Connect
supporting student participation

Students Tackling Road Safety
Primary and Secondary School Student Action Teams

- Student Action Teams: Road Traffic Safety
- Make It Real: Rosetta HS, Tasmania
- SRCs: Elections, Inter-School Organising
- Policy@School: on-line resource for student participation
- r.u.MAD?: 2003 Outcomes and 2004 Plans
- ACSA Conference: Student Participation Workshop Report
- Leadership in the 21st Century: Aquinas College, WA
- Resources: Talk Back Classroom & Student Virtual Parliament; 'Sharing a New Story'; Secondary Student Newsletters - a Query; 'Meaningful Student Involvement'

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #35

Print Post Approved: PP 340646/0008
ISSN 0158-4995
$4.00
This Issue:

This is an unexpected double issue of Connect, courtesy of the lack of spare days through a frantic teaching and research time in October-November. One of the outcomes of this is featured in the Policy@School material (pages 31-33).

In addition, the report of the work with the Darebin Schools Network (Vic) around a Student Action Teams approach to traffic safety, the information from Rosetta High School (Tas) about ‘Make It Real’, and the ACSA Conference (SA) workshop report are all in this issue. So, the enforced delays in publication enabled us all to get access to and share this information.

The continued work on Student Action Teams is inspiring. Here’s a group of primary and secondary schools who are moving real community- and action-based learning to the core of their curriculum. We should acknowledge here the strong partnerships forged through this project: the work of Geoff Jones (and Greg Waters in Term 2) in supporting schools through their Traffic Safety Education roles within the Victorian Department of Education and Training, and the active support of Noeline Palmer from VicRoads and Jenny Chandler from the City of Darebin. And, of course, the work of the teachers and students from these 13 schools who continued to be excited by the possibilities for students to make changes within their communities as part of their learning.

These curriculum approaches work to complement and ‘deepen’ student participation through governance/representative structures. So we find in these schools that the Junior School Councils (JSCs) and Student Representative Councils (SRCs), which historically were the focus of this network, now manage and ‘own’ the Student Action Teams – with more students involved. As we noted in the last issue of Connect, this ‘opens up some opportunities to broaden participatory approaches from ‘hierarchical’ and ‘representative’ structures, into action that includes the concerns of a broad range of students.” It also locates issues of student participation as central to the way we run schools and classrooms, rather than as a marginalised extra-curricular activity.

The other challenge that develops out of these approaches concerns the larger picture about ‘student participation’. This is not end in itself – I’ve previously argued that it is an approach, not a thing: we don’t ‘do’ student participation’. So, what is the purpose of such participatory approaches – participation in what and to what end? The more I think about this, the more ideas of community construction come to mind; all these approaches are about supporting young people to question, construct and develop the sorts of multiple communities in which they live and wish to live. This is definitely not ‘service learning’, which locates community as something ‘adult’, ‘fixed’, ‘distant’ or ‘uncontested’ – where students work as volunteers to support someone else’s notion of community. (There may be nothing wrong with that, but let’s just not confuse it with student participation). Rather, this concept of community is ‘all’ (including young people), ‘changing’, ‘immediate’ and ‘uncertain’/‘contented’ – continually being created and challenged and owned by active participants. And schools see themselves as taking vital roles in that formation and challenge and engagement process. Down with the fortress walls!! Schools supporting students in constructing communities!

Something to ponder over during the summer break? How do your practices fit with that vision? Where do SRCs and JSCs fit within this? How about Maths, Art and English?

Have you got a spare moment now to write up your experiences and practices and to share them with others through the pages of Connect? Another double issue awaits you in late February or early March (‘traditionally’ one that focuses on SRCs and JSCs). I hope it contains your thoughts too

Roger Holdsworth
If you travel in or through Melbourne's northern suburbs of Preston and Reservoir these days, I wonder if you see or feel a difference? Is it safer to be traveling near the schools?

Maybe there's better school signage, new speed zones, possibilities for improvements to tram stops and turning lanes, or pedestrian barriers. Perhaps these are some of the physical indicators of changes brought about by student action in 13 primary and secondary schools in 2003.

There's also increased awareness by whole school populations of issues around pick-up and drop-off, there are pamphlets going home about safe paths to school, whole school participation in walk-to-school days, and student willingness to identify dangerous practices - in themselves and in others. Is there an increased awareness of traffic safety issues in these 13 schools? Certainly!

The 13 primary and secondary schools have been part of a major student action team approach to local traffic safety that has been operating all year. This has involved students in school-based research, in sharing their results at forums, and in designing and taking varied and effective action at their local level to make their school communities safer.

The first two Student Forums have already been reported on at some greater length in earlier issues of Connect (issues 140 and 142) this year, and now, with the project's conclusion (or is it?) with the third Student Forum, this report draws together accounts from each of the schools, to look at what was achieved and summarise how the project developed.

"Rather," the schools proposed, "let's work together and use a Student Action Team approach to traffic safety - where students investigate the safety issues around their school, and propose and take action to improve safety." It was proposed that this would be a shared curriculum initiative, to be supported by the availability of Departmental materials and lessons.

This proposal was endorsed whole-heartedly, both by the schools, and also by a range of other bodies with interests in traffic safety: the Department of Education and Training's Traffic Safety Education consultants, VicRoads, the Darebin City Council, local police and so on.

The group of schools interested to take part grew to include three local secondary colleges, as well as the original 11 primary schools. Schools were asked to commit early to working together, to attending teacher planning meetings and student forums, and to carrying out school-based curriculum work between these forums.

In return, the schools would get consultancy support, road traffic safety materials, and small grants from the Darebin City Council to support their work.

Background

There has been an active network of primary schools in the Preston-Reservoir area for over 14 years. Their Junior School Councils (JSC) provide the focus for shared training and support. Each year, this Network organises opportunities for students to meet together to talk and plan around areas of common interest. In the past, the group has documented the operation of their Junior School Councils (Democracy Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work - still available through Connect), worked on Civics and Citizenship Education, focused on peer mediation and community problem-solving and so on.

In 2002, the group began discussions about a possible larger project for 2003. The schools had been approached to incorporate traffic safety education into their curriculum.

October-December 2003
And so a tentative plan emerged: three student forums, with student teams coordinating school action in between these - a phase of research, a phase of action.

**Student Forum 1**

Student Forum 1 was held in April at Northland Secondary College with about 80 students from the 13 schools attending. As previously indicated (Connect 140), it was important to present the issue to the students, to engage them with it as real and important, and to give them the opportunity of accepting the challenge as something they wished to undertake. This was done by presenting them with raw statistics about state and local traffic deaths and injuries, challenging them to analyse these by age, gender etc., asking them to interpret what was happening, and then bluntly asking them whether they wanted to do something about the picture that emerged.

This was highly successful, with students expressing concern - even anger - about the current situation (and identifying local examples and illustrations of lack of safety) and making strong decisions that they wanted to do something to make their areas safer. In some ways, the difficulty was to hold students back from 'leaping' straight to action suggestions. Rather, they were asked to research the traffic safety issues that existed around their schools, consulting with students, parents, teachers and others about the nature and causes of problems. After all, these were just concerns of some people, or were they more widely held? Some ideas and resources were provided about research methods.

It was invaluable to have Department of Education and Training and VicRoads consultants working with the project, and these people were available to visit individual schools with resources, advice and questions. The small grants from Darebin City Council’s Road Safety Strategy also enabled teachers to spend time with their teams, and develop their resources.

This Student Forum also discussed possible forms of action that could be taken, with three areas of possibilities emerging: engineering (changes to physical situations such as roundabouts), enforcement (asking others such as police to stop or control activities) and education (trying to change the way people behave). In practice, schools talked about taking on a mix of all three of these, entering into discussions with the local Council and other bodies, supporting better signage, advising on illegal parking practices, and also publishing educational materials for use within classrooms, homes and the broader school communities.

This analysis emerged from concerns from some schools that, if students were identifying only engineering solutions, the expense and timelines involved would mean that action outcomes would be distant and unlikely within the project’s timeframe. Educational activities - trying to change the behaviour of students, parents and others - was much more accessible to student action, though many schools also entered into negotiations with the local government engineers, with public transport companies and so on, towards tackling the larger proposals.

Work continued within the teams, back at the schools, again supported by consultant visits.

**Student Forum 2**

The student groups came back together in June to share their results. They were asked to report on how they had conducted their research, what they had found out, and what they were focusing on as a issue.

Their topics were as diverse as the schools and their communities: parent drop off and pick up, lack of crossings, traffic speed in near-by streets, student lack of traffic awareness, concentration of students on tram stops, crossings on major roads, parking restrictions and so on. These areas are detailed in the school-by-school reports that follow. Students reported to the Student Forum with charts and photographs, powerpoint presentations, videos and slides. Representatives stood up and clearly and articulately identified the concerns of their communities, and their commitment to action.

**Student Forum 3**

The third Student Forum in October brought the student representatives together again to report on their achievements. Each school was asked to bring along and set up a small display around two topics: ‘What We Did’ and ‘What We Achieved’. A 'bingo' style game encouraged all participants to visit these displays, ask questions, and find out answers to set questions. All schools also introduced their displays with short speeches.

The schools were also paired, and each was asked to act as a 'consultant' to one other school team, commenting particularly on their work and advising them on future directions. This feedback was given publicly and provided an orientation to the bigger question: 'What now?'
Visitors from the Department of Education and Training, Darebin City Council and VicRoads responded to what they had seen and heard, congratulating students on their work, and also encouraging them to maintain their commitment. Many of the schools, in fact, indicated that they were still involved in action which they hoped would be on-going.

**Some Resources**

**Student Action Teams:**
- The Australian Youth Research Centre at The University of Melbourne has produced a Working Paper (2001) and a Research Report (2003) on the evaluation of a statewide Student Action Teams project. These are available from the Centre (Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne Vic 3010; ph: 03 8344 9633). The Working Paper is $11; the Research Report is $16.50; plus $5 p&h per order.

**Road Safety:**
- CrashStats is a Victorian online database containing all reported road injury statistics since 1991. It can be searched at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

**This Project:**
- For more information about the Darebin project, contact Thérèse West, Preston South Primary School, Hotham Street, Preston Vic 3072. Phone: (03) 9484 1544.

There were some highly significant reports: of heightened awareness by parents about dangers associated with parking near schools and with picking up or dropping off students, of student focus on correct road-crossing procedures, on the need for controlled traffic flow around schools, of the achievement and importance of restricted speed zones near the schools.

In some cases, there were 'Safety Festivals' planned at schools, or days when the entire school population would walk rather than drive to school in order to both highlight dangers and also relieve traffic congestion.

There is a continued commitment to maintain this initiative, with students monitoring changed behaviours and following up promises of engineering and enforcement.

Late in the year, the Network heard that it had won the Victorian statewide award from the Victorian Association for Traffic Safety Education Teachers and this was particularly encouraging of this form of learning.

**Where to now?**

The important aspects of this project: secondary-primary cooperation, working as a district, the support from government and community bodies - will continue. The group is now planning work over a three-year period around student engagement and action, that will possibly take many forms, but which recognises the important elements of the Student Action Team approach:

- engaging and challenging students to take ownership of curriculum;
- focusing on a real issue, which incorporates student inquiry and action, and an expectation of significant community outcomes;
- collaboration between schools and other agencies, in which these bodies provide the real challenge or commission;
- incorporation of these approaches as part of the curriculum rather than as an optional extra.

Watch this space for continuing exciting details.

Last Wednesday I had the privilege of accompanying six Junior School Councillors from our Year 5-6 grades to a Student Forum at Northland Secondary College. This forum was related to a major Road Safety Project which has involved students from 13 schools in our local area.

After the extensive survey work conducted by our students earlier in the year, we have been looking at ways of making the roads around our school safer for everyone.

At Northland SC, our students were able to report on the actions we have taken and the outcomes for our school community. They were also able to hear of the problems encountered at other schools and the ways in which difficulties were overcome.

As an educational experience, this occasion was superb! It demonstrated the ways in which students' problem solving abilities can be strengthened in real life situations. It also enabled students to develop their communication skills, both orally and in written form.

This approach to education is seen as a vital part of our methods of teaching at Preston South. When situations are meaningful, students want to learn!

The success of the Road Safety Project has been acknowledged by the Victorian Association for Traffic Safety Education Teachers. At a ceremony this evening I will be accepting a major award for the achievements of our Road Safety group. It is very rewarding to have all our hard work recognised.

Thérèse West
Principal
Preston South Primary School

October-December 2003
Bell Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/ worked on:
Students examined ways of improving pedestrian safety for students who use Scotia Street when arriving at and departing from school. At present, Scotia Street can be quite hazardous because it is the main dropping off and picking up point. Illegal parking, inappropriate crossing procedures (often encouraged and practised by parents themselves), even speed of vehicles are issues the students wish to address. There is no school crossing in Scotia Street.

Parking is made more difficult because teachers have to park their cars in this street too. (There are about 15 staff altogether.)

Many parents take no notice of the parking signs, such as the loading zone outside the main entrance which prohibits parking or standing at school starting and dismissal times.

Research conducted:
- Extensive surveys of all students - traffic safety and travel;
- Observation survey of traffic in Scotia Street and Oakover Road; use of video and digital photography;
- Interview of Oakover Road Crossing Supervisor;
- Discussion with teachers about parking problems at school;
- Traffic and pedestrian counts.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?
38% students are driven to school; 52% walk; 3% use public transport; 7% ride a bike.

The crossing in Oakover Road is under-utilised because it is located too far away from the school gate. Most students use Scotia Street instead where there is no crossing at all.

Dropping off/picking up is a major problem. Parking in Scotia Street is a big problem because teachers have to park there; signs are not clear or poorly placed eg there is a loading zone directly in front of the main school gate. Many drivers ignore the parking signs altogether. Many examples of poor or incorrect crossing procedures were observed eg getting out of a car that is double parked, alighting from the road-side door of vehicle, running across the road without looking, parents calling children across the road to a waiting vehicle.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- New off street parking facilities for teachers;
- Clearly signed and designated parking, drop-off/pick-up zones for parents in Scotia Street;
- Parents and students use safe crossing procedures for crossings as well as streets where there is no school crossing;
- Motorists drive within the 40kph speed limit and observe parking restrictions;
- Students use kerb-side/safety door when getting into/out of vehicles.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?
1. Traffic safety education for all students, including classroom activities, dealing with key skills such as SLTT, holding hands, correct crossing procedures. A TSE Unit will be developed and implemented in 12/3. Practical activities such as Bike Education and walking excursions will be included;
2. An advertising campaign with posters, brochures, newsletter articles and VicRoads RSAS CD-Rom;
3. Meet with Council Traffic Safety Coordinator to discuss possible strategies;
4. A written/oral submission to School Council and the local MP regarding signs, short term/medium term parking zones, traffic calming measures and off-street parking for teachers;
5. An Expo/Table/Open Day of all student work, including video and digital photography;
6. A flyer sent to all parents with information about correct parking procedures and plan of school parking zones.

Summary:

At Bell Primary School, we have conducted a survey and traffic observation study. From this, the students feel that educating the community about road safety around schools is our best bet. We have promoted the School Speed Zones with help from the local Member of Parliament, Michael Leighton. He has attended a JSC meeting and also attended a launch of the advertising campaign in our school. The advertising campaign has included articles in the Bell News and laminated posters around the school.

The JSC has also completed drafting a brochure titled Bell Road Safety Rules - Be COOL. This will be published in the next few weeks and be distributed to parents and other close members of the school community. The students have written a letter to local shops asking them to display the brochure in their shop windows.

The students have also participated in several photo opportunities. One of these has been an initiative of Michael Leighton and VicRoads. It was to help advertise the 40kph speed zones which are now in place in our area.

Leigh Black
Traffic Safety Student Action Teams

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Students investigated ways of promoting safe use of the unsupervised school crossing in Robbins Avenue. Students reported they did not feel safe using this crossing because of the number of fast-moving cars that often don't stop or slow at the crossing. Some parents even park on the crossing. Many students do not appear to know or to observe correct procedures for using a school crossing.

Research conducted:
- Surveys of students, measuring usage of the school crossings;
- Observing and photographing students/parents using the school crossing or other crossing points in Robbins Avenue;
- Measuring and recording speed of vehicles travelling in Robbins Avenue, with assistance of police officer/radar gun.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?

Few students use the unsupervised crossing in Robbins Avenue because they do not feel safe crossing there. Of those who do, many do not exhibit safe crossing skills and procedures.

Many parents park illegally on or near this crossing. Many of the vehicles travelling in Robins Avenue appear to be travelling faster than 40kph.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- 20% more usage of the school crossing in Robbins Avenue by the end of the year;
- Improved traffic safety skills and behaviour for students, particularly related to use of crossings;
- There will be a major focus on parent/adult behaviour and modelling. Motorists in Robbins Avenue to drive within 40kph speed limit and park legally.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?
1. Display posters, survey and photos of students research and work;
2. SAT talks to each grade about the issue;
3. Presentation at school assembly;
4. Design and publish safety posters to be displayed around the school. Use Vic Roads RSAS CD-Rom;
5. Develop small brochure/pamphlet on safe crossing procedures to be circulated to whole school community;
6. Meet with Council crossing supervisor and police for strategies to improve pedestrian and driver behaviour: educational, enforcement and engineering ideas. Audit/monitor and report on speeds, using police-operated radar gun;
7. Traffic safety education program using Roadsmart.

Kingsbury Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Improved safety for students using the unsupervised crossing in Niblick Street. Students and parents are concerned about the level of illegal parking near this crossing, and the number of cars that do not stop for students using the crossing. The problem is compounded by the volume of traffic in the street, particularly at the start and end of the school day, and by the large number of students who use this crossing.

Research conducted:
- Extensive surveys and questionnaires involving parents and students;
- Interview of crossing supervisor in Maryborough Ave;
- Traffic and pedestrian counts in morning and afternoon;
- Students participated in discussion group sessions to improve knowledge of TSE issues.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?

Parents and students who use this crossing do not consistently use safe traffic behaviours. The SAT observed many instances of incorrect use of the crossing or not using it at all, getting into/out of cars unsafely, inappropriate illegal parking, failure to stop at crossing when in use.

The behaviour of drivers, pedestrians and passengers contributes to the problem, which is exacerbated by the heavy volume and congestion of traffic around school arrival/dismissal times.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:

- Niblick Street crossing to be made safer for all users by ensuring drivers drop off/pick up children and park appropriately as well as wait at the crossing while children are on it;
- Correct crossing procedures to be adopted by all students;
- A crossing supervisor for Niblick Street Crossing;
- All road users to be made more traffic safety conscious.
Traffic Safety Student Action Teams

How can these be achieved?
What actions are to be taken?

1. A comprehensive traffic safety educational program for all students, incorporating an activity week (Traffic Safety Week); practical activities; crossing practice and lesson from Mr. Brealey, the crossing supervisor; classroom lessons from Roadsart;
2. A publicity and awareness campaign for the whole community involving newsletter/magazine articles, talks at assembly, a short play or dramatisation performed for students and parents; display of students' work;
3. A series of traffic safety brochures, dealing with local traffic issues; this also distributed to new parents;
4. Creation of a student award for ‘Road Safety’;
5. A written submission to the school and local council regarding installation of signage, traffic calming measures and possible crossing supervisor for Niblick Street. Meet with Council crossing coordinator for advice;
6. Participate in Walking School Bus Program.

Northlands Secondary College

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Students investigated ways to create a safer crossing point for students needing to cross Murray Road to and from the bus stop on the opposite side of the road.

Desired Changes or Outcomes

- A safe crossing point from the school to the bus stop in Murray Road;
- Correct crossing procedures displayed by students;
- Motorists in Murray Road to be made aware they are approaching a school zone and to adjust speed accordingly.

How can these be achieved?
What actions are to be taken?

1. Display of students' work;
2. Meetings with police re enforcement of speed limits; use of radar gun and speed trailer;
3. Meetings with Council engineers and VicRoads coordinators to consider options for providing a safer crossing at this site;
4. Educational program for all students dealing with wider traffic safety matters as well as the specific issue;
5. Publicity campaign to draw school/community attention to the issue, leading to safer pedestrian/driver behaviour.

Preston East Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/ worked on:
Strategies for reducing the barriers to walking to school. The school is participating in the Victorian Government Schools’ Greenhouse Gas Project.

Research conducted:
- Extensive travel surveys and questionnaires with parents and students to identify mode of travel to/from school, distance travelled, barriers to/concerns about walking to school;
- Focus groups of parents and students and the JSC to discuss these issues.

What did students find out?
What was causing the problem?

Most students are driven to school by their parents over short distances. Those who do walk generally are supervised by adults.

There are significant concerns about the many clearly identified hazardous crossing points and streets which students have to use. The streets around the school carry a high volume of fast-moving traffic but do not have supervised or signalised crossings. An additional problem is the congestion and difficult parking around the school which makes all approaches to the school somewhat hazardous. There are no supervised crossings in streets adjoining the school. Highview Avenue is a major concern.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- Encourage more walking and cycling to school;
- Make it safer for students and parents to do this;
- Reduce the amount of traffic congestion around the school.
How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?

1. Participate in the Victorian Government Schools' Greenhouse Gas pilot project;
2. Consider involvement in the Walking School Bus program;
3. Beginning in term 4 this year, organise an annual Walk to School Day;
4. Meet with traffic engineers and VGS pilot project representatives to identify and establish safe crossing points and routes to school;
5. Reduce the speed of traffic in Highview Avenue to below 40kph using signage (eg school zone, crossing ahead signs), enforcement and other traffic calming measures;
6. Submission to School Council to provide off-street parking for teachers, leading to improved short/medium-term parking for parents;
7. Maintain a high quality whole school traffic safety education program, coordinated by a Traffic Safety Education teacher;
8. Publish a brochure for parents and students dealing with dropping off/picking up procedures.

Summary:

Since the 30th May 2003 Student Forum at Northland Secondary College, the four students who attended reported back to our JSC and told them about the half day activities and discussion and plans to identify an issue of Traffic Safety within our school community.

Our JSC members observed traffic and pedestrian movement around the perimeter of our school and identified severe congestion at the main point of exit from our school ground, particularly between 3.25 and 3.40 pm as students go home at the end of the day.

We have also been advised of a successful nomination for participation in the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy (VGS) Schools Project: “Reducing the Barriers to Walking and Cycling to School”. We are one of 34 Victorian Government Schools chosen to participate.

This project will be conducted over a period of a year and a half; although it is a long-term commitment, it is something the JSC wants to be involved with.

Therefore our issue has been identified for us and the guidelines spelt out by those driving this initiative in the Project Office. Initially all families in the school were given a survey to complete by the end of June. Our JSC organised the distribution and collection of these surveys. They were then sent to the Project Office for identification of local barriers to walking to school and ideas to reduce them.

JSC members, together with a parent focus group from the school community, met with Project team members and local Council Road Safety Co-ordinators to research the survey/findings and draw up an action plan.

I believe that this is very exciting for the students, working with adults to research and plan action to improve an identified traffic safety issue in our immediate school community. I see them also getting feedback from our own Forums and Action Teams that they can pass on to the VGS team.

Darren McMenaman

Preston North East Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/ worked on:

Pedestrian safety in Ash Street, where a student was recently injured while crossing the street between parked cars. Many cars park on the school side of Ash Street, blocking the vision of students who attempt to cross mid-block. There is no school crossing or identified safe crossing point. There is inadequate signage advising drivers of the school zone and of parking restrictions.

Need to improve dropping off/picking up practices. An important issue is how to eradicate the current practice of students running directly from the school exit across the road.

Research conducted:

- Surveys and questionnaires of all students about where they feel safe/unsafe and how they travel to/from school;
- Observation survey of streets around the school.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?

There is heavy traffic congestion and crowded parking in Ash Street. There are no clearly visible and relevant signs in Ash Street advising parents where to pick up/drop off children. There is no school crossing or safe crossing point in Ash Street nor is there a pedestrian barrier to prevent students running directly from the school exit across the street. Students reported they felt most unsafe when crossing Ash Street.

Dropping off/picking up behaviours by parents and children are often unsafe (eg illegal parking, double parking, crossing between parked cars, not using kerb-side door).

Desired Changes or Outcomes:

- Improved safety for all pedestrians, particularly students in Ash Street;
- All road users to display improved skills and behaviour when parking, dropping off/picking up, alighting from vehicles and crossing the road;
- Installation of signs in Ash Street indicating short/medium term and no parking areas;
Traffic Safety Student Action Teams

- School Zone signage with 40kph speed limits;
- Erection of pedestrian barrier outside school exit.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?

1. Meet with Council engineer to plan strategies: pedestrian barriers, SLTT and parking signs, identification of safe/unsafe crossing points. Submit written proposals to principal, school and local Council for further action;
2. Educational and publicity campaign highlighting problems in Ash Street: newsletter articles, brochures, posters, production of school website, announcements and presentations to the school assembly, classroom lessons to Prep-2 students by members of JSC, dealing with SLTT and other safe crossing procedures;
3. A whole school TSE program with related resources such as Roadsmart, Early Years Story Books, encouragement of cycling and walking to school;
4. Enforcement measures: police and student code of conduct.

Preston Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/ worked on:
The issues are speeding, traffic congestion and illegal parking in Foch Street, contributed to by parents dropping off and picking up children.

The SAT wants to look at ways to reduce the traffic congestion around the school, as well as to ensure that pedestrians and drivers observe the road rules, relevant signs and appropriate traffic safety skills and behaviours.

Research conducted:
- Survey questionnaire of all year 5-6 students and a sample of parents;
- Travel survey;
- Questionnaire asking about perceived problem areas around the school;
- Observation;
- Interview Darebin traffic engineer.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?

Many students and parents use Foch Street when arriving at/departing from school. 65% students arrive by car; 30% walk to school; 5% cycle.

Foch Street becomes very congested with many drivers parking illegally and dropping off/picking up children inappropriately. On one occasion, 16 vehicles were observed to be parked illegally.

Some students do not use safe procedures when crossing the road or getting in/out of the car.

The problem is a combination of unsafe behaviour, poor traffic safety skills, inadequate street/parking signage and the fact that there are too many cars around the school at the start/end of the school day.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- All drivers to park legally in designated parking spaces;
- Clear signage installed to provide for drop-off and pick-up zones;
- Students to use appropriate traffic safety skills and behaviour when getting in/out of cars and when crossing the road;
- Less reliance on cars as a mode of travel to/from school; more walking and cycling to school.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?

1. An information booklet for school community on drop off/pick up, safe parking and crossing of road;
2. A whole school Walking to School awareness day in term 4;

Summary:

After conducting research into road safety issues around the school, Preston Primary School’s Student Action Team wanted to reduce traffic congestion and illegal parking during picking up and dropping off of children.

They decided that the best way to target this problem was by holding a Safety Awareness Day. The aim of the day is to encourage children to travel to and from school by any means apart from the car. This would then reduce the number of cars around the school which, in turn, would remove the major cause of the problem.

The JSC has spent their time planning for this day. A magician is going to perform a road safety show, a policeman is going to speak to the school, and the JSC is going to perform some road safety plays on the day.

The JSC has also decided to give each child a show bag for participating in the day’s activities. One item to be included in the show bag is a badge. So the JSC has run a ‘design a badge’ competition. The winner will have their design featured on the badge. The JSC has also made pages of an activity book which will also be included in the show bag. Pages they have contributed include a safety quiz, word search, crossword etc.

Much of the JSC time has been spent writing letters to ask for donations, rehearsing plays, and advertising the Safety Awareness Day to be held on December 2nd.
3. Written and oral submissions to school and local Council to investigate improved signage in Foch Street. Seek advice from Darebin Council traffic engineer;
4. A short play or dramatised presentation to the whole school assembly to raise awareness of traffic safety issues in Foch Street;
5. Seek support from Darebin Council for stronger enforcement of parking regulations in Foch Street through periodic Parking Officer patrols;
6. Consider school TSE program using resources such as Roadsmart. Develop student activity book. Hold a traffic safety competition.

Preston South Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Improved safety of crossings in Hotham and Raglan Streets. In Hotham Street, concerns are about volume and speed of vehicles, inappropriate and illegal parking near supervised school crossing, and incorrect crossing procedures sometimes displayed by students and parents.

In Raglan Street, the issue is the proximity of the unsupervised crossing to the corner roundabout creating a tricky, dangerous crossing for students.

Research conducted:
- Written surveys/questionnaires with all students, staff and parents. Students were asked, among other things, about where they felt safe/unsafe, and how they travelled to/from school;
- Observation survey of roads/crossings adjacent to school, including Bell Street;
- Traffic count;
- Interview of crossing supervisor;
- Whole school TSE curriculum unit in term 2 to raise awareness of students in order to glean informed responses.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?
Students reported they felt most unsafe using the Raglan Street crossing.

The Hotham Street crossing was the most used crossing point, but safety was compromised by illegal parking, speed and volume of traffic and a minority of students not using the crossing. The crossing supervisor expressed significant concerns about the speed of vehicles, stating there had been some near-misses, and some examples of vehicles falling to stop at the crossing. There are implications for pedestrian, driver and passenger behaviour.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- To provide safer crossings in Hotham and Raglan Streets;
- Students using these crossings to display correct skills and behaviours (eg SLTT);
- Motorists to observe speed limits, parking restrictions and other road rules when approaching the school.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?

1. Develop options for improved signage, traffic calming measures in Hotham Street, and relocation of roundabout in Raglan Street. Obtain advice from Darebin traffic engineers and crossing coordinator. Make written submission to school, local Council and members of parliament;
2. A whole-school comprehensive, sequential traffic safety education program, incorporating a term’s unit of work, an activity morning and use of VicRoads, RACV, Travel On, DE&T resources;
3. Publish a traffic safety brochure and posters highlighting the issues to do with safe parking, use of crossings, drop off/pick up procedures, and legal speed limits around schools;
4. A publicity campaign involving display of students’ work, articles in newsletter, a JSC road safety lesson and short play presented to each class.

What Success Have We Had?

TOP TEN OUTCOMES:

1. Signage has been altered near the front of our school in Hotham Street.
2. Our crossing supervisor has reported the number of people who are speeding to Darebin Council and she has made sure that students know that she has listened to their concerns.
3. The representatives of Darebin Council who are responsible for traffic issues have either visited the school or have written to our JSC in response to expressed concerns.
4. The issue of Road Safety has been reported at our monthly School Council meetings, using JSC information.
5. A whole school unit of work related to Road Safety culminated in an exciting half-day Activity Session, involving all students in multi-age activities related to Road Safety with Geoff Jones and VicRoads.
6. Representatives of VicRoads assisted our teachers in the Year 5-6 area to provide an in-depth study of Road Safety.
7. JSC featured aspects of Road Safety in our Thursday morning whole school assemblies.
8. A corridor display provided information for our whole school community and visitors to our school.
9. Our Road Safety brochure entitled “Our School, Our Safety” was distributed to all families in our school and to a variety of outside groups.
10. Newsletter articles were published, highlighting our student action and participation in the Student Forums which involved the thirteen local primary and secondary schools.

BEST OF ALL – the students had fun, felt powerful and realised that their efforts could produce benefits for everyone!
Reservoir Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Community awareness of Traffic Safety issues - both local and general.

There is a need to educate the school community about designated safe crossing points in O’Connor Street, use of school crossing in Barton Street, and appropriate dropping off/picking up procedures.

Some of the parking and traffic signs around the school were unclear and confusing. The absence of a school crossing or formal safe crossing point in O’Connor Street makes crossing quite hazardous at school arrival/dismissal times

Research conducted:
• Travel survey of students/parents;
• Traffic safety questionnaire involving all year levels except grade 5/6;
• Observation survey of streets around the school;
• Discussion group with teacher and JSC;
• Interview crossing supervisor;
• Traffic and pedestrian counts in morning and afternoon.

What did students find out?
What was causing the problem?
Students using the supervised crossing in Barton Street felt safe. According to the survey and the crossing supervisor, most students used this crossing correctly.

However, many students arrived/departed to the north of the school via O’Connor Street. This had no crossing at all and the parking signs were old and confusing. Children did not feel safe using this route. Many did not use correct crossing procedures - often running across the road to waiting vehicles. There were numerous examples of illegal parking, students exiting from the roadside door, double parking, students running across road without using SLTT procedure.

Most students are driven to school. Only 21 walked to school with or without adult supervision.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
• The school zone to be injury free and a safe environment for all road users;
• Students to display correct crossing/SLTT procedures;
• Drivers to park in correct/legal spaces;
• All road users to be more aware of traffic safety issues.

How can these be achieved?
What actions are to be taken?
1. A publicity/community education campaign involving weekly tips and articles in the newsletter and JSC newsletter; weekly tips and presentations at school assembly; a traffic safety quiz; guest speakers at school assembly; and display of student work. The campaign will focus on the issues to do with parking and students crossing in O’Connor Street and the correct use of supervised crossing in Barton Street;
2. A traffic safety education program for all students, highlighted by a SAT-produced Powerpoint presentation and use of programs such as Bike Education and Roadsmart;
3. Meetings with local Council to consider signage needed for O’Connor Street re school zone and short term/long term parking restrictions; SLTT messages for students departing school. Investigate feasibility of crossing in O’Connor Street. Submissions to school and local Council.

Reservoir District Secondary College

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/ worked on:
At dismissal time, the front/main entrance to the school becomes severely congested and extremely hazardous with parents arriving by car to pick up their children at the same time as approximately 400 (out of a school population of 1100) students are attempting to cross to the tram stop opposite the school gate in Plenty Road. Because the signalised crossing is too close to the entrance to the school park, students need to be wary of vehicles turning left across their path into the car park. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of a deceleration turning lane into the school and the practice of parents...
Parking their vehicles just inside the entrance creating long queues extending outside the gate.

The SAT wishes to consider parking and traffic management solutions, as well as to enhance students’ skills and knowledge in using the crossing and tram safety zone.

Research conducted:
- Written surveys of Year 7 students;
- Observation surveys of site in Plenty Road - pedestrians, cars, trams;
- Videoing trams, pedestrian and driver behaviour at the school entrance;
- Interview Yarra Trams personnel;
- Interview Darebin traffic engineer.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?
1. Following a meeting with Council Traffic Engineer, develop an engineering plan, which will include relocating the drop-off zone with the school car park and installation of appropriate signage;
2. Meet with Yarra Trams to consider rescheduling options and to develop a student code of conduct;
3. Develop and implement a traffic safety education program/campaign and a student code of behaviour addressing use of crossing, safety zone, boarding and behaviour on trams;
4. Driver awareness campaign focusing on reduced speeds when approaching and turning into the school, giving way to pedestrians, and correct use of designated drop off/pick up zones within the school car park;
5. A possible future project to be the creation of a school deceleration/left hand turning lane in Plenty Road.

Reservoir East Primary School

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified / worked on:
Students want to investigate ways of making the streets around the school safer for students to use and to cross. Safe crossing points and school crossings in Boldrewood Parade and Genoa Street will be examined and upgraded. Concerns include: the speed of vehicles approaching the school and the signalised crossing in Boldrewood Parade; the lack of warning to motorists that they are approaching the school zone; and the difficult placement of the unsupervised crossing in Genoa Street.

Research conducted:
- Written surveys and questionnaires of parents and students;
- Interview crossing supervisor;
- Focus discussion sessions with teacher;
- Measurement of speeds in Boldrewood Parade with the assistance from police/radar gun;
- Observation and traffic count in Boldrewood Parade and Genoa Street.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?
Dismissal time for the 400 students departing the school via the main entrance in Plenty Road and crossing to the tram stop is very hazardous even though a signalised crossing is available and used by all students.

The problem is caused by the large number of vehicles turning into and stopping just inside the school entrance adjacent to the crossing point, in combination with the restricted footpath area where students wait to cross the road. Lack of warning signs and a deceleration zone mean that turning vehicles often speed through the crossing and stop abruptly at the school entrance.

The SAT will address the issue of parent parking and picking up students after school as well as the need for traffic safety education for students.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- Relocate drop off/pick up parking area inside the school car park to eliminate the banking of traffic across the pedestrian crossing;
- Improved signage and driver awareness program alerting drivers to the left hand turn lane and the school entrance;
- Traffic safety education program and code of behaviour dealing with safe crossing, use of the tram safety zone, boarding and behaviour on trams;
- Rescheduling trams to coincide with school dismissal times.
Traffic Safety Student Action Teams

Lack of speed restriction and school zone signs, and location of crossing at Genoa Street are the main problems.

**Desired Changes or Outcomes:**
- To make the immediate traffic environment around the school safer for all pedestrians by reducing the speed of traffic in Boldrewood Parade, relocating the crossing in Genoa Street, having improved signage advising motorists they are in a school zone, and by providing students and parents with traffic safety education to improve skills, attitudes and knowledge.

**How can these be achieved?**

**What actions are to be taken?**
1. Conduct audit of speed of traffic in Boldrewood Parade using police-operated radar gun;
2. Meet with Council traffic engineer to discuss strategies and options for signage, speed reduction and safer crossings. Develop and submit a proposal to school and local Council, with supporting data;
3. Develop traffic safety education program for students and parents, dealing with local issues, particularly safe crossing procedures and safe routes to school.

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**Reservoir West Primary School**

**Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:**
Cycling to school and bicycle safety.

Students would like to encourage more students to cycle to school instead of being driven by parents. It would be necessary to improve bike storage facilities, provide a Bike Education program and to look at ways of identifying and improving safe bicycle routes to school.

**Research conducted:**
- Students in years 3-6 were given two written surveys/questionnaires, one on general traffic safety and one related to cycling and Bike Education.

**What did students find out?**

**What was causing the problem?**
Most students are driven to school by their parents over short distances. Only a few students ride their bikes. The reasons are firstly, that there is no adequate, secure storage for bikes at school and, secondly, that parents and students are concerned about whether it would be safe to ride from home to school. Currently, the school does not have a Bike Education program.

**Desired Changes or Outcomes:**
- To be a ‘bike safe school’ with more cycling to/from school and a School Bike Education program.

**How can these be achieved?**

**What actions are to be taken?**
1. Organise a Cycling and Walking to School awareness day in term 4 and each year after that. Conduct a Rideability survey and safe cycling routes audit beforehand (with assistance from local Council and VicRoads);
2. Train teachers as Bike Education instructors so that a Bike Education program can be trialed/implemented in Term 4;
3. Develop a Bike Safety School policy and program, supported by a traffic safety education program;
4. Written submission to School Council requesting an improved bicycle storage facility.

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**Summary:**
Reservoir West JSC decided to focus on the issue of Bike Safety as the surveys carried out indicated that’s what the children were interested in. It was also seen as an area that needed improvement and changing. Many children were not riding to school because the bike shelter wasn’t secure or big enough, some children were too lazy, many children didn’t have a bike or a helmet, some children weren’t aware of a safe route to school and some parents thought it wasn’t safe.

On 19th November, the JSC conducted a walk/ride school day to raise awareness of these issues. We had a very positive response and over 300 children rode their bikes or walked to school. Every child who rode or walked got a free breakfast.

Some classes participated in a Bike Education class which was taught by Mr Jones. Two teachers have been trained in Bike Ed and the P-2 students have all participated in Traffic School.

Our long term goal is to improve bike storage facilities at our school so more people will have a choice of how they travel to and from school. We are going to approach our PFA, School Council and local government for support.
Thornbury Darebin Secondary College

Traffic Safety Issue(s) identified/worked on:
Students want to look at a range of strategies to improve pedestrian safety in Dundas Street. Students see Dundas Street as a very dangerous street to cross. Many students use the Dundas Street gate to arrive at/depart from school; they also use it to visit the coffee shop on the opposite side of the street before/after school. Dundas Street carries a very high volume of fast-moving traffic, much of it commercial and heavy vehicle. The traffic doesn't slow when approaching the school. Motorists do not appear to know they are approaching a school zone.

Research conducted:
- Extensive surveys and questionnaires involving Years 7 and 9 students;
- Observation surveys in Dundas Street; videoing vehicles and pedestrians;
- Discussion groups and curriculum activities to raise student awareness and to elicit their TSE concerns/ issues;
- With support of police officer, use radar gun to audit speed of vehicles in Dundas Street;
- Traffic count over extended period.

What did students find out?

What was causing the problem?
Dundas Street presents major hazards for the numerous students who use this school entrance/exit.

There are inadequate speed restriction signs and an absence of signage advising of an approach to a school zone. Dundas Street is a major arterial road, carrying a very heavy volume of traffic, mainly commercial and heavy vehicle, travelling at high speed. Vehicles do not slow down when approaching the school. The traffic has increased in recent years with the installation of speed humps in Raleigh Street.

There is also a great deal of traffic turning into/parking outside the factories opposite the school.

Desired Changes or Outcomes:
- Motorists in Dundas Street to be more aware through a variety of strategies such as: signage, traffic calming measures, policing, etc that they are approaching a school zone, and of the need to adjust speed and behaviour accordingly;
- Students to gain relevant, effective traffic education skills and knowledge.

How can these be achieved?

What actions are to be taken?
1. In Dundas Street, conduct a speed audit of vehicles, following by periodic use of speed trailer and police enforcement;
2. Following meetings with the Council traffic engineer to develop strategies for slowing traffic around the school: speed signs, school zone advisory signs, etc. Submit case to school, local Council and VicRoads;
3. Produce a traffic safety education video for students, staff and parents;
4. Plan and implement an educational campaign through newsletter, video, brochures, and oral presentations for motorists, students, parents, local businesses, School Council and staff;
5. Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive and sequential traffic safety education program for the whole school.

School Newsletter Summary:
During the past year, 9C and 7A have made changes about the road safety around our school.

After conducting a survey which we gave to students and parents, we came to realise that Dundas Street is our biggest problem because of lack of signage. We’ve also handed out a business survey to several of the local businesses to see what they thought about the problem.

On several mornings and afternoons, students and teachers made a tally of students crossing Dundas Street, and cars and trucks that use Dundas Street. We even got a radar gun to see if the cars were speeding. We found three cars over the speed limit.

We’ve put a lot of hard work and effort into our problem and it’s very rewarding to know that we will be getting signs put up down Dundas Street and the speed limit will be lowered to 40 kph at selected times of the day.

Next year we hope to fix up our car park. Our plan is to have the Peer Support Leaders work with the Year 7s on this project.

Jade, Kara, Morgan

October-December 2003
How to Elect an SRC

It’s one of the most important events in the school year – the election of the student representative body: the SRC.

Most people regard it as the ‘popularity vote’ where the real potential leaders are yet to be found – hidden amongst the student population. So instead, you get the confident loud mouths that are only in it for the badge and so called ‘prestige’. They promise the world, but don’t deliver; in fact their attendance rate to meetings is extremely low.

However, I disagree with this stereotype; I believe that the election of the SRC is fast becoming a choice to vote for a candidate who will do the best job. The problem is how will you know that they will do a good job and serve/represent their fellow students? You don’t and that’s the risk every sort of election has.

I’ve come to realize that there are a variety of student leaders, all who have a magnificent potential as an SRC Representative. The problem is getting these students elected. Yes, I’ve written above that students will vote for the best candidate, but it’s how these candidates are presented that will ensure their successful selection.

The SRC that I am a part of at my school, reviewed its selection criteria a few years ago. The process was for all interested students to write an application, saying why they wanted to be a member of the Student Representative Council. Then, once their application was read by the Student Leadership Coordinator, they were allowed to give a speech to the Class Captains of the school, and they were then voted on by the captains on the impression they had given them through their speech.

Though this process may seem fair and doing justice to the belief of a ‘representative election’, there is one flaw. Many of the candidates aren’t confident public speakers and hence don’t perform well enough in the presentations to get elected. This is a big problem.

While investigating a new way to elect the SRC, my school’s student council came up with a great new election process initiative. Just as before, candidates write an application to support their interest. Once the Leadership Coordinator has informed them that he/she has received their application, the applicant can then choose whether he/she would like to sit an interview with a panel of students and teachers or speak in front of the class captains. This way applicants get a choice; if they don’t like public speaking, they can choose to sit a less daunting interview. Hopefully, this way, non-confident people have a better chance in getting successfully elected.

Chris Varney
craskoo@hotmail.com

Students Organising:
Inter-School Talent Quest

It’s not often that students find a teacher willing enough to allow the SRC to run an event out of the norm, such as a competition between two schools. It is even rarer for them to find a teacher who will leave all the busy work to the students, so that they can see for themselves what it is all about. And it must be a teacher who’s lost his mind that would allow the group to repeat the whole thing over again!

Berwick Secondary’s Student Voice has long run an annual talent quest for students. After the success of last year’s, however, senior leaders from the group decided they were looking for more of a challenge; having run talent quests for the past three or four years, it was starting to get boring. After an ordinary lunchtime meeting between a group of the SV executives on a hill under a tree, it was decided to approach the coordinator with the idea of making this year’s event inter-school.

It was decided that, because of the numbers at the school, it would probably be best to split the competition up, focusing first on the junior school. So in April, a group of students set about planning the first inter-school talent quest. Using connections with students on the SRC at KooWeeRup Secondary, we soon had a school to battle it out against. With them just as excited as us about the project, things were soon flying and the project was well on its way to being a success.

With interest from more than 20 groups, it was decided that we would need to hold heats to select teams to go through to the competition. As well as providing entertainment for students at lunchtime, it gave everyone a chance to perform in front of a crowd. Ten acts were then selected to go on to the night competition that was held in front of a public audience.

The project was organised entirely by students. From organising the proposal to the school council for the competition, permission slips, advertising, prizes, phone calls and meetings between schools, buses and pizza, students worked their way through the problems, with help on call from the SV Coordinator. The schools set out the structure for organising the competition early on: Berwick would organise the night if KWR could provide ten acts and get them to Berwick.

After the June event, October saw a repeat with the senior school students. Berwick and KWR reversed their roles and the senior event was held at KWR. This way, each school got a chance of hosting the event and each SRC got a chance at doing the main organisation. While KWR walked away with the trophies from both nights, it showed what SRCs can achieve if they work together.

If you would like any more information about the Talent Quest, feel free to contact me: mills_dale@yahoo.com.au

Dale Mills
Student Voice President, Berwick SC, Vic
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 35 - December 2003

PASTA is the acronym of the Professional Association of Student
Representative Council Teacher/Advisors. Founded in New South
Wales, Australia, in February 1995, our Association exists to support
in whatever ways possible those who work with and support
programs of student participation, representation and leadership.

SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM ON THE WEBSITE

PASS THE PASTA

The second International Student Leadership
Conference (ISRC 2004) is alive and well. As
the originator of the concept, PASTA is asking you
to support the attendance of an Australian
contingent to this event. So far
approximately 20 students and
advisers have indicated an
interest in being part of this
experience. It is not too late to
apply, as the bigger the delegation
the better. Suggested conference
keynote speakers include: Anne
McLellan (Minister of Health,
Government of Canada), Steven
Lewis (Canadian Ambassador,
United Nations) and Craig
Keilburger (Save the Children
Foundation). Gane Olsen in
Edmonton, Canada has been able
to put together a great program
that we are sure will follow the

In response to the large number of private
schools applying for membership, a meeting was
arranged with a representative from the NSW
Catholic School system to discuss how PASTA might
be able to help with their student leadership
programs. While nothing definite was decided at that
time, it is hoped that a closer working relationship
that will be of benefit to both groups might be
developed. I would like to take this opportunity to
thank all concerned for their time and interest, and
look forward to seeing what happens in the future.

It was with regret that we learnt of the
retirement of Ms Helen Kerr-Roubicek. Helen was
the Manager, Student Wellbeing (formerly the
Student Welfare unit) of the New South Wales
Department of Education and Training. She has been a great
help to the executive on many
joint projects over the last few
years and has been only too
happy to give of her time and
experience whenever it has been
asked for. We would like to thank
her for all she has done to further
the causes of student leadership
and to wish her well in the future.

Keep in mind that the
Annual General Meeting will be
held on the last Saturday in
February (the 28th) at the PTC
premises in Leichhardt, NSW. If
you feel that you have the skills
(or more importantly, the interest)
to become a member of the committee, please let the
secretary know (email: esheerin@ozemail.com.au).
We would be particularly interested in anyone who
has a background in primary school SRCs to give us
advice on what might be needed in that area.

Finally, on behalf of all of the executive I would
like to wish everyone the best for the coming festive
season, and thank you for the effort you are making
to help develop the next generation of student
leaders.

Ken Page
President

http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

December 2003
Raising the Bar on Accountability

Although the following article was written by Jeff Sherrill with the American school system in mind, many of the ideas contained are worth considering in terms of what schools (and advisers) are trying to achieve with their support of student leadership programs.

Developing standards for excellence in Student Council and other activities programs should not be unlike the processes and procedures used for assessing the academic disciplines. Given the existing accreditation models and other assessment tools that schools currently use, advisers and principals can, with some modification, produce a comprehensible set of student activity standards. Like those of academic areas, the primary function of the standards would be to define the goals and outcomes of student activities in support of the educational mission of the school and communicate to parents and school leaders what they should expect from such programs.

The difficulty in developing accountable standards lies in two distinct areas: the lack of broad-based, historic research on the subject of student leadership in a context closely linked to academic performance; and a varied group of more than 400 identified student activity organisations, each possessing individual purposes and goals. Although some research has been published, their focus addressed activities in terms of the general benefits that activities have as predictors of student success and positive school experiences.

In 1997 the National Study for School Evaluation (NSSE) sought to identify common goals that should be incorporated across the curriculum in middle level and high schools. Teachers would subsequently address specific skills in each of the identified goal areas within the context of each academic discipline. The common areas of learning that NSSE identifies includes learning to learn, expanding and integrating knowledge, communication skills, thinking and reasoning, interpersonal skills, and personal and social responsibility. Student leadership was identified as an integral component of school quality by NSSE and indicators for student leadership were fully developed for each of the common goals. The following sections explore both middle level and high school goals for each common area of learning suggested in the NSSE report.

Learning to Learn

Learning to learn goals are those that constitute the foundational skills and knowledge that students must master and apply as they progress through a leadership training program. For middle level students, learning to learn goals include:

- Providing training opportunities for developmental leadership skills, eg decision-making and organisation;
- Identifying effective meeting management skills;
- Providing activities that model positive social skills and attitudes.

Learning to learn goals established for high school leaders may include those adapted from the goals cited for the middle level, but high school goals should also include goals that function at more advanced and age appropriate levels. These goals may include:

- Having students develop timelines for activities and projects;
- Demonstrating skills that enhance the operation and development process of their student activity organisation;
- Making a wide range of information services, technology, and school/community personnel accessible to students to ascertain information specific to the needs of given activities, projects, or programs.

Expanding and Integrating Knowledge

Goals written for expanding and integrating knowledge are often found to be at the core of successful school curricula. These goals challenge educators to provide experiences and opportunities for students to apply prior knowledge and skills in cross-curricular settings, including co-curricular programs.

For the middle level, four goals have been identified. Middle level instruction should provide students with extended learning opportunities in core subject areas where they can apply their leadership skills. To increase the success and impact, these opportunities should be experiential in design. Leadership programs should provide students with structured activities that engage the use of personal prior knowledge bases and those that articulate the academic curriculum through a logical progression of skill building and practice. Leadership programs should also create opportunities for students to seek higher levels of skill and comprehension through cooperative group exercises.

Having students create and carry out activities that exhibit their application and synthesis of prior knowledge based in academic disciplines is an imperative when developing high school goals for expanding and integrating knowledge. High school students should be expected to exhibit effective meeting management skills and be able to discern when their use is appropriate. It will also be important for high school students to have the opportunity to participate in cross-curriculum clubs and organisations to enhance their leadership skills. Providing programs that allow participation in career-oriented activities allows students to consider post-secondary options. In concert with the middle level goals, high school students should also participate in cooperative group exercises as a method to seek high levels of skill mastery and content understanding.
Communication Skills

Goals pertaining to communication skills should be written to provide for guided and independent practice. For middle level programs, student leaders should participate in activities that provide practice in written communication. These may include letter and report writing, but may expand to also include writing an evaluation or media story. Another recommended goal is to provide experiences for public speaking with and without the use of electronic address systems. Opportunities to communicate with peers for the purpose of completing a group task are also important. Middle level leadership programs should provide activities that empower students to compose communication samples that effectively inform the school community of a group project or activity.

High school communication goals can include variations of the middle level goals, but should also include goals that appropriately build and expand on more fundamental skills. Programs should include activities in public speaking in both large and small group settings. Students should be expected to exhibit effective uses of print and electronic mediums of communication. In conjunction with this goal, programs should also provide opportunities for students to explore the use of technology as effective tools for communication and the appropriate demonstration of their findings. High school students should also be expected to use deductive reasoning and acquired knowledge bases to recognise examples of effective communication skills.

Thinking and Reasoning

Thinking and reasoning skills are imperative for successful mastery of the complexities found in more challenging areas of academic disciplines. For middle level student leaders, learning skills in this area begins by participating in activities that require them to identify problems and seek solutions. Following problem identification, student leaders should use divergent thinking processes. This will aid as they seek solutions to problems and in developing plans for implementing various student activity projects. To help students develop higher skill levels of divergent and convergent thinking, students should be given opportunities to participate in structured brainstorming activities.

At the high school level, leadership goals for thinking and reasoning should apply more specialised applications of the skills. Students should be expected to evaluate and critique given information presented by their peers. Upon completion of this evaluation, students apply creative thinking and problem solving skills to determine and propose effective implementation plans for projects and ideas. High school students should also be expected to categorise their proposed solutions to various problems according to the levels of risk involved and project outcomes.

Interpersonal Skills

Closely related to communication skills, another integral part of leadership is interpersonal skills, those skills that help leaders work effectively with others. For middle level leadership programs, it is important to provide students with opportunities to practice negotiation skills needed to reach a common solution for a presented situation. Within this process, students should practice recognising and accepting the contributions and viewpoints of others. This can be integrated into activities that achieve another goal, promoting group consensus to reach common goals.

Using group consensus to reach a common goal should also be a primary interpersonal skill featured as a high school program goal. Programs should also promote opportunities for self-exploration, the development of positive self-esteem, and self-worth. Interpersonal skills can be learned in a variety of settings. High school leaders should be encouraged to experience and participate in programs involving peer counselling, tutoring, and conflict resolution. Students should demonstrate effective application of interpersonal skills by taking active roles in the development of school events and activities, such as school dances, spirit activities and service projects.

Personal and Social Responsibility

Because middle level students typically are at the height of experimenting with social behaviours and discovering what is and is not acceptable, it falls naturally that a primary goal of a leadership program would be to have students explore through discussion and practice proper social behaviours for various situations. Students should also be provided guidance to develop and participate in service learning projects. To explore personal responsibility within the school community, leadership programs must provide opportunities for students to plan and participate in activities that enhance the student environment. These activities may centre on student faculty relations, school spirit or school-community relations.

For high school programs, goals in the category of personal and social responsibility offer reinforcement to those of the middle level and help students become better able to recognise and define their own responsibilities and those expected of them as members of both micro- and macro- societies. High school student leaders should be given exercises that require them to interpret the scope and importance of the individual roles for the members of a group in a project or situation. An important part of social responsibility is service. Service can be best learned by having students who develop and participate in activities that promote volunteerism and service learning at both the school and community levels. In the school environment, students should be involved in assemblies, programs, and events that discuss social development and model behaviours that are considered acceptable. Students must also be involved in activities that develop a sense of personal responsibility and promote confidence in their own abilities. Because of the busy schedules of student leaders, activities that help them manage their time and make wise use of leisure time is recommended.
Leadership programs should also include activities that prepare students for post-secondary education.

In addition to the NSSE goal areas, the common goal of leadership should also be considered when writing accountable program goals. Several general leadership goals are generic to both the middle level and high school program. In both groups, students should be given opportunities to set goals and follow through with them. Another general goal is for student leaders to improve their use of identified leadership skills through exploration and practice. Activities should challenge students to identify and take risks to achieve important goals. This supports another goal that asks students to take the initiative to begin and complete a task. Both groups should also be expected to evaluate activities and projects more effectively.

Specific to the middle level, common leadership goals address three basic areas. The first of these - predicting outcomes - calls for students to participate in exercises that provide guidance in predicting outcomes based on various scenarios. Students should also be given opportunities to participate in leadership positions and training. They can also practise applying leadership skills through role-play where they are expected to model the correct uses of specific skills. Common leadership goals at the high school level work to advance student leaders and vault them into the more substantial roles available. The primary goal of a high school leadership program should be to introduce students to a curriculum that builds skills and knowledge required for leadership and management. In such a program, students receive instruction and practice in skill areas that lead to the ability to focus on a presented task, set a direction for action, promote a vision for the future, and predict and assess outcomes. The program also gives students opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities that will help prepare them to meet the challenges of a changing world.

The goals presented here are but a skeletal outline of those necessary for schools to provide full and proper leadership programs to middle level and high school students. Although schools should assess their own programs and create goals and strategies based on those findings, the goals addressed herein identify the core ideals and content of student leadership education and should be considered for inclusion, also keeping integration of skills and cross-curricular learning at the forefront of the project. As with goals written for other areas of a school, those written for leadership programs should be attainable and measurable, but they must also be composed with a clarity that makes them understood by the most important party involved - student leaders - making them accountable not only to school officials and parents, but to those who have the highest expectations for and derive the direct benefits from a leadership program.

The writer (Jeff Sherrill, sherrill@principals.org) is Associate Director for middle level and adviser services at the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Reston, VA, USA.

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ISRC 2004
2nd International Student Representative Conference
(3-7 August 2004 - Edmonton - Alberta CANADA)

The delegates from the 1st ISRC - initiated by PASTA - were enlightened, inspired, informed, and encouraged by the global issues explored by both the students and adults. Student and adviser delegations from four continents included a Principal from Thailand, a Deputy Principal from Canada, the Executive Director of the USA National Association of Student Counsellors and the Chief of the Mohawk Nation. ISRC 2000 delegates from several countries, including Australia, presented the group's resolutions at the United Nations in New York the following year.

The second ISRC will be an issues-driven conference as well. The themes and workshop topics for each day are:

- **Day 1: August 3** Celebrating Cultural Diversity
- **Day 2: August 4** Health and the Environment
- **Day 3: August 5** Education, Media, and Politics
- **Day 4: August 6** Community Service
- **Day 5: August 7** One World-One Dream
- **Day 6: August 8** Think Globally, Act Locally

The world has changed since December 2000, but the importance of having students and their teachers and advisers gather to meet, to discuss, to brainstorm, and to solve challenges has remained constant. This is a major professional development and life-enhancing opportunity for advisers as well as student leaders.

The Australian Delegation Tour will be approximately 24 days, departing Sydney during the last week of July and returning in mid-August. It will include pre-tour Orientation before proceeding to Edmonton for three days of its annual cultural heritage festival. Following the ISRC, the Tour will travel south on its way to the intense personal leadership skills training that is Camp Cheley, Colorado, the oldest of the superb National Leadership Camps run by NASC.

The estimated base price for the 2004 Tour is approximately A$5600. This includes all travel, conference and camp registration fees, site entry fees, accommodation and most food needs. During ISRC, students stay with host families, while advisers stay in the Conference hotel.

For more information on this event contact:
e-mail: charleskingston@ozemail.com.au

Go to the PASTA Website for information on all our projects, including adviser and student professional development, raising the SRC profile, ISRC 2004 and our normal annual SRC Leadership Tours:

http://hsd.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

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The PASTA Newsletter is edited by Ken Page and distributed bi-monthly as a supplement to Connect magazine.
ADVICE for ADVISERS

Are you thinking of giving your student leaders some form of group leadership training, running a workshop, etc? If so, the following may be of assistance.

USING GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group activities can be used to build positive group interaction. They can be used in many ways and reused, with variations, in multiple situations:

• at the start or end of meetings (or as a quick energiser in the middle if interest is flagging);
• during a one or two period workshop with a limited specific focus;
• as the vital process components, one building on the other, in a one day workshop;
• at an overnight retreat;
• as the core curriculum of a longer term workshop or camp;
• at a conference as preparation for and follow-up to presentations;
• as part of activity projects for the student body organised by student councils;
• or any other occasion that could benefit from having group members feel comfortable with each other.

Ideally, the leadership curriculum underpinning student representative councils and the like - for which citizenship and civics education can be one catalyst - is an active process. In addition to the above alternatives in timetabled opportunities, it should occur also in many timetabled classrooms. Such activities - appropriately chosen, competently facilitated and regularly reinforced - can be ideal for both pupil/pupil relations and teacher/pupil relations as well as invaluable ways of supplementing the curriculum of many subjects.

Guidelines For Using - from Icebreakers to . .

Each icebreaker, energiser, trust activity, skills development exercise, or other activity used with a group should be incorporated into your workshop and lesson plans for a reason. In order that all group members appreciate what is to be gained from an activity, the facilitator should be sure to point out its objectives and benefits.

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http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

December 2003
A communication activity that can be used in this fashion is ‘What am I thinking?’

WHAT AM I THINKING?

Concept:
If you look at why people get angry with each other, you will find that many times it is a result of misunderstanding what someone else is thinking. Much of our violence today is a result of not clearly expressing ourselves. We need to have clear communication that accurately reflects what we are thinking so others won’t misinterpret our words or intentions. Making someone else guess how we feel or what we are thinking creates problems that can cause hurt feelings, anger and even physical harm.

Time Needed:
15 minutes and discussion time

Material Needed:
2 metres of yarn for each team of 4 or 5
A pair of scissors for each team
25-35 balloons of various colours for each team
One needle or thumbtack for each team

Activity:
Divide your group into teams of up to 10 people. Give each team a pair of scissors, 25-35 balloons of any shape (but they must be of various colours) and about 2 metres of yarn. Choose one person from each team to be the inspector. Take the inspectors aside so the rest of the participants cannot hear your instructions. Tell the inspectors that their team will be handing them balloons. The balloons must be blown up, tied off, have a piece of yarn tied around the stem, no two balloons of the same colour may be handed to the inspector one right after the other and the same person may not hand two balloons to the inspector in a row. If you feel this might be too complicated for your inspectors to remember, have these instructions written down for them to refer to. Tell the instructors that they cannot answer any questions from their team. If you feel this set of rules is too hard for your group, take out the yarn tying part. But don’t make it too easy; you want them to become frustrated.

Now bring the inspectors back into the room. Explain to the teams that their assignment is to hand the balloons to their inspector in the correct manner. If the balloon is not handed to the inspector in the correct manner, then the inspector will pop the balloon with his/her pin. Each team has 25-36 balloons to hand the inspector. The inspector will place the accepted balloons on the floor by him/her to be counted at the end of the activity. The team with the most balloons accepted by the inspector is the winner. Explain that the inspector is not allowed to answer any questions. Give no further instructions except to clarify or repeat what you have already said. The object of the activity is to guess through trial and error what the correct manner is to hand a balloon to the inspector.

Discussion Ideas:
- What was the correct manner to hand a balloon to the inspector?
- How did you go about finding out what the correct manner was?
- How did you feel during the activity if you were the inspector?
- How did you feel during the activity if you were one of the workers?
- Once you figured out the correct manner, how easy was it to get your balloons accepted by the inspector?
- How did you feel if you never guessed the correct manner to give the balloons?
- Have you ever had someone expect you to do something but not give you complete instructions? Explain.
- How do you feel when someone expects you to read their mind?
- How do you feel when you try to guess what someone is thinking and you guess wrong?
- How can unclear communication make us angry?
- What is the best way to deal with that kind of anger? What happens if you don’t find a positive way to deal with anger?
- Is violence a suitable solution to anger? Why or why not?
When adults ... think of students, they think of them as potential beneficiaries of change. They think of achievement results, skills, attitudes, and jobs. They rarely think of students as participants in a process of school change and organisational life.

Michael Fullan

[We] have not been listening much to children in these recent years of 'summit conferences' on education, of severe reports and ominous prescriptions. The voices of children, frankly, have been missing from the whole discussion.

Jonathon Kozol (1991)
Savage Inequities.
New York: Crown Publishers

It is not 'utopian' or 'naive' to think that learners can make responsible decisions about their own learning; those words best describe the belief that any group of people will do something effectively and enthusiastically when they are unable to make choices about what they are doing.

Alfie Kohn (1993)
'Choices for Children: Why and How to Let Students Decide' in Phi Delta Kappan, 8-20

I have been struck by ... how threatened some teachers appear to be by the thought of treating pupils in their everyday exchanges as they would adults, and how they ignore the social rules of courtesy: allowing others to save face, making another feel they are of interest... If a colleague asks us to repeat something, we do not immediately reprove them for not listening; if a guest is late, we do not threaten and bluster, but accept their excuse at face value. And if we can be so tolerant and understanding of adults who have the freedom to shun our company, it is curious that we can feel free to withhold such important social imperatives from those who are forced by compulsory education to witness our presence.

Professor Lynn Davies (1994)
Beyond authoritarian school management: the challenge for transparency,
Ticknall: Education Now Books

When schools venture down the democratic path, even from the early stages they start to:
- treat their pupils with dignity and respect as thinking beings;
- help children to develop skills of democratic citizenship;
- see giving young people a voice as a means both of protecting themselves and of helping their teachers to find the methods and techniques which will enable them to learn in the best way;
- see pupils as potentially more effective students if empowered, trusted and allowed to feel safe and able to express themselves freely and responsibly.

The evidence is now overwhelming. When schools behave like that, they become better schools. They are happier, more productive, more effective. Exam results are better. There are reduced levels of alienation and truancy. The whole process is happier for everyone - and the results improve too. It's a win-win arrangement.

Bernard Trafford (2003)
School Councils, School Democracy, School Improvement
Leicester: SHA Publications

Some Interesting US Websites:

Sound Out: promoting meaningful student involvement in school change:
www.soundout.org

What Kids Can Do:
www.whatkidscando.org

Project 540: Students Turn for a Change:
www.project540.org

In the Mix: Student Power:
www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows/show_school_reform_yia.html

Student Leadership and Service Team:
www.k12.wa.us/integratedcurr/yes

Youth Speak Out on Education:
www.pbs.org/merrow/listenup/projects/education

Student Engagement in Learning and School Life:
http://ed-lex.law.mcgill.ca/Pub-SE.htm
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Make it Real

Make it Real is about learning real things, completing real projects and making real decisions. With Make it Real, there are real time lines, real audiences and real consequences.

Make it Real is different from other parts of our academic program because it requires you to show initiative, it requires you to come up with ideas and it requires you to act for something to happen.

Make it Real has four elements:
- Personal Challenge;
- Enterprise;
- Work Studies;
- Service.

Later in this paper I will introduce each of these elements to you, but for the present I'd like to focus on active learning and enterprise.

Make it Real is as much about working with others in small teams and groups as it is about individual learning. You have a lot to learn from each other and the community beyond what the teacher teaches and what you read in books.

The teacher's role is to assist learning. They are more like a coach than an instructor. The teacher is still in charge, but you are expected to show initiative and come forward with ideas and try things out. A great deal of responsibility is given to you in this new way of learning and you will learn many new skills including negotiating your program; but the most important thing at this stage is that you have a go, take a risk and try something new.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Make it Real is activity based. There is not a set body of material for you to learn, but instead a framework where you have to plan a program over two years. Most of the learning is experiential, that is you learn from experience (by doing something). Under this arrangement you have to take responsibility for your own learning.

**Key Characteristics of Active Learning Projects**

1. Clearly defined objectives;
2. Access to a continuum of learning opportunities;
3. Real responsibility;
4. Collaboration beyond the school and peer group;
5. Concrete outcomes and celebration of achievement;
6. Regular review and evaluation;
7. Clear connection to other areas of learning;
8. Effective motivation through example and respect.

Active Learning needs to be focused and we will use mentor groups to make sure you are given guidance, counselling and direction. With this kind of learning it is really important that you de-brief with your mentor and use the feedback to set new goals.

Each active learning experience involves the following phases:

**Planning:** setting goals and preparing for the activity;

**Experience:** the activity itself eg a work placement;

**De-briefing:** reflecting on what has been learned;

**Evaluation:** analysing and drawing conclusions;

**Reporting:** keeping a permanent record of the experience.

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At Rosetta High School, just north of Hobart in Tasmania, a new approach to learning has been introduced in 2003. The Make It Real program incorporates many elements of student participation approaches. How are such ideas translated into an on-going school program? How do they appear on a timetable? Here Graham Speight, Principal of the school, outlines the Make It Real program to students.

**THE FOUR ELEMENTS**

**Personal Challenge**

With the personal challenge, we are inviting you to have a go at something new, to push yourself to find out about yourself.

Personal challenges can be physical, mental and emotional. They must be personal, but that doesn’t mean you can’t be part of a group. They can be creative, social or just hard work, but they must challenge you.

For example, participating in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme will take you bushwalking, rock climbing and abseiling, but if you can already do those things easily, it is not a challenge.

Working with handicapped children might be a real challenge for some, but for others, something they already do.

A good example of a personal challenge is public speaking or presenting in an assembly. Some personal challenges can be easily measured eg a Bronze Medallion, but others eg working with old people, will be more difficult to quantify.

Over time we will have many examples of personal challenges to illustrate what we mean but for you, the first group, one of the challenges is finding a challenge.
The personal challenge includes a compulsory personal relationship (health course) for grade 9s. You must attend all sessions to receive maximum points.

Another aspect of the personal challenge is your on-line portfolio. The on-line portfolio is a record of your experiences in Make it Real over the two years. To graduate, you must submit your portfolio electronically to the graduation committee.

**Enterprise**

People often confuse enterprise or being entrepreneurial with making money. This is not the case; enterprise is actually about putting ideas into action. Sometimes this does make money, but not all enterprise is concerned with profit.

The following enterprise skills help define what we mean by being enterprising:

**Enterprise Skills Are:**

- Assess strengths and weaknesses.
- Seek information and advice.
- Make decisions.
- Plan time and energy.
- Carry through on agreed responsibility.
- Negotiate.
- Deal with power and authority.
- Problem solve.
- Resolve conflict.
- Cope with stress and tension.
- Evaluate your performance.
- Communication skills.

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<th>Identify and initiate.</th>
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<td>Assess strengths and weaknesses.</td>
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<td>Planning and preparing.</td>
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<td>Communicating, negotiating and influence.</td>
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<td>Organising, managing and deciding.</td>
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<td>Resolving.</td>
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<td>Monitoring and evaluating.</td>
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As you can see, enterprise could be running a business or managing a project or creating something. You can be enterprising in all fields: making things, performing things, selling things.

**Service**

Service comes in many shapes and forms. You are providing a service when you are being a good citizen; you are also providing a service when you volunteer. Serving others (including your school and your community) is an important aspect of the Make it Real program because it puts the onus on thinking about others.

St John's Ambulance, the Red Cross and numerous other voluntary organisations provide services, as do various clubs and sporting organisations.

Holding office (e.g. house captain) and participating in committee work are also examples of service. Service is central to our community; it is the glue that makes things work.

Service includes leadership and being a valued member of the group.

**Work Studies**

Career and work education is an important part of your education and so, within this program, there is a compulsory work studies component.

With the Work Studies program you have to complete the career/vocational assessment tasks, research various careers and complete a job investigation, participate in career pathway planning, learn about job application and interview processes and learn about the rights and responsibilities of young workers.

There will also be opportunities to participate in work experience and placement programs.

Then you have to develop a career plan. Once you have submitted a career plan, you will have to go before a panel and discuss your plan. A panel will include someone from your chosen field, a parent (perhaps yours) and a member of staff.

The panel will give you a score reflecting your preparation, understanding and presentation.

As part of Make it Real, all students need to complete:
- one individual research project; and
- one small group project in each of the two years.

Both of these projects will include a negotiated assessment activity to be presented to an assessment committee of experts and peers. See student guides for more details about the personal interest project and small group project.

An important part of the Work Studies program is developing a work ethic. By this we mean the right attitude. A 'can do' attitude that makes you attractive as an employee and as a potential employer.
HOW THE MAKE IT REAL POINTS SYSTEM WORKS

Over two years you must successfully collect 800 points (400 each year).

You can do this by completing tasks in each of the four Make it Real strands.

You can also collect another 200 points (100 each year) through attendance, participation, achievement and behaviour in other parts of your school program and this will enable you to graduate from the school.

The difference between a graduate and a school leaver is that a graduate has completed a range of activities including the core skills certificate that enables the school to say that not only has this person been reliable, punctual, honest and a regular attender, but they have also shown initiative and participated successfully in a range of programs.

A graduate is a good citizen – a person who has shown maturity, good judgement and perseverance. A graduate has met all the terms of the graduation criteria and this means they are well balanced individuals who have demonstrated that they are good citizens and capable workers.

A school leaver is someone who has reached the end of grade ten and is leaving school.

The main benefits of Make it Real can be traced through its focus on work, community, service, enterprise and personal challenge. Successful completion of Make it Real means our students are ‘work ready’, more significant in the eyes of many employers, they have the right attitude. Because if ‘position, position, position’ is the catch cry of selling real estate, ‘attitude, attitude, attitude’ is surely the catch cry of work readiness.

Our graduation certificate enables all students to gain recognition for their work and achievements. We will still recognise our high achievers through the various academic, cultural, sporting and citizenship awards at our Presentation Assembly, but in addition we will acknowledge all those other students who try hard, do the right thing and achieve their best without ever qualifying for the top awards.

A management committee made up of teachers and students will determine how the points system will be administered and rule on points of issue, but the points table should enable students to satisfactorily plan their two year program.

One of the real benefits of Make it Real is that students can capitalise on their extra curricular and out of school experiences to demonstrate a balance in their portfolio. In this way students can aggregate their point scores on the basis of their work in and out of school.

WILD CARDS

All students can submit a wild card to the management committee through their mentor. A wild card is a submission that demonstrates an activity that does not easily fit into the four categories of the Make it Real framework but which you believe should count for points. There will be a special form you have to fill out to play a wild card.

PORTFOLIOS

We will set up a template for you to complete your on-line portfolio. The very best elements of your portfolio will make it into your Record of Achievement folder. As noted earlier you must submit your on-line portfolio electronically to the management group.

YOUR MENTOR

Every student will have a mentor. Your mentor is an experienced and trusted adviser who can help you plan your program and provide coaching and counselling to help you get the most out of the program. Each mentor will work with a small group of students.

HOW AM I ASSESSED?

All of these programs can be assessed under the present TCE system. It is not clear yet what the new system (due to be in place for 2005) will look like.

During the year and towards the end of grade 9 and grade 10, you will be asked to present your portfolio to a panel that will ask questions and give you feedback on your work in Make it Real.

Make it Real gives you real power to make decisions about your learning. There will be many opportunities. With this package there is a year planner which your mentor will work through with you.

Make Make it Real work for you. Try new things and test yourself out. Have a go!

Graham Speight

October-December 2003
r.u.MAD? embodies a vision of what can be achieved when students 'give back' to their communities and strive to make a difference about real problems.

The program helps teachers create authentic roles for their students as agents of change in the local community. It focuses on student engagement, organisation and decision making, and links particularly to Middle Years initiatives that emphasise active citizenship.

On-line and CD-Rom curriculum materials include a project manual, guidelines, worksheets and hypothetical projects, as well as a kit for setting up a student-run Foundation with school-community links. The website also serves to keep teachers and students informed of interesting projects and helps them get in touch with each other. MAD projects are generated by the students themselves, and can focus on environmental, social or holistic solutions.

Valuable outcomes have been achieved for students (such as resilience, leadership, self esteem, literacy and research skills), schools (student engagement, partnerships, curriculum development) and communities (school links, social change at the local level, and addressing the needs of youth by enlisting student skill and enthusiasm in authentic ways).

Origins of ruMAD?

With the close of the Stegley Foundation in November 2001, it was keen to develop projects that supported progressive social change and kept alive the legacy of the Foundation. It was agreed that the best place to start was through the development of curriculum material and associated practical activities for primary and secondary level students.

As a first step, David Zygier of Knowledge Services was employed to develop a program outline and to undertake some initial consultation within the education and philanthropic sectors. Background research and searches on international websites indicated that there were very few programs of this nature anywhere in the world.

The project has been a truly collaborative exercise. Financial and in-kind support was received from a range of philanthropic bodies, including:

- The Education Foundation (hosting the project);
- The William Buckland Foundation;
- The Myer Foundation;
- Perpetual Trustees;
- The Stegley Foundation, and several individual donors.

Levels of Madness

Our first full year of operation has demonstrated that getting schools to take up the program is an intense process. It is important to provide flexible options and to take into account the schools' range of commitments eg mandatory curriculum, time, teacher effort, disruptions to existing timetable

MAD days are relatively easy to organise and are organisationally similar to many similar events (uniform free days etc) while Foundations or embedding in the curriculum requires major commitment and planning.

The level of involvement increases:
- MAD Days;
- One off projects;
- SRCs, JSCs and leadership;
- Community projects;
- Integrated into the curriculum;
- Foundations.

So what has been achieved in 2003?

- Over 50,000 students involved through an aspect of the program (compared with 10,000 in 2002).
- MAD Day launch on March 28: 283 schools registered and 78 provided feedback. A pleasing aspect was the joint action taken by some schools. Eleven schools in the Yarra Ranges held a youth conference, several schools held a joint activity day in North East Victoria, and a small group of schools in the Gisborne worked together.
- 51 schools have run change projects this year, compared to 6 in 2001 and 25 in 2002.
- Strategic positioning of the program within the education sector. The majority of current projects will be ongoing into 2004, giving a strong starting base. Several clusters are commencing work in term four to set up for 2004. The Albert Park project sees students actively recruiting other schools for environmental action.
- Over 300 schools individually contacted this year, more than 100 of these with follow up visits.
• 29 conferences and PD sessions this year, reaching a wide audience.
• As well as the existing three MAD Foundations, a further four have been established in 2003, involving ten schools, with a fourth ready to begin in 2004.
• Youth Conference: 55 students from 17 schools attended a conference at the Edmund Barton Centre in Mooroobbin. The students presented their projects to the conference and got to hear what other schools were doing.
• Student leadership: The 55 students attending the conference heard a talk on being an ambassador and were assigned two schools per school to present their projects to next year. One of the tasks for the program coordinator in 2004 will be to support the implementation of this program. Also the Albert Park College project involves going out to secondary schools and presenting their plan.
• The development of cluster projects, often with local council support, has given the program a wider reach and an ongoing position in cluster schools. Current clusters are centred around the Yarra Ranges, Copperfield College in Sydenham, Brunswick and Coburg, Princes Hill, and Eltham. They are at varying stages of the ruMAD? process but they provide a great model for spreading the program and potential new clusters could be supported in the Gisborne area, Gipsland, Myrrhee, Albert Park and Dromana.

2003 Strategies

1. **MAD Day 2003:**
The aim was to grow the number of schools participating in MAD Day from 50 in 2002 to 160.

A total of 283 schools registered for MAD Day and received the kits which we prepared. We received 78 feedback sheets from schools and the Schools co-ordinator had direct follow up contact with 106 schools. The MAD flags option in the package was particularly successful. An example of the use of the flags was Riddells Creek Primary School which has kept the flags up all year and used the exercise as a stimulus for the whole school community (staff and parents) audit of their vision for a more community focused school.

Other special MAD Day events included the launch at Princes Hill Primary School, a cluster celebration day in the North East of Victoria centred around Myrrhee PS and a MAD Day Youth Conference in the Yarra Ranges with 80 students from 13 local schools attending.

2. **Student Foundations:**
The aim for 2003 was to develop five new Foundations and consolidate the existing three.

All three existing foundations continued their work in 2003. Melbourne Girls has now developed such a profile that they were inundated with community applications for funding. Spensley Street PS has continued the foundation with a substantially new group of students and The Grange has continued to support their foundation despite the driving teacher leaving the school.

**The new foundations:**

- **Dromana Secondary College:** As part of their Year 9 SQSE course the students have developed a foundation to support local action. Already they have raised funds to support the local RSPCA, CFA and an elderly citizens group. It is part of the mission statement of this foundation that their students donate time and talent also to their fund recipients.
- **Don Valley Primary School:** This foundation grew out of a student initiative in 2002 to improve links with the elderly in their community. The school is currently taking submissions on the best ways to support more active involvement of the aged in their community. They are looking closely at computer training and school projects.
- **The Kids to Kids Aileen Foundation:** Formed by 28 students selected from four primary schools, one special school, one state secondary and one private special school in the Brunswick region. The foundation raises awareness of the needs of the people of Aileen, takes submissions from the village school and supports them with fundraising and materials where appropriate.
- **The KODE Indigenous Culture Foundation:** This foundation developed out of the concerns of students and their community about keeping alive koorie culture. They raise funds through dance and art shows, and use the funds to support further development by employing indigenous teachers and supporting taking their culture to the wider community.
- **The Yarra Ranges Cluster:** This is a huge group, comprising eleven schools and over 40 students representing a total of over 3000 students. It is focused on auditing community needs and allocating funds and time on local community projects. The sheer size of this group means that the auditing has been very time consuming and the follow up tasks of fundraising, taking and assessing submissions, will only begin in term four of this year, so they will not be in a position to receive seed funding until 2004.

3. **Annual Projects:**
The target for 2003 was fifty individual projects.

Fifty one schools have undertaken major projects this year, and are at varying stages of completion. The scope of these projects ranges from the highly ambitious Albert Park College/Myrrhee Primary School plan to have a day of round the bay action to planning and preparation of an indigenous garden by Year 8 students at Northland Secondary College.

In some cases, students have begun projects that have involved a great deal of research and will not lead to fruitful action until 2004. The Copperfield College cluster's plan to assist the poor in their region is one example, as is the planned joint sustainable schools project in the inner northern suburbs. Several projects: Whitfield District Primary School's Jessie's Creek project for example, have continued from last year.

In some cases the foundations have lead to projects themselves. For example, the KODE school has run art shows and dance performances to actively take their culture to the wider community.

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October-December 2003
One difficulty with this program needs to be noted here. Unlike MAD Day, registration of MAD projects is not necessary and therefore it is probable, given that the material is freely available on the net, that many schools are running ruMAD? projects without our knowledge. Certainly, the positive response from conferences and anecdotal evidence suggests that this is true.

4. RuMAD? Ambassadors and Conference:

The aim was to hold an ambassadors conference for 50 students in 2003.

Our conference was attended by 55 students who got the chance to present their school’s project to a wider group, hear about other projects, and prepare a presentation to take to other schools in 2004 in their role as ambassadors for student community involvement. The Conference included a performance by the KODE indigenous culture group.

5. Teacher Information Seminars:

Four seminars for twenty teachers per term.

This target was reached in a different way. Apart from the interactive half day workshops run at a range of conferences (ACHPER, Country Teachers, Southern Region, Gippsland) and a range of shorter presentations (Middle Years, Monash, South Eastern Region, various staff meetings), teacher release was provided for cluster schools to work through the ruMAD? program with the schools coordinator or to work with the co-ordinator and groups of students. This approach meant that more than 40 teachers committed to ruMAD? projects were worked with in this way. The change in approach resulted from the requests of newly appointed Innovations and Excellence cluster coordinators to want PD directly connected to projects to meet their brief.

Objectives for 2004

Short Term Objectives:

- Maintain the excellent result of 2003 MAD Day by aiming for 300 schools being registered, and ensuring follow up of all schools.
- Support for the Albert Park College MAD Day initiative to hold a student action day involving schools around Port Phillip Bay.
- The supporting of the current schools doing projects and aiming at a further increase of 20 to 70 schools. The above clusters provide a starting basis for this.
- 10 Student Foundations (7 existing).
- Run a bigger ambassador conference in 2004, representing 50 schools and with 200 students attending.

Medium Term Objectives:

- Develop and implement a more targeted marketing of the program, to complement the current strategy by giving ruMAD? a position in the curriculum.
- Take up the continued expressions of interest from outside Victoria, and seek to support five pilot interstate schools.

Long Term Objectives:

- Within three years, we expect ruMAD? to be running nationally, with corresponding growth in the recognition of student involvement and an increasing role for RuMAD? Youth Ambassadors.
- It is hoped that MAD Day will be a major annual event and a real celebration of how young people can make a positive difference.
- Having used a more targeted curriculum marketing of ruMAD? to embed the program in Victoria, to similarly package and embed the program in other states.

Staffing

A common experience of the past two years has been that ruMAD? workshops have generated a large degree of interest. Response at conferences has been consistently enthusiastic. The actual take up of the program, as far as can be ascertained, is not commensurate with the enthusiasm, and the seeing through of projects to completion sees a further drop off.

Three possibilities emerge from this:

- Schools are taking up the program, but not informing the Education Foundation. This is highly probable, but would not account for all of the discrepancy between inspiration and action.
- In its current format, ruMAD? requires a degree of enthusiasm and commitment that makes it appealing to only the most ‘can do’ of the ‘can do’ teachers.
- Amid the many demands placed on schools by the ‘crowded curriculum’ and increasing workloads, there are too many inhibitors to ruMAD?

Feedback from workshops tells us that, while teachers are inspired by ruMAD?, they often struggle to see an easy way to fit it into their school curriculum. In trying to be all things to all teachers, the program may be squeezing itself out of the curriculum.

The steady growth (6 schools to 28 schools to 61 schools) of recent years may be about as far as it can go. Certainly the Youth Ambassadors conference at the end of the year gives the program a new way to approach 34 new schools, and the Albert Park/Myrrhee project offers the possibility of large scale school involvement.

However, if the program only continues to reach the most enterprising of teachers, then the capacity for continued growth is limited. Even among these teachers, much support is needed for teachers to take up the program. The consistent experience of the past two schools coordinators has been that three or more school visits are required to cultivate teacher enthusiasm until it becomes commitment to a project.

A more accessible way is needed to make take up easier.

Feedback suggests that ruMAD? could increase its take up by more targeted packaging, aimed at the next rung of ‘can do’ teachers. It could be aimed at specific KLA’s and specific Year levels as an additional strategy.
Suggested ruMAD? packages could include:

- Year 9 SOSE (a one term unit)
- Year 8 Environmental Science (a one term unit)
- SRC/JSC (guidelines for an active student body)
- Primary

Such packaging would offer teachers an adaptable, planned program that meets CSF requirements and actually saves planning time.

An investment in a working group to write these program packages would greatly assist in the further take up of ruMAD? Ideally this would be done this year, ready for 2004, so that the appropriate subject associations could be approached for more focused presentations next year.

A further costing would be the provision of time release for teachers to support the further development of cluster projects as these offer great possibilities for wide reaching action and for student leadership.

Given the other administrative requirements, and the continuing need to present at conferences, train ambassadors and publicise successes, the program requires a similar staff commitment as the previous two years.

Further references: see Connect 131 (October, 2001) and 138 (December 2002)

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**Policy - what sort of word is that?**

Do you get excited about making school policies?

Do you get a chance to be excited about it?

Well, a new on-line resource is available for secondary school students, to support their access to policy-making at school. And even to make it exciting.

*(See the next page for more details.)*

Here is the song that launched the web resource. Instead of just clicking through the pages in silence, sing along as you click along.

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**POLICY LAUNCH SONG**

Today is gonna be the day that we're gonna go a talk for you
By now you should have somehow realised what we're gonna do
There are many policy areas; we'd like to enlighten you about them now
About them now

First of all it's the preamble bit; it tells you what it's all about
It tells you when you first log in, and the postamble logs you out
Both of these will tell you why we decided to do this now
Do this now

**BRIDGE**

Coz policy's a big and scary monster
We can tell you how to defeat it if you wants ta
Just click on any section and it'll all be clear to you
Don't have a cow

**CHORUS**

I said maybe: Policy's gonna save me
And after all: Policy's a ball

Every kid in the class ain't the same, that's just plain to see
Policies need to keep in mind student diversity
These pages will tell you about race and ethnicity
Check them out

Every school's got a bully that's a tool, now we've got a tool for you
It's not just about the kid that's being hassled, it involves the whole school too
This will tell you to involve everybody, they've all got something to do
To help you out

**BRIDGE & CHORUS**

The next bit will tell all you need to cross the cross roads of life
Stay at school, go to TAFE, get a job, or maybe even get a wife
When they're all talking about this stuff, do they ever listen to your voice?
Do you get a choice?

We thought of all these get rich quick schemes and how to increase your wealth
But in the end it seemed much more important to put something in about health
What's your school got to say about the way students feel about themselves?
And their health

**BRIDGE & CHORUS**

The last section to round it all off is rights and responsibilities
How does your school let you know about them, and do you influence these?
Students need to know where they stand in a school, and we don't mean geography
That's all now ...

*Marty Conboy and Matt Thomas*
Policy@School:
an informative (and free!) website designed
specifically for secondary school students. A tool for
members of Student Representative Councils (or
equivalent bodies) who want to be involved in
initiating or revising school policies to
benefit the whole school community.

Written, designed and produced by trainee teachers
at The University of Melbourne, in collaboration with
the Victorian Student Representative Council
(VicSRC).

http://www.policyatschool.org

(Supporting students to monkey around with policy!)
On Monday 17 November, a group of approximately 30 student teachers from Melbourne University officially launched their innovative new web-based resource, titled Policy@School. The launch took place at the Australian Youth Research Centre, with invited guests including the Dean of the Education Faculty, Professor Brian Caldwell, the VicSRC (the student-run peak body of secondary students), and Student Representative Councillors from various secondary schools throughout Victoria.

Why was Policy@School developed?
The student-teachers chose to develop Policy@School as the key focus of their studies in the pre-service subject Education Policy, Schools and Society (EPSS). This subject is designed to prepare and encourage pre-service teachers to become policy actors and problem solvers in their school communities. Having identified a lack of student voice and participation in the school policy development process, the Applied Workshop group decided to develop Policy@School in order to help high school students understand the role that they can play in this process and how to get involved.

So, what exactly is Policy@School?
Policy@School is an informative (and free!) website designed specifically for students. It is a tool that will prove particularly useful for Student Representative Council (or equivalent body) members who want to be involved in initiating or revising school policies to benefit the whole school community.

By accessing the website, students will gain a clearer understanding of:

- why school policies exist and how they relate to wider government and community legislation or guidelines;
- the processes through which policies are developed, monitored and revised;
- the ways in which students can participate in the development of policies and initiatives to address issues specific to the needs of students at school; and
- wider community organisations and networks that can provide further information related to the issues covered on the Policy@School website.

Anyone wanting to find out more about Policy@School can access the website at:

http://www.policyatschool.org

Eve Fisher, EPSS

Jessica Tammens, EPSS
A day-long workshop at the ACSA Convers/Actions National Conference, convened by Connect, brought together teachers, students and other participants from around Australia to take part in extended conversations about action-based curriculum.

The workshop included, amongst other voices, those of six of the youngest presenters to ever formally address an ACSA conference: reports from a group of six and seven-year-old students from South Australia’s Magill Junior Primary School. They joined other students and teachers (including presentations from Christies Beach High School and Glenunga International High School) in outlining, questioning and reflecting on curriculum and governance approaches that encourage and enable active participation of students in meaningful community initiatives.

Examples of student participation in curriculum decision-making and action have been reported throughout Australia (and elsewhere) over the past 30 years. Such examples are characterised as ‘authentic learning’, ‘community-based learning’, student action’ and so on. Commonly, they involve students designing, implementing and reflecting on approaches to learning through engagement with real issues in their school and wider communities.

The workshop brought together practitioners from several schools to report on their initiatives in this area, and to link these into a consistent and useful framework. The workshop explored commonalities in approach, presented evidence and justification for such programs and, through some discussion and brainstorming, started on the process of defining essential elements that would encourage others to develop and extend these approaches.

**Student Action Teams**

The workshop started with a presentation by Roger Holdsworth about the operation of Student Action Teams in Victorian schools. These teams include:

- Student engagement with the project focus or topic; either student choice of this, or substantial student decision-making on how to approach it;
- Student engagement with project decision-making and implementation;
- A focus within the community - preferably beyond the school;
- Identification and formation of a student team or teams;
- Processes of research and action by students that intend to make a difference around the chosen focus/topic within the community.

**Magill Junior Primary School**

The presentation from Magill Junior (R-2) Primary School was coordinated by Patricia Lutz and Susanne Rogers. They provided an overview of their work and introduced six students to so-present on aspects of their program. One student has subsequently described this experience for the school newsletter:

On Monday 29 September, Sam, Amanda, Miriam, Ben, Anthony and I went to the Australian Curriculum Studies Association Conference with Mrs Lutz and Mrs Rogers. It was at the Education Centre at Hindmarsh. We went there to talk about all the things that students and children do at Magill Junior Primary School. We went there to talk about all the things that children do at Magill Junior Primary School.

Principals, teachers and lecturers from other schools and universities from all over Australia came to watch and listen to our speeches.

I enjoyed reading my speech about ‘Jump Rope For Heart’. I have learned some things that were in other people’s speeches. Sam talked about the quilt made by the children for the 150th Anniversary of Magill School. Amanda talked about the Gardening Group that worked with Mrs Ferguson. Miriam talked about ‘Planning Casual Day’ at our school. Ben talked about ‘Fun Day’ and Anthony talked about ‘Planning Book Week’.

I thought the conference was very interesting and everyone spoke clearly. I enjoyed the conference!

Written by Claire Zhang in Year 2
Magill Junior Primary School

The learning environment enables young students to develop skills in life long learning through active participation in decision making, negotiation, planning and taking on special roles and responsibilities. Students have opportunities to engage in a wide range of groups, activities and events, enabling them to develop an understanding of democracy and government in a community.

Whole school programs include Student Representative Council, Peer Mediation, Library Monitors, Litter teams, Sport monitors, Special days and Celebrations, and Assemblies. In day to day learning
experiences, students participate in establishing expectations and consequences, having special responsibilities, making choices and decisions, class meetings, working in teams, solving problems, planning and organising information and activities, communicating ideas.

Students are trained and supported in their roles as representatives on the SRC, Peer Mediation and Library Monitors. Class teachers manage Litter Teams and Sport Monitors. Assemblies are held every two weeks with students playing a very active role in planning and organising and presenting. All students have the opportunity to have a say in suggesting projects for casual days, planning and organising special events and celebrations.

Christies Beach High School

After the lunch-break, Vivienne McQuade and two year 9 students from the school, Breeanna Russo (Chairperson of YEA) and Sandy Stewart (member of YEA), outlined and discussed the operation of Youth Environment Activists (YEA) within the school, as part of the school’s Student Initiated Curriculum (SIC). They talked both about what they did within the program and the importance of this to them. Breeanna and Sandy led the workshop through a simulated classroom meeting, where members of the YEA report on initiatives and gather responses from other students.

The YEA was formed through a student voice conference at the school. It was decided that the environment could be a central topic for enabling students to learn decision-making skills. The school called for volunteers and at the same time nominated a few students who had been identified as ‘students at risk’. The group used democratic processes to select a name (Youth Environment Activists – YEA) and a logo. T-shirts were organised and printed with the logo, immediately giving the students a strong sense of identity within the school. The students were also taught project management and application writing, and developed a pro forma whereby other students in the school could apply for a grant to undertake environmental activities with their class or for the broader school community.

In the program, students are making real decisions with real money. They go through a democratic process to decide which environmental projects will be funded, and learn and teach project management skills to students proposing the project.

The range of projects that the students have been involved with are: tree planting, plant propagation, Water Watch, Clean Up Australia Day, photo records of oil refinery areas, painting rubbish bins, celebrating and publicising World Environment Day, debates, hosting conferences, and sending students to conferences and workshops. These examples have all involved the process of application writing to reflect project management, providing funding through a budget line, follow up and mentoring of project organisers.

The students involved have spoken at conferences, developed skills in public speaking, been involved in the state Youth For Environment Council and undertaken various environmental projects across the school. We now have student representatives on the school’s environment committee. Students involved have undoubtedly constructed new identities through their involvement in the YEA. Their identity is constructed visually through their t-shirts, structurally through having their own space within the school, and connected through common practical experiences. It has become clear that a major benefit of the project has been the connection of students to democratic processes through actual real life experiences, making democracy relevant and something that can be lived rather than just taught.

Glenunga International High School

The final presentation was by Heather Browett, a year 9 student at Adelaide’s Glenunga International High School. Developing from a study of Government in Society and Environment, Heather undertook a personal project to study ‘student voice’, the way it should operate in schools and the way that her school could adopt an effective way of valuing student voice. Under the title ‘Making a Difference’, she spoke about the way the SRC operates at the moment, about a survey of students, about proposals for reforming the SRC and about ways in which students can make a difference in their school community.

Heather highlighted the power of a clear analysis of current situations with regard to real ‘student voice’ within schools. It exhibited insight, from the ground up, and a personal reflection of what the institutional barriers are to effective participation, as well as an exploration of ‘who listens’ and, indeed, who does not listen.

The workshop concluded with a short discussion of some of the principles and commonalities emerging from these reports. This included some extended discussion about whether such ‘projects’ or approaches are best embedded within existing curriculum structures (eg within classes, or as an elective) or separate from the formal curriculum (eg at lunchtime or withdrawn from classes). What is gained and lost in each of these arrangements? The workshop came to no specific conclusion, but rather indicated that arrangements must best reflect the local situation.

It was suggested that a 3-Way Test of Value would be useful in defining and characterising such ‘project-based’ approaches:

Any project needs to be able to show that:

• it has value to students - that students chose or constructed it and see its relevance to their interests;
• it has wider value in the community - that it is meeting real and purposeful community ends;
• it has educational value - it meets or exceeds mandated curriculum objectives and involves learning.

Demonstration of these outcomes would be a joint responsibility of teacher and students.

Roger Holdsworth
What is student leadership in an educational context?

"Of all the will toward the ideal in mankind only a small part can manifest itself in public action. All the rest of this force must be content with small and obscure deeds. The sum of these however, is a thousand times stronger than the acts of those who receive public recognition. The latter, compared to the former, are like the foams on the waves of a deep ocean."

Albert Schweitzer Nobel Peace Prize 1952

Defining what 'leadership' is in an educational context when developing 'future leaders of tomorrow' at Aquinas has proven to be a difficult task. Schweitzer's insightful reflection on the importance of leadership development for 'all' rather than a 'few' assists us with what we don't understand. Very much an intangible, the modern paradigm of leadership is more about exhibiting a dimension of desired behaviours (van Linden & Fertman, 1998) which are strongly correlated to generic life skills rather than position. While much in the past has been autocratic in nature with a heavy emphasis on the old 'command and control' model of leadership, post-modern leadership thinking now deals with learning and inquiry, humility, task orientation and sensitivity to others in a way that builds trust and confidence in working relationships (Batros, 2002). This mode of thought is ever so important in regards to adolescent development particularly within boy's education.

What also has become increasingly apparent and well documented is the link between IQ (rationality and logic) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Dalí, 2000). Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to deal with effectively with one's own and others emotions. While IQ can be argued to be largely innate, leadership behaviour and emotional intelligence can be observed and learned through interaction in society. Factors such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills all contribute to the holistic development of a student. Dr Donna Cross, from the WA Centre for Health Promotion and Research (2003) supports these findings: "children need to be taught autonomy, social competence and decision making to become more resilient. The evidence and ongoing concerns continue to be overwhelming. Resilient children 'bounce back'. They have good intellectual functioning, sociable, self-confident, faith, and a well established 'moral compass'."

One of the difficulties facing adolescent males is how to express how they feel, particularly in a rational manner. Unfortunately these are personal and social competencies which many find difficult to develop. In many situations they are often encouraged to restrain themselves and not 'lose their cool'. Any loss of control of emotion is interpreted as being irrational and perhaps a weakness in character. While this form of restraint is admirable, it does not necessarily solve the immediate problem at hand. In fact it may compound it by elevating levels of anxiety, and delay any solution and eventual closure to the problem. Perhaps the great philosopher Aristotle provides the solution with the following words of advice:

"anyone can be angry, that is easy... but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way."

Even the great medieval theologian and name sake of the College, St Thomas Aquinas, recognised the need to bring emotion to argument, rationalising that the two defining characteristics of human nature as being 'reasonable' and 'visible' – the ability to reason and to laugh.

The implications for adolescent development and, in particular, boys' education are enormous. Not surprisingly one only has to refer to the job/role descriptions and take note of the increasing importance of personal attributes over and beyond the technical expertise required for many forms of employment. Employers across the board are becoming ever so aware that while prospective employees can learn new skills they question the capacity for an individual to adapt to a new environment.

Lisa Gardner, researching for Melbourne's Swinburne University, claims that "emotional intelligence was generating such interest in the workplace with employers now assessing it as part of the application process". (West Australian 3/10/03). This self-efficacy is akin to being self confident about your ability to execute tasks. The importance here cannot be underestimated, considering that it is now quite common to change one's employment on a frequent basis.

What should we then be looking for when determining our "future leaders of tomorrow"?

Perhaps the most critical issue to be addressed is the development of a greater community understanding of what leadership is in today's world and its relevance when educating their sons. What we do know, is that in the main, leadership is 'situation' – an individual will develop their leadership skills according to the environment and task at hand. Defining the desired dimensions of leadership skills should be done in conjunction with the ethos, values, culture and tradition of an educational institution. There is no use in attempting to take an arbitrary text book definition of leadership and force the metaphorical 'round peg to fit a square hole'.

At Aquinas much of this is a 'given'. The Edmund Rice ethos, intertwined with a Catholic education already provided for a set of bedrock core values. These have been further clarified over the last two years through the development of the College Strategic Plan. Another task was to identify what existing programs (formal and informal) are currently in place. Many exist in their own right, while some serve the purpose of providing ‘value-added’ benefit to the College curriculum. Combined, they give impetus and direction for the development of a leadership model which encompasses the core values as stated in the College Strategic Plan and acts as a 'template' for future development. Along with an overarching vision statement indicating the awareness, interaction and mastery processes of leadership, development can be enacted upon in formal and informal settings as witnessed with the attached schematic diagram.

The role of an authentic Aquinas student leader is to communicate the College values – faith, excellence, respect, service and justice – by role modeling them in their day to day actions. These values serve to guide their actions. Research has found that the two of the prime personal qualities considered essential for leadership are integrity and trustworthiness. Integrity centers on values, and leaders with integrity are strongly dedicated to doing what they know are right. Linked with trustworthiness they 'walk the talk' and they lead by example. The ability to
communicate these two personal qualities through personal social awareness will certainly enhance their credibility. This is reflected in the leadership model. Acting in a ‘leadersful’ manner is to behave with dignity, emotional maturity and in such a way that people trust your judgement. These are not T’s Elliot’s ‘tollow men’ afraid to act and preoccupied with self-interest. In his synopsis ‘Heroes in Our Eyes’, Les Carlyon perhaps sums it up best when looking for the elusive “common denominator among true leaders” – all possess grace. Blessed Edmund Rice the founder of the Christian Brothers espoused these very qualities.

VISION

In the forming of tomorrow’s leaders Aquinas College encourages students to explore, recognise and celebrate their leadership potential. The authentic Aquinas leader is not just a student of action, but also one of understanding in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice. Leadership for them is not just a position and the imposition of will over others, but an opportunity to assist in a time of complex and sophisticated change. True leadership for them is about the forming of relationships and the continual self-development of one’s interpersonal and intra-personal skills within the context of the College values and the opportunities offered.

MISSION

The mission of the College is not only to provide for formal leadership opportunities, but also to maximise the students’ awareness in developing their potential leadership skills through their day to day involvement with College life and its extra- and co-curricular activities. The development of leadership is a continuous process and is best viewed, as with many other learned skills, in a progressive manner.

REFERENCES

Carlyon, L. (1998) Heroes in Our Eyes, Melbourne Information Australia
Talkback Classroom and Student Virtual Parliament

The youth voice is set to become a powerful democratic force through a strategic alliance between two innovative youth projects - the Talkback Classroom forum and the Student Virtual Parliament.

Talkback Classroom is a monthly national forum for senior secondary students to debate issues with federal parliamentarians and community leaders. It is sponsored by the National Museum of Australia and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Education Office, is recorded before a student audience in the Museum's Studio, and broadcast on ABC Radio National's Life Matters.

The Student Virtual Parliament is a high security on-line interactive poll that works like an 'opinion market'. It harvests and ranks student opinions in a continuous voting process. "The Student Virtual Parliament gives all students equal opportunity to set the polling agenda by submitting opinions directly into the on-line forums in the form of concise statements called 'placards'," says founder Ralph McKay. "All placards compete continuously for votes from students across the country and are ranked live in transparent leader boards."

With the linking of the two projects, the Student Virtual Parliament nationwide polls will guide the Talkback Classroom student panellists when they frame questions to put to program guests.

"The alliance means thousands of students across the country can now feel connected to the democratic process. I believe it's a world first opportunity for young people to experience direct, transparent democracy," says Dave Arnold, the Manager of Schools Programs at the National Museum.

Currently 180 schools are participating in the Student Virtual Parliament, which is an international initiative from Sydney-based BigPulse.com. Over 25,000 voting passwords have been requested.

Talkback Classroom founder and coordinator Stephen Cutting says, "bringing the two projects together means that young people across Australia can now have a strong voice, heard by the body politic and broadcast nationally."

The partnership was launched to coincide with the Talkback Classroom forum held on 26 November 2003 in Parliament House. The forum featured Shadow Treasurer Mark Latham as the guest interviewee.

Teachers can register their school now for the Student Virtual Parliament at www.studentparliament.net.

Further information about Talkback Classroom, including how to apply to be on the student panel, can be found at www.nma.gov.au/education/events_and_activities/talkback_classroom

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Talkback Classroom: Stephen Cutting:
03 5797 2409; 0408 559 211; ereproductions@bigpond.com
National Museum of Australia: Lyn Beasley:
02 6208 5123; l.beasley@nma.gov.au
Student Virtual Parliament: Ralph McKay:
02 9953 3958; 0416 136 975; svp@bigpulse.com

Share a New Story:
Young People in Decision-Making

The Australian Youth Research Centre (University of Melbourne)'s Working Paper 23 explores issues associated with young people's participation in formal decision-making bodies. It has been produced for the Foundation for Young Australians and is available from the Australian Youth Research Centre (03 8344 9633) for $11 (plus p&h) or on-line at the Foundation:

www.youngaustralians.org/pdfs/Publications/Sharing_a_New_story.pdf

Secondary Student Newsletters: Query
Frank Golding is looking for information on secondary students' newsletters/newspapers: examples, editorial policies, funding arrangements, school veto powers and so on.

If you can assist Frank, contact him at: goldings@netconnect.com.au

Meaningful Student Involvement:
Guide to Inclusive School Change

This useful document by Adam Fletcher (published in 2003) provides a clear structure of definitions, purpose, tools for assessment, practice (actions) and examples of applications (mainly, but not all, US-based). It is published by The Freechild Project in Olympia (WA, USA) and can be found on-line at:

www.soundout.org
Local and Overseas Publications Received

**Australian:**
- **ACSA 20-20 Vision** (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT): 20 articles from 20 years of *Curriculum Perspectives*
- **AEU News** (Abbotsford, Vic) Vol 9, Nos 7, 8; August, October 2003
- **Curriculum Perspectives** (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 23, No 3; September 2003
- **Darebin Network Student Action Teams: Road Traffic Project - Newsletter No 2** (Darebin Network, Vic) October 2003
- **Education Links** (Centre for Popular Education, UTS, NSW) #66/67, Winter 2003
- **Education Views** (Education Queensland, Brisbane, Qld) Vol 12 Nos 15-19; August-October 2003
- **Network News** (Network of Community Activities, Surrey Hills, NSW) September 2003
- **Parity** (Council to Homeless Persons, Vic) Vol 16 Issue 7
- **Starlink** (Victoria University, Vic) Issue 51, August-September 2003
- **Towards a Public Curriculum** (Alan Reid and Pat Thomson; ACSA, Deakin West, ACT)
- **Yikes!** (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 2 Edition 8, 9; August, October 2003
- **Youth Studies Australia** (ACYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 22, No 3; September 2003

**International:**
- **Children's Participation** (Henk van Beers, Save the Children, Sweden; 2002): experiences in capacity building and training
- **Democracy and Education** (Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA) Vol 14 No 4; 2003

**Education Now** (Nottingham, UK) Issue 41 (Autumn 2003) - final issue
**IDEC 2003 Magazine/Education Revolution** (AERO, Roslyn Heights, NY, USA) Vol 2 No 1 (Summer 2003)
**Leadership** (NASSP, USA) Vol 32 No 1; Sept 2003
**Tearaway** (Voice of NZ Youth) October 2003

**Documents**

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

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

**Code** | **Description/Pages/Cost**
---|---
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Miscellaneous Resources:

- Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5)  $ .........  
- Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) Case studies of Primary School SRCs ($7 or $12 for two copies)  $ .........  

Foxfire Resources:

- Sometimes a Shining Moment (Wigginton) ($25)  $ .........  
- Foxfire: 25 Years (Doubleday) ($25)  $ .........  
- A Foxfire Christmas (Doubleday hardcover) ($25)  $ .........  
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