examples of student participation in ....

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& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #23
Over the past few weeks, it has been a privilege to take part in several Civics and Citizenship Education conferences in South Australia. This has provided opportunities to hear of exciting initiatives in schools from Reception (R) right through to senior secondary levels. Some of these stories are included in this issue of Connect. The challenge is, as always, how to build on these initiatives - how to applaud them, but to also suggest that we can always go further.

Dr Tony Knight has recently written that "...an ideal democracy is an unattainable goal. Democracy can only be a hypothetical vision used to ensure progress, much as infinity does in mathematics." (of Educational Policy, forthcoming)

In thinking about such issues, and therefore about the nature of school change - how we 'ensure progress' - I have been returning again to the model of 'whole school' developed within the Health Promoting Schools movement, and thinking about how we apply this to issues of active student participation:

Such a picture enables us to think about the way in which a 'whole school' works: it challenges us to plan action, developments and change across all aspects of the school. Thus, for example, it is not enough to simply work on developing an effective Student Council in isolation. We need also to consider how student participation can be enhanced in classroom teaching and learning, how students are involved in 'real world' community issues, other ways in which the school ethos can be more acknowledging of all students’ needs, what formal school policies are in place, and so on.

The above diagram also encourages us to audit what we are already doing within these areas, and to use that audit to prioritise action. That may be as simple as ensuring that class meetings are held regularly, or that students are represented (and voting) in school policy and decision-making discussions. It might enable us to get some grasp on the 'big picture' of student participation in the school, and lead to a realistic plan (within time and other resources) about what is most effective to tackle.

Roger Holdsworth
Citizenship as a Community of Practice

It is frequently noted that citizenship education requires more than simply learning about the virtues of civic participation from a text (Watts 1995) [1]. Students also need practical experiences in working with others for the greater social good. But building such experiences into the everyday life of the school and classroom is often more easily said than done.

One possibility is to think of citizenship as a pedagogical and organisational practice, rather than simply as an end in itself. Citizenship as pedagogical and organizational practice is one in which students:

- collaborate with others;
- consult with their peers and other key stakeholders;
- make or participate meaningfully in decisions;
- carry out or assist in implementing a plan of action;
- are accountable for the outcomes.

While the specific purposes of such activities may vary, what is often common to citizenship projects is that students make a positive contribution to their school and/or local community, to a particular group, or in support of a particular cause. They thus learn how to exercise social agency (cf. Wyn and White 1997) [ii].

Citizenship as Practice

In order to illustrate ‘citizenship as practice’, in this paper I tell the story of one school in which the goal was to build a school website. The school must remain anonymous, because this story comes from a University of South Australia research project commissioned by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (SA). The research project was to investigate how disadvantaged schools might advance their knowledge of literacy and information technology to improve classroom pedagogies (the Information Technology, Literacy and Educational Disadvantage project) [iii]. One school, named Greentown District Primary in the research report, chose to adopt an approach to the project which closely approximates citizenship as practice.

Greentown District Primary Builds a Website

Greentown is a regional country city and home to several state schools. Greentown District Primary serves a public housing estate, educates many of the local agricultural workers’ families and has a significant concentration of Aboriginal students. Like many disadvantaged schools and neighbourhoods in other parts of South Australia, Greentown District Primary was perceived to be ‘other’ and ‘lesser’ than its primary counterparts in the town. Staff, students and parents heartily resented this deficit representation and what they believed to be an unfair positioning in the city’s educational hierarchy.

When Greentown District came into the research project, the four teachers involved quickly decided that they wanted to make a school website. They hoped that a website might be a place in which they could present a more accurate picture of school successes, strengths and achievements to the local and global world. They had no expertise in using email, the Internet or in making web pages, and knew that this would be an undertaking which would require them to learn a lot very quickly. While the school was helped in the research process by a small grant, and some technical and researcher support from the University, the teachers also committed large amounts of their own time to the project.

Involving the Entire School

Greentown District Primary staff were determined that what they did would involve the entire school. They already had a classroom-based SRC structure, and each class regularly took its turn to produce the school newsletter and run the school assembly. The basis of this structure was regular class meetings. Constructing the website built on, and added to, this existing structure and practice.

The project began with every class in the school in the school computer room (the school could only afford one computer laboratory and one multimedia machine in each teaching space) looking at a range of websites. Students critically examined school websites, as well as others of interest, such as football clubs, Nintendo and television related sites. Students were encouraged to think about the categories of information used in each site, the various icons used, and distinctive design features. On the basis of this common information, each class then discussed and democratically decided upon a set of recommendations about the content, format and 'look' of the proposed school website.

Three Website Representatives

Next, each class elected three website representatives. One student was to join the technical team, and the other two students the support team. The
task of each duo from the support team was to ensure that their home class was regularly informed about progress and consulted about decisions. The task of the technical team was to learn how to use multimedia software and to design the various sections of the site. The three representatives together had joint responsibility for content, and the support team continued to explore the web and to make suggestions.

This production process was supported by the four project staff, who had small amounts of release time to co-ordinate the initial class work, and to train and work with the website teams. The whole staff had to be involved too, since they had to ensure that their home class meetings allowed everybody to participate in ongoing website decisions. The core team of teachers thus had to report regularly to their colleagues at staff meetings.

Into the Community

It was decided that the website would not only feature the local school, its programs, students and staff, written in the students’ own words, but would also include some information about Greentown itself. The staff was clear that the ‘look’ was to be that which students produced, rather than being something that the adults had decided children would like. Needless to say, there came a point at which the staff did have to take final responsibility for technical matters, but this was at the very end of a long, involved, and involving, process.

The building of the website took the best part of three terms, during which time many staff and students questioned whether it would ever happen. But the core team of teachers and students were determined that it would eventuate.

And it did. The Greentown District Primary website was launched at the end of the year at a full assembly attended by many parents, local dignitaries, the town newspaper and the regional television station. The school hired a giant screen so that everybody could see the website live to air as it officially became part of the World Wide Web. Within a few days excited Greentown students received their first emails from other parts of the world and found that their local school was indeed globally connected.

This process was not without its glitches and hitches. Being inclusive and democratic is hard work and the results are always less than perfect - and the events at Greentown District Primary were no exception. Participation by the whole school was greatest at the beginning of the project, and at the celebration of completion. The website was not nearly as complex and large as initially planned because making the pages took much more time and expertise than initially expected, and the lack of rural connectivity proved a time-wasting hindrance.

Sadly, after the enthusiasm of the launch, the website itself has subsequently floundered. During the project, the teachers’ plan was that each class would take its turn in updating the content of the web page: the website would thus become part of everyday school practice, built into the ongoing classroom based decision-making processes. For a range of reasons, including significant staff movement and the lack of release time available for a co-ordinating teacher with technical know how, this has not happened, and the site remains today as it was at the end of 1998.

A Citizenship Exercise

However, despite this, the Greentown District Primary website construction project can be understood in terms of citizenship education. As citizenship practice, building the website required students to collaborate, consult, participate meaningfully in decisions, carry out a plan of action and be accountable for the outcomes. Through the website project, students made a positive contribution to their school and to their local community. While by itself the project did not constitute a citizenship education program, it nevertheless made an important contribution to the ongoing citizenship education of Greentown Primary students.

I now want to take the notion of citizenship as practice a little further, referring to the Greentown story, as I take up the notion of a ‘community of practice’. In the next section I explain Etienne Wenger’s theory of social learning and relate it to the Greentown project and to citizenship education.

A Community of Practice

Etienne Wenger (1998)[iv], who, together with Jean Lave, coined the term ‘community of practice’, has argued that we too often think of learning as an isolated and individual activity, and knowledge as something that is stored away in little packages and taken out when needed. Wenger argues that such a focus on storage is counterproductive. He asserts that the storage of knowledge is only a small part of knowing: knowing primarily involves doing, the putting of knowledge to work. Knowing requires active participation in social communities. Instead of concentrating on the memorization and testing of storage of knowledge, he says, we should look for:

‘inventive ways of engaging students in meaningful practices, of providing access to resources that enhance their participation, of opening their horizons so they can put themselves on learning trajectories they can identify with, and of involving them in actions, discussion, and reflections that make a difference to the communities they value’ (p.10)

Wenger argues that this is a social theory of learning. It has a focus on participation as the means by which:

- individuals engage in and contribute to their communities;
- communities refine their ways of being and ensure their ongoing survival, and,
organisations become effective and continually renew organisational knowledge and activities.

Wenger proposes that this social theory of learning illuminates not only the academic enterprise of learning, but also the community and organisation benefits that result.

Wenger's particular elaboration of social learning and action supports the notion that citizenship education requires more than just individualised book learning. Citizenship is not something that can be learnt in isolation. If students are to 'learn' citizenship, then it is through acting as citizens in a community that they will come to 'know' what it means to be a citizen.

In the story I have recounted, Green town District Primary was the community in which students were provided with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to community-building, through a process of active participation. The activities of website construction were about the learning of the children and staff involved - but they also built on, and built up, the existing democratic practices through which students contributed to school decision making. As well, the project made a positive intervention in the ongoing negative representations of the school, students and neighbourhood.

Identity Formation in a Community of Practice

Wenger builds on his notion of community of practice by suggesting that we should also think of identity as a practice. By that, he means that identity is never fixed but is always being produced, changed and shifted with changing circumstances. Wenger emphasises that identity formation is not a private activity. Like all learning, identity formation is social: that is, identity is always socially constructed in and through relationships with others. Belonging to particular communities and actively engaging in their joint enterprises, Wenger says, is a process of 'identification', through which community members come to have ownership of particular ways of being and doing things (Chapters 6-9). This social learning is the basis on which individuals experience and talk about both their identity and power in social terms.

Citizenship as a community of practice is, following Wenger, about more than simply doing and learning things. It is part of the ongoing construction of individual identity - self as citizen. It is also part of the growing of a collective identity - of the community - as a polity. Children engaged in citizenship as a community of practice not only see themselves as citizens, active agents in a social setting, but see the community in which they are learning as a place in which citizenship can be practiced [v].

Thus, using Wenger's argument, the Greentown District Primary website activity can be seen to:

- enhance the collective identity of the school as a place in which children are actively involved in doing those things that matter, where they are able to participate in processes that make a difference, and,
- contribute to the development of the citizen identities of the children and staff, through their involvement as website builders and designers, as idea contributors and as decision makers.

However, just as Wenger allows us to theorise about the possibilities of citizenship education as a community of practice, and the positive achievements of Greentown District Primary, his perspective also highlights possible limitations.

Citizenship Requires More Than One-Off Events

Wenger argues that communities of practice consist of more than one or two activities. Communities of practice are ongoing (as well as changing). Practice is regular and routine. Practice becomes commonplace and 'everyday'.

Wenger's notion of a community of practice includes three important 'everyday' dimensions:

1. mutual engagement, in which there is ongoing negotiated activity and mutual accountability;
2. a joint enterprise, which allows for diversity within common activities, builds relationships and helps to maintain the complexities of the community; and,
3. a shared repertoire, in which structures, stories, tools and artifacts are produced, used and valued by all members of the community (Chapter 2).

Wenger's theorisation of everyday practice highlights the importance of Greentown's classroom meeting structure, which provides a regular space in which activities can be negotiated. The class meeting is the vehicle through which the school 'shared repertoire' of SRC, newsletter and assemblies are managed, and through which particular stories are told and valued. It is the place in which accountabilities are made real to students, as their class does or doesn't do as expected by the school community, where class representatives do or don't participate in the SRC and do or don't allow their class to be informed about and contribute to school decisions. It is the arena in which class members come to learn how to listen to others, ask questions respectful of difference(s), and to discuss and come to grips with the complexity of issues and views.

Wenger's tripartite notion of the community of practice (as engagement, enterprise and repertoire) also provides a rubric through which the shortcomings of school practice can be analysed. Any school might ask itself how much, and how regularly, how inbuilt and how supported, are these three dimensions of practice.
Useful Questions

When applied to citizenship as a community of practice, the three dimensions focus us very neatly on how much students really do get to act as citizens in the school culture and structure. Here are just some questions we might ask:

- How does this school actively involve students in curriculum negotiations?
- How are students involved in decisions about school clothing?
- How does this school involve students in deciding school (as opposed to classroom) rules?
- How does this school involve students in deciding assessment formats and protocols?
- How are students involved in producing important public school artifacts?
- What does this school do to establish student research teams to inform decision making?
- How do students participate in school reform projects?

When this set of questions are applied to Greentown District Primary, it is clear that the school probably has some way to go. Just like other schools, Greentown District Primary is somewhat short of being able to claim the title of a democratic school, in which citizenship is the hallmark of everyday school practice.

However, this is not to say that Greentown has nothing to teach.

The Lesson from Greentown Primary

Greentown District Primary does have something important to offer. Unlike those many schools whose websites are developed by commercial providers, a teacher or small group of students, Greentown’s example offers us an alternative and an interesting perspective.

At the outset, the staff argued that because the website would represent and speak for the school to the outside world, the whole school should have some say in its content and appearance. The staff saw the opportunity for a whole school approach that would reinforce, as well as use, the class meeting structure already in place. They saw the website as a civic activity, and citizenship as part of the pedagogical and organisational process through which it would be achieved.

In so doing, the lesson from Greentown is that any research and/or reform initiative can provide an interesting opportunity to build on and build up citizenship as practice.

Planning such a change involves explicit attention to:
- how students become engaged in the project;
- the materials and experiences with which students build up an image of the world and themselves; and,
- the ways students have an effect in the world and make their actions count’.

(Wenger, 1998, p. 271)

In order to engage in citizenship education, in which students learn to see themselves as citizens, and their schools benefit from their agency as active participants in the school community-potly, these three (engagement, materials and experiences, and agency as above) must become the lens through which curriculum experiences are designed. They must become regular features of everyday school activity. School structures and school cultures must move from allowing isolated possibilities for student participation in decision making, towards Wenger’s notions of citizenship as a ‘community of practice’.

This, of course, is not just a challenge for Greentown District Primary, which is further ahead than many of its counterparts, but for all of us.

Pat Thomson

Endnotes

[iii] Many of the findings of the ITLED project, directed by Barbara Comber and Bill Green and completed in 1999, have not been published by DETE. You can see some of the ITLED project on: http://oac.schoools.sa.edu.au/itled/
[v] This could be called ‘empowering’.

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2nd Junior Eco Club Asia Pacific Conference

Recently Samantha Germein and Sam Cosh from Port Vincent Primary, South Australia, represented Australia at the 2nd Junior Eco Club Asia Pacific Conference held in Hiroshima, Japan from February 9th to 13th, 2001. We were intrigued by the environmental concerns of other students and have returned with a greater appreciation of Australia’s environment and the laws in place to protect it. We enjoyed participating in youth forums and making friends with students from around the world.

After a welcome and a talk on the Millennium Children’s conference by Phillip (UK) and Yvonne (Kenya), officials welcomed us. The official from the Ministry told us that at the current rate of development, we will need three Earths to support the next generation. He said: "Take small steps in your daily life and always make an effort to attend to environmental problems".

We were the first country to speak. Our presentation, like most others, was in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. It outlined the activities and achievements of our Eco Club since its inception in 1992. As the conference theme was "Let’s preserve Our Ocean for the Future! Mother Ocean Nurtures the Earth", we included footage of the monthly Reef Dive we undertake in conjunction with the Conservation Council of SA. The audience of Japanese Eco Club members were able to understand us by dialling 2 on their headphones.

It was interesting to hear of the concerns and activities of children from different countries. Peng Shan and Chen Yuting from China were concerned about environmental destruction. Chen Yuting said, "We can no longer hear the birds singing or see the clear, blue sky." The government has recently passed Environment Protection laws to help overcome some of China’s problems. Peng Shan is worried about rubbish disposal and the lack of recycling. At the moment much of China’s waste is just buried. Their presentation caused us to reflect on our recycling programs both at school and state level.

When we take Ph tests on our rain as part of GLOBE, our readings are always 7. Masa and Naoya, from Attached Fukuyama Junior High, Hiroshima University, Japan found their readings varied from 3-4. They found that lemon and vinegar are similar in acidity to their rain. They have been doing lots of studies on acid rain and their report was very interesting. Like us they are a GLOBE school.

We interviewed Kim Hyung-Tae on our video. Kim and Byeong Jee-Hyun talked about their agricultural Camp called "Deulsali". This field trip gives children from the cities a chance to experience life in the country. Kim said it was amazing to sow sweet potatoes, potatoes and scallions. Later they return and help with the harvest. We found it interesting that they found it so interesting! We had never thought before about how it would be not living on a farm. Life must be very different in Korea.

Joliana and Syed (Hadi) told us about the aquatic life of Malaysia. Malaysia has recently passed laws to stop the indiscriminate collecting of many species including the leather back turtle. Other laws have been passed to protect the marine environment from oil spills, the pumping of factory waste into rivers and overfishing. Some of their marine creatures were amazing.

6,837 students from 55 schools in The Philippines belong to Eco or Earthwatch Clubs. Rachel and Ken think the garbage collection of Manila needs improving. The air pollution is particularly bad. The Clean Air Act of 1999 and the Ecological Waste Management Act 2000 are giving them some hope their pollution problems will be overcome. They feel the youth of their country have much to hope for and are willing to work for the future. If they don’t help, they worry that there will be no more fish to eat and that would mean “no more sushi”. Ken has taken part in Eco trips to the countryside and really enjoyed seeing unpolluted areas.

June 2001
Oranit lives on the south west coast of Thailand along the Andaman coast. She belongs to a leadership group that studies resources, biodiversity and environmental problems of the area. Nittida lives in Southern Thailand. She is also a member of the Young Andaman Leadership Network. They showed a video about their area and how they work together.

Ian and Kelly talked about problems with the water table. Farmers in Hawaii, like farmers in our part of Australia, cleared much of the land in the early 1900s. In Hawaii the pineapple farmers put many herbicides and pesticides on their crops. These entered the water table. Later the wells were closed because the chemicals caused cancer. At their schools they conducted Environmental Water Quality tests and made brochures they shared with the community. The Middle School studied different filter systems and reported on their findings and the High School studied the purity of bottled water, a dike system and the underground water system. Their studies culminated with an environmental summit.

After interval various Eco Clubs from around Japan gave short reports. Each one was followed by a quiz and we had to hold up bits of coloured paper to vote for the correct answers. This was fun. The Kurose-cho group reported on nature watch activities. They like to go camping, swim in the rivers or climb the mountains. They also study the stars. They have made a swallow map based on questionnaires. The Newton Club likes to study the health of the Hachinan River by looking at what insects and macro-invertebrates live there. They do similar tests to those we did with Clarendon Primary. They also study migratory birds that migrate to the Inland Sea. The Ecological Research Club do similar things in their area. They also stock their river with sweet fish fry once a year. Their quiz question was "What do you think sweet fish eat? Bread, lichen or algae?" The answer was "lichen".

The Ocean Kids Eco Club aims to protect and preserve the ocean for the future. They seem to do a lot of activities like we do. They study the creatures of the sea near Miyajima. Beach cleanups are also part of their activities. They asked us "How many islands over 100m in circumference are in the Inland Sea?" The answer was: over 200. The Green Nature group loves looking at the stars. They were the group that came with us each day and they gave us a star chart in Japanese!

After the conference appeal was presented, everyone posted their "Wish to protect Mother Ocean" on a giant board. The conference closed with a party for delegates, host families and officials. It was fun finding out about Japanese customs and their way of life, through homestay, the visit to Miyajima island and general observations.

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Memorial Mysteries

Just before ANZAC Day 1999 our class began to investigate the names on our local War Memorial. We began our investigation with World War 1 veterans. We listed the Fallen and The Enlisted separately. Mrs Trotter, who teaches at our school and whose family has lived here a long time, suggested families we may be able to contact.

We visited the cemetery to record the names of those with the Rising Sun on their graves. Our first great discovery was a photo hanging in the pub of the 1911 Port Vincent Football team. Many of the members were WW1 veterans. This meant we could match names and photos. We then used the Nominal Roll at The Australian War Memorial website to track down the names and enlistment records of the WW1 Veterans.

Mr Arthur, a local RSL member, and our principal, Mr Conradi suggested we hold our school camp in Canberra. This would give us a chance to honour the veterans we were researching at a special service at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. At a class meeting we decided this was a great idea. We decided to hold the camp near Remembrance Day as that would give us a chance to complete our research.

As a class we researched WW1 veterans. Our research 'multiplied'. The more we discovered the more there seemed to be to find out. We originally planned to publish our research as a booklet but it became obvious there was enough information to publish a book! We decided to write further chapters according to our interests. Some decided to research the impact of war on sport in the district while others researched school journals and interviewed locals to find out how children’s lives were affected by war.

In November we travelled to Canberra for the camp. On November 10 we held a ceremony in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the WW1 Veterans
we had researched. Those of us who had researched WW1 veterans who died placed poppies next to their names on the Wall Of Honour. On Remembrance Day we took part in the official service. Each one of us represented 1000 war dead. After the service we met a WW1 veteran. Many of us felt quite sad at this time. Some of the poems we wrote have been included in our book.

At the Memorial we met Mrs Boland. She was a volunteer guide. Mrs Boland became interested in our research and later sent us copies of relevant war diaries, citations etc. Her assistance proved to be invaluable.

On our return we voted at a class meeting to continue our project. Our teacher thought we might be bored with it by now but we weren’t. We held a preferential ballot to name the book. The winning suggestion was Memorial Mysteries.

It was great to be able to interview WW2 Diggers and their families. They were willing to talk about this time in their lives. Many chose not to tell us about conflicts but more about their families and mates. Some of us attended the annual reunion of the 2nd/48th at Port Vincent in 1999 and 2000 to better understand their views of war.

It was interesting to compare attitudes to the Vietnam War and the World Wars. Many members of our local RSL spoke to us about their service and the role of the RSL.

Other veterans heard of our research and came to school to speak to us. Mr. Peter Lehmann, for example, brought along a child’s gas mask for us to see.

This book was a great deal of work but it was worth it! As we finished the chapters we had to ‘Read and Review’ each one then ‘Check and Correct’ it. It ended up being a book about our community, the service of our veterans and our heritage and not a book about war.

We encountered many problems and learnt a lot about technology too! Now we know how to use the Internet effectively, more about using Word and Excel spreadsheets, to scan photos and memorabilia and how to cope with computer viruses.

We formed three committees to plan the launch. The Launch Committee planned the invitations and the order of service. The Invitation Committee setup a database to record the names and addresses of people we wished to invite, acceptances and book orders from people unable to attend. The Museum Committee contacted people, collected memorabilia and set up a museum in the classroom to display items we had been shown. Mrs Stanton, from our Governing Council, helped with the book sales. (All copies sold out in two days. We have since reprinted it)

In writing this book we have discovered more about Australia’s history, our way of life and our community. We have also found out the value of working together and ways we can do this. We are proud of our work and were pleased to share it at the Australian Education Assembly in April 2001.

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June 2001
STUDENTS-AS-RESEARCHERS APPROACH: FACILITATING STUDENT RESEARCH INTO SOCIAL ISSUES

This publication was written by Jan Edwards (Research Officer, Students Completing Schooling Project, Department of Education Training and Employment, South Australia) as part of the Students Completing Schooling Project. The project was undertaken between 1997 and 1999 and was a collaborative venture involving the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE), South Australia, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, and the Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching (FIST), Flinders University of South Australia.

In a foreword to the materials, Geoff Spring, (Chief Executive, Department of Education, Training and Employment) describes the project and materials as follows:

“The (Students Completing Schooling) project investigated the issues around early school leaving. Collaborative research projects in which university personnel work with students, teachers and the broader education community are valuable in identifying issues, and in developing new ideas about ways in which education systems can meet the needs of diverse groups of students.

"Using the students-as-researchers approach described in these materials will help students to have more of a voice in their schooling and to learn more about current social issues of importance to them. It provides teachers and schools and the broader community with opportunities to listen actively to what young people say about schools, current social issues and other matters of importance to young people."

The Students as Researchers publication identifies student voice as a key concept in such an approach. Student voice is described as:

'...communication by students of their way of knowing the world and their place in it, their school, their community and their culture. Students speak with more than one voice, that is, all students do not speak with the same voice and individuals may express multiple voices. For example, an individual may choose an 'institutional' voice in the school setting because school structures and the school community value this particular discourse. To value and hear students' voice necessitates an awareness of the multiple nature of students' voices. A students-as-researchers approach provides an opportunity for the creation of spaces in which to hear students' voices.'

The students-as-researchers approach offers the possibility for students to engage in research aimed at constructing knowledge about their lives within the context of the valued curriculum. The valued curriculum usually reflects the culture of the dominant groups within society. The students-as-researchers approach integrates students doing research in a curriculum context with students acting as researchers in the production of knowledge, both within and outside the school.

Student research is a process where young people create and have a stake in the construction of knowledge about current social issues. Within traditional research projects offered in school, students have the opportunity to use a range of library resources to explore what others have written about a topic. The students-as-researchers approach provides an opportunity for students to construct new knowledge and involves students in thinking about an issue, seeing what is said about an issue, developing an understanding of the issue, testing this understanding, developing an account of the truth and reporting these findings to an audience.

An important part of the approach is students working in collaboration with school personnel and others outside the school with expertise in research.

There are three important sets of interests implicit in the students-as-researchers approach:

- The interests and concerns of the students;
- The interests and concerns of the schooling process including accreditation;
- The interests and concerns of a civil and just society.

The students-as-researchers approach can be organised in the following way:

- A one-unit (semester) program consisting of 50 to 60 hours of programmed time;
- A two-unit (full year) program consisting of 100-120 hours of programmed time.

The students-as-researchers approach can also be integrated within an existing learning program.

The students-as-researchers materials are organised around eight Learning Opportunities. These Learning Opportunities provide a basis for teachers to develop programmed instruction time, which will vary according to prior knowledge, local assessment and accreditation practices, student interests and the length of the study.

The eight Learning Opportunities are:

- Developing understanding includes brainstorming, understanding confidentiality, self-disclosure and non-disclosure of personal information;
- Critical examination of knowledge includes research, validity, developing questions;
- Concept mapping;
- Prepare for fieldwork - 'critical friends', open questions, non-verbal communication, and role-play;
- Research ethics;
- Final fieldwork preparation, interview plan;
- Conducting fieldwork;
- Presenting the Findings.

There are also core activities for all students undertaking this work. These core activities relate to the safety of members of the group and the participants in the research, and to the matters of ethics. It is important that the teacher and students recognise the critical nature of these preparation activities. Students will need to discuss and negotiate the matters of confidentiality in some depth so that common understanding, codes of behaviour and practice are reached.

Students-as-researchers represents an excellent resource which provides teachers and their students with an explicit, valid and rigorous structure for research into social issues.

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For more information, see:
www.studentsasresearchers.nexus.edu.au

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It can also be ordered on-line at http://www.curriculum.edu.au/
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 23 - June 2001

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

As this edition reaches you, the student recommendations document from the 1st International Student Representative Conference held in Sydney last year, will be on its way to New York with our delegation of SRC Advisers and Students. A meeting has been arranged with a representative of the Australian Mission to the United Nations for Monday 25th June at 2 pm when the delegation consisting of Ralph Murray (Immediate Past President of PASTA), Michael Nolan (Bordentown High School, New Jersey, USA) and eight student representatives who attended ISRC 2000, will be in New York. And we are very excited that this event will achieve the goal set by students from Australia, Canada, Mohawk Nation, Thailand, Slovenia, Germany and the United States when they met together in the main student forum of ISRC 2000. After that, the delegation will travel with students from Bordentown High School to rejoin a larger group heading for the National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Conference in North Carolina.

While PASTA is busy on the international scene, we have been busy on the national scene in Australia as well. From the start, PASTA made the decision, on both academic and legal grounds, to establish the organisation as a national SRC Adviser Association to actively support all staff, students and schools involved in student representation, student leadership and student participation in school-based decision making and problem solving. Representatives from five states have attended and participated in PASTA activities and have become motivated and inspired to build a network in their own areas.

Our steering committee recommends that branches/associations of PASTA develop on an “Education District Model”. Where there is sufficient interest amongst SRC advisers and students, anywhere in Australia, a branch/association of PASTA (which is an Incorporated not-for-profit entity run by volunteers), can be formed. However, branch/associations will need to be financial members of PASTA Incorporated and operate under the same Constitution. 2001 will be a year of national growth for PASTA.

In New South Wales, third term will be an important time to watch for promotional material about a Training and Development Inservice for SRC Advisers and Student Welfare consultants which is being organised for Week 2 Term 4 at the Professional Teacher’s Council facility at Leichhardt, when year 12 students in New South Wales are on study vacation. Day 1 (Friday) will be on activity programs starting with the organisation of SRC networks, meetings and conferences for schools and feeder schools, while Day 2 (Saturday) will be an information day looking at school and community based programs, district and state priorities. Be sure to check out the next edition of Connect for details.

Jeanne Bow
President, PASTA Inc.

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

The PASTA Newsletter is edited by PASTA and distributed bi-monthly as a supplement to Connect magazine.
THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY

This is the title for one of the six student workshops being presented by the students representing Australia at this year’s 65th Annual National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. It will focus on the various theme recommendations that developed from ISRC 2000 in Sydney last December. Other workshops, including an Advisers’ International Panel, will look at the future directions such visionary initiatives might take, including the possibility of another conference in 2002.

The formal printed recommendations have now been published and distributed to all delegates, supporters and others who have indicated their interest. These are now also available on PASTA’s website at http://hs.c.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/Go to “SRC International Conferences” or the “What’s New?” pages.

The last issue highlighted the themes of those recommendations and reiterated the original vision initiated by Ralph Murray, PASTA’s Co-Founder and Immediate Past President who is currently fulfilling the role of Acting Executive Director for ISRC futures.

Here, we hear from Anna Samson - Convener, Student Chair Programming Committee and now the new Vice-President - National/International of PASTA. Anna was the ISRC 2000 Committee member most heavily involved with the Recommendation and Action Plan process before, during, and now, following the event. Regarding the Recommendation process, Anna writes:

The movement has always had its detractors; those who claimed it was next to impossible to bring together over 300 student representatives, between 12 and 18 years of age from around the world to Sydney, Australia for five days to discuss issues affecting young people across the globe. Even some members of the Organising Committee ... (at times) doubted the probability of completing such a formidable task.

But it was accomplished - and arguably with great aplomb at that...

The recommendation process was integral to ISRC in terms of providing delegates with opportunities to focus on articulating and debating their concerns, as well as a means of enabling them to develop solutions to and ways of dealing with those problems.

For the ISRC was more than just a talk-fest. A major focus of the Conference was action. The delegates were on about actually doing things about the problems and concerns they shared and recognised that others face. There was a profound awareness shared by all that it is up to them to secure change in society.

This didn’t mean, however, that delegates felt or were made to feel that they were the only ones with this responsibility: national governments, non-governmental organisations, corporations and international bodies also have an obligation to transform the world - to rid it of injustice, poverty, inequality, war and intolerance. As student representatives, delegates recognised that they can play an important role in ensuring that these bodies live up to their obligations and that they take the views of young people seriously - not dismiss them as simply naive. It was considered vital that youth join together with other activists to place pressure on these groups to remain accountable to the world’s citizens.

However, this lobbying function was determined to be only part of their role as student representatives. ISRC also aimed to empower students to initiate activities on a local, school-based, national or global scale to address their concerns. Taken individually, each recommendation represents a starting point for students, and the organisations of which they are a part, to initiate grassroots programs.

View these recommendations as expressions of young people’s political maturity, manifested in their faith in the ability of institutions and, more importantly, the individuals within those institutions, to embrace change and radically reconstruct society as we know it, as part of the ever-utopian goal to create a ‘better world’. Be assured that the delegates to ISRC 2000 have pledged to do their utmost to encourage these institutions to take on board the relevant recommendations.

From the start, ISRC 2000 has always been labelled the first step in the quest to what will hopefully be the establishment of a world-wide high school student representative movement. In fact, one of the most exciting aspects of the Conference was the commitment of delegates to a continuation of the ISRC phenomenon.

The greatest challenge, however, will be the ability of the recommendations to remain a vibrant document that will garner others into becoming part of the ISRC vision.

FOR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT DETAILS - SEE THE PASTA WEBSITE

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

- PASTA Memberships and Professional Development Activities: bowtech@ozemail.com.au
- OVERSEAS TOURS (for advisers and students): suspage@ozemail.com.au
- CSC AWARDS (Community Service Certificate Program): RalphMurray@bigpond.com.au
- ISRC, International Linkages and Projects: asamson@wesley.usyd.edu.au
- Website and Independent/Systemic Schools: ckingston@interact.net.au
TEACHING LEADERSHIP

As an SRC adviser organising activities for your group, you must remember that no matter what happens you are trying to teach your students about leadership. Some of the things that happen in activities can be a little more catastrophic than in a normal classroom situation. For example, your students have just run an event that has got a little out of hand. The event involved quite a bit of ice cream and the hall is now well plastered with the stuff. What do you do?

**Punish:**

"That’s the last time we run that event at this school. You did not control the event or make attempts to stop the kids from messing up the hall."

**Message to the students:** When you have a problem, you are the cause of the problem.

**Rescue:**

"That’s all right. These things happen. We’ll get the cleaner to sort it all out."

**Message to the students:** When you have a problem, it is someone else’s problem.

**Teach:**

"Looks like you have a problem there. Get some mops, water, and paper towels. You can help me clean up this mess."

After the mess is cleaned up, ask: "What can we do next time to make sure this doesn’t happen again?"

**Message to the students:** You have a problem, you can help to solve the problem and perhaps prevent it happening again, and I’ll be able to help you if you need it.

When students make mistakes, good advisers do the following:

- acknowledge that students have done something wrong
- give them ownership of the problem
- offer them ways to solve it
- show them that they have the power to solve the problem

Adapted from an article in Above and Beyond Vol 3 No 2 - Winter 2000, the newsletter for advisers and student leaders across Canada.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING AND ANNUAL EVENTS

- **30 JUNE** - End of Financial Year - Annual PASTA Membership Fees Due
- **21 JUNE - 21 JULY** - PASTA North American SRC Leadership Tour. Includes a delegation to the United Nations in New York, the 65th Annual NASC Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina; Leadership Camps in Alberta, Canada and Lake Tahoe, Nevada; host school and state and district SRC Association visits in Bordentown, New Jersey, Edmonton, Alberta and Houston, Texas; debriefing in Hawaii. Official NSW Government Host School - Gorokan High. This year’s tour also includes delegates from Tasmania and Queensland. Applications for 2002 now open for students and advisers from all states and territories.
- **28 JULY** - PASTA COMMITTEE MEETING - 11 am Umina High School, Sydney Avenue, Umina Beach on the central Coast. All current and new members welcome to attend.
- **TERM 4** : PASTA is offering New South Wales SRC Advisers a Professional Development Conference. Successful Form One Lane one day teacher development activities continue through colleagues in Victoria. (See “How To Contact” page on PASTA’s Website).

**Annual PASTA Membership Fees Now Due!**

PASTA Membership for 2001-2002 is due on July 1: please use the form on page 14 to renew your membership promptly.
What does membership of PASTA offer you?

- Regular newsletter and journal including Training and Development within the SRC area
- Reduced registration fees at association, state and national level conferences
- Regular seminars, workshops and conferences
- Practical workshop ideas for use in schools
- Positive support for SRC teachers and advisors
- Opportunities to be involved in discussions on the future of SRCs at all levels
- Special resources for students and teachers
- Access to SRC networks
- A support network for SRC advisors
- Membership (includes GST and subscription to Connect magazine)
- Area of particular interest: Primary, Secondary, Special Other (please specify)
- Employment Authority: NSW Department of School Education

Please sign your card number before sending this form.

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I wish to apply/renew my membership for the year ending 30th June 2001.

I enclose a cheque for $_____

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Further details:

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Signature: ____________________

PASTA Membership Form

Tax Invoice: ABN 49 398 096 539
Berwick Secondary College is located approximately 45 km south east of Melbourne and is the largest single campus secondary college in Victoria, with approximately 1800 students. The school's student representative body, now known as 'Student Voice', was formed in 2000 under the guidance of Cathey Dragaia and this year it continues to uphold the traditions set in the formation year.

In its second year, Berwick Secondary College's Student Voice is still powering forward, with no sign of stopping. Over the past two years, the organisation has grown to gain respect from the students and teachers alike.

This year's group consists of 25 strong and motivated leaders, whose main purpose is to provide student politics, leadership opportunities and entertainment. Some of the objectives of the Student Voice are to represent and identify the feelings and opinions of the student body, encourage active student involvement in school activities and promote school loyalty. These are just a handful of points from the 2001 Student Voice Constitution.

and ensure the smooth administration of the organisation. Student Voice leaders also represent the student body on other official school committees such as the School Council, the Policy and Planning, Facilities, Publicity and Curriculum Committees. Often Student Voice is consulted or asked to represent the student body on specific sub-committees, such as the Uniform Sub-committee and Code of Conduct Sub-committee.

Weekly forums and studios have created an active working environment, with leaders always working on at least one project at any given time. 'Forums' are our formal meetings, where we discuss projects to further their leadership skills. In order to gain the skills required to operate the organisation efficiently, students take part in an induction leadership camp at the start of the year; individual leaders attend workshops/conferences run by outside organisations, as well as the much looked forward to 'Democracy Tour' in August, where the team travels to Ballarat to learn about our democracy, staying overnight at Sovereign Hill Lodge.

Some of the activities that are run by the Student Voice include school socials, the winter sleepout, battle of the bands, food stalls, radio station, playground and running leadership programs for local primary school students.

In order to publicise the Student Voice and keep students informed about activities, the Student Voice has recently created a Publicity Committee of four students. These students work on keeping school notice boards up to date, making posters and updating the Student Voice's website.

For more information, you can either visit the Student Voice's website, which is accessible from the school's web page: www.berwicksc.vic.edu.au or email us at: sv@berwicksc.vic.edu.au

Danie Bunting and Dale Mills

The Student Voice operates under the leadership of a president, elected by members of the Student Voice, and other executive members including the Vice President, Secretary and the Publicity Officer. The role of the executive members is to promote following the formal meeting procedure as written in the agenda, and 'studios' are our working sessions where we work on the projects.

Not only does the group help the student body, but Student Voice also gives its leaders the opportunity.
For the last three years, Magill Junior Primary School (Reception-Year 2) has participated in the Learning to learn project with a particular emphasis on values education and learning to live together. Student Participation has been a major focus. During last year, staff and students worked through a major review of Student Participation in the school, and set goals for future development.

During 2001, the aim of the school has been to provide more students with opportunities to practise and develop skills which will enable them to be active citizens within the school and community, and develop as life-long learners.

Through their participation in a range of activities, students aged 5 to 8 years are able to develop skills involving teamwork, communication, problem-solving and making choices.

Areas where students participate actively are:
- class meetings;
- class rules and consequences;
- review of the School Behaviour Code;
- responsibilities within the class and school;
- Peer Mediation;
- Library Monitors;
- Sports Monitors at play time;
- whole school assemblies;
- Student Representative Council;
- welcoming special visitors.

Peer Mediation

Staff, students and parents were informed first about Peer Mediation.

Training days (for 44 Year 2 students) were then run where a lawyer, contacted through Civics and Citizenship Education networks spoke, and showed 'court' articles to the students being trained.

Mediation skills were developed through role plays. A written format was followed (this was reviewed and prepared by the Student Voice committee), and the previous year's Peer Mediators did some role plays and discussed the role of the Peer Mediation Program with the trainees.

Every Monday, the ten Peer Mediators for the forthcoming week are introduced to the whole Junior Primary and everyone is reminded of where they can be found, why they are there, and what they can do to assist in the harmonious climate of the school. A Peer Mediator also explains what the 'Focus of the Week' is eg 'Keeping our yard litter free', and a copy of this is then distributed to all classes by two Peer Mediators. The Peer mediators also have some input into what the Focus of the Week will be.

Two Peer Mediators are on duty every lunchtime and they sit in designated areas at a table. After making some investigations, we found this was a satisfactory way to go and made it easier for the younger students to find them.
Every three to four weeks, the Peer Mediators are gathered together to discuss any problems or issues. Some feedback from them has been: "We like helping others", "I like helping people solve problems", "I am doing a helpful thing", "It's fun talking to other people" and "I enjoy helping others".

The students enjoy the responsibility of being a Peer Mediator, but only 44 Year 2s (7-8 year olds) were able to be trained after the Student Voice committee selected them from the many written applications received. The Year 1 students have the opportunity to see their peers mediating with students, and many have expressed a keen desire to be a Peer Mediator next year.

Dee Cooper
Coordinator, Peer Mediation

Student Representative Council

At Magill Junior Primary school, there are 22 student representatives from Reception to Year 2 on the SRC. At the beginning of the year, students who have been on the SRC for the previous year talk to all the classes about what is involved in being an SRC representative. Two class representatives - a boy and a girl - are chosen by their peers through nomination and voting.

All members of the SRC attended training sessions focusing on:
- role of the SRC;
- decision making;
- meeting procedure;
- special roles;
- reporting to class meetings;
- planning.

Meetings are held weekly and representatives give reports from class meetings, discuss new issues and plan special activities and events. Activities include:
- representing the school at tree planting for a local council;
- facilitating all students to have a say in planning new play equipment for the yard;
- raise money for various charities and special school projects.

SRC Representatives were asked to give some feedback about how they feel about being an SRC member. They said that they:
- feel like a team;
- are happy to look after the school;
- get to talk about all kinds of things;
- get to help at the school;
- get to look after people;
- feel good because classmates chose them;
- get to know each other;
- are a planning group;
- talk about lots of things.

Patricia Lutz
Coordinator, SRC

June 2001
JSC Conference: Tuesday April 3rd, 2001

Emma Burmeister, Vicky Maulden, Jesse Caio and Melanie Petz attended an all day JSC Conference at the Moreland Civic Centre. The conference was attended by eighteen local primary schools.

Some of the topics discussed were:
- How to run JSC meetings properly;
- How to share ideas and listen to other people;
- What to do before, during and after meetings;
- Accept everybody’s ideas so that they will want to keep contributing;
- “Have a say” - schools exist for kids.

Some ideas we worked on at the conference were:
- having JSC reps say the Patriotic Oath at assembly;
- organizing sandpit monitors and new toys for the junior school;
- creating a web page about our JSC;
- writing a JSC policy for the school;
- getting more line games marked on the asphalt areas;
- making sure grades have regular grade meetings;
- getting benches and comfortable seating in the upper area;
- putting more bins around the school in good spots;
- organizing a suggestion box for students to use.

We went with Ms Fiona McIntosh our JSC teacher. We meet every Wednesday for the first half of lunch in Fiona’s room.

We would like to thank the school for sending us to the JSC Conference. We would also like to thank the Moreland and Hume City Councils and Anglicare for organising and sponsoring the conference. We all received a folder with notes and a pen. We had a delicious play lunch and lunch provided. We have learned lots about meetings and what we can do for our school and we met lots of nice kids from other local schools.

We all attended three sessions - here are our reports.

Sharon’s Group

Sharon asked Jess and me to handout pieces of paper. Then we chose from three columns what we would like to do. The column titles were 'Before the meeting', 'During the meeting' and 'After the meeting'. I chose 'During the meeting'. Jess chose 'After the meeting'. We had to write down what we do at our meetings for that part. We both put down four explanations about the question. Sharon asked if anyone had gone to a School Council meeting. Only Jess and I put our hands up. We told everyone about what we do when we go there. Then it finished. We had an excellent day.

Vicky Grade 4 Fiona & Jess Grade 3 Ms Simm

Fred’s Group

In Fred’s session (we had three sessions) he got us to sit in a circle on chairs and he said we were going to play a game called ‘Have you ever?’. How it’s played: You ask a question (eg ‘Have you been to McDonald’s?’) and if you have done the thing that the person said, you have to move at least two spaces from where you were sitting. We also talked about how we got into the Junior School Council. It was very interesting to listen how people got in. It was really great, I think, for 18 schools to be there. I really enjoyed the day.

Melanie Grade 4 Ms. Simmit

Chris’s Group

In Chris’s session, after he introduced himself we lined up in height order and then divided into two groups (tall and short). Then we played a game to learn each other’s names. We had to partner with people from other schools and discuss heaps of stuff about Junior School Council (JSC) like: What activities do you plan? When are your meetings? What jobs do people have in JSC? How do you run your meetings? Most schools did pretty much the same thing. Some differences were that some school meet during school time, some meet monthly and others fortnightly. Most schools have different meeting times and grade levels represented - on school only had grade 6s on their JSC. We were the only school there who invited the JSC to report directly to the School Council and attend some School Council meetings. It was a great day.

Emma Grade 6 Mr Millot
Paving the Way

The 'Paving the way' Victorian Statewide Secondary Students Conference will be held in Ballarat over three days - July 11 to 13, 2001. It is expected that this conference will 'pave the way' for the establishment of an on-going Victorian State Student Organisation - a statewide network of students, that will encourage participation within the Victorian school system.

It is expected that up to 200 students will attend the Conference, from all over Victoria, from all school systems. This conference is a student-owned and student-run event, and has been planned by students from the Victorian State Leadership Council (continuing from the 1999 state conference) and from the Victorian State Student Representative Council. This Organising Committee has been meetings for several months to plan the conference. Invitations have been extended to students at secondary colleges through Victoria.

The conference is supported by the Education Trust and the Victorian Office for Youth (within the Department of Education, Employment and Training).

As well as consideration of proposals for the formation of some form of continuing statewide student organisation, the agenda for the conference includes opportunities to explore issues within Student Councils (how to motivate students, how to plan activities etc), issues within Victorian education (School Councils, Quality of Education, the VCE, Student Action Teams, Health Education and so on), and many wider issues of concern and interest to students. An outcome of these discussions will be a set of recommendations that will provide the basis for action by the Statewide Student Organisation following the conference. In addition, the participants will develop skills, share experiences, meet new people, and be inspired to continue playing a role in paving the way forward.

Participants have been asked, in their applications, to indicate how they plan to continue to use and support the conference aims and objectives within their school or district.

To find out more about the Conference, contact Steve Metcalfe (Office for Youth) on (03) 9637 3463 or e-mail Elizabeth Atkinson, one of the student organisers, at: atk01@salecollege.vic.edu.au

Why do we need a Statewide Student Network?

We live in a world that is ever-changing. The lives we live seem to run double time. We are well and truly into the new millennium, and how the future looks will all depend on every single one of us. We all have something in common: a vision for the future. We are the future and, although the world we live in seems to be rather apathetic to our wants and needs, we all know that each and every one of us can make a difference in this world. Each and every one of us makes a small ripple in the lake of life, and together we can make a huge wave that can make the difference, regardless of how big or small it is.

The need to make a difference in education is the foundation for a Statewide Student Network. The proposal that is to be considered at this Conference will be the backbone to how we all go about operating this network.

A Statewide Student organisation will bring us all together to discuss common issues and, by being representative of the whole state, we will be listened to.

Siriwann Sao and Veggie Cari
- for the Conference Organising Committee

June 2001
School Spirit: No Longer Just a Dream

With the NSW State SRC Conference for 2001 fast approaching, with its theme of School Spirit and Pride, perhaps a situation that was only a faint dream will burst into reality with vibrancy and strength: the possibility of a School Community feeling safe and proud of their school heritage.

The deadline, however, is fast approaching for the NSW State SRC Conference Working Party, as the date for the opening of the Conference is closing rapidly on them. Pressure has been building as to what the conference's themes were going to include; soon a suitable and mature decision was made. The theme is to be on School Spirit - promoting a sense of belonging and safety within the school and community environment. This theme also rings true to the goal set by the NSW SRC on the promotion of Public Education. If it is successful, it will be a dream come true for SRCs around the state.

Many titles for the Conference were put forward and narrowed down to a short list which included:

- School Spirit - Building Pride;
- Raising Spirit, Building Pride;
- Community, Connection, Citizenship;
- SchoolSpirit.com.au; and
- Public Schools - Sharing, Caring.

All relate well to the strong theme of School Spirit and Pride and the Department of Education shall be announcing their decision on the title shortly.

Besides the games nights, dance parties and the general bonding process occurring at the Conference, there will also be a busy schedule adhered to. Ten workshops will be on offer for delegates to select from and to take back to their respective District SRCs and School SRCs to run as certified programs. This is a vital stage of the process and, without the vigilance of the delegates, the Conference would be for naught. A few of the programs running at the Conference are:

- Mental Health, Resilience And Well Being For All Students;
- Improving Communications - Student to Student Morale and Student to Teacher Morale; and
- Assisting Students Who Have A Disability To Be Part Of School Life.

The latter is a huge development for the NSW SRC, with the much awaited launch of the magazine resource for SRCs, Just Like Us, by the Minister of Education and Training, Hon. John Aquilina MP at the meeting of the NSW SRC on Friday 25th of May.

To a lot of students around the state, this Conference may well signify a change of feeling in the common school yard. Perhaps we will see the end of the graffiti plaque on our school walls and toilets; perhaps there will be an improvement in attendance at the school; perhaps soon we will hear a higher percentage of students in the playground state their pride in attending their schools. This would be the ultimate achievement of the NSW SRC and the fruit of the hard labour of the State Working Party. This conclusion has been almost a fleeting dream, but is now one step closer to reality.

James Vilcek
NSW SRC Delegat

Resource Materials on Active Citizenship

Democracy Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work

This 48-page book was produced by teachers and students from a group of schools in the north of Melbourne in 1995. Stories from 10 primary schools describe the operation and focus of their Junior School Councils. Each school provides a brief answer to key practical questions.

An invaluable resource for developing active citizenship in primary schools!

- $7 a copy (posted);
- $12 for 2 copies

- from Connect - see back page

Discovering Democracy in Action: Learning from School Practice

Twenty-five primary and secondary schools in Victoria explored how to use the Discovering Democracy materials in their Civics and Citizenship Education approaches during 1999 and 2000, and then wrote about their experiences. A 'whole school approach' is outlined, within which many schools explored what active citizenship meant.

Available from the
Youth Research Centre
Faculty of Education
The University of Melbourne
Vic 3010
Fax: (03) 8344 9632
FREE - just ask!

Various back issues of Connect

Each issue of Connect contains stories about active citizenship in the classroom and in school governance. These stories of Junior School Councils (JSCs), Student Representative Councils (SRCs), classroom approaches and projects all illustrate practical ideas for recognising and developing the active citizenship of young people.

Back copies of Connect are available (see back page): $4 for a single issue or $6 for a double issue.

An index to the contents of back issues is also available ($3).
News and Reviews

3rd World Conference Against Racism

To all interested Young People!!

As many of you would hopefully know by now, in August and September this year the United Nations will be hosting its 3rd World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa.

There will be three distinct components to the WCAR - the conference ‘proper’, involving government delegations from UN member states; an NGO (non-Government organisations) forum, for NGOs who have accreditation from the UN; and a Youth Forum, the full details of which are only just emerging.

We represent a small but growing group of Young People from across Australia who are interested in ensuring that all elements of the WCAR have maximum input from, and representation of, Australian Young People. This could include anything from holding youth meetings, writing to ministers and government delegations and attending regional preparatory meetings, to organising and funding an Australian youth contingent to Durban in August. The script has not yet been written, and the possibilities are endless. It is a very exciting series of opportunities for young people to effect genuine social change on a global scale. We will send out further details of what this means over the coming weeks.

Already we have organised the only Australian Youth Consultation that will feed input directly to the preparatory process of the WCAR. This event, held in Adelaide in April, was highly successful and the draft report of this Consultation was tabled at an event hosted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission in May. This National Summit, and the 1-day Youth Forum that preceded it, was the first stage of HREOC’s domestic consultations leading up to the WCAR. We felt this was an important win for young people to be able to feed directly into that Summit, and address many leaders from Australia’s NGO sector on racism, its effects, and the unique perspectives of young people. The final report of the Adelaide consultation will be available soon.

Our next steps are still being worked out, however in the meantime we would like to hear from you, and get your support. At this stage, a return email indicating your willingness to be involved (and perhaps a short background on why you are interested, and any work you’ve done in this field in the past), and in what capacity you can assist will be great. Of course, please also let us know if you no longer want to receive updates or information from us.

That’s it for now, we’ll get more out to you soon. We look forward to hearing from many of you.

Please spread this message far and wide on your networks.

Tirana Hassan (tiranah@hotmail.com)
Amrita Dasvarma (amritadasvarma@hotmail.com) and
Michael Quall (mikq@one.net.au)

for the Australian Youth NGO Working Party for the World Conference Against Racism
(aust_youth_ngo_wcar@hotmail.com)

Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA)
2001 Biennial Conference, Canberra

Education Futures & New Citizenships

Saturday 29 September to Monday 1 October 2001

Registration forms and further information at the ACSA website:

WANTED!

Students to take part in curriculum discussions and debates
- on panels, in workshops, present poster displays ...

Contact the ACSA Conference Organisers at: acsa@acsa.edu.au

June 2001
Supporting Student Participation: Victoria

Unfortunately most SRC/JSCs struggle to operate on a daily basis – there is always any number of dilemmas occurring – and this is just in the schools who actually have an SRC/JSC. A large number of schools at both primary and secondary level in Victoria, do not offer students the opportunity to have a student-owned and student-run group, or to have student representation and input into the decisions made for and by the school.

The struggles experienced by SRC/JSCs are a reality in this country, where we are still finding our feet in terms of the importance of student participation. Training and development of our students is the only way to lessen the struggle and to, in turn, improve the effectiveness of these student groups.

Raise Your Voice

Raise Your Voice (RYV) is an organisation dedicated to promoting student participation and leadership in both primary and secondary students. RYV believes that student leaders are capable of a whole lot more than is generally expected of them. With the right training, student leaders can take the initiative to really make a difference in their schools and not just operate at a token level.

How can Raise Your Voice help you? It can:
• help set up your SRC/JSC;
• assist with the development of your constitution;
• run training days or shorter workshops;
• work in consultation with you to plan and run the perfect camp;
• offer expertise in student participation – including such areas as: the correct structure, electing leaders, executive positions, meeting procedures, constitution, networking, ideas;
• offer extensive knowledge in student leadership theory – including general leadership theory, teamwork, communication, public speaking, goal setting, time and stress management, self awareness, decision making, problem solving, motivation, assertiveness, self esteem, etc.

For more information please contact:
Cathey Dragasias
PO Box 1483
Clayton South VIC 3169
Ph: 0418 178 450

SRC Training Days

SRC and Student Leadership Training Days have begun to attract local media attention in some areas. Second Strike Productions has conducted many training seminars for SRCs and JSCs around Victoria to rave reviews. Most importantly, the students participating in the course have often felt so proud of their accomplishments that they have written reports of the day themselves, to be published in school newsletters. This business was established by ex-students who were very active in their SRCs and wanted to help strengthen Student Councils right across Victoria: from Preston, to Sunshine, to Frankston, and even to Mildura.

So something must be going right!

The Training Days offered by Second Strike Productions hit the mark for a few good reasons. Firstly, all the trainers themselves have actually been on a Student Representative Council for at least a few years whilst they were at school. They know how these things work. Secondly, the training is tailor-made to suit the SRC specifically. No two SRCs are alike and so they must be treated as unique.

The trainers are constantly on the look-out to find innovative methods of presenting material - like meeting procedure or constitutions - that can otherwise be very dry and boring. Time is always spent on assisting the SRC working on one of their actual projects, so it's not all just theoretical.

David Mould
Managing Director, Second Strike Productions

Contact Second Strike Productions:
22 Menzies Grove
Ivanhoe VIC 3079
(03) 9855 8900
0412 743 951
second_strike@hotmail.com

Ausschools E-Mail List

Ausschools (the name may change soon) is an e-mail discussion list devoted to "Australian schools where the students have a significant say in their curriculum, their environment and their destiny". It was set up after the recent Australian Democratic Schools Association Conference in Sydney. To join the list, simply mail to: ausschools-subscribe@yahooogroups.com or visit: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ausschools
Clearinghouse

Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on: (03) 9489 9052 or (03) 8344 9637

Australian:

Building Relationships: Making Education Work (Australian Centre for Equity through Education, NSW and Australian Youth Research Centre, Vic) February 2001
Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 21 No 1, April 2001
YACSAround (YACSA, Adelaide, SA) 2/01, March/April 2001
YAC Vic Submission to the Victorian Youth Strategy (YAC Vic, Melbourne, Vic) April 2001
Yikes (YAC Vic, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 1 Eds 6; May 2001

International:

Democracy and Education (IDE, Athens, Ohio, USA) Vol 14, No 1, 2001
ESSIC News (OBESSU, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) February/March 2001
Infoyoouth (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Seoul, Korea) Vol 7 No 1, March 2001
National Coalition News (National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA) Vol 25 No 4; Spring 2001

Democracy Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work

OTHER STUDENT PARTICIPATION SUPPORT MATERIALS AVAILABLE
See the back page of this issue of Connect for listings and order form

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The number on your Connect label tells you the issue with which your subscription expires. Please renew promptly - renewal notices cost us time and money!

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, computerized index of these documents is now available from Connect for $3; this can be accessed and printed by topic, keyword etc or simply sequentially.

Code Description/Pages/Cost
484 Re-focusing the Lens: Assessing the Challenge of Youth Involvement in Public Policy (Phillip Haid, Elder C Marques, Jon Brown; Ontario Secondary School Students' Association and The Institute on Governance, Ottawa, Canada, June 1999) (84 pp; $8.40)
485 Re-focusing the Lens: Executive Summary (as for #484) (10 pp; $1.00)
486 Youth Involvement in Policy-making: Lessons from Ontario School Boards (Elder C Marques; Institute on Governance - Ottawa, Canada; Policy Brief No. 5 - July 1999) (6 pp; $1.00)
487 "Engage!" Youth in Governance - Proposal (Ontario Secondary School Students' Association and the Institute on Governance - September 1998) (6 pp; $1.00)
488 'Democratic Education and Critical Pedagogy' (Tony Knight and Art Pearl, in The Urban Review, Vol 32 No 3, 2000) (16 pp; $1.60)
489 Going to the source: Student voice in high school reform (Dana Mitra, Stanford University - paper to annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, April 2001) (8 pp; $1.00)
490 'Squeaky Wheels and Flat Tyres': A Case Study of Students as Reform Participants (Elena Silva, University of California - Berkeley; paper to annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, April 2001) (7 pp; $1.00)

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MATERIALS:

Back issues of Connect ($4 single; $6 double issue). Circle issue/s required: $ ................
- Cross-referenced index to contents of Connect back issues ($3) $ ................

Miscellaneous Resources:
- Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) $ ................
- Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) $ ................
- Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) ($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) $ ................
- Shining Moments - Foxfire video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: $5) $ ................

Documents:
- Photocopies of the following documents: $ ................
- Cross-referenced Index to photocopies of documents ($3) $ ................

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