support from teachers; how to get support from the system.

The conference agenda included small group discussions, a question panel and guest speakers. AASC wishes to work towards the continued improvement of school experience.

State Council of Students

by Angelique Smith

The Student Action South Australia (SASA) conference invited secondary school students from state, catholic and independent schools throughout SA to elect a State Council of Students. The State Council of Students is to be a body of students working together, with support from both government and non-government agencies, to provide a forum for discussion of and action upon issues and problems which affect students.

After a discussion about what the State Council of Students actually was, we were split into area groups which became area councils. We then got to know each other and talked about representation. We elected four people from each area to make up the interim management committee of the state council. Each area had to elect one person from an independent school, one person from a catholic school and two from state schools. We met all the representatives.

After this we had lunch. The area councils are responsible for collecting information from their schools, undertaking action on issues of concern to students in the area, providing and supporting training being offered to students in schools, acting as a support group for students undertaking action in their local communities and assisting and supporting students in their work with the current decision-makers within education and the non-government youth affairs sector.

Everyone left the conference feeling they could now help themselves and their fellow students have a greater say in decision making in their schools and communities.

Angelique Smith is a student at Mt. Barker high school.

Landmark becomes starting point

by Amanda Lambden

On June 26, 1985, Campbelltown high school, a multicultural school in the Adelaide suburban area, held a student conference. The conference idea originated after the school hosted a parents’ conference which was attended by 50 parents and teachers.

The school considered that students also should participate in curriculum advice. The conference was organized by Year 12’s who are the school government. They were assisted by youth coordinator David Wright and teachers.

The aims of the conference were:
1. To seek and listen to representative student views in relation to the senior secondary school concept at Campbelltown high school and school policy regarding senior students.
2. To provide the students views for consideration in school planning and/or modification of the senior secondary school concept in the future.

There were key questions which students had to discuss and form action, ideas or answers. The topics discussed were student/teacher relationships, career planning, courses and rules, canteen and discipline.

All topics revealed information that many students have never had brought out in the open. Students were keen to talk on all questions and ideas flowed freely: Students felt the conference was a success as it enabled people to speak freely without the fear of being put down or told to keep quiet.

After the conference opinions and comments were forwarded to the PEP task force for consideration, in conjunction with inputs from other sources, in planning for next year.

The answers and comments were also printed up for students and teachers of Campbelltown to view.

Overall the conference can be seen as a landmark in the history of the school and should be seen as a starting point of recognition for students, which will just keep on growing.

Campbelltown’s conference was a start to find ideas on career courses and all other important questions as it considered the opinions of students, the ones who should have been considered from the very beginning.

A 15 minute video of the Campbelltown conference has been produced by David Wright. It is available from 45, Box 1152, G.P.O., Adelaide, 5001.

In the past students and teachers were seen as being on the opposite ends of a scale.

No communication existed between students and teachers, but in 1985, International Youth Year, the barriers are beginning to be broken.

Students and teachers are beginning to form opinions of one another as caring people. Teachers are realising that students have realistic opinions that could better school curriculum.

An issue discussed at the conference was student/teacher relationships. Students and teachers discussed freely the positive and negative points. Students were concerned that although they were suggesting change, they were powerless to achieve it. Teachers expressed the view that they were willing to back up any suggestions that were reasonable. One major point was that students felt teachers should look at what the students have come up with and TAKE NOTICE.

After the conference there was a noticeable difference between students and teachers. Students can now talk more freely to teachers on matters about school and on a personal level. Students also noticed teachers are taking notice of ideas put forward. They are beginning to stop comparing students and having more consideration of their feelings.

Teachers and students are learning to relate to each other better.

The barrier is being broken, there are people in schools rather than students and teachers. With communication and feelings towards one another growing on a positive level school is becoming a happier place to be.

Amanda Lambden is a student at Campbelltown high school.
NSW: State Association?

On the weekend of December 7-8th, a meeting and workshop will be held at Kelso High School in Bathurst (NSW) to look at the possibility of establishing a state association of student activities. It is anticipated that a steering committee will be formed and guidelines for a constitution established.

It is intended that in 1986, formal recognition will be given by the Department of Education, individual state schools and private schools and youth organisations, to a statewide body designed to encourage and improve the role of student councils, increase the level of involvement of students in school activities and provide a network of support for teachers and students working in this area.

The initiative for this meeting has been taken by the Regional Association of Student Government in the Western Region of the NSW Education Department. This group has been active since 1981 and now believes the time has arrived to develop a larger organisation.

"We know from experience that regional associations such as our own cannot fulfill the numerous demands for resources and training which have come from other regions and other states. The demands placed upon students by PEP, DSP, IYY, community and school committees are increasing weekly - but progressing weakly. Moreover, virtually all other areas of the school curriculum already have their own professional associations for teachers, which added benefit a state association of student activities would hopefully encourage."

Further details can be obtained from:
Sharan Burrow, Kelso High School, Bathurst 2795 Phone (063) 314544
or Charles Kingston, Kandos High School, Kandos 2848 Phone (063) 794103
Deadline for replies is Friday, November 8th.

N.T.: Gabfest

Another GABFEST - or Northern Territory wide student meeting - was held on 28 May in Darwin, with the theme 'using the media to have your voice heard'. Appropriately, students held a press conference, took part in two talk-back programs and had considerable newspaper and TV coverage.

The GABFEST is becoming well known around the Territory and is beginning to be accepted as a serious student advisory forum for the Education Department. Another GABFEST is planned for later in 1985.

Study of Society (Vol 16 No 2, August 1985) contains a two-page article on GABFEST. It can be obtained from Frances Wood, Editor, Curriculum Branch (R&D), Education Department, 234 Queensberry St., Carlton 3053 Vic.

More information on GABFEST from:
Joy Irvine,
PO Box 4821, Darwin NT 5794

Tas: Film

Vinnie and the SRC is a film about the trials and triumphs of a year 10 student facing the choice of leaving school for work or staying on to year 12. The whole school and the SRC become involved in looking at the job market for school leavers and changing the school curriculum. The film was produced by the Tasmanian Film Corporation and commissioned by the Tasmanian IYY Coordinating Committee. Available from: Tasmanian Education Department Media Centre: Phone (002) 308.022

W.A.: SRC Networks

The Youth Affairs Council of WA has launched a project to coordinate and encourage Student Representative Council networks in the 13 Education Department regions in WA. Several such regional networks already exist and have been helping each other. The project's long-term aim is to strengthen the foundations for a statewide network for WA. Contact: Liz Bray, GPO Box T 1741, Perth 6001 Phone (09) 322.6744

Articles from Education Briefs, Youth Affairs Council of Australia, July 1985 (PO Box 108, St Kilda South 3182)
Rap Up For Gippsland

Thirty-one Latrobe Valley (Vic) students recently put the finishing touches to their 150th celebration newspaper Raparound Gippsland.

The State Government granted $32,000 to put together three papers in the Gippsland Region. The first paper, from the Leongatha/Warragul area was published in term one; the second paper is being put together by students from the Latrobe Valley in term two. A third paper will be written and published in third term by students from the Bairnsdale area.

All three papers will have been written by primary and post-primary school students who contributed different articles, drawings and photos to the papers.

Richard Smethurst, a year 9 student from Yallourn Technical School, felt that there were advantages in primary and post-primary students working together:

The younger children were able to learn from older students and older students from younger people as well. It was a chance to cooperate with children from other schools.

Richard added that each student was able to get experience in writing and setting out a newspaper.

You just take for granted what goes into a newspaper.

Articles, drawings and photographs were gathered by a teacher in each of the sixteen schools involved in the project in the Latrobe Valley. Mr Steve Hove, a Humanities teacher at Yallourn Technical School, for example, reported that he had received approximately 40 articles for the second edition of Raparound. Many of the other participating...
schools reported a similar response from students.

Topics covered in the second edition of Raparound consisted of students' views, jokes and games, sport, fashion, history of the Latrobe Valley and education in the '80s. Each of the three papers will be placed in a time capsule to be buried for 50 years.

Only two meetings were held to gather articles, drawings and photos, and later two days were spent at a camp at Mirboo North where staff and students completed the paper. The students who attended the Mirboo North camp made up the Editorial Committee. These students had to design sixteen different pages, allowing space to fit in illustrations, photos, stories and graphics.

Ms Di Goulding, coordinator of the project, praised the work of the team:

The cooperation between the kids was fantastic. They've all developed a much greater awareness of newspapers and the newspaper world.

Ms Goulding described the experience as 'real learning' for the students and said the staff team hoped the project could be funded again next year.

Co-editor and year 9 student at Newborough High School, Janice Bale, said she enjoyed the experience:

It was good to see all the primary and secondary school kids getting together, exchanging ideas and making friends.

The second edition of Raparound Gippsland was launched in Morwell on August 13th.

Report prepared by R Smethurst, year 9 and K Keeney, Community Liaison Officer, Yallourn TS, with assistance from the Latrobe Valley Express.

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**YOUTH ACTION TEAMS AND THE MULTIPURPOSE USE OF RAILWAY STATIONS - AN OVERVIEW**

This report, prepared for the Victorian Ministry of Transport by Bruce Wilson and Johanna Wyn, under the auspices of the Urban Education Studies Group at Melbourne College of Advanced Education (November 1984) outlines the process by which groups of young people, both at school and unemployed, formed action teams to study and recommend on the future development of Melbourne railway stations.

"These teams would collect information on community views and needs and make recommendations on how railway stations could be developed as multi-purpose facilities helping to meet community needs.

"Why young people? What could they contribute that couldn't be offered by professional researchers? Put simply, young people themselves constitute major users of railway services, and are best placed to know what changes or new services would be most appreciated by other young people. As researchers, they are more likely to be able to communicate with other young people and other members of the community who would not respond readily to railway officials or other professional workers. Given a high level of concern within the Ministry about the extent to which railway property is the object of vandalism, it was hoped that the project would come up with proposals which would lead to more positive attitudes from all sectors of the community and extend the range of available services.

"The project has resulted in ten written reports and four videos from the action teams ... This report has been prepared by staff at Melbourne College of Advanced Education to provide an account of how the project has been conducted and an overview of the outcomes. It should be seen as a supplement to detail provided in the reports from the action teams."


For further information, contact Urban Education Studies Group, Melbourne College of Advanced Education, 757 Swanston Street, Carlton 3053.
SPECIAL YOUTH
RADIO CRAM GUIDE

Radio station 3CR in Melbourne publishes the CRAM Guide, a newspaper-format magazine that tells of programs and of happenings around the station.

The October-November issue is a special issue devoted to "Youth Radio". It marks both International Youth Year and the station's Youth Radio Project run in cooperation with 3RRR.

Articles in this special CRAM Guide give information about the Youth Radio Project's two festivals, talk of the background to youth participation in radio on 3CR, 3RRR, 3PBS and 3CCC and also outline some of the other youth-operated programs on 3CR: Ascolta, The No Ratings Show etc.

Copies of this special issue of the CRAM Guide may be obtained from 3CR, 21 Smith Street, Fitzroy 3065. Phone (03) 419.8377. Regular copies are provided to listener-sponsors of the station ($30 pa or $15 pa concession).

VFSSPC Resolution

The Victorian Federation of State School Parents' Clubs passed a resolution supporting student participation at its recent annual conference. The resolution reads:

Federation believes that the participation of students in all levels of education decision making is vital and therefore must be encouraged and properly resourced:

(i) Students must be allowed to allocate time to the establishment of communication networks at school, region and state level;

(ii) Funds for the establishment of student networks must be made readily available at all levels;

(iii) Post-primary School Councils must consult with their student body to develop effective strategies for involving students in School Council decision making;

(iv) Primary School Councils must develop strategies for taking account of the interests/views of their student body;

(v) Student representatives on State and Regional Committees must be credited for these activities as they are legitimate educational experience;

(vi) The Department must, in consultation with students, develop regulations governing the operation of Student Representative Councils.

MEDIA EXHIBITION

Express Australia produced a young people's media exhibition that was held in the AMP Building in Melbourne from the 19th to 31st August, for the Next Wave Youth Arts Festival.

As well as an exciting display of art work, newspaper clippings, video and photography created by young people, daily print and radio interviews were held in and around the AMP square. The radio interviews, mostly with key figures involved in the Next Wave festival, were broadcast regularly on 3CR. Roving press interviewers covered activities happening outside the exhibition space. The resulting print articles were circulated to all major newspapers.

Express Australia successfully piloted a computer link-up to Hadfield High School from the Youth Affairs Council of Australia Youth Participation Fair held at the St Kilda Town Hall as part of the ANZAAS Conference.

The link with Hadfield established direct communications between young people and was used effectively and efficiently to survey opinions on the theme of young people and the arts. These ideas were used in the interviews with Andrew Bleby, director of the Next Wave Festival and Minister for the Arts Mr Race Matthews.

The link-up with YACA was used to send questions to a panel of experts on youth affairs, including Helen Mayer, MP, and return their answers to the Express Australia team which produced a story that afternoon.

from Express Australia Newsletter
September 1985

more details from Express Australia
PO Box 348, Abbotsford 3067
phone (03) 63.8364

THE 4S NEWS

Issue 5 (October 1985) of The 4S News contains many articles on 'Students Conferencing'. The publication, from the Senior Secondary School Students Project (South Australia), is an exciting and provoking magazine. Copies from: The 4S News, Box 1152, GPO, Adelaide 5001

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ABSENTEEISM

Absenteeism is a study based in some post-primary schools in the Broadmeadows areas of Melbourne. Written by David McRae with publication funded by the Victorian Participation and Equity Program, the report paints a picture of the students who 'skip school' in that area.

Questions such as "Who are they? Why are they absent?" "Whose fault is it?" "Is there a gender variation?" "Is ethnicity a factor?" and so on, are considered and this version of the final report provides brief answers. Questions concentrate on areas of 'the students' and 'the school' and a range of recommendations are presented.

The study report is available from the Victorian Participation and Equity Program, 416 King Street, West Melbourne 3003. Phone: (03) 329.5677 (Marion Norbury).

HANDS ON

Hands On fills a role for 'cultural journalism' in the United States (the area of students working in oral history and centered around the Foxfire magazine approach) as does Connect for youth participation projects in Australia. Perhaps that's part of the reason why I've always found it such an interesting publication to read. And that's why I'm so pleased to see its reappearance!

But that parallel is only part of the reason. I also find Hands On extremely useful reading, both for its guide to what's happening in 'oral history/cultural journalism' areas, and for its more general 'how to do it' approach to practical education needs.

After an interval of a couple of years, Hands On is now back in production. Volume 7 Number 1 (Spring 1985) arrived recently. It is intended to resume regular publication of four issues per year. Subscriptions are US$4 per year and obtainable from: Hands On, Foxfire Fund Inc, Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568 USA.

As with Connect, Hands On relies on project reports, commentaries, how-to articles, inquiries, achievements, photographs and book reviews from you the reader!

It's well worth subscribing to!

Roger Holdsworth

REVIEWS:

EDUCATIONAL MAGAZINE

The Educational Magazine, produced by the Education Department of Victoria, has devoted two issues in 1985 to areas of student participation and IYY.

At the time of going to press, Volume 42, Number 4 is published, with articles on "Youth and Curriculum", "Youth participation and curriculum integration", "Change comes slowly for girls", "Increasing opportunities for student participation", the Northern Metropolitan Region Student Network and "Youth ANZAAS". There are also case studies of Student Forum at Mt Clear Technical High School and on Teaching "Student Government" at Albert Park High School.

The next issue will have further articles on "Issues in student participation", "Youth Action Project", "Student Action Project" and "Student Working Party".

Enquiries to the Editor, The Educational Magazine, Materials Production, Curriculum Branch, 234 Queensberry St., Carlton 3053. Phone (03) 341 4480.

GETTING INVOLVED

Getting Involved At School is a set consisting of a 30-minute cassette and booklet, produced by the Sydney-based 'Girls on Tape' project.

The tape contains voices of students and others involved in student participation in school decision making. Examples are drawn from both New South Wales and Victoria though the prime targets of the advice and contacts given, are students in NSW schools. For example, much is made of the application by students for Student Initiative funds from the NSW Participation and Equity Program.

The booklet contains questions, stimulus material, information about videos, contacts, examples and further student voices in print.

Copies of the kit are available for $6 from the Inner City Education Centre, 37 Cavendish St., Stanmore 2048. Phone (02) 316.3550.
## Articles:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Article/Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>Series of work booklets by Christine Hogan (WA TAFE PEP)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>220A</td>
<td>Managing Meetings – brief notes on the 'Doyle and Strauss' approach (not a good copy)</td>
<td>24 pp</td>
<td>$2.40</td>
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<td>220B</td>
<td>Problem Solving in Pairs</td>
<td>21 pp</td>
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<td>220C</td>
<td>How to Get More Out of Student Meetings</td>
<td>20 pp</td>
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<tr>
<td>220D</td>
<td>Why Participation?</td>
<td>1 p</td>
<td>30¢</td>
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<td>220E</td>
<td>Meetings Bloody Meetings</td>
<td>9 pp</td>
<td>90¢</td>
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<td>220F</td>
<td>Measuring Understanding of Student Participation</td>
<td>20 pp</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
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<td>220G</td>
<td>Content, Process and Metaprocess</td>
<td>9 pp</td>
<td>90¢</td>
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<td>220H</td>
<td>Youth Participation Projects (including Peter Cole's 1981 VITSE paper by the same name)</td>
<td>30 pp</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
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<td>220I</td>
<td>Hard Times and Problem Solving</td>
<td>10 pp</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
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<td>220J</td>
<td>Participative Education – Resources</td>
<td>6 pp</td>
<td>60¢</td>
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<td>221</td>
<td>Democratic Decision Making in Schools and Colleges; 3 pamphlets from the State School Teachers' Union of WA</td>
<td>12 pp</td>
<td>$1.20</td>
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<td>222</td>
<td>Student Committees Pilot Program (Preston South PS, Gowerville PS, Preston Girls HS) – Clare Hanna</td>
<td>11 pp</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
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<td>223</td>
<td>Youth Action Teams and the Multipurpose Use of Railway Stations – An Overview: Melbourne CAT, Nov. 1984</td>
<td>42 pp</td>
<td>$4.20</td>
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<td>224</td>
<td>Participation: The Developing Concept Ray Davis and Ruth Hoadley; paper to Curriculum 85 Conf.</td>
<td>19 pp</td>
<td>$1.90</td>
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<td>225A</td>
<td>Students on School Council Day: Workbook</td>
<td>12 pp</td>
<td>$1.20</td>
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<td>225B</td>
<td>Students on School Council Day: Evaluation sheet</td>
<td>1 p</td>
<td>30¢</td>
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<td>226</td>
<td>Student Working Party (Vic): Minutes, Meeting Format, Summary</td>
<td>9 pp</td>
<td>90¢</td>
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<td>227</td>
<td>Student Participation Resource List</td>
<td>13 pp</td>
<td>$1.30</td>
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<td>228</td>
<td>Facilitation Youth Participation: Accreditation Sub-group – report and recommendation to Curriculum '85 Conference</td>
<td>2 pp</td>
<td>40¢</td>
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<td>Accreditation: Implementation – Chris Barrett; prepared for the Regional Reference Group: Goulburn-Northeastern Region</td>
<td>17 pp</td>
<td>$1.70</td>
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<td>230</td>
<td>Draft Accreditation for Student Participation Policy</td>
<td>2 pp</td>
<td>40¢</td>
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<td>231</td>
<td>Student Government at Wendouree High Technical School; Jenny Dalman, year 8; prepared for Curriculum '85 Conference</td>
<td>2 pp</td>
<td>40¢</td>
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<td>232</td>
<td>Campbell's Creek Primary School: Detailed Package of Material</td>
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<td>A.</td>
<td>1984 'Pupils in Decision Making' survey results</td>
<td>2 pp</td>
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<td>B.</td>
<td>Survey – July 1985 – total school and grade analysis</td>
<td>8 pp</td>
<td>80¢</td>
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<td>C.</td>
<td>Report to SIP Committee on grade 6 survey follow-up</td>
<td>4 pp</td>
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Combined: 14 pp $1.40

"And one more thing – is it alright if some of us kids write some articles for Connect?" – Angela
Publications Received:

We wish to stress that the following publications received by CONNECT are NOT for sale. However, they are available for perusal by arrangement. Contact CONNECT on (03) 699.9052.

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Broadly Speaking - a series of four broadsheets:
1. School's a Stage (I'm Going Through)
2. Many Faces Meet
3. Fair Go
4. Student Decision Makers
From Student Press Project, South Central Region (Vic).

Ascolta (Brunswick schools, Vic)
Vol 11 No 6 December 1984
Vol 12 Nos 1, 3, 4 March, June, Aug.

Focus (Albert Park HS, Vic) August 1985

PEP Works (Ardeer HS, Vic) No 1 1985

Youth in Decisions 1985
Student Press Project, Western Metropolitan Region.

Rave (Winnaton school, Vic)
No 24, October 1985

OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Foxfire (Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA)
Vol 19 Nos 1, 2; Spring, Summer 1985

Paradise Project (Edmunds Middle School, Burlington, Vermont, USA) June 1985

Other Sources

IYY Poster, Express Australia Poster, Youth Media and Communications in Action Exhibition (19-31 August), Newsletter (September 1985) - Express Australia Media 3 (Rusden Media, Vic) No 25, Aug.

Hands On (Foxfire, USA) Vol 7 No 1 Spring 1985

(The Still Here) Collective Notes (COSHS) Nos 4, 6 Aug., Sept. 1985

Study of Society (Various Vols 11-15)

Briefing Papers, YACA Statement, YACA Briefs No 15, Youth Affairs in Australia YACA Publications (YACA) - July-Aug 1985

Youth Affairs Journal (IYY Issue: 'Youth Participation') (Coburg, Vic) Vol 4 No 3.

Connexion (Volunteer Action Centre, Vic) August/September 1985

IYY Weekend, Calendar of Events, IYY (Q)


Listening Post (2SER-FM, Sydney, NSW)
August, September, October 1985.

Absenceeeism: The Truants: Who Doesn't Come and Why - a study in some post-primary schools in the Broadmeadows area
- David McRae (PEP, Melbourne, 1985)

Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) Aug 1985

Update NIE Vol 11 No 7, August 1985;
No 8, September 1985; Newspaper in Education Week - handbook, March 1985
(Newspapers in Education, USA)

Communication Research Trends (UK)
Vol 6 No 1 1985

The Fringe Magazine (Fringe Network, Vic) No 35 July-August 1985

Your Comments

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sherbrooke Youth Action Centre. The Centre has only been in operation for a short period of time. One of our main aims is to collate as much information as possible which would be of relevance to the young people of this shire and to distribute it amongst them. We plan to distribute the information in two ways:
- by setting up a resource centre;
- by setting up a mobile resource library.

We hope that you can be of assistance to us by sending out any relevant information.

Keith Waters, Sherbrooke Youth Action Centre, PO Box 301, Belgrave 3160.

Friends of Connect

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since last issue:

SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER ($100; 2 years):
Judy Quinn (Balaclava, Vic)

PATRON SUBSCRIBERS ($20 pa):
David & Diana Scott (St Kilda, Vic)
Trish Britten (Shepparton, Vic)
Sue Rechter (North Fitzroy, Vic)
Victoria Triggs (Coburg, Vic)
Colin Hollow (Croydon, Vic)
Margaret Pliessie (East Melbourne, Vic)
Chris Barrett (Wodonga, Vic)
Pat Thomson (Prospect, SA)
Michael Donnelly (Broadmeadows, Vic)
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To: CONNECT, The Newsletter of Youth Participation in Education Projects,
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