STUDENTS ON COMMITTEES

MASS MEDIA INTERVIEWS

AND MORE!
This Issue

At last! This double (late) issue starts to collect and present some of the material I gathered in a recent visit to projects in the United States. Two long interviews with David Bernstein of Project Blueberry and with Joe Clark from McKinley High School's Mass Media Program form the first focus on media projects.

In Victoria (in particular) there has been a lot of attention recently on students in formal decision-making arenas, either through their own structures (SRCs etc) or on official committees. With students represented on PEP Committees, this should also be an issue throughout Australia. Three papers are included, which are discussion papers on these issues.

We repeat here: feedback on these papers is URGENTLY requested. The next draft is intended as a step towards committee and government policy. You'll be sent copies of the re-worked papers.

I also attended the 1984 Youth Forum in Bathurst recently and hope that the next issue of CONNECT can carry a full report of this, plus details of planning for a National Youth Forum in 1985. Also, a report on the new audio recording studio/radio station at Reservoir High School (Vic) is promised.

I hope that this issue will be with you soon! 

Roger Holdsworth

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During a recent visit to the United States, I visited and interviewed people at a number of projects. Two of these interviews are presented in this issue - both are linked by student participation in mass media.

INTERVIEW 1: David Bernstein

PROJECT BLUEBERRY

In CONNECT 24, Sally Ingleton reported on PROJECT BLUEBERRY at Minnechaug High School in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. I visited the school and talked with David Bernstein about the project and its demise:

Blueberry started in 1976. Greg Trimmer and I wrote a grant - it was a Federal grant that the State decides who gets it and who doesn't. We were the top-rated grant out of the 40 proposals in the State. So we got funded.

We had 33 students in our first year and made lots of mistakes and by the 5th or 6th year, we really corrected them all and because of that, became really successful. We hired a project coordinator - that was the key to our program. Greg and I stayed as English teachers.

The course was an academic English course. We hired what we called a project coordinator to allow someone to be here all day just to do video. I knew from my experience with video that there was no way you could teach and work with video and work with kids - you'd just go crazy, your mind would explode. That was the key, I think - hiring this person. The first person we hired stayed three years.

Why did you propose this project?

Our society's so media-oriented, and we ignore media. I taught a film-making course at the time and a Literature and Film course, a film-viewing, analytical film course. One day I was working with my Media course, a course called Understanding the Media with what we call low-level seniors, seniors who've just had trouble at school or just barely getting by and want to get out of here. One day, I was doing a mock news cast with seniors. The head of my Department was here observing me to judge whether I should be re-hired next year (there was all this pressure!) and one of the kids stood up and said, "God-damn it, I can't read this stuff - there's no punctuation!" And I said, "Whoa, say it again; that's a great thing to say!"

Then I found my film-making class was a group of all learning levels. In this school we tend to put kids in learning levels - phase 1, 2 and 3, phase 1 being the top. My film-making class was phase 1 to 3. I'd found the phase 3 kids were good in the hands-on, good working down in the automotive section and the phase 1 kids were good thinking. But they really worked well together. The phase 3 kids said, "Hey, I'll run the camera and show you how to edit the film." And the phase 1 kids said, "These phase 3 kids aren't all that bad." The phase 3 kids said, "I'm as smart as that phase 1 kid - he's just on a different level." That was another thing that Greg and I started to see.

Greg did a lot of stuff with his low-level sophomores in his Writing class. We knew Foxxire and its successes in putting together a magazine and how wonderful that was. We decided that we would like to do it in video.

But it wasn't any sort of video - it had that community orientation.

Right; we decided that it had to be community oriented. It could not be acting out drama type things or video-taping a meeting and sending it over the air. It had to be documentary footage. We thought we'd split it: profiles of people, issues and life-styles. Pretty much that's what we stuck to. By the end of the four years, five or six years of Blueberry, we've had over 400 shows produced. Many were from the man who makes dulcimers, to making maple syrup (which is a big thing in this area) to a show on handicapped children to Shriner's Hospital to being a mid-wife to wheel-chair basket-ball - really any idea we were open to.

Why was it important to do that sort of program rather than a play?

I think the learning process of developing an idea from the beginning and seeing it all the way through. A play's there. So many television programs in schools that I know, basically do that. We're going to do television today, so what are we going to do? Well, let's do a skit; let's have Harriet come in and talk about baking a
cake and sit down with a microphone. I said to kids, "If you can do it on radio, then let's not do it on television. Let's find the video component, the visual aspect. If all we're going to do is a skit, why don't we just do it?" And also academically, we want to make sure that kids, people, administration understand it as an academic component. It was "playing with television". It was that television was a method to get to someplace else - it wasn't the end-all. I think that's what made it unique. From other programs I've seen in this country, I still think it's unique. Even the programs I saw in St Louis (1979 Conference) tended to be sit down, record somebody talking about their life versus editing, slickness, try to get a little bit of slickness into it. Not that the shows were slick by themselves, but the idea was there.

Having the cable also meant that you had an audience.

We had a built-in audience that was free. Part of the cable contract with the town read that they had to have an hour a month of public access. So we did an hour a week - we went on at 7 o'clock every Wednesday night. There was a local paper that would always print what our next week's show was going to be and I would say that we began to get a good amount of people watching it, not weekly, but they knew it was on and they watched it.

Then we also did other things, like went to groups. We were very public-relations conscious the first three years. We spent the day at the library just playing tapes or we went to historical societies and Lions Clubs and got a lot of very positive publicity.

We always brought kids with us. That's something we learnt from Eliot Wiginton of Foxfire. We always brought kids with us wherever we went. I cannot remember ever going anywhere except for maybe consulting a school or two - even then we brought kids - without going with kids. Last year we went to Nantucket and worked with their school system and brought three kids with us. I always thought that was important - made them do the work. We went twice to St Louis. We went to another conference earlier. To have them stand up in front of 500 to 600 people and talk about it is a real learning experience.

The philosophy behind Blueberry is that all the decisions are made by them. I didn't call up Mrs Jones and say, "We'd like to do a show on you." They had to call her up and say, "We'd like to do a show on you." They had to learn the frustrations of people saying no or they had to be persuasive and say, "Yes, you are important to us."

I remember one group of kids wanted to do a show on Arlo Guthrie because he's from Western Massachusetts. They hunted him down for a month and finally gave up, but they didn't stop. Another group of kids did a show on teenage alcoholism and they wanted to interview three teenage alcoholics. It took them two months to find three teenage alcoholics who'd go in front of the camera, and it's a real moving show, and they know that it was worth their three months of running around and hitting dead-ends. In society we always hit dead-ends.

Those activities were taken in class time were they - the ringing-up, the preparing for an interview, the research?

Yes and no. An amazing amount of the work was done outside of class. One day, Greg and I tried to figure out how much, how many hours kids have to put in on a show from the time they decide they're going to do it, to the time their final edit is put in, and we figured it was 50 to 60 hours. When you consider kids have five other classes, or four other classes and work and sports and whatever else, that's a lot of time. But they did it.

We rarely gave up the English class to do anything like that. We were very academic but all out academic things in English class were geared towards community and towards values, so we would read Ordinary People, Catcher in the Rye, Death of a Salesman or talk about suburbs and literature and what it means to be growing up in a suburb and do a lot of self-exploration through writing, and that type of thing. So it was very academic-oriented. If some special problem came up and some kid said, "Gee, the only time I can really tape is now" then obviously we would let them do it. But they learnt very quickly that this is not an excuse to get out of school. They really needed to want to do it and to me that was a big thing. As Sally said, to be able to get two kids to come in during the summer to talk to her ... We went through an evaluation process and we had evaluators up here during the February vacation. We didn't set this up - we just told the kids, "Look, as it turns out, we're going to be here for three days during February vacation working with some evaluators. If anybody wants to come in to edit, they can." Well, from 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock, this room was full during February vacation.
The evaluators went, "Oh, what's going on here? Kids are giving up their vacation to be here?"

I can remember spending an all-nighter with a group of kids. The school rule is that we had to have an adult in this room after school. Sometimes Greg and I and Mark would be busy, so we said, "If you can get your mum or dad to come in and sit with you, just for liability reasons, then fine." And many times parents would come in and sit with the kids.

So the parents were being very supportive of the project?

Very supportive. I cannot honestly remember one parent who ever said to me that this was a waste of time for their kid or anything like that. It was always, "It's the best thing that's happened to my kid" or "It saved them". The biggest thing I used to get from parents on parents' night was, "It's the only course that I've had my child in that he or she talked about at the dinner table." You know the typical:

"What did you do at school today?"

"Aah, nothin'!"

Instead: "What did you do at school today?" and they'd talk for hours. And they could show it!

And when a kid brings home an English book or a Math book and they say, "Do you have any homework tonight?" and the kids says, "Yes, it's right here." When they bring home this video equipment, this huge box of stuff, and the parents have to drive them sometimes or get involved, then the parents become very un-passive, very active in there.

Do they ever worry about the 'academic' subjects and maybe think they were suffering because of this?

At first, people were really unsure that it was going to be academic enough. Television is fun and learning can't be fun! It has to be treacherous and boring. But I think as we gained a reputation, which we've lost from not being here, kids knew it was academically-oriented. What we did every year, as kids went to choose their next year's classes, we'd send Blueberry kids around to English classes and say, "Talk about it, but be honest! Tell them how many hours it takes. We don't want anybody coming in thinking it's just fun. Let them know it's fun, but don't let them think that's all it is, that it's a gut-course and you don't do any work." So by the third year, we started getting kids come in with expectations of: "I'm going to work 50 or 60 hours". Kids quit football team to be in Blueberry, and that's unheard of in this town - to quit the football team!
Did you also get the kids who regarded it as being a cop-out?

I think we got kids who, when they came in, would say, "I'm going to take Blueberry because it sounds easy" but by the time they left, they knew it wasn't. Kids failed. We had a cross-section of kids and kids didn't do any work or didn't do any writing. I'm not saying that 100% of the 1000 kids who went through the program (whatever number) were all articulate and literate. But I would say that every one of them grew in some way. Maybe they're just a better parent now than they would have been without it.

How were the topics decided?

Kids would split themselves into groups of three. We found out that groups of three were ideal. If they had groups of four and they had to vote, then it's 2:2 - that kind of thing. Another learning was obviously compromise. Then they would just make the decision.

When we first started Blueberry, we did our shows - I don't remember how we chose those shows - and at the end the kids said to me: "Well, we did five shows. There aren't any more stories in this boring town!"

And, 400 shows later, we still have a list of 100 ideas.

The kids will think of this as a community. They think of this as "a place where I sleep, and I'm going to escape from when I graduate high school" and they don't know that sometime in their life they're going to end up living in a place, if not this place, then a place like it, with their kids who are going to have the same complaints.

So we go around the class and say, "Who's your next-door neighbour? What does he do? What does your dad do? What does your mum do? Think of a show in town."

And they go, "Oh, there's no show."

One day I did that - I went around the class and everybody as typical, said, "No, I don't know anybody; my next-door neighbour is boring. I hate him - he throws rocks at us" and things like that.

That day, I went home and looked in the newspaper and there's a full-page article, a profile of a policeman in town who collects 45s - records, 50s - 10,000 records. I brought it in and said, "Look, here's a show for Project Blueberry: Wilbraham cop collects 45 records."

And Kathy Small raises her hand and says, "That's my next-door neighbour. I knew that!"

All of a sudden a kid says, "My next-door neighbour makes birch-bark canoes."

"Oh really? Don't you think that's a show?"

"My next-door neighbour, on weekends, flies B-52 bombers out of Westover."

"Don't you think that's a show?"

And finally they start to see their neighbours as people being interesting.

"My dad is an airline pilot."

"Well, gee, that could be a show."

"My mum makes cakes for a side-light."

"Well, that's a show."
They didn't have to be a grandiose. They didn't have to be, "My dad saves lives every day." It could be everyday, simple shows, and some of them are the best, like a show on an gas-station attendant, a guy who owns a gas-station. They captured this guy - he's a character. You walk into small towns and there are characters there. He's not going to leave his mark on the history of the United States, but he's still a character, an important person. People started to see that.

It changes conceptions of what is important news.

Not everything has to be a major murder in town to be important.

We started to do some public service stuff too. We would do little side-lights on abortion, or where to go for help for planned parenthood, or teenage alcoholism. That was really good. It taught kids how to do 'tone'. We used to do fun-and-games stuff but this taught kids how to do serious tone, to use a serious mood.

Was there any conception among the kids to say: "What is it important to communicate to other people who are watching?"

I think that was a constant question. Once they did their first show ... the reaction to the first show was always, "Boy, did I screw that up. I could have done so much better." And then after that is, "Well, what is it that the audience wants to see and learn about the subject or about this person?" Sometimes it's really hard to cut people out of a show, but you realise it's boring and you're going to cut it out.

They know there's a number of levels. One is, "What does the audience want to see?" Two is, "How do I keep their interest?" because they're conscious of it. And the other thing that came out of this course, that kids always told me, that's not something you can prove, is that they said they became better TV viewers. First of all, they became more selective. They said they no longer sat down in front of a TV at 6 and got up at 11 and went to bed. They realised that you can turn a TV set on and off when nothing else is on, or you don't even have to turn it on.

We had a little questionnaire at the end: "What did this course do for you?"

One kid said, "What this course did for me, was it made me into a reader. I realised how bad television is and now I read." Great!

They watch a lot of Sixty Minutes, a lot of documentary stuff, a lot of public broadcasting, radical stuff. They started to see that entertainment is nice (they enjoyed MASH for what it was, and I'm sure kids watched Dallas because it's fun to watch) but they understood on what level they were watching it.

Did they campaign around issues; use it as a medium to change the community?

I probably shouldn't have used the example of abortion, because that was so volatile we stayed away from it because there are pro and anti views and when you really get into that particular issue, it's hard to be intellectual about it. But teenage alcoholism: who can be for teenage alcoholics. There's an easy committed side to that. I remember a group that wanted to do a show on raising the drinking age. It used to be 18 in the state, and it was raised to 20. Obviously they were against it and by the time they were done with the show, I really think that some of them, while they may not have admitted it publicly, were for it and understood the need for the change in the law. So that happened a lot: they went in with one prejudice and came out with another understanding.

Can you take us through what would have happened with putting a show together?

We devised a seven step process and on each step, one of the teachers was responsible for approving the step, to go on to the next one. We would have, say, 14 groups of students working - we might split them into groups of three, and I might have three different groups to work with. It was their responsibility to come to me.

First thing they would do was to come up with an idea. They'd sit around a table. We'd have a list of ideas on a board. We'd go crazy at cutting things out. They just had an idea. There were kids who came into the class, who on the first day would say, "I know what I'm going to do for four shows this year already." So they'd come up with the idea. That was step 1. Ninety-nine percent of the time you'd approve the idea. You might say, "That's too large. How do we make this smaller?" Or "It's too small; how do we make it larger." Or, "No, you cannot hang out from the top of a helicopter while it's flying along, with camera equipment. I'm sorry, but that's one time I'm going to say no to it."

And then they sit down and they contact the person. They decide who's going to do the contacting or contact a group of people. That's step 2 - that's an easy step.
Step 1 they go and do a pre-interview. They don't bring the camera equipment. We found that can be pretty overpowering to a person the first time you meet somebody. They bring a tape-recorder. I said that would be fine, but even that can be nerve-wracking. They're responsible for taking notes, and really interviewing the person, like you're interviewing me. For example, the girls who did a show on the York Street Jail, they had to go down to find out what they could tape, what they couldn't tape. They wanted to get over their nervousness at going into a Jail, they had to decide what their opening shot was going to be.

I can remember Melissa walking down the street and she came back the next day and she said, "We saw the most beautiful shot, but we need to do it today."

I said, "What do you mean, you need to do it today?"

She said, "There was a rose that was blooming through the gates of the prison, with the inmates in the background. We want that as our opening shot, because one of the inmates that we're going to interview wrote a poem about a rose. We want to read the poem over that visual."

We said, "Well, get in the car! Let's go! This is perfect!"

So they have to think of that. They come back and they start to think of the show in terms of how to organise it, what questions to ask the person, technical things like what lighting do I need, do I need extension cords, can I do this in one shoot, or am I going to have to go back three or four times or whatever. So that's the next step.

They come back with notes. We look at the notes. We talk about the show with them, then the next step is they sit down and write a story-board or script with questions they are going to ask, what visuals they are going to get - really putting it together, ideally so it looks like the show's going to look. Realistically that's not true, but at least they're starting to think about it in terms of A goes here, B goes here, C goes here.

We approve the storyboard. We talk about it a lot. With one show on an artist, we decided on four different openings that we were going to tape and see which one was going to work better.

Then they go and shoot, do a shoot. It may last anywhere from one hour to a day to a couple of hours. The other thing that kids are nervous about: "This guy doesn't want to give up his Saturday morning to work with us." People would go and they'd have cookies ready for the kids; they'd bake them a cake. The woman we did a story on cake decorating, she made cakes for a living. Well, she made a Blueberry cake, using our logo. They came here and there was this Blueberry cake, with our logo on it! She said, "Well, I thought if I was going to make a cake, and you wanted to see the final product, here it is." And the guy who makes dulcimers - it's a month process - what he did was, he spent two nights in his lab, doing the parts of each of the dulcimers, so when the kids came in, they would see each part. So people were really prepared for that. That's something that was a real learning. So they'd go and shoot - that was the next step.

They knew how to use the equipment?

We did training in a lab. By that time they knew how to pan, how to zoom, all that stuff. That's been taught to them and they'd been practising for hours and were just itching to get going. We would tell them, "If you've nothing to do tonight, take the equipment home and play with your family and tape your dog running ... I don't care." That's the nice thing about videotape - you just erase it and go over it.

So they go and tape, and then they come back and pre-view it. Inevitably they miss things, inevitably something was out of focus on an important shot. Inevitably they had to call the person back and tell them, "We need to come back." Again they were nervous: "Oh he doesn't want us back, after we spent all day there!" "Of course he does. He wants you back because he wants that show to be as good as you want it to be." So they call the guy up or the woman up, and they go back and they re-tape. Then they pre-view again, and they have everything down listed by number, like an editing machine has numbers: 001.

They might write: 001 - 050: Harry talks about maple syrup;
050 - 055: Shot of collecting maple syrup; etc etc.

We did this on 3x5 cards. So what they'd do was they'd lay the cards out on the table and they would actually edit: "Here's cut first shot; here's our second shot; we're going to insert this visual over this shot; here's our third shot ... " and they'd actually edit with these 3x5 cards. So by the time they were done: "Here's all the shots we're not using and here's a pile of our shots." Ideally, what they would do would be to go: "OK first shot is on 007" and they'd fast-forward to 007 and then they'd pre-view it and they'd edit. Then they'd say, "Next shot is on tape 2,
082" and they would do that. It was a logical thing. That's ideal. Obviously, as in any creative process, along the way you say, "Wait a minute, I don't think that looks right" or whatever.

After they'd pre-viewed, they would edit a show. In video, it's electronic editing, so it's shot 1, shot 2, shot 3... "Whoa, I don't like shot 2" well you have to erase shot 3, whereas with film you can cut it and put it in the middle. You learn very quickly that pre-planning was extremely important, otherwise they waste a lot of time. Especially in video. In film you can look up and say, "Here's the shot, it's right here in front of me." In video, if you hold the tape up, you don't see anything.

After a little while, the kids would begin to learn to trust us. There's a certain trust and camaraderie built up, and they would start to ask us our opinions. You knew when you could be real honest and say, "I don't know... it's boring" to "It's really wonderful" to anything and kids would really want to know. It wasn't like, "Pat me on the back Mr. Bernstein, that's all I want you to do." It was, "I really want to know, because I want this to be good" and they would re-work it many times.

One show, they had the whole thing down and it took them 15 hours of editing. They came to me (and I don't know how long a kid works on a show, just as I don't know how long a kid works on a paper - I just know what the result it) and I said, "I just find the middle really boring" and they went back and re-edited it - another 15 hours' worth and they felt it was worth it. That was the key: it was that sort of learning.

How much involvement was there with the teachers? You didn't actually go out on the shoot?

No, I think I went out once taping in all the years of Blueberry. They would call us with their problems: "The machine doesn't work!" - that kind of stuff. The involvement was back here in the studio, working with the kids.

But there's a secondary involvement. It's the only class I've ever had, in all my years of teaching, that I was mostly involved with the kids. I like the kids I have now, but it's not the same. I knew their deepest, darkest secrets. When you travel with kids, you just know everything about them. One time, I said to my wife, "You know, I think I eat dinner more with my students than I do with you now." Go to St Louis or Chicago or wherever else we went. It was that kind of camaraderie that was built up, that I really miss. I still get letters and calls - kids come home from college and they call me up... which doesn't happen in my other classes. I'm the same person, but it's not the same growth. We spent time in Boston, we travelled, and they thought they were part of something unique and important. It was their niche. The football team is their thing, and the basketball team is their thing, and the computer people have their thing - well, this was Blueberry.

What are some of those kids doing now?

Everything, from working in a store to a number of kids who do video work. One person works in New York City... oh, two do... doing video. One person teaches a class two towns over in video. Two or three students went into the coastguard... it could be anything.

One of my favourite students went into gerontology, the study of old age, and she said, "I'd never have done that if it wasn't for Blueberry. I really loved video, but I realised I wasn't really good at it, but it made me socially aware."

When I went to high school, we were in the sixties - we were socially aware. I went back to my high school reunion: most of the people were doctors, or if they were lawyers they were poverty lawyers or union lawyers - they weren't corporate lawyers; they were teachers or they were social workers or psychologists - very socially oriented. Now
it's computers or business and "give me the big bucks". What I found with the Blueberry kids is that they didn't go into that. They went to sociology, they went into working with the elderly, they went into video, they went into art - they went to socially-oriented programs - drug counselling, that sort of thing.

I ran into one student, first year of Blueberry, one of what I call the "clunkers" - one of the kids who doesn't want to do anything. Ran into him about two months ago. I said, "What are you doing?" expecting him to tell me he's sitting on a beach doing nothing.

He said, "I'm just finishing up my Ph.D. in anthropology."

I was stunned. I said, "Come on! Now really what are you doing? What you're really doing is you're running a bula dozer, right? That's what you're telling me?"

He said, "No really. I'm at Penn State; I'm getting my Ph.D. in anthropology. I know I was a jerk at Blueberry, but it's something that just stuck with me. After taking two years off and not going to college, then I went to college, it just hit me: this is what I want to do. And I love it - I've travelled all over the world. This is great."

I really think kids are willing to take risks more. The problem with our society in the United States is that people get put into a little corner. They have to decide when they're juniors in high school what they want to do in college. "I want to be an engineer." I couldn't do that when I was a junior in high school. If I did that, I would be a CPA - an accountant. If somebody said, "What do you want to do?" at high school, I'd say, "I don't know; I'm good at math - I'll be an accountant."

The kids trace that back?

Consciously. Like the librarian. She was not joking when she said her daughter still feels part of Blueberry. Her daughter works for the State of New York, working with transportation of the elderly and she does speeches all around the state. She constantly says, "Blueberry gave me that ability to stand up in front of groups and it gave me the desire to work with people and not be money oriented."

Have you got a favourite video?

I really don't. I've stories. Every time I see a show I remember little things that happen in every story that makes the shows ... The worst show:

We had a group of three girls who hated school. Two of them never graduated high school in the end. They went and did a show on a farmer who was 81 years old in town. Technically it was horrible, but there was just something about those three girls doing that show that it could be my favourite show because of their story of getting together this 81 year-old man they used to work for when they were young, and doing that show.

On the other hand, you see a really slick show like the one on Shriners or Scott Prior that you really appreciate the thought process coming through it.

There's another show we did, with three girls who weren't academically motivated on "Unique Friendships". It was on two step-sisters, twice removed, who became best friends. Every time I see it I cry. It's wonderful. It's what really we thought Blueberry was going to be and then it's grown up to other stuff. Everytime I go through lists of shows, I can remember little stories about each kid.

We did a show on a stone-cutter, a guy who's a sculptor. He was doing work on the Hartford State Capitol. Two unmotivated kids went down there and climbed the scaffolding up there and did a show on this guy - you could hardly understand him because he had a very heavy Italian accent. Every time I still see Charlie, we still talk about that show.

Blueberry's had problems continuing to get the money from the community to keep existing - to pay the video person.

I'd say that if the community was asked to vote for different parts of the budget - "Here's the school budget - how many vote for funding athletics" and you'd get 100 people to raise their hand; "how many people vote for funding the home eco department?" well 10 people would raise their hand; "how many for Blueberry?" - well the same 100 would raise their hands. But that's not the way it works, unfortunately. "Here's the school budget of x million dollars - how many vote for passing it?" They never see what's in it.

We're no longer a program because the school, in its infinite wisdom they decided they only have a big enough pie and they can only do certain things. The Art Department is being devastated, the Music Department is not doing so hot and the I.E. Department isn't getting what it wants. There's obviously money, but the people who make the decisions on where that money goes obviously have a bias against this kind of course.
It's seen as an expendable frill.

Kids will still take English whether Blueberry's here or not. They'll still learn to write. Yet you talk to every one of them - they'll just tell you Blueberry's the best thing that ever happened: "We hope to get it back" - but talk is cheap.

Over the years we fought it and won and kept winning. To be perfectly blunt, Greg and I got tired of fighting. We kept saying to the Principal: "Why do I have to keep telling you why we exist and walk out of here at 6 o'clock at night with books under my arms, and do work at home that every other teacher does at school, when there are teachers who walk out of here without any work? Nobody ever gives them a hard time and they think teaching is wonderful. They say to me, 'This is a great job. I get here at 10 to 8 and I leave at 2 o'clock and I have all the afternoon to play anything I want or get a second job or do anything I want.' They don't have any hassles - why do I always go home with knots in my stomach, wondering about why we're here and have to keep telling you why we're here? Nobody ever questions the History teacher who shows a film every day. Nobody ever asks him his academic credentials or are kids learning in his class, because everybody knows they aren't."

After a little while, you just say, "Screw it. I've got to worry about myself and my own family and my own health." I started getting ulcers. I said, "This isn't worth it!" You just get tired of it. It's sad because the other half of me says, "Fight!" and I do fight but it's like butting your head against a wall - after a little while it hurts and you give it up.

You also hinted that you thought that Blueberry was being used as a pawn in many ways because people would support it...

We'd say, "Hey, if you don't support this budget, we're going to have to cut athletics and Blueberry." Well, everybody in town knows they're not going to cut athletics. Well, finally, after four years of crying wolf and saying that and Blueberry coming back, the parents were saying to me, "Come on, you're not going to give me that school committee meeting again where you stand up and say how great Blueberry is. School committee has heard it 100 times first of all, and second of all every year they have it back anyway."

And I'd say, "Maybe they have it back because you did stand up and say that."

They say, "No, we know the truth - the truth is they're going to have it back no matter what."

Parents were stunned that it wasn't coming back. I said, "Call the Principal." But you can't make them do it. Out of vision, out of mind.

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Interview with David Bernstein by Rebecca Coyle and Roger Holdsworth.

Further information on Project Blueberry, including the Project's writing assignments and a full list of videos produced, is available on photocopy through CONNECT. It is listed as #183 - 85 pages for $8.50.

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Plan it, print it

"How to Plan & Print Your Own Newspaper," a recently released publication from Children's Express, is a short-but-comprehensive manual on beginning newspaper production.

The 31-page loose-leaf booklet highlights the student's involvement in the newspaper process from beginning to end. It covers school newspaper basics such as size, style, layout and pasteup tools, typewriter typogra- phy and duplication.

The cost of "How to Plan & Print Your Own Newspaper" is:

- $4.95, single copy
- $4.75 each, 10-50 copies
- $4.45 each, 31-100 copies
- $4.15 each, 100 or more copies.

For more information on this concise, useful publication, contact: Bob Clampit, Publisher, Children's Express, 20 Charles St., New York, N.Y. 10014; phone: 212/243-4503.

Reprinted from Up-date NIE: Newspaper in Education programs Vol 10 No 5 May/June 1984
McKinley High School is in St. Louis, Missouri. The Mass Media Department at that school is situated in the basement area. I wandered in during the summer holidays but several students were still working there, showing Joe Clark, a member of staff, sections of a video they were working on.

I sat down with Joe and started by asking him about the background of the Mass Media Program:

The program started four years ago. We began as a de-segregation project. We're one of the unusual programs in the city in that ours started out as a specialty program within a regular school. There aren't too many other programs like that going - they're either specialty programs in a special building or the whole school is devoted to a certain area of study.

Our program, on the other hand, started out as a specialty program that happened to be located at McKinley High School. We're one of two or three like that in the city in terms of the desegregation effort.

We have four or five areas that we specialise in, in terms of mass communication:

Photography, especially photo-journalism, is the first. In this area, I think we differ from other photography programs in this city. For instance at Visual and Performing Arts, their emphasis is more on creative photographic expression whereas our emphasis here is on the photo-journalism - telling a story in pictures. I think that distinguishes us from other photography teaching programs that are going on.

The Radio class does a 15-minute radio show every morning over the school system's radio station KSLH, which is an FM station here in the city.

Who would listen to that?

The general public, I think. We do have a few listeners although the school educational system's station has not the highest ratings in the city. It's not something, I think, that teachers are using in their classes as a program of studies, as they do other programs on that station, such as reading and vocabulary, but the audience is a more general audience because the station broadcasts throughout the city.

We have a course in Super 8 Film-Making where students write scripts, story-board, shoot their own original Super 8 film. I suppose, as much as anything else, this is the creative wing of what we do, because Super 8 lends itself more to creative expression and less to documentary record-keeping kinds of things. That's more appropriate to the tape lengths you have with video or audio tape. You have very short lengths with Super 8, so everything has to be very tightly controlled. It tends to be a more creative medium - one that lends itself to creative expression rather than documenting facts, as radio and TV tend more to be.

We're starting a program in the Fall where we're going to use the existing Journalism courses and try to give them our own special emphasis. We'll have courses in "Introduction to Journalism" and then "Journalism Lab" where the school publication and hopefully other publications will be taught too. I'm hoping to expand that to a more general magazine format and we may work this in conjunction with the English Department here at school and with the Photo-Journalism class, so that hopefully we'll be able to come up with a nice, balanced publication that will reflect the work that the students in Photo-Journalism as well as the work that the students in English classes and the Journalism classes are doing too.

That will go out through the students at the school?

We don't have any other larger distribution in mind at this time but initially, as a magazine, as an experiment, to see if it might fly - in-house at this school. But hopefully, dealing with broader topics. We wouldn't limit ourselves to just what's going on at McKinley. That gets kind of tired. Most of the students who are in our program are from outside the McKinley district. Since we are a specialty program within the school, we draw from everywhere in the city and the students tend to come
from districts all around. The interests of the students tend to be broader and that's reflected in the kinds of materials that they produce - they're not just McKinley oriented. When I was here as a regular McKinley teacher, two years ago, that was the case: everything was parochial. They wanted to deal only with those kinds of topics, related to teachers and students and school events and that sort of thing.

One of the things this program does, is it gives the kids a little more of the sense of the scope of media, what they can do with it, the kinds of things that can be expressed with it, and broaden their thinking somewhat as to what they should be dealing with.

You're particularly involved with the Video section. Can you tell us about the links that have been developed there with commercial television?

We just started a partnership program with Channel 4 recently. It actually started as a result of CBS's response to President Reagan's invitation to the private sector to become more involved in public education. They responded by mandating that all their directly owned stations throughout the country (in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and St Louis) would become involved with the local schools. So they approached our school system and asked which schools or which school that the system would recommend they team up with. Because of our involvement with television, in the video segment of our mass media program, the superintendent recommended that they come here to McKinley. It was ironic in that right after the partnership began, they were thinking of moving us out of the McKinley building and house us where Visual and Performing Arts High School is going to be next year. So we were almost locked out of that association with KMOX immediately upon its being established. But they decided to leave us here at the last minute and we are going to remain. The association with KMOX is going to open a lot of doors for the students in video.

The culminating activity for this year (and we did start late) was for the students to create a half-hour show to be aired on Channel 4. That has generated more enthusiasm and excitement in the students than anything else that they've done in the program, in the video classes, bar none. Even students who are seniors and graduated a week and a half ago, are back and still working on the completion of the program, because it wasn't finished as of the end of our graduation time for seniors anyway.

What sorts of things are they doing?

I said that the students in the program, since they come from other districts, have a tendency to be a little more broad in their thinking as to kinds of topics they would like to deal with. When the producer came from KMOX, she thought that the ideal thing for them to deal with would be McKinley, and they want to spotlight the school and their association with it. So it came from Channel 4 that the program was to be about McKinley. A lot of students really didn't care for that, because they thought they could find more interesting material outside the school than they could here. But in any rate, it is about the school, spotlighting different students and teachers, different kinds of activities that are going on within the building. One of the ways that they broadened out was that, since break-dancing is such a craze in the country these days, they decided to do a spot on break-dancing. Since everybody in the school is break-dancing into the classroom and out (you turn around and some-one is wiggling in and out of the door) they were able to do a spot on break-dancing. That worked out very nicely. They're doing a spot, too, on a McKinley alumnus who was paralysed in a football accident about 12 years ago, Herman Davis. The school hasn't forgotten him - they give him programs every year in the auditorium. He's a very courageous young man who has survived not only his own tragedy but many in his own family too. So they decided to do a program on him. Things of that kind... I think that the topics that they chose were generally very good ones to deal with.

Did the students have much say in the program or how it would be carried out?

I think there was an attempt to bring the students in. Right from the beginning, that was the intent of that producer. I didn't mean to be negative about that.

The producer came in with the intention of letting students determine what kind of show they were going to put on and I think that particular focus was 1) that they wanted to spotlight the school; and 2) that I think she felt that the students would deal best with material they were most familiar with, and probably thought that the material they were most familiar with was McKinley. But there were open lines of communication.

One thing that I can say very openly about the partnership with Channel 4, was that they listen to what you say, and that they respond. I haven't felt any sense of: "We
are going to come in and tell you how to do things." There has been a legitimate attempt to come in and work with the staff. It's been more reluctance on behalf of the general McKinley staff to become involved with the kinds of things that the station is offering, rather than the other way around. Channel 4 has listened very well.

Do they regard it as being an educational process for students?

Sure. I think they realise that these are students, and they're not going to produce these programs in the same time limitations that a professional would have to deal with. They don't expect perfection. They expect us to reflect that these are people involved in a learning process. I think that in general they have been pleased with the kind of things that the students have been doing and I think in general impressed enough at the way the students have handled themselves. So it's been a learning experience for them too.

What's been your role as the teacher?

I've tried to stay in the background as much as possible. Going into this thing, I didn't want to become any more involved than I had to be. I wanted to make it a project that the students could legitimately say that they had worked on, and had produced on their own. I'm the wheels behind a lot of what happens - I provide transportation, I provide advice if they ask for it on given things, technical matters.

If I am at a particular place where they are taping and I see something that I think is obviously not going to work, I'll slip in and say, "I don't think you should do it that way" but if they say, "No, I want this" then I say, "OK, go ahead and do that, if you think that's going to work". I tried to be very low-key in this whole production and not intrude any more than was absolutely necessary in the whole process.

How much experience had these students had?

The ones that were mostly involved were seniors who were at least two years in video. They have experience of putting together and working with a fairly wide variety of programs for high school students. We've done things from a senior follies session with three cameras to programming for a variety of departments here at school - English, Social Studies. In each case, they had to do some research to find out what the content of the program was, so that they could video-tape it successfully and not miss the point.

Is that the usual sort of content in the video programs in the course?

It's a pretty wide variety of stuff. Students do their own creative work, they get involved with a lot of projects with classes, and we get involved with requests from not only teachers but from outside agencies within the school system. We did a program on micro-computers for the Data Management Services Branch of the system. The creative programs that they work on tend to be imaginative, kind of bizarre sometimes, involving anything from more traditional type special effects, with make-up and creating artificial blood for bloody scenes, to almost science-fiction or fantasy-type programs.

One student did a program called 1984, where a fellow is trying to get into a room that security clearance will not let him get into and eventually the guy has to walk off frustrated because the computer won't let him in. Then someone else who has a proper authorisation goes in, and it's a rest room. The last thing you hear in the program is a flushing toilet.

Who's the audience? Is it important that you have an audience?

One of the reasons the Channel 4 thing is going to be so valuable is that it provides an outlet they can shoot for. The audience for those programs in the past has been either a limited audience of teachers and students here in the school who we
video-taped for, or for parents say at a parent night where we'd have the parents of the students who were involved in the program come by and take a look and see what the students had done. But we did not have an outlet for the students in video, a really clear tangible goal that they could shoot for.

Much more so, in that respect, are the programs that are aired on our radio show every morning. The radio show provides them 15 minutes every morning that they know that they have to fill, that they know that there are people out there who are going to hear.

What do they do?

A wide variety of things again, from the most trivial and inane to interviewing the mayor. Students who come to the class with a lot of initiative will think up things that another student might not: "I think I'll call the mayor and see if he'll talk to us". They call the mayor and, sure enough, he'll talk to you, and you set up an appointment and go speak with him.

It's a pretty tough assignment, filling 15 minutes every day!

It is. The students on that show, I guess, feel the pressure more than any other students in our program. Having deadlines really does something to the adrenal system and the students have to be up for that. They don't repeat any material - they have to come up with 15 new minutes every day, from a two-hour class.

How many students would be involved in that?

I think in the radio class this year there were about 12 to 15, depending on the time of the year. Each student has one show - each show is the responsibility of one student for one day, so students are probably going to have a show that they're responsible for on the air once every couple of weeks. On the other hand, they don't have a whole lot of material to edit with, since the tape recorders and the equipment we have to deal with is so limited because of budget. They have to schedule their editing time, their recording time and their broadcasting time very carefully.

You've been fairly well supported in terms of equipment and staffing?

When people come to the program, it looks as though we're very well equipped. Actually it's been very haphazard to the program - in the central administration of the program. The purchase of the equipment has been left to the people involved in the program, which is a credit to the administration. But there's been no real study as to the needs of a program like this, and I've requested a study like that be done, because we, as people involved in it, can talk for a long time about what this program's needs are, but we're not really paid much attention to. I like the definition of an expert as an ordinary guy along way from home. When we get people in from outside to talk about Visual and Performing Arts Programs or Mass Media Programs, they say to our central administration, "The Mass Media Program needs this" and they pay a lot more attention to them, whereas people here in the system, who have been working here for a long time, are not really heeded very carefully.

So, if you ask me personally if we're well equipped and well funded, I'd say no. I'd say we've been able to do pretty well with the money that we've been given in putting together a program, but that's only because of lots and lots of hours at night agonizing over a too-small budget.

Many other programs have been cut. Do you fear that?

I'm sure that the money's going to dry up - federal and state moneys for de-segregation are going to dry up. I don't know how much longer they're going to be there. It's not a bad time for us now. We're getting some new things and we're able to do some exciting programs with the students. A few years from now, if these moneys do dry up, and I think they will, I don't know how much the Board is going to support a program like this in a tight financial situation where other things are going to take priority and it's going to be more difficult for them to justify keeping us around. Then I think it's altogether possible that our program might feel the effects of that.

Is it a frill?

No, I think it's a shame when education has to set priorities like that where only the most important things are going to be funded. Most important is a relative term. I think our program is the reason for a lot of student who have gone through it, to stay in school, and I think it's the reason for a lot of them going on to school who wouldn't have ordinarily. I'm not talking about 'bad' students, I'm just talking
about students who have found a niche here. They've found a place, a form of expression or a career option here, that they might not have had someplace else. High school is a very important time. It's an important time for decision-making for a young person. Going out of high school and choosing where to go into college or not is going to affect the course of that person's life. Or choosing which field you're going into out of high school. I think the areas we're teaching are very important at this time when technology is growing so rapidly. We need people who can handle the technology and we need people who have started at a younger age in thinking about what the technology can do, just in terms of their own growth as individuals and learning to deal with the technological society like the one we have—understand it and not be manipulated by it, to be able to control their lives a little better. I think this is a very important program, and it would be a shame to see it go, just as it is a shame to see Music and Art and Physical Education go as they did when we had the tremendous budget cut-backs because of the money crunch a couple of years ago. Within this system, we lost an awful lot of young, energetic, bright teachers who were laid-off and that was simply because there wasn't enough money.

If a crunch like that comes again, Mass Media is certainly going to fall in that category. Our system has always been about 20 years behind anyway!

For further information, contact: Joe Clark, Mass Media Program, McKinley High School, 2156 Russell, St Louis, Mo 63104

Budding journalists produce elementary school newspaper

The students of Tualatin (Ore.) Elementary School learned by doing as they produced their own "weekly miracle."

The students took part in a weeklong newspaper enrichment unit designed to show them how a newspaper is produced and give them the satisfaction of composing a newspaper they could call their own.

Compose they did, filling a nifty 18-page tabloid-sized newspaper, Trojan Times. The newspaper boasted seven "sections:" school news, opinion/editorial, sports, people news, features, entertainment and pictures/cartoons.

Stories covered a vast array of hot topics, each of which demonstrated the writing ability of different students. Among the offerings: "Iowa Connection," about a school in Cedar Rapids that was involved in the same type of newspaper project during the same week; stories about the school nurse and the principal; a candid conversation with a local news broadcaster; and a stirring editorial entitled, "Have you waved at a policeman today?"

The newspaper also was chock-full of cartoons, along with some surprisingly accurate "information graphics" (those charts and graphs that USA Today does so well).

The project was the culmination of four months of work by faculty coordinators Janice Best, Janet Winterrowd and Joy Lindner. The students were separated into two groups—primary (K-3) and secondary (4-6). The groups were then divided into the various "departments." A group of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders were recruited to serve on the editorial board (along with several adults) to select and edit stories, write headlines, lay out pages and write editorials.

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YAP IN SALE

The Youth Action Program (YAP) at Pembroke High School operates upon principles of youth participation and some negotiation of curriculum.

A pilot class of 25 year 9 students takes part in the program. The students take Mathematics, Physical Education, Art, Science and Humanities. As well as these subjects, four teachers are involved in the YAP activities: cross-age tutoring, production of a school magazine and fortnightly excursions. There are eight teachers in the YAP team and the teachers work together on certain projects to adopt many different perspectives.

Although these subjects and activities constitute the essence of YAP, there is another important YAP component which makes invaluable contributions to the development of the YAP students.

We, the YAP teachers and students, are regularly invited to conferences and to take workshops as a result of interest shown in YAP by other schools and educational organisations. The 1983 YAP students undertook many such commitments culminating in the VISE sponsored YAP Conference in November 1983 (reported in issue 26 of CONNECT).

This year, the YAP students have visited local primary schools, participated in a cross-age tutoring workshop, addressed students at an Upper Yarra High Tech in-service and travelled to Sale for Sale High School's in-service day.

The YAP students gain enormous confidence from their public-speaking engagements as they realise that their knowledge and experiences are valued by adults and peers. They are listened to, questioned closely and thanked for their input.

Below is an account of the Sale in-service by one of the participating students.

Tom O'Meara
Pembroke High School

When Tom came into the classroom, he announced that four students and himself were invited to attend an overnight in-service at Sale. The interested people had their names written on the board and we all voted for four people. Eventually Megan, Richard, Darren and myself were chosen. We didn't quite know what we were in for but we didn't want to drop out.

Finally, it was Thursday the 19th and Tom was driving us to Sale. When we drove in to our motel, it was a mad rush to drop in our luggage and have tea before 7.30 pm.

When we walked into the "Bounce" Centre, we were handed agenda sheets and name tag stickers before moving into the large room where the first half of the conference was to take place. When we did go to sit at our seats we looked in front of us; there must have been about 250 people in there. Suddenly I felt sick and scared, but as the speeches took place I got over it.

There were speakers from Sale High, Bairnsdale, VISE and, of course, Pembroke. It was very interesting, listening to them talk about their different programs and ideas. After Tom's speech, Geoff Dimmett of VISE asked if there were any questions and just when Richard, Darren, Megan and I thought we were safe, a man stood up and directed a question to the YAP students: "How do you feel about all this responsibility being thrust upon you?" We all sat there stunned. When Geoff asked, "Which one of you will answer?" I turned to my left and all I could see was three thumbs pointing my way, so I turned to my right and there was Tom sitting there grinning and saying, 'Go on Suzie, please." So I gradually stood up and answered the question including 'cross-age tutoring' and 'The Grapevine' in my answer until I nearly fell down, as my legs were shaking like a leaf. I couldn't believe that I had done it. Tom, Geoff, Doug and even the Sale High School Principal congratulated me. I was so happy that I did it, not only for me but for Tom as well.

After we were dismissed, some Sale High School SRC members came and gave us some questions and also the man who asked the question came up and Megan and myself spoke to him for around half an hour. He was very interested so we didn't leave out one detail about YAP.

Then on Friday the second half of the conference took place at the Sale Racecourse. We first listened to Doug once again about the minischool program until we all broke off into groups.
We were, of course, with Tom and we were the head of the Youth Participation Group. There were about 20 people assembled in front of us, who seemed really interested. Firstly, Tom talked about YAP in general until he asked for questions. There were questions like, "How does cross-age tutoring start?", "Do you mix with the other year 9s?" and "Do you enjoy the program and are you getting anything out of it?" seem to be the most asked questions. We all answered the questions fully and confidently. It was an absolutely fantastic experience. It took a while for me to realise that I spoke in front of all those people and mum hardly believes me now. I was amazed at how the adults were listening to us, the students, and how they didn't pick on us. Also, hearing my voice speaking to those people, it sounded strange and going to these conferences I think increased understanding between adults, teachers and students and they also give you experience in talking and negotiating ideas and problems. I hope Sale High School were happy with our presentation of YAP. I could see that most of them were very interested and it would make me proud if they did install a YAP class.

Suzie Brown
Pembroke High School
Cambridge Road,
Mooroolbark 3138

FRIENDS
OF Y.P.

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

SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER ($100):
Student Press Project (West Footscray)

PATRON SUBSCRIBERS ($50 pa):
Anonymous (Brunswick, Vic)
Brian Coulter (Lake Bolac, Vic)
Andrew Ius (Williamstown, Vic)
Jocelyn Grant (Carlton, Vic)
Tullamarine TEC (Brunswick, Vic)
Kerry Howard (East Malvern, Vic)
Jeana McPherson (Essendon, Vic)
Tony Knight (Bundoora, Vic)
Jan Hargreaves (Toowong, Qld)

Action out west

By all accounts the 'official' launching of the Student Action in Education Project was a great success. Gathered together in the Footscray Technical School auditorium were the Minister of Education, officials from the Education Department, workers from the Western Region Education Centre and students from local post primary schools. Each of them had encouraging and positive things to say about the project, which 'unofficially' started in Term 3 last year.

Project officers, Pamela Ward and Barry Hancock (pictured above) see the main aim of the project as encouraging and supporting student participation in decision-making in post primary schools in the region. Funded by Western Region TEAC, it has grown directly out of the Ministerial Papers which call for student participation in decision-making at all levels.

So far, the emphasis has been on setting up student committees within schools, and establishing networks beyond this. However, this is shifting towards resourcing these networks through documenting the project, setting up a resources library and helping students document their own participation.

Several students involved in the project spoke at the launching, outlining various aspects of the project and describing their own experiences and observations. If confidence and eloquence are any measure of success, it is clear the project is doing well.

To date, the Western Region is the first to take on a project like this. Other schools and regions wishing to know more about Student Action can contact Pamela Ward or Barry Hancock on 3143011.
Dear Community Studies, History or Writing Program,

Enclosed are copies of newspaper inserts (held by CONNECT) that have been taken from our forthcoming publication "Coming of Age in Boston: Across the Generations." MOSAIC is a community studies and publication program at South Boston High School which, for the past two years, has been conducting an oral history research project documenting peoples' life after high school. Our 1984 anthology is the culmination of that research. We'd like to take this opportunity to contact other community and student research and writing programs, to exchange publications, and gather some basic information on what other kinds of activities are happening in the field.

Also enclosed is a questionnaire about your program and its publications. (This is available on request from CONNECT.) The purpose of this is two-fold. First, we would like to gather basic information for a possible informal directory of programs like ours. Second, we have a small grant to purchase materials for a library of community and student produced writing materials which needs to be spent by late July this summer. If you have publications for sale, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can include you in our materials search.

If you would be interested in being included in our bulk mailing of our 80-page anthology (which will include materials in this insert and numerous other articles) please send back the questionnaire by mid-July as well.

Michael Tierney, MOSAIC, 95 G Street, South Boston, Massachusetts 02127 USA

Under separate cover, I'm mailing our last two copies of Those Comforting Hills (received). I think I mailed these last fall, but did not make a record.

Please take us off your mailing list as we will not be publishing any more magazines. We no longer have a class time to work.

Thank you for your paper. We've enjoyed them and I wish continued success for you.

Virginia Milner, Those Comforting Hills, Comfort, Texas, USA.

It is with regret that we must tell you that, due to lack of funds, "WORDWORKS, About People and Employment" has been forced to fold. Any remaining funds will be donated to other job creation task groups within Employ Working Effectively.

Elaine McCready and Barbara Sharp, EMPLYO, PO Box 88, Balaclava 3183

We're from an alternative school in the north-wes corner in Connecticut.

We produce the magazine "North-West Images". We need some new ideas and would like to show you some too.

We've enclosed one of our magazines to exchange for one of yours.

Sarah S Machio, North-West Images, Box 151, West Cornwall, CT 06796 USA

Enclosed are three copies of our school newspaper, THE BOOLITE BUGLE. The newspaper is produced entirely by level 10 students as part of a unit. The choice of articles, writing and final acceptance of them are made entirely by the students. Editors, sub-editors, photographers and a meetings secretary were elected by the students and they organised all tasks themselves, except for the printing.

Units were a minimum of three periods so much had to be done at home. At a general meeting, the students raised the issue price from 5c to 10c and each student has sold three copies each of every issue. The money raised will be used to finance another issue later this term. Original funding came from TEAC.

THE BOOLITE BUGLE is a remarkable achievement. Students who have difficulty with the written language were enthusiastic to produce articles of a high standard. As students from across level 10 groups worked together, it produced a sense of unity amongst students who may have had little contact with each other.

Miriam Iuricich, Warracknabeal High School, PO Box 285, Warracknabeal 3393
A TRAINING DAY FOR STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

Produced by the Student Action Project (Western Metropolitan Region, Vic) and compiled by Lisa Innocenzi from Altona High School. This 20 page booklet describes the in-service program organised by the Student Action Project in March of this year for SRC representatives and provides a useful model for training sessions on developing and supporting student involvement in decision-making. Students workshopped through a number of practical activities and then presented back to the group the submissions they had developed during the day. Interest Task Groups worked on the issues of publicity, activities, finance and administration. There is also a section dealing with organising and running SRC meetings and activities. A practical and useful document aimed at giving students basic skills to involve themselves in SRC and School Council activities.

Available from the Student Action Project, West Education Centre, 34 Kingsville Street, West Footscray 3012. (Contact: Pamela Ward, Barry Hancock: (03) 314.3011) Also available on photocopy from CONNECT: #184 $2.50.

MURRAYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL: RADIO IN THE CURRICULUM

A report on an in-service day held at the school in April, 1984.

3MRR is the community radio station based at Murrayville High School and the report describes the discussions which took place at the in-service earlier this year. The focus of the in-service was (a) to integrate radio into the school's curriculum; (b) to examine strategies for incorporating radio into various subject areas.

There appears to be little input from students to the in-service and in examining the issues of radio in the curriculum. While it is important to extend the use of such a valuable resource into the classroom, the potential will only be realised if students too are brought into some "ownership" of their experiences.

For further information about the in-service, contact Justin Shortal (who wrote up the booklet and was a resource person at the in-service) at 3CCC-FM, Station Street, Harcourt 3453. Phone: (054) 74.2511.
STUDENT FESTIVAL WEEK September 17th - 21st

The Student Festival week has been designed to involve students in a range of fun and interesting activities, to get students together during a week of events which will be run at different locations in the South Central Region (Vic), and to provide a forum for discussions and information sharing.

Some snippets from the program:
* PEP Thugs Rock'n'Dole - a play: Monday 12th September - afternoon;
* Workshop for students on School Councils - Rights, Roles and Responsibilities: Monday 12th September - afternoon;
* Learning about producing a school newspaper: Tuesday 13th September - morning;
* Learning about local history: Wednesday 14th September - morning;
* Workshop for girls in schools: Thursday September 15th - afternoon;
* Student Forum which includes a drama-based in-service on student participation, forming regional student bodies, student rights etc: Friday September 16th;
* On-going displays of student photography, newspapers, writing;
* Rap dancing;
* Mural tour.

These and many other sessions and further information is available from Sue Fabian, South Central Region: (03) 520.7666.

BEING A GIRL: IT'S HARDER THAN YOU THINK

A recent resource for educators examining the complex issues of the needs of girls in schools.

The booklet is based on the premise that schools can perform a valuable role in countering the socialisation which restricts girls' options by providing factual information and raising their self-esteem. The booklet contains sections on the Australian family, Teenage girls and the law, Sexuality and health, Self-esteem and Work and unemployment.

Produced and available from The Women's Legal Resources Centre, 9 Carroll Street, Lidcombe NSW. (02)649.3172.

GIRLS AND THE LAW

Produced by Kate Tayler and Robyn Outram through the Women's Legal Resources Centre, Lidcombe in association with girls from high schools in Sydney.

The aim of the booklet is to provide information for young women that will be helpful and easy to use. Quite often, the law and the,legal processes can seem so complicated that girls (and women) don't seek legal help.

Available from the Women's Legal Resources Centre, 9 Carroll Street, Lidcombe NSW (02) 649.3172

NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CULTURAL JOURNALISM: WORKSHOP REPORT: 1979

CONNECT has received a few copies of the special issue of HANDS ON that dealt with the 1979 Cultural Journalism Workshop in St Louis, Missouri. These are available from us for $2 to cover mailing. First in gets copies - others will have to wait until we can order more from FOXPIRE. (PS We were there.)
MY PLACE, YOUR PLACE

A fabulous new poster kit from CENSE (Campaign to Encourage Non-Sexist Education).

The aim of the poster kit is to provide images to children whose families do not fit the media stereotype, and to assist parents and teachers who want to redefine their "families" to include friends and the wider community. The plain facts of the matter are that less than 21% of Australian families actually fit into the nuclear family stereotype. My Place, Your Place includes a large, full-colour poster and a 32 page booklet containing current statistics, information, lesson plans and ideas and an annotated bibliography of non-sexist children's books.

Available for $7 plus $1.50 postage from:
CENSE, 34 Kingsville St., West Footscray 3012.
Phone (03) 314.3011

The editors of EMU Literary Magazine For Young Australians proudly announce its continued success by presenting the second and third issues. These collections of work represent an even greater variety of writing and graphics from a larger circle of young Australian talent.

The EMU editors are proud of their survival as a self-funded magazine. We aim to aid young writers in their isolation and to present work of high quality to as wide an audience as possible.

The success of our first issue in both sales and enthusiastic response from writers and readers alike, has established us as a much needed and refreshing general literary magazine. EMU is unique in that it aims to publish articles from Australians aged under 25 years of age. To this end, we also support their endeavours with workshops and soirees involving greater public audiences.

The third issue of EMU reflects the effort of two years' ground-work in establishing a genuine, dedicated outlet for young writers.

In keeping with our policy to promote young writers, this issue marks the inception of a special section for very young writers, those aged under 14 years. Like the rest of the magazine, this new section (called "Just Hatched") contains exciting creative thought which should challenge your pre-conceptions of youth writing.

EMU can be obtained from 192 Clarke Street, Northcote 3070. The co-editors are Evelyn Tsitas, Fiona Capp and Catherine Jaggs.
A STUDENT INVolVEMENT IN MEETINGS IN-SERVICE will be held at Brighton High School on September 12th for interested students and teachers in the South Central Region in Melbourne. The day has been designed by a planning group made up of students from three of the schools in that region. Activities will include a screening of Meeting Bloody Meetings, discussion groups, practice meetings and "the ideal meeting".

Details available from Sue Fabian, South Central Regional Office, PO Box 68, Balaclava 3183. Phone 520.7666.

A REPORT FROM PRIMARY AREA STUDY TEAM EIGHT: IN-SERVICE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Previous reports in CONNECT (Constructive approaches to social change in CONNECT 22/23 and Student researchers in action in CONNECT 24) outlined some results and background to research carried out by students in Melbourne. This research was also linked to a concept of teacher in-service carried out through LaTrobe University's Education School. In this, Area Study Teams work on school-based in-service training and individuals gain a post-graduate B.Ed. degree.

This report is the result of a two-year project in the western suburbs of Melbourne. It provides the background to the research referred to above. Sections are contained on: Action Research Teams; Students as Researchers; Transition from Primary to Secondary School; Mathematics Across the Curriculum: Multi-cultural Perspective; and Aggressive Behaviour: Theory and School Policy.

Copies are available from Tony Knight, Centre for the Study of Urban Education, LaTrobe University, Melbourne 3083 for $5 or $5.50 by mail. (ISBN 0 85816 540 6)

A new magazine was launched on Tuesday, 26 June at Carringbush Regional Library.

Called 'No Visible Means of Support', it's a study of youth issues in the inner urban region.

 Basically catering for the unemployed, it is packed with statistics and information on just about every aspect of youth in the streets today.

Overall the magazine covers employment, unemployment, hassles with the police, recreation, income security, and housing.

Many problems such as the issues of unemployment, disabled people, aboriginals and migrants are covered as well.

Homelessness, institutions and the options in housing prove a good subject, with many individuals expressing their views on the matter.

Hopefully N.V.M.O.S will have an impact on the street and widen many people's eyes to the problems young people live with.

As it is stated on the foot of the introduction: "We hope that this report will lead to community discussion and would welcome any comment on it's contents." - Judy Atkinson.

Have a good look at N.V.M.O.S if you get the chance and voice an opinion - after all, it is a step closer to a viable means of support, isn't it.

BERN

Review courtesy of Soft Option, 415 Church Street, Richmond 3121.

No Visible Means of Support - Inner City Bulletin No 5 from PACS - available from the Department of Community Welfare Services, 9th Fl, 176 Wellington Pde., East Melbourne 3002. Phone (03) 651.7467 or from bookshops.
Bathurst High School

The year 10 Commerce students at Bathurst High School are studying local government. They have been discussing the issue of the elm trees in Bentinck Street. It was decided to carry out a survey of students within the school and send the results to councillors. The findings were as follows:

Question 1: Should the elm trees in Bentinck Street be cut down?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
<th>% No</th>
<th>% Don't Know</th>
<th>Student Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the survey was fairly loosely structured, the results do indicate a definite trend in opposition to the removal of the trees. The sample is narrow and not of voting age (except some year 12s). However, the attitudes of children on such issues often reflect those of the home. Also, these are the people who will have to live with the results of council's decision.

Year 10 Commerce students
C/O Peter Morgan
Bathurst High School
Bathurst 2795 NSW

Conference writing, Sunshine HS, Vic
STUDENTS & COMMITTEES

These three discussion papers have been produced within the Victorian Transition Education and/or Participation and Equity Program. They are intended as guides for the use of committees or for students on committees and, at this stage, are still in draft form - so responses are invited.

1. STUDENTS ON COMMITTEES: FOR COMMITTEES

The following discussion paper on student representation on committees is being circulated for your information and comment. It has been produced by a working party convened by the Policy Coordination and Program Review Committee of (Victorian) TEAC (Transition Education Advisory Committee) and comprising people with experience in TEAC (State and Regional), the Supplementary Grants Program, the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, the Youth Action Program and the Student Action in Education Project.

The proposals included as "principles" in the paper are intended to be positions which committees could work towards. Groups that do not initially feel able to implement all these points should not be deterred from starting to develop action. Action suggestions are included in each section.

We would be interested in your response to this paper. Responses should be sent to Students on Committees Working Party, TEAC/PEP, 416 King St., West Melbourne 3003.

Marge Smythe, Chairperson, Policy Coordination and Program Review Committee

PREAMBLE

In a variety of educational programs and school structures, representation in decision making is being accorded to students and student groups. Government policies, as reflected in the Ministerial papers, call for such representation. This poses challenges for school structures, for committee procedures and for teaching and learning approaches.

This paper, prepared as a response to those Government initiatives, attempts to outline some of the principles under which such representation should operate and some action steps to be taken by the various programs and committees.

INTRODUCTION

Why are students being approached for representation within programs and school structures?

A summary of various papers and other writings on this subject must point to the changing nature of youth, their position in society, their diminishing life options, and the role of education in this regard. James Coleman has written that:

"The student role of young persons has become enlarged to the point where that role constitutes the major portion of their youth. But the student role is not a role of taking action and experiencing consequences ... It is a relatively passive role, always in preparation for action, but never acting. (1)"

In recognition of the need for a response to these dilemmas, that alters the nature of the educational experience for young people, various programs have insisted that young people be brought into a more active role in decision-making about the implementation of program activities. This occurs within specific projects, within school-based decision-making structures and on area, regional and state committees.

Such representation is seen to have important educational value for the students (both generally and in specific skill areas). It recognises the value of the contribution that students make to the development of the program and provides a model of access to decision-making skills for all students. Tony Knight points to a rationale for programs which allows students to develop and demonstrate competencies to:
1. function as participants with adults in the planning and the resolution of problems in school and community settings;
2. learn the processes of debate, discussion and decision-making in group structures;
3. develop and plan human service activities;
4. link academic content and learning in order to deal with important social issues. (2)

And Peter Cole comments upon specific aspects of such programs as they relate to the transition of young people from school to work or further study:

... the transition from school to work or further study is one significant part of the broader process of the transition of youth from dependent to independent status;
the process by which youth in transition are assisted, should value rather than devalue the contribution which youth can make to society;
schools and their communities have an important role to play in the process by which youth are prepared for transition;
youth facing difficulties in exercising options should be assisted and supported whilst negotiating the process of moving towards chosen paths;
youth that are most severely disadvantaged should be given priority in the allocation of support resources. (3)

Participation by young people in the planning, implementation, evaluation and review of programs must be developed in the context of the above general statements. Since circumstances vary between programs, specific consideration needs to be given to the reasons for such representation and the outcomes expected from such representation. It is vital that such consideration provide a model for the basis of continuing representation and involve students in joint planning of the purposes for involvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented as statements of principle followed by suggestions for action by committees:

1. Rationale

All programs need to consider ways of involving students in planning, implementation, evaluation and review at all levels. Such a criterion should be written into the formal Program guidelines.

In particular, in requesting or requiring student representation on Program committees, specific consideration should be given to the rationale for such representation in terms that cover Program views of:

(a) the intent of such representation - educational (for students and the committee), political, pragmatic etc;
(b) the nature of the representation - from whom, how broad etc;
(c) the action to be taken by representatives - as a result of meetings, between meetings etc.

Action: 1. When the committee considers student representation, it should adopt a specific statement outlining the above points which then forms the basis for negotiation between the committee and student representative/s to lead to a shared understanding.

2. The Program should allocate funds from its budget for the support of representatives (as envisaged later in this paper) and should officially approach other funding bodies for financial support of representatives.

2. Influence

Student representatives on committees should have parity of influence in decision-making with all other groups and individuals.

In order to have authority on committees, all members (including students) should have a broad electorate of whom they are representative, to whom they are responsible and from whom they draw power.

Action: 1. Committees should discuss this issue both prior to and at the start of the period of student representation.

2. Committees should devise techniques to monitor influences within decision-making, to overcome discriminatory practices and to enable parity of influence. These techniques could include:
3. Committees should ensure that representatives are elected or appointed by broad student-run organisations, or work specifically towards such a situation if that is not initially possible. Funding could be allocated for the development of such broadly representative student bodies.

3. Perspective

Student representatives on committees should have the opportunity to meet with other students from other areas in order to broaden perspectives on student concerns and issues.

Student representatives on committees should have the opportunity to meet and work with representatives of other groups in order to broaden perspectives on educational issues.

Action: 1. Working parties on all issues should be open to student representatives;
2. Representatives should be funded to meet with students from their own and other areas;
3. Time, funding and accreditation should be available for these forms of support activities as well as for meetings;
4. Committees could approach in-service funding committees for support for student in-services.

4. Constituency

For effective student participation on committees to take place:

1. Student members of committees should be elected by students, not appointed by other means (eg teacher nomination);
2. Forums should exist at school, local, regional and state levels to enable students to develop links/contacts for information sharing and mutual support;
3. Such forums should provide the basis of an 'electoral college' for the election of student members to committees at corresponding levels of organisation (eg school-based forum elects students to School Council, School Proposal Committee etc);
4. Students elected by student forums/electoral colleges should have the opportunity to report back regularly to these forums for information, policy decisions, advice etc;

5. Student numbers on school, local, regional and state committees should be of such proportions to ensure that they are able to have effective influence/input;

6. Student representation should reflect the composition of the 'electoral college' with respect to gender, age, language, background etc.

**Action:** 1. The Minister of Education be asked to issue a policy statement on student representation on committees to cover:
   (a) the need for student representation to be elected by other students, as in the case of School Councils;
   (b) the need for school, local, regional and state committees to ensure adequate numbers of student positions on these committees;

2. Regional student groups should be set up to include student representatives from all government post-primary schools (initially);

3. A State-level student group be set up to include members from all regional groups;

4. The role of the regional and state groups be to:
   (a) promote the issue of student participation in decision-making in schools, through in-service, publications etc;
   (b) assist individual schools in setting up appropriate student forums;
   (c) provide the basis for closer student links/networks within and between schools;
   (d) act as a resource group for students and others seeking information and assistance.

5. **Support**

   Issues pertinent to the area of support for students involved in decision-making include:
   * a concern about student inexperience in such processes;
   * a concern about student disadvantage in relation to general meeting procedures;
   * the need for communication channels between student representatives and their broader student constituencies.

These issues could be restated as positions of principle:

In order for effective student participation in educational decision-making forums, the following principles should be endorsed:

1. **All student participants must have access to support programs designed to assist them in their work in decision-making forums;**

2. **All forums which include student representatives should adopt meeting procedures to maximise the effectiveness of student participation;**

3. **All student representatives be required to utilise appropriate communication channels with their broader constituency as an integral part of their role.**
Action: The above principle positions need to be supported with appropriate programs and resources in order to make the statement of principle an actuality. The following methods are raised for consideration:

1. (a) Generate in-service programs for student representatives resourced by the auspicing body. Issues to include meeting procedures, methods of developing communication channels, rationale for student participation, elaboration of roles of all participating bodies;
   (b) Develop an network of students as consultants, resourced by the auspicing body, to assist the work of new student representatives;

2. (a) Adopt a program of committee tutors, responsible to each student representative, required to assist student representatives on committees;
   (b) Adopt a program of pre-meeting meetings, resourced by the auspicing body, whereby agenda and major issues are discussed and clarified with student representatives;
   (c) Adopt a more flexible meeting procedure allowing for short adjournments whereby particular issues can be clarified and elaborated with student representatives prior to the formal debate;
   (d) Adopt a meeting reporting format which clearly itemises decisions taken and persons responsible for action;
   (e) Adopt a procedure of a verbal summary of all business completed at the end of the meeting by the executive officer;
   (f) Encourage a point form synopsis or summary of the main concepts presented in committee documents as a face sheet to all documents;

3. (a) Develop a program of report-back meetings conducted by student representatives with their broader constituency, supported by the auspicing body;
   (b) Support the development of student media programs to which student representatives submit reports of decisions taken and the nature of debate;
   (c) Develop a program of student seminars/conferences at which substantial and long-term issues relating to the work of student representatives can be considered.

For the programs to be undertaken seriously by students, their involvement in activities related to each of the principles must be negotiated and accepted as a legitimate component of the students' school curriculum program. Such negotiation should include relationship of work to classroom activities, development of agreed assessment goals and links between student representative work and curriculum content areas (e.g., English, Social Studies, Mathematics etc).

6. Credit for Students' Work

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 decision-making processes. (4)

Students should not be disadvantaged by their participation on committees occurring at the expense of their school work. To ensure that this does not happen, students should receive full credit for their committee work and attendance. Such credit should, wherever possible, be integrated into the schools' curriculum with the committee work given full value as an important learning experience.

Action: Negotiations will have to take place when student membership of committees is being arranged, involving the committee, School Council and administration, students, parents and teachers.

The committee concerned will have to take substantial responsibility for this action by having a committee member or members act as liaison person/s keeping in regular contact with the school/s involved. This liaison could include:

* seeking Education Department endorsement for the proposal to have students on the committee;
* developing a task orientation to the role of students on committees. Students would benefit from having specific tasks/projects/responsibilities to oversee, to identify with and to report about;
* seeking negotiated 'contracts' covering such things as:
(a) school subjects or programs with which the committee work links;
(b) probable time commitments of the committee work and arrangements this
might necessitate for the student/s with other school subjects or programs;
(c) agreed goals and format for descriptive assessment of the student's
committee work;
* writing of assessment and other reports regarding the student's committee work.

7. Arranging Time Out of School

Students should be able to be involved in committees and to assemble
and discuss issues of concern to them, during school time.

Action: Liaison between the committee and school/s will have to take into account:
(a) the need for flexibility in both committee and school time-tables/time-
lines;
(b) commitments students have regarding such things as exams, study, part-
time jobs, family holidays;
(c) school procedures for endorsing student out-of-school procedures.

8. Transport

All young people face severe restrictions of transport-including legal and financial
limitations and dependency on restrictive public systems or on parental chauffeuring.
As well, there is the contrast of positions of students to all others in education re-
garding travel allowances for in-service and committee attendance.

Students should receive full financial support for travelling arrange-
ments to and from school/home and committee meeting place.
In order to support individuals and families and for reasons of safety,
no student should be expected to travel alone.

Action: The committee concerned will have to accept responsibility for action here,
although some School Council responsibility may be appropriate here. Funding
for taxis would seem a likely arrangement.

9. Legal Liability

Obviously legal liability problems can severely restrict any student out-of-school-
time activity. This has been a worry for some time now, particularly for TEAC programs
and the whole issue is under investigation by the Education Department. The (Victorian)
Director General's memorandum "Supervision of Students" dated December 8th 1983 is im-
portant to note.

Provision for legal liability should protect, not restrict, student
participation on committees.

Action: The situation with respect to legal liability and student participation on
committees needs to be clarified to all parties concerned and resolved in
line with the above principle.
The committee would have to liaise with the current Education Department in-
vestigation into legal liability with the above action in mind, and specific
instances referred to TEAC personnel currently investigating liability issues,
cases and policy.

10. Payment

Paid student representatives on committees is a possibility in the same way that we
sometimes have paid parent and teacher representatives. While students usually do not
have an income and participate on committees on a voluntary basis, adults usually have
responsibilities for committee work as part of their paid employment. As the Partici-
pation and Equity Program has stated aims to investigate combinations of schooling, training and work, the issue of payment for students becomes especially important.

Professor Ken Polk (University of Oregon, at VISE during 1983) includes the issue of payment in his check points for youth action programs:

... What I am suggesting is that when we think about work experience and work-oriented programs, if we think in terms of youth involvement or youth participation along the lines of problem solving and service, we can begin to give young people a real sense that they have something to contribute.

... If possible, see if you can get paid for the young people. There are lots of reason for this. An important one is motivation for the young people. Pay provides an initial reason for their participation. However, the most significant reason is that we need to develop models of responsible employment activities for kids. The pay issue forces the participating institutions to think differently about young people. Youth affairs, youth service agencies should consider having a very significant part of their budget for the employment of young people so that their employment policy can be a model for the rest of the community. The community needs to know how to involve young people and employ them. (5)

Favourable consideration should be given to the issue of payment for the committee work of student representatives.

**Action:** When committees arrange for student representation, the issue of payment will need to be included in the negotiations and supported by committee (and other) funds where this is seen as appropriate given the above principle. The committee concerned will need to plan for possible payment to students, structure this into their financial arrangements and negotiations for representation, and investigate appropriate awards and employment contracts.

**References:**


4. Greg Thorpe - student at St Albans High School and member of the Western Metropolitan Region Student Participation Working Party - paper to the Working Party.

2. STUDENTS ON COMMITTEES: FOR STUDENTS

The following paper is a re-write of the "Students on Committees" paper directed to students. Again, comments and questions are invited: Roger Holdsworth, Participation and Equity Program, 416 King St., West Melbourne 3003.

INTRODUCTION

If you're on a committee, you might wonder what support the committee or your school should be giving you. This paper tries to give some ideas of what could happen. After all, it is Government policy that students should be on committees.

What sort of committees?

At a school level, the most likely one (in Victoria) is the School Council. In secondary schools, there should be at least two students on this Council. But there are also other groups: Curriculum Committee, management committees for various funds (Supplementary Grants, Transition Education, School Improvement etc), perhaps committees in faculties, year levels or sub-schools.

In the Education Department Region, you might be on the Regional Education Board, on Supplementary Grants Area Committees, on TEAC Regional Committees and so on.

At a central level, students are represented on the Committee of the Participation and Equity Program and could be on a whole lot of other groups (TEAC, Supplementary Grants, State Board of Education etc).

When you're on these Committees, some questions come up, like:

* why are you on the committee?
* how much influence will you have? will you be listened to?
* will you have a chance to learn what the committee is doing?
* who do you represent? how?
* what support will you get?
* will you understand the meetings?
* will you miss out on school work?
* will you be allowed to attend by the school?
* how will you get to meetings? will it cost much?
* will you be able to legally attend?
* will you get paid?

Here are some ideas on these questions that we think committees need to think about. You probably have views on them too. Maybe you, too, could insist that you and the committee talk about the ideas.

1. Why are you on the committee?

A committee should give you a clear reason why they want you on it. But you, too, should know what you and other students will get out of it. All of that should be talked about by both you and the committee.

For example, one school has adopted the following list of reasons:

- to represent their homegroups on decisions made which affect the whole mini-school;
- to give the students a voice in all matters which affect the mini-school;
- to make students equally responsible for decisions which are made;
- to give students practical experience in government;
- to give students the chance to work with adults on a shared basis.

2. How much influence will you have?

You should be listened to in the same way as all other members of the committee are. That will only happen if you really represent other students and take reports back to them.

It will also need to be checked up on by the committee - it is too easy to overlook you or not really listen to what you say. So the committee should work out ways of checking how it behaves.

It may also be necessary to give money to help you hold the meetings of students and build a student organisation.

3. How will you learn what the committee is doing?

You should have a chance to meet with students from other areas and from other committees, to find out what they're doing and what they're interested in.

You should also have chances to work with other committee members on a whole range
of matters. That means you should be able to be on sub-committees on all sorts of things, not just on "student affairs".

Money should be made available for you to meet with students and others.

4. Who do you represent?

You should be elected by students, not appointed by others. That probably means that students will have to be able to meet to talk about representatives and to choose them without interference. The type of meeting will depend on the committee. For example, if you're talking about a representative on the School Council, the meeting (or 'forum') would be just in that school. On the other hand, if you're asked for a representative on a Regional committee it would be necessary to try for a meeting open to students or student representatives across the Region. At the moment it is hard to set up Regional or State-wide meetings, but these could be developed in the near future.

One school has suggested: Students represent their homegroups. They are the spokespersons for their homegroup and should strive to represent these people in a fair and honest way.

Once representatives have been elected, they should also be able to report back to meetings of students to give information, get ideas and advice etc.

It is important that enough students are elected to committees so you have support and influence. It is also important that representatives do match the type of students who elect you - particularly in things like sex, range of ages, ethnic groups etc.

5. What support will you get?

You are the voice of the people whom you represent. It is important that you are given time by your school or your teachers to talk to those people (to report back to them about what is happening in committee meetings, and to hear the views of the people you represent).

If the committee meets during school time, your school or teachers should allow you to attend meetings. If the committee meets outside school hours, you should expect that transport or money for transport might be arranged. This should also apply if the meeting occurs outside the school.

You should expect that other committee members will be prepared to assist you if you are having trouble understanding what the committee is doing.

6. Will you understand the meetings?

Most committees at present are made up of adults who seem to have made up their own language. For you to have an input into the meeting, it's vital that you understand what is being talked about. If you don't, you have the right to ask questions and to expect an answer.

If there are other students on the committee, you should talk to them about things you don't understand.

You should request that an agenda be made available well before the meeting so that you know what is going to be talked about at the meeting. This way you will have time to find out information you will need to know at the meeting and talk about the issues which will be raised in the meeting.

7. Will you miss out on school work?

Obviously, being on a committee requires a certain commitment from you to give up some time. This should be taken into account before you join the committee. You have to think, "Is being on this committee important to me, or for my school? Is it as important as other work I have to do?"

One way of dealing with the problem is to say, "OK, I'm on this committee. That means I probably have to put in some extra time to catch up on my work I might be missing out on at school." This side of the issue is your responsibility.
On the other hand, because (in some cases) you are representing the school, the school should give you some credit for the work you do on their behalf. You would expect that your involvement with the committee should be mentioned on your final report or certificate. You should at least expect that your teachers are clearly aware of your involvement on the committee, and be prepared to make some allowances. Your committee should support you on this issue, and if necessary make contact with individual teachers to come to some arrangement.

8. Will you be allowed to attend by the school?

Most committees which operate outside the school (Regional TEAC, PEP, Supplementary Grants etc) will have approached your school first to ask for someone to be a student representative. So your school will probably give you permission to attend.

In many schools, you have to turn up to a minimum number of classes in a subject in order to satisfy the requirements of your course. You and your committee may have to talk with the school or your individual teachers to work this out.

Committees which meet within your school should consider all committee members' other duties when they're arranging suitable times for meetings.

9. How will you get to meetings? Will it cost much?

Committees operating outside the school or outside school hours should be responsible for making sure you can get to meetings, either by arranging transport or by giving funds for you to be able to attend by public transport.

10. Will you be able to legally attend?

Your Principal should have a copy of a memorandum from Dr Norman Curry, the Director General of Education (dated 8.12.83). This document states that if you are leaving school without a teacher supervising you, the school must have a record which includes this information:

1) a description of the activity to be undertaken, including locations;
2) the names and ages of the student involved;
3) the time of leaving and return to the school.

It is recommended that prior written approval of parent or guardian be obtained before students are allowed to leave the school environs without direct supervision of a teacher or other adult.

11. Will you get paid?

There is no official policy which says you should get paid for being on a committee. However, when the committee is arranging for students to be represented they should consider the possibility of paying you and build this into their financial arrangements.

The committee should be aware that by paying you they will be encouraging you to take your work more seriously, and you would have a stronger commitment to do a good job.

It is worth keeping in mind that most of the adults on the committee are there because it is part of their job (for which they are getting paid). You, as a student, however, have few real rewards for your work, and payment for your services on the committee is one way of making certain that you get something back for all your efforts.

We hope that this paper will answer some of your questions and that it will give you an idea of how to approach your work on the committee. It's quite possible that the committee will not have considered all these issues. If not, don't be afraid to bring them up yourself.

Good luck.

Graeme Fletcher and Roger Holdsworth
3. INCLUSIVE COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The third paper is a first draft of some ideas about changing committee procedures to encourage the participation of students. While it is particularly written about students on the Participation and Equity Program Committee it has wider relevance to other representatives and other committees. Comments are again welcomed: to Roger Holdsworth, Participation and Equity Program, 416 King St., West Melbourne 3003.

The Schools Commission PEP Guidelines for schools should equally apply to the procedures adopted on Program Committees:

3.40 Parents and students are too often involved in token ways ... The establishment of formal participatory structures is necessary but not sufficient for real participation to occur; resources must also be provided to develop the capacity of young people and inexperienced parents to contribute to school planning and policy ... 

These suggestions are a first attempt to define steps that could be taken to achieve this. As a Committee attempts to implement them, further needs will, no doubt, become obvious and these too should be documented.

A. Before the meeting

1. A detailed agenda should be sent out, giving (where possible) recommendations to be moved.
2. Meetings should be held before the meeting to go over the agenda and main business. For example, students could meet with other students and with an advisor, to talk over what is likely to happen.
3. Meetings beforehand could be held with other committee members where they explain to students what they aim to do in the meeting and how they will do it.
4. In particular, experienced committee members who will act as in-committee 'tutors', should meet with students before the meeting.
5. Pre-meeting meetings should be seen as part of committee members' commitments. In particular, accurate time commitment information should be given to students when approaches are made.
6. A support person should be allocated to meet with students before the meeting and, where possible, to sit with students during the meeting.
7. The meeting should be held at a time when student representatives can attend with minimal disruption to their studies.

B. At the start of the meeting

1. An experienced committee member should be nominated as a 'tutor' to each student member for each meeting. This role could rotate between members, with attention paid to positive gender role models.
2. All members should be introduced and identified, for example with a place name. This should show both the name and the organisation represented.
3. All documents should have a face sheet summarising the main ideas or recommendations.

C. Procedure of meeting

1. The meeting should stop before decisions are made, to allow time for students to:
   * talk with each other;
   * talk with committee tutors;
   * talk with any support people present;
   to make sure they understand the issues.
2. Motions should be written out and, where possible, copied for all members of the Committee.
3. There should be a clear statement about the style of each part of the meeting—identifying 'brain-storming' or 'formal' times.
4. Arguments and discussion from subcommittee meetings should not be repeated in committee meetings.
5. At the end of each item of business, the chair-person should summarise the decisions on action to be taken and clearly indicate responsibility for action.

D. Language

1. All members should avoid forms of jargon:
a) initials should be avoided except where they're explained in documents;
b) other groups, committees or individual roles should be explained fully;
c) an attempt should be made to put motions and discussion in direct language.

2. Any member should be able to query the use of a name, word or phrase and have that query treated seriously.

E. After the meeting

1. At the end of the meeting, the chairperson or Executive Officer should summarise the major decisions made, especially indicating what action is to be taken, by whom and by when.

2. The committee tutors and/or support person should meet with the students to talk over what happened in the meeting. This should also be regarded as part of the meeting commitment.

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TEAC Teacher-Parent-Student Task Force, Diamond Creek Technical School, Vic.

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AUGUST 16TH - 19TH

AT

LATROBE UNIVERSITY

CONFERENCE ON....

YOUTH AND RESPONSIBILITY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

PROFESSOR JAMES COLEMAN
senior editor of major
educational reports including:
Youth-Transition to Adulthood

workshops and addresses on:
alternative programmes for young people....
youth participation in decision making....
development of youth policy....
MOST building sites have hoardings. Some have more than others but, universally, they are too high to see over to what's going on inside, they are grey and something of an eyesore. This is occasionally relieved by some graffiti or a poster for a band you've never heard of. Flinders Street Station redevelopment site has 300 metres of hoardings and in the next twelve months Chris Minko and Martin Kingham want it all to be covered with murals.

They are inviting all schools to participate in a mural painting project which all started when Martin read an interview in which Chris asked for hoardings to paint. Martin, who is the Flinders Street Station site shop steward for the Building Workers Industrial Union, has always been interested in workers exercising some control over building sites. He believes that hoardings which are built by BWIU members and painted by members of the Operative Painters and Decorators Union, are a great forum for community groups, unionists and schools to produce art, make statements and participate in the life of the community.

The project, as yet unfinanced, has the backing of the BWIU, OPDU, all the on-site workers and the Victorian State Government. Martin did all the background work getting the project ready to go, liaising with the site managers, unions and the government. Chris Minko, until recently employed on a short contract at the Performing Arts Museum, is the totally unpaid project co-ordinator. The OPDU is currently preparing a submission for the Arts Council to get funding to employ Chris full time to work on this project, but to help the unions develop the idea and extend it to other building sites. Ironically, Martin reckons they will have little trouble getting the go ahead from private companies to use hoardings for what could be seen as political purposes. The Victorian State Government has, however, reserved the right to veto any murals which could be regarded as controversial, but then again, development corporations aren't susceptible to the democratic process.

Martin Kingham believes that projects of this kind are not only good advertising for unions, but really do offer all sorts of groups an avenue for communication, expression and participation which they would not normally have. Unions already have a history of employing artists-in-residence to work on different union-based projects, but this is the first time they have been involved in something which is readily accessible to the public.

And it certainly is accessible. Hundreds of people walk past Flinders Street Station every day, and come up against a group of school students painting something exotic or exciting on the hoardings. They are very public; people stop and ask questions, or, rarely, or frown and the kids work hard at producing something that is really good.

All schools are invited to participate in this exciting event. It is not simply an 'art' project. All teachers could think about ways of using murals in their curriculum. All paints and timber have been donated by the sub contractors and the basic preparation is done by the workers. Each school gets about fifteen feet of hoarding, about five and a half feet tall. Teachers who would like to get a group of students involved should contact Andy Minko giving about three possible dates for the mural painting. A sketch of the proposed design should be submitted about two weeks before the mural painting date and, be warned, you may be subject to censorship. Ring Andy Minko at Fitzroy HS 481 7788.

Nicola Bullard
### Articles:

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**Publications Received:**

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**AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

- **Panorama** (Westall HS, Vic) Vol 3 Nos 1, 2 April, July 1984
- **Network** (Hurstbridge Schools/Community, Vic) June, July, August 1984
- **YPND Newsletter** (Melbourne, Vic) June 1984
- **The Boilite Bugle** (Warracknabeal HS, Vic) Editions 1, 2, 3 1984
- **Tightrope** (Fitzroy Community Youth Centre, Vic) Issues 2, 3 April, May 1984
- **KIC** (Caulfield HS, Vic) Issue No 2 May 1984
- **Rave** (Winnaton, Vic) No 20 May 1984
- **Emu** (Northcote, Vic) Vol 1 Nos 2, 3 Summer-Autumn, Winter 1984
- **Between The Lines** (Williamstown HS, Vic) 1984
- **Network** (North Geelong schools, Vic) No 4 July 1984
- **Out Of Line** (Student Press Project, Vic) No 1 1984
- **Profile** (Sunshine schools, Vic) Vol 7 Nos 1, 2 April, June 1984
- **News Flash** (St Albans Special School, Vic) June, July 1984
- **St Albans Headlines** (St Albans Special School, Vic) Nos 1-6, 1983
- **Phoenix Fortnightly Bulletin** (Wendouree Tech HS, Vic) Issues 2, 3 1984
- **Ascolta** (Brunswick Schools, Vic) Vol 11 No 3 May 1984 (10th Anniversary edition)

**OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

- **Noun** (Edmunds Middle School, Vermont, USA) Vol 6 No 2; Vol 7 No 1 Winter 1983
- **The Foxfire Calendar** (Foxfire, Georgia, USA) 1984
- **Northwest Images** (Goshen, Connecticut, USA) Spring 1983
- **Long, Long Ago** (Bell Gardens, California, USA) Vol 2 Issue 3 Fall 1983
- **Mosaic** (South Boston, Massachusetts, USA) Nos 1, 2
- **Those Comforting Hills** (Comfort Middle School, Texas, USA) 1979, 1980-83
- **Foxfire** (Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA) Vol 18 No 1 Spring 1984
- **The Pinnacle** (Rabun County HS, Georgia, USA) Vol 7 No 8 June 1 1984

**Other Sources:**

- **Other Ways** (AERG, Vic) Nos 16, 17 April, June 1984
- **Communication Research Trends** (London, UK) Vol 5 No 1 1984
- **Update NIF** (Newspapers in Education, Washington, DC, USA) Vol 10 Nos 4, 5
- **TTV News** (Vic) Issue 1 (YACVIC, PO Box 108, St Kilda South 3182)
- **Listening Post** (2SER-FM, Sydney, NSW) May, June, July, August 1984
- **The Fringe Bugle** (Fringe Network, Melbourne, Vic) Nos 22 - 25 May - August 1984
- **Media 3** (Rusden College, Vic) No 21 May 1984
- **Wordwords** (EMPLOY, Vic) Issue 5 Jan/Feb 1984
- **Network News** (Sydney, NSW) May, July 1984
- **Student Action Newsletter** (Footscray, Vic) No 1 1984
- **The Ticket** (The Station, Sydney, NSW) Vol 5 No 1 June 1984
- **Citizen Action in Education** (Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, Ma, USA) Vol 10 No 2 April 1984

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