It's all about negotiation ...

Also in this issue:

- Negotiating Curriculum and Structures: 4 Glimpses
- Perspectives on Education and Participation – from 3 States: Professor Allan Luke, Dr Ken Boston, Emma van der Veldt, Erica McCaig
- Victorian, NSW and Tasmanian State SRC Updates
- Student Action on Home Safety: Heatherhill SC
- A Primary School SRC: Wonthaggi PS
- Resources: 'Speak Out', 'Link Up', and 'Form One Lane'; Student-Run Web Pages: Taking Children Seriously

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #19
This Issue

A great double issue of Connect to greet you for term 4, 2000. Much of this issue is about negotiation: student participation in the construction and implementation of curriculum in the classroom. It is about ways in which student and teachers work together to define what is learnt, how it is learnt, how it is assessed, how it is structured, how constraints are handled. There's no one meaning to 'negotiation', so Connect asks several schools (primary, middle, secondary) to tell us what they do, and to reflect on the processes and outcomes. We'd also like to hear much more about what you do - how you negotiate curriculum.

There are also other articles here outlining student action and student voices - safety campaigns, we: creation, conferences and forums. There are reports from Victoria, NSW and Tasmania about the development of their statewide student organisations and conferences.

Under the heading of Perspectives, Professor Allan Luke, Deputy Director General of Education Queensland, is interviewed by Lisa Hunter about curriculum change in that state, while Emma van der Veldt and Erica McCalman (two student activists in Victoria) write about their views of participation, democracy and SRCs. We've also included the keynote address by Dr Ken Boston, Director-General of Education and Training in NSW, from the NSW State SRC Conference.

So - diverse and provocative reading. Get into it!

Next Issue of Connect

Because of this double issue (replacing issues listed for August and October) the next issue of Connect is due in December, just before the ISRC Conference in Sydney. As well as all the final details of that event, articles are already planned about a VET building project, an SRC: citizenship initiative and about your work - if you tell us.

Roger Holdsworth

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Cover:
Negotiation at Sherbrooke Community School: Nina and School Council student representatives. Photo (plus photo page 14) by Kate Cuts.
"Are we really going to do this?"

Voices from students who make social decisions and act on them

Alison Sewell, Sue Fuller, Rosemary Murphy and Barb Funnell

Once Upon a Time...

"Ms Fuller, can I please ring the signwriters? They said to ring back at 10 o'clock," asked James. A fairly ordinary question, but 12 year old James was once described as "going nowhere". He never remembered his homework, he was unable to settle for more than five minutes, and he could be disruptive.

In August 1999, Creative Problem Solving was introduced into the class program and, to the surprise of his teacher, James's whole demeanour changed. He quietly assumed a leadership role, he took responsibility for himself, and was motivated to unprecedented levels of creativity, thinking and positive action. It is no fairy tale that James became a tall poppy in the classroom.

Introduction

This article tells a story of the experiences of two primary school teachers who are united in their belief that providing opportunities for young children to purposefully participate in their school community can develop feelings of personal empowerment, as well as provide a responsive environment where talent can surface. These teachers talk about the journey they took with Creative Problem Solving (CPS), a framework to support authentic social inquiry, and decision making. As such, these students were also developing the skills to become responsible, contributing and confident citizens -- the citizenship goals of social studies education.

We argue that effective citizens need to be effective problem solvers, self reliant, resourceful and productive people. In addition they need to be creative thinkers, questioners, and unafraid to act in accordance with their value positions. Many students are gifted in these civic skills, but too often school programs are not designed to identify and extend these students. We advocate the use of CPS as a means to scaffold the development of all these civic skills and as a means to create a responsive environment to nurture talent.

The voices of both teachers and their students are heard here to highlight their learning partnership. Their voices echo the excitement of making a difference in the school community and the rewards of seeing unexpected talent surface. Their voices also speak of the difficulties of incorporating authentic problem solving into the classroom program. As a prelude to these stories, the origins of CPS are identified and past stories from other classes in New Zealand and America are told.

The Original Plot

Osborn (1957) argued that creative inquiry was the "cornerstone of human endeavour" and went on to develop CPS. CPS has since evolved from an extensive tradition of theory, research and practice into a sequential approach to identify challenges, generate and analyse options, so that new solutions can be actioned. As such, CPS supports the higher levels of thought, imagination and action required to solve ill-defined messy problems -- problems we all face in our daily lives. Let's take a closer look at the six steps of CPS.

Each step of the problem solving model has a distinct yet interrelated purpose. As can be seen in this figure, each step develops a specific sub-skill such as:

- how to recognise that a problem exists;
- how to ask questions to clarify the problem;
- how to articulate a problem statement;
- how to creatively brainstorm ideas to solve the problem;
- how to logically think through the creative ideas to decide on workable solutions;
- how to act on these solutions and reflect on the implementation process.

Creative Problem Solving

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In this way, the designers of CPS have translated an effective and sophisticated problem-solving process into a form which can be learned and applied successfully by primary school students as young as seven and eight years. It is suggested that each step be taught, applied and practised initially as single, self-contained units, so as to provide an overall understanding of the model (Eberle and Stanish, 1990). Cramond, Martin and Shaw (1990) found that if CPS is to effectively change problem solving behaviour outside the classroom, it must be taught in ways that enable children to transfer it to real-life problems. The one-off use of CPS will not lead to effective change. It needs to be an integral part of the democratic classroom program if children are to transfer their CPS skills to their everyday lives.

**Past Stories**

Historically, CPS has been used as a means to challenge and enrich the minds of gifted learners. However, Schack (1993) showed that a wide range of children can benefit from instruction in CPS in the regular classroom, and that by so doing, a responsive environment is established to identify gifted children. McIntosh and Meacham (1992) used CPS in the regular classroom to help children respond to folk tales where heroes solved problems to ensure a happy ending. CPS was then used again to help students explore the significant contributions made by real heroes to society with the creative solutions they implemented. Finally, they used CPS to help students believe that they had the potential to be a hero. Here they analysed their strengths and weaknesses, and identified ways to improve a personal attribute.

Ayres (1990) used CPS in his regular classroom when his students identified that there were few biographies written for early readers. Using the steps of CPS these students decided to write their own biographies about famous people for their school library. Sewell (1997) used CPS in a regular Year 3 and 4 classroom when students commented on the number of accidents occurring in the playground. They made their fort safer and more interesting to play on.

Using the framework of CPS, the children developed a plan of action by presenting a fort design and requesting help to build it from the Board of Trustees. Sewell also found that these children's sense of efficacy to solve problems and make a difference increased having used CPS.

**Barb's Story**

Our stories are set in a Year 3 and Year 8 class at North Street School, a large Year 1-8 primary school situated in the Manawatu town of Fielding in New Zealand. The stories came about as a result of two academic staff from Massey University (Alison and Rosemary) working closely with two teachers (Sue and Barb). Both Sue and Barb were willing to not only “give it a go”, but to try something that was real, and that would give their students more ownership over their learning. CPS was also going to fit in with the school’s emphasis on personal goal setting. Our team worked collaboratively, sharing skills and understanding to ensure a successful classroom intervention. The teachers recorded their work in a diary and kept in regular touch via polycom telephone conversations, and face to face meetings. In this way problems were spearheaded and successes celebrated so as to bridge the too often distant academic world with the hands-on world of classroom teaching. The voices of the teacher were thus amplified (Flack and Osler, 1999).

The first story is set in a Year 3 classroom with teacher Barb Punnell. Barb began her CPS program by having the class look around their room to identify issues of concern, and to find areas that could be developed to expand the learning opportunities in the classroom. The children wrote their thoughts and Barb copied them onto large sheets to display in the classroom. Barb then took the children outside to identify areas that presented challenges and potential opportunities for improvement. The children identified two main areas of concern which were further discussed in their regular ‘buzz’ groups. Barb felt that given the age of her students and the need to closely scaffold their thinking and problem solving, that simplicity was essential. So, the children voted on one issue that they could make a difference to. Finally, the children decided that the unsightly litter was their main area of concern.

Their ‘mess’ thus defined, the children began work on the second where they asked questions to find information about the litter problem. Barb found the ability of children to ask a good question varied. Some children asked questions that were unanswerable and would not help find useful information, such as “Who dropped the first piece of litter?” But this was in itself a learning step, and children soon began to see that asking thoughtful questions was the key to making progress at this step. The following questions guided an inquiry by various groups within the class:

- **What sort of litter is dropped?**
- **Where is most of the litter?**
- **When is the litter dropped?**
- **Why is there so much rubbish in our playground?**
- **Who is mainly responsible?**

Answers to the above questions were presented in a variety of forms, particularly graphs, which Barb suggests was a consequence of their graphing work in maths. As an interesting aside, the children discovered that rubbish littered their playground, not only because students weren’t using rubbish bins, but also because of the position of buildings that created a wind tunnel. On windy days rubbish was sucked out of the skip bin and strewn across the yard. This finding initiated some unplanned but very meaningful scientific inquiry. This part of Barb’s story shows how she was able to integrate the curriculum.

Having reflected on their steps the children framed the
following ‘question’ as a manageable problem statement to solve. “In what ways might we get rid of litter at North Street School?”

At step 4 the children brainstormed a wide variety of possible solutions to this problem. Their ideas included issuing fines or rewards, closing the gap in the fence, using additional rubbish bins, specifying a place to eat lunch, and having rubbish patrollers.

Barb found it easier to have the children work in small groups here, where they prioritised the class brainstorm. This exercise demanded compromise and cooperation, skills Barb had to support.

At step 5 three key criteria were decided upon:

• the cost had to be manageable;
• the tasks had to be those that children could undertake;
• the tasks had to get children from across the entire school working cooperatively.

The groups rated their ideas against these criteria and came up with what they believed to be their best solutions at step 6. The group solutions were then put together as a class list. Interestingly, the most commonly voiced solution was to “get serious”, which Barb pointed out was not in fact a specific strategy. She challenged children to think about, how they were going to get serious? This question took the children back to step 4, where another brainstorming session ensued.

This recursive step highlights the flexible nature of CPS where group reflection, judgement and creativity can be redirected back to prior steps. At the point of writing, children were planning to become litter patrollers, and they were also designing creative skits to advertise the issue at school assemblies.

The children that Barb had previously identified as gifted certainly thrived with CPS. They made most of the very creative contributions to the brainstorming sessions, and they were extremely motivated at each step. One of the gifted children even talked about her experiences with CPS at the Federation for Social Studies Conference. She told the conference participants how she had transferred the CPS outside the classroom. “My brother and I had to swap bedrooms and I looked at this as a problem. I used CPS to see what I could do to the room. It would be smaller but I could make some changes in the way that it was set up. So I set it up differently and I like it now.”

Sue’s story

The second story is set within Sue Fuller’s Year 8 class. Sue tells quite a different story because her students were older and more capable of cooperative inquiry. Sue introduced CPS by talking about the new social studies curriculum and its emphasis on problem solving. She then, like Barb, linked the ideas of CPS to the personal goal setting that the students were already familiar with. Sue used her own sensed problem - lack of shade - to model the CPS process. She explained how she followed the steps of CPS to achieve a successful tree planting exercise. Sue then took her class for a walk around the school to identify potential situations that could be improved. Her students could be heard saying “that area is a real mess” and “I never noticed before, but that fence is really ugly.”

From this point Sue’s class was bubbling with enthusiasm. They began to take the lead and Sue was happy to follow and play a supportive role. The list of potential school improvements was huge and unwieldy. While a new shower block and covered gymnasium complete with swimming pool were desirable ends, Sue reminded them they didn’t have the means to achieve these in the short term. Three potential ideas were eventually arrived at by having groups of four students decide on their top five ideas, then pairing these four students with another four so groups of eight shared their top ideas. Ultimately three issues were common across all groups so it was decided to focus on these. The issues were a dull school sign, an uninspiring hall and a boring fence.

This process took some time, but Sue felt strongly that each student should feel their contributions were valued. Sue used black and yellow
thinking hats (de Bono, 1996) to sort out positive and negative aspects of each choice. At this stage Sue assigned three areas of the classroom to each idea, and students were to assemble in the area that was designated to their first choice. Fortunately, support for the three issues was evenly spread, but this meant three problems to investigate and solve! Sue had little choice but to go with the enthusiasm that had gripped her class. Her students really believed they were “making a change for the school”.

Sue saw the three groups working well together, devising thoughtful questions, reviewing facts, working out their main problem statement, generating creative ideas and narrowing these down according to their criteria. Her students were acting in socially responsible and confident ways. Each group also wrote formal letters to the Board of Trustees, who in turn formally replied. Sue recalls this aspect with some interest, as the students set high standards for their submissions. They were unwilling to accept errors or untidy work because this was “real stuff”, and “a chance to leave our mark on the school”.

While Sue was inspired by the successful cooperation, degree of commitment and sense of pride, she also came up against some problems of her own to solve. She noted that students were inclined to want to run to the finish line without carefully considering the potholes along the way. One group went off track by focusing solely on fundraising to bring about the desired result: “Hey Ms. Fuller, I’ve organised a sausage sizzle for Friday afternoon!” With Sue’s expert guidance the group approached the Board of Trustees, who, as it turned out, were prepared to put money into their project. This enabled the students to use their time and energy actioning their plan. Sue also found it difficult to juggle the three groups’ needs. She was, however, able to provide the program flexibility to enable different groups to pursue their own goals. Two of the groups organised outside professionals with little pre-arranging from Sue. For instance a professional artist helped to facilitate the fence mural. Sometimes Sue had to support her students’ voice and ensure that she or other experts did not take away the ownership and personal commitment of their project. When other problems arose, Sue held a class meeting to ensure all students could voice their concerns and set new guidelines for behaviour.

The final results of these three social decision making projects saw a creatively designed mural completed on a very dreary wall, a school hall that was tidy and held displays from each class, and a design presentation to the Board of Trustees for a new school sign. Here are some images of these successes - success brought about by commitment, motivation and hard work from both students and their teacher.
Conclusion

Sue, Barb and their students believe that CPS was the most worthwhile learning experience they had completed in the year. Why? Because they could work in a community of learners who had a real purpose, and who could make a real difference. Too often school work is seen as practice – preparing for the real world. We argue that unless some of that outside reality comes into the classroom, then the skills learned within it may never be utilised outside. Trefinger (1995) claims that the ultimate goal of education is to “enable students to improve their ability to deal successfully and creatively with real problems and challenges” (p 309). We would add to this goal by saying that teachers must also develop the self beliefs in their students that they can make a difference by thinking, and acting in thoughtful, caring and strategic ways.

These stories were set within classrooms that reflected social constructivist theories of learning where students constructed their own understandings via social interaction. Learning tasks were active, meaningful, real, negotiated, reflective, and connected to what is known. Teachers became more than just facilitators; they were questioners, coaches, listeners, mentors and partners in exciting learning adventures, the end point of which was never clear from the outset. The spirit was one of “colligiality: helping, sharing, working together, listening and supporting in a caring manner” (Brophy and Alleman, 1998, p 56). Such a differentiated learning environment will not only meet the needs of already identified gifted students, but also provide a responsive environment to allow as yet unidentified gifted students to be recognised and grow into tall poppies.

Alison Sewell
Sue Fuller
Rosemary Murphy
Barb Funnell

References


Flack, J and Osler, J (1999). We’re teachers, we’re researchers, we’re proud of it! The Australian Educational Researcher, 26 (3), 89-104.

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Wonthaggi Primary School, Vic

"A Vibrant SRC That Deals With School Issues"

At Wonthaggi Primary School, our focus is on self esteem, feeling valued and having a legitimate voice. We do many things that help that focus, including having a vibrant SRC that deals with school issues.

The SRC needs a formal structure that ensures that the forum works for every grade. Class meetings have to occur, SRC meetings are timetabled, minutes are kept and we have a charter of purpose.

Senior students conduct meetings in the junior school. The SRC is an item on the Staff Meeting agenda and on the School Council agenda. The Assistant Principal coordinates the SRC. We are now developing a web page for the SRC.

Bill Jeffs

Student Representative Council Charter

- To give each grade an equal opportunity to discuss important issues and bring them back to the SRC
- Help make the school a better place, by giving the students opportunities to have their opinions heard
- To raise money for different charities eg World Vision sponsorship, Jeans for Genes, refugees etc
- To raise money/purchase equipment for the benefit of the students
- To organise fun activities for the students - talent quest, netball, roller-blading etc
- To raise important issues and bring them to the attention of students, teachers, Principal and School Council
- To give students a chance to be involved in leadership in the school
- To give students the opportunities to act as positive role models for other students

August-October 2000
The Sound of One Hand Clapping

Experiences of negotiation from the
Year 9 Centre, Beaconhills College, Vic

Garry Black, Cheryl Madden and Margaret King

"To the Year Nine Centre,

I want you to know the effect you had on our
son was nothing but good. We pinned a lot of
hope on you and you came through.

You gave credit and importance to the things he
felt were worthwhile, the things that were part of
himself at that time. By offering them in the school
day you gave him the credit he has been taught to
respect.

He was given the chance to repair and improve his
motorbike. He had to think and think again to get over
problems occurring along the way. What better life
skill is there to learn?

You gave him time to think, reflect and discuss ideas
with himself and others. The focus was off academia
only and the opportunity to grow was in its place.

The Year Nine Centre is a garden, ever changing
and constantly flowering in different areas. You will
always have those who stick to the narrow path they
know, never glancing left or right to see the magic. Do
it for those who send their young adults to you with
open minds and the encouragement to make the most
of their stay with you, and you will without a doubt
receive much gratitude.

Onward and Upward Year Nine”

NEGOTIATION AND OWNERSHIP OF
LEARNING

The sentiments expressed in this letter describe the
Year 9 Centre at Beaconhills College in Melbourne's East.

We recognised that current practices were not meeting
the needs of teachers or students. Our own experiences
were amplified by the 1993 Schools Council Report In the
Middle School for Young Adolescents, which noted
"Curriculum lacked balance, breadth and coherence, was
low in relevance and was often dispiriting for students.
Student experience was fragmented; thus preventing
sustained engagement with curriculum teachers and
peers. There is a need (the Report said) to formulate and
implement more flexible strategies and provide
curriculum and organisational renewal."

Michael Norman challenged us to "Put the Priority on
the Person in Teaching and Learning", through a more
inclusive curriculum, and the growth toward autonomous
responsibility, whilst Hugh Mackay, in the 1996 paper
titled Discontinuity: Coming Ready or Not, emphasised
the need for schools to help students find inner resources,
to build self esteem and develop a sense of community.

In fact, Mackay wrote, if there was only one thing you
could offer your students to equip them for the future, it
should be an understanding of the need for a sense of
mutual obligation and the skills necessary for knowing
how to establish and enrich personal relationships. Other
research by Gardner, Perkins, Beane, Gunstone and White
and Barnes has highlighted the active and constructive
way students build understanding.

The direction gained from these educators complemented our own experiences and we sought to
provide a challenging Centre in which students can learn
about themselves, their communities and about how they
make contributions to their communities. We
recognise that understanding cannot be imposed but
must be constructed by the individual; that self esteem is
heightened when individuals are achieving in areas they
identify as meaningful; and that students bring a wealth
of ideas and experiences to the classroom and that these
prior learnings and characteristics of the 'learner' need to
be recognised and harnessed as motivating and influential
forces in learning.

We are a Year 9 Centre, but the ideas and practices
expressed in this article could apply to a range of age
groups. They are not dependent upon a particular space
or location for their successful implementation. This
article is not about us, but rather about the process of
negotiation and the ways in which we have applied this
process to make active, constructive, person-centred
learning a reality.

Negotiation is a key process in the Centre. We place
much emphasis on recognising that students bring with
them interests, beliefs, values, skills - prior learning
experiences. Negotiation allows us to genuinely include
all students, with all their individual differences, in their
learning. As Boomer (1982, 1992) notes, the rule is simple.
Learners will work harder and learn better and what they
learn will mean more to them if they are discovering their
own ideas, asking their own questions and fighting hard
to answer them for themselves. Further, deeper and with
a view to whole person development, Boomer explains
that negotiation is more than a method or technique; it is
a theory of teaching, learning and curriculum composing.
It emanates from questions about authority, power and
knowledge, from questions about the role of language in
learning, from enquiries into the nature of democratic
schooling, questions about the kinds of students we want
to launch into the world, questions about the relationship
among all members of the school community.

We view negotiation as the building of shared intents
between teacher and student. Teachers have the wisdom

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of the elders, expressed as curriculum profiles, standards frameworks, key competencies or VCE courses. Students have intentions, approaches and developmental needs that they bring to learning. Negotiation is the process whereby we take the opportunity to firstly communicate our intentions and secondly seek to clarify the intentions of a class of students. Then, we look for ways of developing common goals or a shared intent. If we consider our students as the subject and our classrooms (teachers and curriculum) the object, and they both represent a hand, then the school experience for many is a bruising affair and subject and object clash together, with the width of the gap determining the quality of the school experience. Negotiation is a process that can reduce this gap — to the sound of “one hand clapping”.

Negotiation then, is the process of inclusion, of sharing, of communication, of tolerance, of goal setting and of opening up opportunities for ownership of learning to pass from teachers to teachers and students.

What follows are examples of how we negotiate in our Centre. We will refer to negotiating the curriculum, negotiating administrative structures such as class groupings and negotiating student wellbeing and discipline.

NEGOTIATING THE CURRICULUM — APPLICATIONS

We will discuss two of the programs in the Centre in order to describe various levels of negotiation and how negotiation can enrich learning. The first is from four weeks of our Integrated “Discovery” program. During term 1, we investigate the Ideas, Events and People that shape ourselves and our country and in turn our ability to shape things. The unit is structured by a set of non-negotiable objectives and criteria. They must be investigated and ultimately are examined at the end of the semester. In weeks 5 and 6 of the term, the teachers present a series of lectures that encompasses the basic knowledge relevant to the ideas, events and people that shaped Australia. Students are then invited to select from a 'menu' of options, tasks that require them to reflect on, synthesize and express in another way the information presented during the lectures. This menu includes opportunities for further research, for drama, for annotated visual displays and for consideration of any student proposals. That is, students have had to 'do' something with the information. Students then present their completed 'menu' tasks to their class and/or other classes and, in this case, all students undertake a timed essay test at the completion of the unit.

In this example, negotiation is used in the selection and pursuit of a menu item and this allows students to apply their different interests and skills within the structured parameters of telling the Story of Australia’s development. This task is followed in weeks 7 and 8 by an investigation of our preferential voting system and ways of maintaining cohesion in society. Staff identify the issues for the election to be fought on, namely, litter, put downs, ‘passengers’, student parliament and lunch activities. Students, through applying de Bono’s thinking techniques, develop policy and campaigns. Here, the crucial benefit is that you have a “whole school” discussing important issues. That is, students are drawn into the thinking, feeling and consideration of issues that affect them. When the election is held, the ‘elected’ parties are then charged with the responsibility of putting policy into action. This policy can be the one they were elected on, or it can be that the elected party can sift through the numerous other ideas in order to develop action plans which they present to a staff that is enthusiastic and encouraging, but which also provides a test of ‘practicality’ to the emerging policies.

In this fortnight of Discovery, negotiation between students, and then staff and students, has been involved in opening up debate and making decisions about things that will affect the tone and well-being of the whole school community.

The second and larger example of negotiation comes from the Personal Best program. Personal Best unfolds during four 90-minute lessons per week for the 9-10 weeks of Term 3. Simply stated, it is like a larger version of the menu mentioned earlier. However, in Personal Best there are no limits placed in the selection of a topic by the students. Students are encouraged to identify topics that are significant to them.

As Howard Gardiner said “a most important event in a child’s education is the discovery of a domain of strength or interest. Once this has been found, the student can be expected to thrive and if it has not been found, the student may never experience the excitement of learning.”

Once students identify a topic, or as often happens, they work backward from a vision of an end product or service, they are required to complete four tests of accountability. One: thinking and management; two: research and glossary: three: journal of participation; and four: Presentation and Review.

During Personal Best, students are placed in the driver’s seat. They are responsible for some of the key decision-making for a significant amount of time. However, they are supported in this new and challenging role.

The build-up to a Personal Best provides the necessary support for the student. Without careful support and active building of shared intents, many students would be ineffective and overwhelmed by the magnitude of choice. However, with sensible, ongoing support, Personal Best (we have co-managed 600 such projects at the time of writing) can succeed in developing skills in research, time management, life interpersonal high order thinking and creative presentation.

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Indeed, Personal Bests have taken students to the top of Beane's Demonstration Mountain. That is, students have been challenged to move from structured task performance (like: look, listen and answer these questions), up through higher order competencies, complex student-directed performances and into life-role functioning. The top of the mountain is characterised by increasing autonomy, responsibility, reality, decision making and "hard thinking", in community contexts.

The build-up begins with word of mouth. Past students share their experiences with those waiting to embark on a Personal Best. In fact it is now not unusual for Grade 5 and 6 students to be talking about what they will choose when their time comes. Such is the cultural spread of this program. This occurs early in Term 1. By the end of Term 1, there is a general information session between staff, parents and students to outline the general nature of a Personal Best and alert parents and students to the timeline. By mid Term 2, sessions are allocated for students to begin making maps of possible topics. Two weeks later, 15-minute meetings are scheduled between a student, their parent(s) and a staff member. At these meetings, still a month before the end of Term 2, the group discusses (not judges) the proposed topics/ideas as expressed on the maps.

During discussion, questions relating to feasibility, costs, mentors, equipment, resources, budgets, value and relevance, extensions, lateral possibilities, detail, support, roles of parent, school and student are explored. Then in the final fortnight of Term 2, the Thinking, Planning and Research Components of the Personal Best are undertaken, so that students can "get stuck into the doing" during Term 3. During Term 3, students are required to tell the story as the Personal Best unfolds, in a daily journal. Finally, there is a Celebration of Personal Best afternoon session for primary aged students in the local area and Year 8s, and an evening session for parents.

So, in a program that is highly negotiated, we have both raised our goals for student achievement and student autonomy through raising our supports in the form of meetings, gaining parental participation and awareness, attracting mentors from the local community and using action plans, thinking plans, research plans, journals and public presentations as tests of accountability. These tests are presented as Assessment Tasks and reported on at the end of the project.

Through the Personal Best program, Year 9 students have investigated topics in many conventional and unconventional fields. Two memorable topics were:
- a public performance of "Les Miserables";
- the design and development of a rocket that needed to carry a 20 cent coin 800 metres into the air.

The student who directed the production of Les Miserables decided on the topic whilst in Year 8. When her opportunity came, she raised funds, gained the services of a singing coach, trained a 14-piece choir, made costumes, wrote a synopsis of the story, booked a hall, advertised the event, and performed eight songs from the musical.

In contrast, a student who struggled initially to find a topic developed the rocket. He claimed that he was reluctant to put time and effort into something he didn't believe in. Finally he expressed a desire to investigate methods of propulsion for spacecraft. This led to a phone call to RMIT's Department of Aerospace Engineering and the kind support of a Senior Lecturer in that department. The extract from a letter written by the student describes the impact of the meeting.

"Dear Mr ... The meetings on Friday the 25th were extremely helpful. I can't express how much help those meetings were to me. Not only did I get valuable career information and paths I must follow to get to my ultimate achievement, but I also got my Personal Best project. A Senior Lecturer at RMIT gave me a very exciting project that interests me a lot.

Thank you for arranging those meetings on Friday. I look forward to telling and showing you my project.

Yours sincerely ..."

This student then proceeded to perform quite sophisticated mathematical algorithms as well as develop design and systems technology skills. He also had the opportunity to test his models in a wind tunnel and have further support as required.

The very nature of these and other topics have helped establish the culture of Personal Bests. Students have taken much interest in the work and achievements of other students and this interest has led to a positive attitude and approach to Personal Best. There is an expectation of an interesting journey and a hope of a successful outcome.

It is important to note that Personal Best and other negotiated programs run in conjunction with subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and Commerce. These subjects do contain elements of negotiation but in general most students do similar work most of the time. This raises the question of how negotiated curriculum shapes up to National Curriculum Profiles or Curriculum Standards Frameworks.

The answer

Negotiated Curriculums shape up very strongly. As discussed, we use a blend of non-negotiable objectives and criteria, with negotiated components. This provides a solid background for anyone wishing to audit our curriculum against NCP or CSF documents. However, that aside, any Personal Best, with its stages of thinking plans, action plans, research plans, journals of participation, presentation and review, can generate indicators across a range of Key Learning Areas, Strands, Levels and Outcomes. We have done the audit and simply stated, students are doing things and these things can be tracked across KLAS and indicators of their participation and achievement can be identified, documented and reported on.

NEGOTIATION IN ADMINISTRATION....
DECIDING ON CLASS GROUPINGS

During Term 3 of their Year 9 year, students attend an Information Evening on the Centre. As part of the evening, students are required to identify other students they believe they can work well with, students they know, and students they think they cannot work with. This information is collected to form their class groupings for the next year. Parents are required to sign the form on which students make their selections.
We believe this is an important example of negotiation. Critics would say that putting friends together is a recipe for disaster, claiming that they will be distracted during learning. However, we believe that they value the responsibility to make the situation work. They are given the opportunity and can protect it by using peer pressure in positive ways. The students are able to develop autonomous skills and, if they value the opportunity to work with friends, they are more likely to modify any errant behaviour because they may lose something they value.

NEGOTIATING STUDENT WELL-BEING AND DISCIPLINE

Inevitably, during a year, there will be pressures on the interactions between students and between staff and students. These can be moderated successfully by class meetings, where the common good is defined and communicated to the class. However, where a situation provides a significant ongoing threat to the “common classroom good”, another form of negotiation can be used. This is what we call the Community Action Conference. We first heard about this from Ken Rigby and his work on bullying at the University of South Australia. The Conferences require participation by the ‘victim’ and their parents, the ‘aggressor’ and parents, and staff representation. At these Conferences, the history of the threat to the common good is presented, but the focus is on resolution and development of skills to enrich personal relationships. The Conferences seek to educate about ways of behaving and set the course for the future. This action is often in the form of descriptions of behaviour that are to be encouraged and/or consequences for further threats to the common good. Again, the ‘bruising’ gap between the subject (victim) and object (aggressor) is narrowed and the parties develop a shared intent on how to manage the issue or at least a better emotional understanding of the impacts that certain behaviours can have on others.

These Conferences contrast markedly to processes that have predetermined punishments and/or decisions handed down by an authority. The significant advantage of the Conference is that all relevant parties are involved in working on successful conflict resolution. Parents are involved in the development of future plans. Consequences are still used where appropriate and important skills are developed in negotiation through the modelling of negotiation that often occurs at these conferences.

So it can be seen that negotiation has a role to play in determining fundamental principles in the development of education and in developing curriculum, administrative structures and student well being.

A WARNING

We value negotiation. It is a process that makes us a genuine and congruent organisation. Schools that say they value the backgrounds and interests of their students, or who attempt to cater for individual differences, must be able to show how they achieve such worthwhile goals. That is, they must be accountable.

Negotiation provides that accountability, that genuineness, that congruence between mission statements and aims and what actually goes on in the classroom.

But, negotiation is difficult

Students are not used to being heard. They are not used to being put in a position of responsibility: responsibility for creative thinking, topic selection, time management, intrinsic motivation, accountability, autonomy, caring, collaborative skills and strategies.

The provision of free choice of projects alone is not negotiation. We suspect that critics of negotiation attack something that is not truly negotiation.

And this is the warning

Negotiation is, as Boomer says, a theory about teaching, learning and curriculum composing. It emanates from questions about authority, power, ownership of knowledge and the kinds of students we want to launch into the worlds.

Therefore, it needs to be carefully planned. The risks are greater, but the rewards are worth it. We must think carefully about the Instructional, Emotional and Management Support we provide in any negotiated program. We must think carefully about the Rules our students will play; the Audiences that will receive their endeavours and the Purposes for which they will work. They will want to know “what is in it for me?” before they decide on how much of themselves they will invest in their learning. They are the emerging mapmakers. Each will make their own map and, in large part, that map will be shaped by who they are, their levels of optimism and pessimism and the level of control or power they believe they have. Negotiation helps them become aware of how they own the process of learning.

The last word can rest with parents who have passed on these comments about a negotiated curriculum.

• “We can see the Centre as the perfect instrument for 14/15 year olds.”
• “...students have been given a chance to experiment with their own ideas as well as continue with the mainstream ...”
• “...In many ways, both obvious and subtle, you have made a positive difference in the lives of students in your care...”
• “...our son has been challenged to work harder to reach his potential ... has taken on board some new skills which will be a solid foundation for his VCE years ahead...”
• “...our daughter has made great developments...”
Negotiating the Curriculum at the Grange

What is the starting point when you look to negotiate your curriculum? As the January holidays of 2000 came to a close, we were somewhat looking for those ‘traditional’ structures of planned curriculum we were so used to. We (the team teachers) were about to embark on a new method of planning and delivering our curriculum, to 75 eager Year 7 students with a vast array of experiences and expectations of what secondary school was all about.

The main motivator for re-establishing our curriculum ‘rules’ was that we agreed, as a team of teachers in the previous year, to try and match our perception of Primary school life for our students. We figured that this would assist us in addressing many of the transitional issues we had seen rear their ugly head in the past. Our perception proved to be untrue in many cases.

We were presented with three classes of students who had a much broader range of experiences in their early years than we expected. ‘Mixed ability’ was not only going to be a learning issue for us all, but also a methodological one. Because of this, we needed to help students find out what they didn’t know...

It was quite clear that the James Beane method of curriculum development was going to be a new experience for everyone concerned... scary and exciting at the same time. But we pressed on. The first two and a half weeks of term 1 were soaked with asking questions of self and the world and grouping these, re-grouping, trimming and finally voting on topic-areas from all this decision making. The teaching day seemed to drain us more than usual, although it was the sense of satisfaction and collaborative work between staff and students that kept us coming back. Given this, individual subject disciplines gave us some familiar stability and likewise, introduced students to the variety of subject areas taught within our large school.

By the end of the second week, what we were learning was a lot about each other and our students – far more, we believe, than we could have in our individual classroom settings.

Conscious of our own Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and their respective work requirements and outcomes to be addressed, we spent much of our meeting time as a team, looking at the questions posed by the students (the journey) and correlating these with our assessment (the destination). These were in line with the CSF already and any changes we needed to make were not significant. In addition, as soon as we were confronted with the students’ questions, we grabbed the opportunity to use prior activities from our individual KLAs that we knew would fit in well.

Timetable structure proved to be our biggest opponent and so we needed to make some sacrifices with regards to our teaching load for a while. This has to be one of the greatest distinctions between the experiences of primary and secondary educators, when embracing either a negotiated or integrated curriculum. The path travelled in search of creative solutions to logistical problems can result in worthwhile revelations to a variety of other aspects. A visit to Rushworth P-12 College (another school attempting negotiated approaches), not only gave us a clearer insight into how we might address timetable issues, but also enhanced our understanding of the manner in which students may be given greater ownership of the curriculum whilst still having effective parameters in place to guide their learning.

For us, Term 1 was what you might call a shaky start, particularly for a new team of teachers not completely sure of the path of the intended journey, let alone the destination. Into Term 2 and we solved our timetable issues (sacrifice, sacrifice!), by almost completely collapsing the timetable as we knew it. Lessons were devoted to ‘skilling’ students in subject areas needed (our topic area had a career focus: “Life after...
school"), followed by some open "project time" where students got a chance to work their way through a grid of tasks at their own pace. These were derived from the original set of questions they posed.

We were optimistic with regards to the number of activities we thought students would or could complete, and consequently, trimming and tapering our original plans saw an amended version published. This was a success.

This would have had to be the most satisfying time in our collective teaching careers. Before our eyes there were the 'strugglers' committing themselves to intense blocks of time where they would successfully complete a set task. Their satisfaction was evident by their focus and their willingness to ask 'productive' questions of us. Finally, this is what we had waited for. Other students who had always coped with timelines and tasks set, continued to do so, only now when they finished one thing, they moved on – and reaped the rewards at the end of it!

The anticipation of all this, and the losing of 'control' we once had as educators, has taught us lots about each other; it has stretched our professional competence and helped us re-evaluate what we believe to be relevant education. Even though our priorities have changed somewhat, we still see many challenges before us. We look forward to continuing this type of curriculum-planning and building stronger links between the students, the curriculum and us.

Tony Edwards
Romina Pimpini
The Grange P-12 College
PO Box 730
Werribee 3630
to encourage their children to try classes they have not experienced before, so that they have a broad base of subject experience when it comes time to make VCE choices. Parents value this involvement with their children’s subject selection and support teachers with homework and work requirement issues.

The final stage of negotiation occurs when students first enter the class. They negotiate with their teachers around what they would like to learn in the class. The teacher integrates students’ perceptions of the class, student-negotiated work requirements and the areas of the CSF strands which the teacher would like to cover. This negotiation model demands that students are able to make compromises and yet still be able to achieve their aims for a class, as well as complete measurable work requirements for a CSF judgement. The negotiated work requirements, the goals and aims of the class, are then published for students and families to read at home and to use as a guide to measure the child’s progress in the class at parent/student/teacher conferences half way through the semester. These conferences offer an opportunity for all parties to discuss the student’s progress and achievement of the negotiated work requirements. It may emerge at these conferences that the work requirements need to be modified because the student is not being challenged or is struggling with the negotiated work requirements.

The negotiation process may continue after this stage if individual students are unable to meet work requirements because of disabilities, extended absence from school or for other reasons which the teacher is made aware of in the course of the semester. It is this ongoing aspect of negotiation within classes that allows each student at the school to have an individual learning program which allows them to achieve and experience success in the completion of work requirements.

VCE students at Sherbrooke have the opportunity to negotiate various aspects of their classes after teachers have discussed the variety of responses available to them to meet work requirements in classes. In English, continued page 43...
Welcome to our Student Action Team Winter Fire Campaign.

My name is Samantha Dunstan and I'm from Heatherhill Secondary College. I'm one of the members of the program called Student Action Team that is run in association with the Victorian Police Youth Corp.

I was fortunate to work with Darren Matthews from the Noble Park CFA on this Student Action Team Winter Campaign Project.

Firstly, for people that are not familiar with Student Action Teams, I would like to briefly tell you about the program.

SAT (which stands for Student Action Team) provides information and structures that enable young people to participate as active citizens in their community and to promote attitudes of tolerance and belonging among young people.

Where did the idea for SATs come from?

The original idea came from the Department of Justice. They were working on a project called Safer Cities and Shires. Together with the Department of Education, they invited Victorian schools to express interest in participating in Student Action Teams in 1999. Our school put in an application and was accepted to be a part of this project.

By completing this program it is expected that students will gain at a personal level:

- **Communication skills** which include: Being able to actively listen, being able to assertively present their needs and problem solving and negotiating skills.

- **Self management skills** which include: Monitoring and managing self-talk and developing appropriate support networks.

So now that you all know briefly about what Student Action Team does all hand you over to Julia Nguy.

Samantha Dunstan

Our Student Action Team is concentrating on the issues of home safety and house fires. The biggest tragedy is that the majority of house fires are preventable. Statistics show most housefires are started by householders themselves. They are mostly accidents, but accidents are often caused through negligence.

There are many things you can do to prevent and survive a housefire. By taking a few moments to look around the display so that you'll have a much greater chance of avoiding the devastating effects of fire. It starts by knowing the danger areas in your home.

The few of the most common causes of fire are:

- Kitchen stoves which is a major fire hazard. Check the proximity of electric cords, curtains, tea towels
and oven cloths to ensure they are at a safe distance from the stove. Be careful of long, flowing sleeves on dressing gowns contacting gas flames. Never leave the stove unattended.

- Faulty wiring is dangerous: Always use a qualified electrician for all electrical wiring work. Never attempt to do it yourself. Double adaptors and powerboards can overload power points. Install safety switches and correct fuses.

- Electrical appliances - check them or throw them out: Faulty appliances cause fires. Either have them repaired or discard them. Destroy faulty appliances before disposing of them.

- Electric blankets burn: Don't sleep with electric blankets on or leave the house without switching them off. Never leave. Have your blanket checked by an authorised repairer or service centre if you suspect overheating. Always follow manufacturers instructions for care and storage. Ensure each blanket is inspected annually at the beginning of the cooler months.

- Butt-out before bedtime Smoking in bed could be fatal for the entire household - tiny embers can smoulder unnoticed and burst into flame much later. Ensure butts are properly extinguished before placing in rubbish bins.

- Store flammable liquids carefully: Store all flammable liquids such as petrol, kerosene or methylated spirits away from heaters, hot water, service pilot flames and other naked flames. Check the label before use and storage. Use extreme care when decanting.

There are also other causes of fire, you will come across the causes as you walk around and notice the display. After you take a chance to look around we hope that you have learnt from it and become more aware of whether the environment you live in is a risk to your life.

We also hope that our efforts towards this project will inspire others and that the resources that we have established which includes the translation and displays will be utilised in the future.

Last of all we would like to say thank you to the Noble Park and Springvale Fire Brigades especially Darren Matthews for organising all of this display and assistance, and the Springvale Police Station for supporting us all the way. Thank you for all audience and guests for taking your time to come out here and view our display.

Julia Nguyen

SAT, Heatherhill SC, Janine Road, Springvale South 3172
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 19 - September 2000

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 IN THIS ISSUE

PASS THE PASTA

HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR APPLICATION???

Registration Deadlines for the 1st International Student Representative Conference have been extended. The first $100 deposit is due on 30 September with the balance due on 30 October and there is an opportunity for day registration to mid November. It’s the same for Advisers and Student Representatives. The Advisers’ program will run parallel with the Student program. Advisers will attend all the general sessions with the students. After that, Advisers will have different workshop and discussion group leaders and be in different rooms, but the program format will be the same. Send PASTA your expression of interest/application now so that PASTA can send you an Adviser registration packet. There is a separate package for presenters and exhibitors.

NSW Advisers can use the letter of invitation to apply for ‘school funds’ as indicated in a letter from the NSW Department of Education and Training to District Superintendents. Students need to be creative in their fund raising. Students have a constituency in their local community and can approach local councils, businesses, and service clubs with youth programs for financial sponsorship and become their representative on Youth Issues. This is a Representatives Conference. Friends might hold a fund-raising dinner or run a trivia night or students could finance themselves from their own part time job. This may mean that the recipient will have to report back to a council meeting or send some thank-you letters. Remember the registration fee covers all your conference materials, conference shirt, hat, meals, transport and entry fees to all conference related activities. The Nigerian Youth Environmental Network, who share PASTA’s vision and aspirations in Environmental Education, have just reserved eight places! So why not send your application now?

Seventeen representatives forming the Australian Delegation to the 64th National Association of Student Councils’ Conference held at Monte Vista High School in Cupertino, arrived home safely at 6.30 am on Thursday 20 July, after four weeks in the USA and Canada. In addition to the NASC conference, our delegation made the inaugural visit to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and the Canadian National Leadership Camp.

Three Advisers and twelve students from this delegation were from NSW Government Schools. Two students were fully sponsored by the Victorian Department of Education in honour of being selected as the two top senior SRC student leaders in Victoria last year. Congratulations to tour leaders Ken and Sue Page and Ellen Sheerin on another successful tour and our thanks to the New South Wales Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Department of Education for supporting the tour. Plans are already underway for the 2001 tour. Starting at New Jersey, the tour will include the conference at Charlotte, North Carolina, visits to Nevada and South Dakota (and possibly Canada again) for the National Leadership Camps. A week in Houston, Texas as guests of Klein Forest HS Student Council. Application forms are now available for both students and advisers who may be interested in furthering their student leadership skills.

Victorian PASTA is on the move with its second ‘Form One Lane’ seminar day on Thursday 24th August 2000 at LaTrobe University. One participant from the March seminar day said the conference was: ‘Excellent... Very good to talk to and hear what other teachers have to say...’ If you are into student participation, representation and leadership and want to talk to others - drop Victorian PASTA an e-mail at ERSCStudent@hotmail.com or contact the Secretary David Mould, on 03 9499 2755 or mobile 0412 743 951 and find out what is happening.

Jeanne Bow (PASTA President)

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

August-October 2000
In the USA and Canada, each State or Province has a State Student Council Association that includes all schools (both public and independent) which choose to join. They elect their student officers, including a President, who then meet regularly throughout the year in one of a number of regions throughout both countries. Since Australia has no such equivalent structure, at our orientation meeting back in April, we chose Allison Corkery from Manly High School in NSW to fulfil that role for the Australian delegation. The following is the report that Allison gave at the PASTA meeting in Sydney upon her return.

The aim of this report is not only to look at each part of the trip, but also to look at what we got out of it and why it was a benefit to us.

**Travelling from LA to Cupertino**

This time at the very beginning of the trip was probably the most important time as far as the way the group was going to work together over the next month. We spent the first few days getting to know each other better and I know it was an instant feeling of unity. Talking to some of the others we agree that the exact moment we felt like a family was at Universal Studios when we were getting in trouble for being late. It was quite clear then that we were going to have to trouble tolerating each other over the next month.

**NASC Conference**

The NASC conference this year was held in Cupertino, California at Monte Vista High school from the 24th to the 28th July. This proved to be an eye-opening experience for us both due to the immense size of the whole thing (2000 students and advisers from the USA, Puerto Rico and Australia) as well as the completely different atmosphere that American Student Councils have compared to those in Australia. The week consisted of motivational speakers at the general sessions. Speakers included John Alston, Tyler Dumans, Sally Ride and a special greeting by Rosie O'Donnel.

Students also attended student-run workshops as well as presenting two of their own, one on the cultural differences in Australia and one on sport/the ISRC conference. We also viewed a presentation on Gun Violence called “Bang Bang you’re dead” and got the opportunity to discuss the issues this raised in smaller groups. The second last night was spent with Peter Yarrow, from the folk group Peter, Paul and Mary in a candle lighting Ceremony at Stanford University. (Due to fire regulations, however, we were restricted to glow sticks). The delegates also participated in a community service project, stuffing Teddy bears and distributing them amongst hospitals and nursing homes in the area.

This week was important for us because we were able to learn from both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Americans. We were able to reflect not only on ourselves as leaders, but the whole leadership system in Australia. The amount of hype and enthusiasm that they were able to create was something that we can hopefully encourage in our own SRCs, but we can also see how much more effective Australian SRCs are in tackling some of the important issues that the Americans sometimes avoid.

**Travelling from Cupertino to Edmonton**

This was a time of regrouping for the Aussies. Because we'd all been off doing our own thing in a sense during NASC, it was a really important for us to once again come together back into the family-like group we'd developed travelling from LA to Cupertino. It was at this point that we really got to know each other the best. Spending so much time with each other, we were forced to become dependent on each other, but we also had to learn how to be independent from each other. We also had this time to create a sense of independence and maturity on an individual level. We didn't have host families looking after us any more and we had to look after each other and ourselves. We had to be tolerant of things that we might not have been able to do back home, simply because we were spending so much time together (6 hours in an airport at one stage).
Summer Youth Leadership Camp

SYLC 2000 was held near Hinton, in the foothills of the beautiful Canadian Rockies. With only 35 participants, who were in turn broken up into six smaller groups, it was quite a change to the grand scale of NASC. The camp focused on many different elements of leadership, grouped into people skills, program skills and self-skills. It was a time for firstly personal reflection, but also how we can help others in our community through leadership.

Mornings were spent in workshop sessions, including listening, building people up, understanding others, understanding ourselves, lateral thinking, creating a positive attitude, and resolving conflicts and values, while the afternoons were spent canoeing, horse riding, bike riding, kayaking or rock climbing. The Hike from Hell on the second afternoon was a time for us to come together as a group to overcome a challenge, a very difficult one at that. Evenings involved the intergroup Olympics with each group competing for the SYLC Cup. Our last activity each night was a debriefing in our small groups, which allowed us time for reflection and getting to know the others in our group really closely.

Edmonton/Vancouver

Edmonton was a week spent with students on the Canadian delegation for the ISRC conference in December. We were able to learn a lot from each other and make some very close friends. It was an opportunity for us to learn about an entirely different culture from the Americans’ and in some sense the lifestyle of the Canadians was a closer resemblance of our own (although perhaps not the gridiron experience on the last night).

The train ride through the Rockie Mountains was the perfect time (23 hours to be exact) for us to reflect and evaluate the different aspects of the trip. We spent the time laughing about different memories, comparing experiences and talking with each other about the change in the relationships that we had all developed. Once in Vancouver, we also spent most of our time in one group, although we were all hosted in different families and the last couple of days there were spent relaxing and winding down after a month of non-stop action.

The plane ride home was spent discussing our plans for when we got home, anticipating the excitement of the ISRC conference and remembering what an amazing time we’d all had together during the last month.

Allison Corkery
Manly High School

SRC AMERICAN TOUR 2001

If you are contemplating being a part of this experience either as an advisor or as a student, here are the details of what is in store for you. While dates for the tour are yet to be finalised, the intended itinerary is as follows:

Day 1 - Depart Sydney for Philadelphia via Los Angeles. Begin visit to Bordentown Regional High School, New Jersey
Day 2 and 3 - Bordentown Student Council to arrange. Could possibly include a trip into Philadelphia to see the birthplace of America as a nation, limited shopping, etc.
Day 4 - Join the New Jersey State delegation and travel with them to the 65th National Student Council Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina
Day 5 to 9 - Join approximately 1500 students and 500 advisers at Providence High School for the 65th National Conference
Day 10 - Travel from Charlotte to attend a Leadership camp held in either Nevada, South Dakota or possibly Edmonton, Canada
Day 11 to 16 - A much smaller group of approximately 120 students get together to broaden and refine their skills at one of these National camps
Day 17 to 19 - Travel from camps to Houston Texas where we will be hosted by the students of Klein Forest High School
Day 20 to 24 - Arrangements to be organised by Klein Forest HS Student Council members. This may include attending a school leadership camp in New Braums
Day 25 - Depart Houston for Honolulu via Los Angeles
Day 26 and 27 - Visit local sites, including the Pearl Harbour War Memorial while we debrief the tour and plan how these experiences will be passed on once back in Oz
Day 28 - Depart Hawaii for Sydney
Day 30 - Arrive Sydney

For further details contact tour organisers Sue and Ken Page:

Phone: 02 4396 6485
Fax: 02 4393 1157
E-mail: suepage@ozemail.com.au

August-October 2000
The idea struck while travelling on a flight from Reno, Nevada, USA, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Relaxing after an incredible week spent at Lake Tahoe at a National Leadership Camp, Rebecca Heinrich (Carlingford High), Lana White (Greystanes High) and myself (Lauren Rose, Alstonville High) were discussing ways of passing on what we had learnt from our month-long tour of the USA when we returned to Australia. One particular suggestion appealed to me: the idea of a “Spirit Week” where the whole school and community could come together for a fun yet thought-provoking week of activities. Hopefully, this would allow me to pass on some of the skills that I learnt on the 1999 PASTA trip.

So how did Alstonville High’s ‘SPIRIT WEEK 99’ become a reality for our hardworking group of SRC members? A proposal was put forward to the SRC and in turn promptly taken to the Principal. Just as promptly it was knocked back with the following reasons being given for why it was not possible:

- there is no way students could pull off a week of student run activities;
- it will take up too much school time;
- teachers don’t have the time to organise it;
- students won’t participate;
- cost involved is too high;
- finding a free week could be a problem

Hmmm. It was obvious that this was going to be a mission...

Cutting a L-O-N-G story short, a dedicated SRC, a detailed proposal, very effective use of “Agenda 99” (we discovered that anything possibly related to the Agenda was considered OK, rather than activities that weren’t; for example, the Olympics were related back to the aim of ‘to improve the physical fitness of students’), numerous visits to the Principal, welfare, discipline, School Council, and P&C meetings, etc. The old story of persistence, persistence, persistence, together with the simple equation of “get knocked down 6 times, get back up 7”, saw AHS’s Spirit Week 99 set down for Week 7, Term 4.

After the initial shock of being given the go-ahead, the SRC geared up for action. Committees were formed for the six activities that would dominate the week. These were:

1. **Theme Days**
   These were run to enhance the fun environment, and to have a change from the usual school uniform. They included:

   - **Monday**: Twin Day (where everyone comes dressed as a twin or in groups of twins)
   - **Tuesday**: Sock and Tie Day (where everyone wears normal uniform, with the loudest tie and socks they can find)
   - **Friday**: Green and Gold Day (to get a bit of Aussie spirit happening)

2. **Olympics**
   SRC members ran these on the school oval in a double period. They included activities like hula hoop games, tug-of-war, guess the faces, footy throwing cops, coin-drop, etc. These took two periods for each year from Years 7-11, with a teacher supervising each activity.

3. **Workshops**
   These were run for every class from Years 8 to 10. Outlines came from District, Inter-District, State and International SRC conferences that our representatives had been to throughout the year. They were predominantly presented by our Year 10 students, and juniors. The topics included:
   - Year 8 - Challenge Yourself.
   - Setting Clear Goals
   - Comfort Zones
   - Dealing with Disappointment
   - Year 9 - Self Image and Confidence
   - Year 10 - Teamwork and Motivation
   - Teamwork is Easier if You’re Motivated
   - Value of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
   - What Makes a Person Motivated?

4. **Motivational Speaker**
   Came on Friday afternoon to finish the week on a positive note. An improvement for next time will be having a topic that all years could relate to, but our speaker Graham Hyman did a great job of entertaining 600 students on a hot Friday afternoon.

5. **Community Activity**
   On one of the 2 hour strike days that occurred during the week, we gathered all of the people at school together to make Christmas decorations for the elderly people at the retirement village across the road. The Christmas decorations were in the form of placemats, and a couple of SRC members went and presented the mats to them. We think they appreciated the gesture, and it helped us do something in/for the community.

6. **Community Dinner**
   The aim of the dinner was to thank all of the clubs and organisations that help out our school. The SRC continued page 25.
First International Student Representative Conference

Building a Better Today
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

13 - 17 December 2000

The ISRC 2000 Program Offerings Provide a Varied Menu

The varied ISRC 2000 workshops and general session presentations are coming from both overseas and from Australia. They are being offered by both student and adviser delegates as well as individuals and organisations who have been specifically invited to present.

All presentations support, reflect and expand on each respective day's themes and issues:

Conference Theme: "Building a Better Today"
Day 1: "Celebrating Our Cultural Diversity"
Day 2: "Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century"
Day 3: "The Environment - Conserving Our Future"
Day 4: "The Media, Political Process, And You"
Day 5: "SRCs Furnishing Their Home in the Global Village"

REMINDER: Any more applications to make a presentation or be part of the program?

All delegates are encouraged to offer to present a workshop, facilitate a roundtable, be part of a panel or do a performance. All organisations are welcome to develop a display or exhibit. Such submissions are needed no later than the end of October. This date has been extended from 30 September because of this edition of Connect not getting to schools over the Olympics break.

Go To PASTA Website - SRC International Conferences for more information:
http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

Both the draft and the timed preliminary program can be accessed from that page.

POST-OLYMPIC SPECIAL
Confused and delayed by Olympic 2000 fervour?
The good news is that ISRC 2000 Applications Can Still Be Made.
Conference Delegate applications will remain open for as long as we are able to do so.
15 November is the advertised date for close of Day Registrations but - so that you don’t miss out - contact the ISRC 2000 Organisers or PASTA.

Supported by:
The Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher Advisers
The New South Wales Department of Education and Training
The University of Sydney
The University of Newcastle,
Central Coast Campus
National Association of Secondary School Principals, USA
NSW Federation of Parents & Citizens Associations
Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers
Connect Magazine (Australia)

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

August-October 2000
Minsk and Kamloops,
Katmandu and Kalamazoo...
Lagos and Launceston,
Prince Edward Island too...

From Europe and from Canada
Asia and the US of A
Latin America, Africa, Oceania,
To OZ flying skyward for more than a day
Swaziland, Ghana, Nigeria,
England, Germany, the Dutch...
India, Mauritius, Korea
Louisiana, Jalisco, Ontario and such

Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cameroons and Sierra Leone
All together now in a single cause...
Making presence felt by all
From Trinidad/Tobago to New Cornwall.

Broken Hill, Bugewoi, Barrenjoey and Skippy too
Dawson Creek, Canyon Creek, Beaverlodge to name a few
Bangkok, Amsterdam, Accra and Lusaka...
West Fargo, Saskatoon, Tualatin and New Orleans too

Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan...
From Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to a Newfoundland:
Sydney, Newcastle, Liverpool and Lilliput
CASAA, NASC, PASTA, P&C and DET 'Connect'

From BC to DC, Alaska, Connecticut, Florida and Illinois,
Indiana, Iowa and Nebraska, California what a ploy.
New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Michigan ain't all...
Pennsylvania, Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island and Texas stand tall.

Thailand, Philippines, Japan and New Zealand - Kiwi land,
PNG (MCG?)... don't bury your head in the sand
From Interstate to New South Wales
From Overseas to be our guests.

From Qld to Tas, SA, WA and the rest...
Vic, ACT, NT, NSW all the best
From Windsor, Wellington, Washington to Wentworth
Famous places, famous people all will be

As Bankstown, Freetown and Bordentown
to Central Sydney 'Downtown'
for Australia ISRC 2000.
Now YOU too all come down.
WHY YOU SHOULD BE THERE!

- ISRC 2000 is an original first.
- ISRC 2000 is not going to happen again in Australia.
- ISRC 2000 is a gold medal opportunity to make your global contribution to humanity.
- ISRC 2000 is a great way to spend the last week of the school year.
- ISRC 2000 is an even more illustrious way to start your holiday.

Terms and Jargon Explained

The ISRC Conference Logo, designed by Anita Samson, depicts students in the host city - Sydney, Australia - working together with their neighbours from the Australian states, New Zealand, South East Asia and the nations of Oceania and "Building a Better Today".

'Melting Pots' are the main groups where delegates will meet to discuss housekeeping issues, resolve questions, discuss issues arising from workshops attended and, most importantly, contribute recommendations to the final day of the Conference.

The term 'Melting Pots': a) describes the structure of the groups as they attempt to capture the cultural and ideological milieu of the delegates; and b) describes the processes to be undertaken as delegates contribute their individual ideas, concepts, opinions and suggestions to create the recommendations for the final day.

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

'Home Room Groups' are delegations from each individual country, region, state or district.

'Workshops' are formally prepared presentations with the major responsibility for ideas and materials up to the presenters.

'Roundtables' are more informal than workshops. Presenters are mainly facilitators who initiate discussion about a particular topic and then open up the discussion to everyone present.

'Panels' involve several presenters each making a contribution to the whole. If you wish to be part of a panel with others you don't know, but are interested in a similar topic, we will put you into one.

'Performances' can be dramatic, musical or dance contributions.
DISPLAYS & EXHIBITS

Students/advisers/associations/schools/youth groups/businesses are encouraged to contribute to this conference by mounting an exhibit or display. Your exhibit may focus on any or all of the themes or issues as appropriate to your organisation or projects. They may be rostered or static displays.

Exhibits should be for a minimum of two days - 13 & 14 December at University of Sydney. Day 3, focusing on the Environment, is at the Ourimbah campus on the Central Coast of NSW. Exhibits/Displays may remain at the University of Sydney for Saturday/Sunday 16/17 December.

In addition to the major supporting educational organisations, ISRC 2000 encourages such contributions from:

- other educational organisations such as the Australian Principals’ Association, Australian Education Union, Teachers’ Federations and other relevant professional associations;
- Catholic and Independent schools in Australia which wish to highlight student representation, leadership and participation in their schools;
- businesses relevant to education, the various issues of the Conference and to leadership (eg publishers, motivational media, speakers bureaus etc);
- non-profit organisations relevant to the issues and processes of this Conference such as Kids Help Line, Volunteer Australia, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the Peer Support Foundation etc;
- Indigenous, multicultural and youth groups which highlight the theme of cultural diversity and the global perspective of this Conference;
- Cultures, countries and regions of the world.

ORGANISATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR ALL EXHIBITORS/SCHOOLS etc

- Contact PASTA (via email: ckingston@interact.net.au or suepage@ozemail.com.au) re your interest and requirements;
- If you wish your business or organisation to be included in the final printed program, confirm your exhibit or display no later than 30 October;
- Assure all necessary plans are in place no later than 30 November;
- Arrange for delivery of your exhibit materials beforehand or set them up yourselves at the University of Sydney Education Buildings on Monday or Tuesday 11/12 December 2000.

FANCY YOURSELF AN 'IG'?

International Guides (IGs) are delegates to the Conference who take on some key additional roles:

1. to meet with and assist a delegation of overseas or Australian student leaders and advisers (a 'Home Room' group) for the duration of the conference.
2. to work in pairs facilitating key daily group discussion in mixed international groups known as Melting Pots.

All IGs will be required to attend at least one training and planning meeting prior to the conference, to familiarise themselves with the program, as well as the responsibilities and requirements of the position. It will also give IGs a chance to meet other IGs. A two day training/‘dress rehearsal’ workshop will take place at the University of Sydney during the two Conference Preliminary Days - Monday and Tuesday, 11-12 December.

IGs need to have had some previous experience in the field of SRC and youth leadership at a variety of representative levels. IGs need to be enthusiastic, willing to learn and eager to pass on their knowledge and skills to other student leaders.

The position of International Guide is open to anyone in Year 10 (2000) or older. All those interested must apply in writing on the official application form.

If you wish to be considered for this important role, please contact 'Banana Power' trainers Lisa Bolland and Rebecca Heinrich for an application form:

Rebecca Heinrich <beebanana@hotmail.com>
Lisa Bolland <lisathelegend@hotmail.com>
or PASTA
c/- Banana Power
4 Billyard Place
Carlingford NSW Australia 2118

For further information, offers of assistance, papers, workshop proposals and delegate application forms, enquiries are to be directed to:

1st International Student Representative Conference
1 Gladstone Street, Bathurst
NSW Australia 2795
Phone: (02) 6332 2603 Fax: (02) 6332 2302
E-mail: ckingston@interact.net.au
http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/
funded the dinner and invited two representatives from each of the following to attend: Alstonville Rotary, Lions, Zonta, Quota and Apex Clubs, as well as the School Council, the P&C, and the executive teachers and Principals of the local primary schools. One member from each group gathered to give a short talk on what their group is doing in our community. This proved very beneficial for future contacts. Musical items were played throughout the night. This allowed some of our musical students to showcase their talent. 

As Year 12 students were doing their exams at the time, the SRC team that organised Spirit Week was a young one. It required plenty of hard work and commitment to enable us to meet certain deadlines. However, it really did help to pull the group together and make us work as a team.

Hopefully the students got something out of it and it will be run again in the future.

Spirit Week - Workshop Proposals

Workshops will be run as indicated on the accompanying timetable. The teacher for the class will stay and oversee the workshops, help with discipline etc. The years 8, 9 and 10 workshops will run in the normal classroom. The class will be split into two, with one half staying in the room and the other half working just outside, or in a specified vacant room.

The Year 7 workshops will last only ten minutes, with classes rotating from their Christmas activities in the hall. These workshops could be run outside if necessary. Again, the classes will be divided into two.

The Year 11 workshop is a guest speaker on mental health (with Mr Lind's permission). This could possibly be run as half of year 11 for a period, then the other half, or the whole of year 11 for one or two periods.

The topics of the workshops are:

Year 7: Friendship
Year 8: Challenge Yourself
Year 9: Self Image & Confidence
Year 10: Teamwork & Motivation
Year 11: Mental Health

Outline

Year 7 - Friendship

Key Ideas - Friendship means persistence. Friendship is not always easy.

Be there for your friends especially when they need help.

1. Write 'friendship is... on butcher's paper. Ask for responses and discuss. Read a statement and ask students to move to area of their opinion (agree, disagree or impartial/not sure). Statements could include:
   - It's easy to maintain good friendships
   - Good friends never judge each other
   - Friends should never tell each other what to do
   - You need to see good friends at least once a week
   - It's better to have a lot of acquaintances than a few really good friends

Ask one person from each of the groups (agree/disagree/not sure) to voice their opinion on each statement.

Year 8 - Challenge Yourself

Key Ideas: Setting clear goals; Comfort zones; Dealing with disappointment

1. Clear goals

   Write unclear goals on board or butcher's paper. Ask group to make them clear eg Unclear Goals/Revised Goals (examples)

   I want to be a good student
   I want to get a B in Biology

   I want to be fit
   I want to be able to do 50 sit-ups

   I want to have more friends
   I want to make two new friends this school year

   I want to be more involved in school activities
   I want to be a part in the school play

   I want to have more money
   I want to earn $200 by the holidays

   Explain that unclear goals can lead to disappointment

2. Comfort zones

   Explain to students that we frequently limit ourselves by remaining within our 'comfort zone' (will lead to discussion of what a comfort zone is).

   Ask: "What do you think is meant by comfort zone?" (Staying where it's easy, not trying anything new). Discuss student responses.

   Point out that in order to grow and learn we need to stretch our comfort zone. Think of some ways to do this. Write them on butcher's paper/board.

   Write situations and ask how someone would either stay in their comfort zone or stretch their comfort zone. Situations could include:

   A) You're at a restaurant with your friend and his/her family. You are given a menu. How do you decide what to order?

   B) You're at your cousin's 21st birthday party. There are lots of people there - some you know and some you don't. How do you decide to whom to speak?

   C) It's the first day of term and there's a new student in your class. She/he's an exchange student from Germany (or any other overseas country) who speaks very little English. How do you get to know them?

   Conclude by discussing responses and focusing on what opportunities would be missed by staying within a comfort zone.

3. Dealing with Disappointment

   Read through handout on page 15 of resource guide 'Be Excellent' (possibly have it blown up and stuck up on the wall or at the centre of the group).
Put forward some examples of disappointment and ask how they would deal with each one after considering the points of the handout.

Ask them to divide into groups of 3 or 4 and come up with a disappointment they or someone they know have faced and how they dealt with it. Could they have dealt with it differently?

**Year 10 - Teamwork and Motivation**

Key Ideas: Teamwork is easier if you’re motivated; Value of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; What makes a motivated person?

1. Students do a team activity eg can only cross a patch of carnivorous clover through the aid of a certain number of ice-cream lids. The ice-cream lid must be in contact with some part of a person at all times, or else it is taken away. If a person falls into the clover, they are gobbled up and then can’t help their team any more. (If students have done this activity at peer support, etc. then another one will take its place).

   Emphasise the value of teamwork.

   Emphasise that teamwork is easier/more efficient if individuals are motivated.

2. **POSE QUESTION** – “What is motivation?” Brainstorm as a group on board/butchers paper.

3. Keeping in mind previous responses, students in groups of 2 or 3 write down their 5 most powerful motivators (eg. money, knowing you’ve done the job well, fear, etc.). Join groups and agree on the 5 most powerful motivators. Report back to whole group and record on board/butchers paper.

4. **POSE QUESTION** – “What is intrinsic and extrinsic motivation?” Using responses from last activity, discuss the value of intrinsic (from within) and extrinsic (from without) motivators. **POSE QUESTION** – “Which are more powerful for you and why?”

5. Debrief: Levels of motivation can vary from time to time and from task to task. Motivation is rarely constant. Motivation alone is no guarantee of success. There are three stages of motivation:
   - Getting started
   - Sticking to it
   - Finishing well

   There is always the notion of “I would have been... I should have been... I might have been.” Motivation can turn this around to “I did.”

6. **ACTIVITY**:

   Students form into groups of 4 or 5 and draw and label (buttercup paper, coloured pens) a picture of a motivated person. Debrief: Summarise the characteristics that indicate motivation is strong, eg prepared, keen, takes on tasks. Highly motivated people are valued. We need to understand what motivates others and ways to help increase the motivation of others. We need to understand the ways intrinsic and extrinsic motivators work.

Lauren Rose  
Alstonville High School, NSW

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**News from the Apple Isle**

This year in the Tasmanian SRC, we have set ourselves several goals that we hope to achieve by the year 2001. The Tasmanian SRC consists of students from public and private schools in the Hobart region. We provide a forum for discussion of matters of concern to the students of Tasmania.

This year our goals for the SRC are:

- **To set up the North and North West regional Tasmanian SRCs**
- **To obtain membership (even if only in a non-voting role) on several committees dealing with youth and student issues**
- **To create links to other youth forums such as the Tasmanian Youth Consultative Committee**

As written in our constitution, we have committed ourselves to representing the student body as a wider community involving both the northern and southern regions. The North of Tasmania is, at the moment, without a student representative body.

One of the greatest achievements of this body is the combined representation of both private and government schools in a collegial atmosphere. We recognise the major commitment of the teacher/coordinator of our state SRC as essential for the achievements so far.

We have had representation on the Youth Envoy judging panels and Tasmania Together Community Leaders Group. Conferences attended have been Youth Parliament, UNYA, NASPAC, TYCC, the Victorian State SRC conference and State Parents and Friends.

*Trish Wilcox, Rosny College, Tas*
ADVICE for ADVISERS

Are you looking for something to help raise the self-esteem of your students? The following was presented at the National Leadership Camp at Lake Tahoe in July, 1998 and is produced as follows from the May issue of Leadership

Self-Esteem Mirrors
By Lori Kiblinger

Objectives
- To provide an opportunity for self reflection
- To enable class members to get to know each other better

Materials
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Glue and/or tape
- Old magazines

Time Required
This assignment can be done as a class assignment or, to facilitate use of photographs and other personal items, can be assigned as homework. You will need one class period after covers are created for presentations and processing.

Procedure
Each student leader will create a CD cover as follows:
1. Select a name for the artist or group that represents the “real you.”
2. Select a title and design for the CD cover that represents how others see you.
3. Select six song titles as follows:
   a. One for the type of friend you are
   b. One for the types of friends you have
   c. One that tells where you feel most comfortable
   d. One that tells what you would like to accomplish
   e. One that tells what you do well
   f. One that tells what makes you feel good.
   These song titles could be actual songs or they can be invented titles.
4. Choose a producer - your most influential family member
5. Choose an agent - your most influential non-family member.
   Each student leader will present the CD cover to the class, explaining the choices he or she made.

Note: I give very little specific direction about what the size of the creation should be, and while many will cut the construction paper to the exact size of a CD cover, the results will vary from student to student. Some of my students actually placed their designs inside plastic CD covers, while others’ designs were the size of a piece of construction paper. Some students include photographs of their agents and producers, too. The variety is good, and details like that have very little to do with the concept of the project. I would encourage you, though, to set it up however works best for you.

Processing
Conduct a class discussion using the following questions:
* Why does a leader need to contemplate these things about him or herself?
* Why do we need to share these things with each other?
* What did your own CD cover teach you about yourself?
* What did you discover about someone else in the group?

Lori Kiblinger (lkibby@teraworld.net) advises student council at Fredonia (Kansas) HS. She serves on staff at NASSP’s National Leadership Camps and is a frequent presenter at the NASAA workshops.

PASTA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

All memberships to PASTA are due as of July 1. Please use the Membership form - next page - to renew your membership or to take out a new membership. Remember that PASTA membership includes your subscription to Connect.

The PASTA Newsletter is edited by Ken Page and distributed bi-monthly as a supplement to Connect magazine.
What does membership of PASTA offer you?

- Regular newsletters and journals
- Reduced registration fees at annual conferences
- Practical workshop ideas for use in schools
- Positive support for DRG teachers
- Access to DRG networks
- Support networks for DRG advisers
- Training and development within the DRG area
- Opportunities to be involved in discussions on the future of DRG at all levels
- Special resources for students and teachers
- Attendance at open meetings of PASTA which
- Includes GST and subscription to Connect magazine

North Head NSW 2263
2-12 Dyson Drive
PASTA Inc.

Member Support: To:
Name: (02) 9964 3322 Fax: (02) 9964 2422
Mention and Motion Meme, 19th Floor, NSW
are held at the joint Council Buildings Council
 Attendance at open meetings of PASTA which
the future of DRG at all levels

2000-2001
Memberships NOW DUE

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Given Names

Title
September 1st, at Melbourne Town Hall, saw 75 secondary students from SRCs across Victoria come together to discuss and plan our very own Statewide Student Representative Council for Victoria. The entire day was hard work, discussing very difficult concepts of structure, election procedure, fundraising and keeping communication going to all students.

A state SRC already exists in NSW, Tasmania and ACT, so it’s about time Victoria caught up! We can now say we are well on our way to achieving this. The Forum has provided students with the answers to the questions that continually block the path. Who will run it? With what money? How do we hold meetings over huge areas? What are we trying to achieve?

The day began with an in depth discussion of exactly what a State SRC could achieve. The benefits that networking can bring are numerous, as we discovered. SRCs don’t need to re-invent the wheel every time they start on a new idea. They can find another SRC who has attempted the same activity and get some advice from them.

If an SRC is having a problem, a whole network of SRCs can find solutions faster, and maybe even assist directly.

SRCs can collect new ideas to assist them if they are having trouble, or just pick up new ideas for events they can run.

SRCs together can make a greater representative force to organisations, Government or other relevant groups. Students can then have a democratic vehicle for taking action on issues important to them.

Participants took a very clear vote at the end of the Forum to confirm that they definitely wanted a Victorian State SRC; this received unanimous approval. Following that, the students took a second vote that now provides us with a good picture of what a State SRC will look like.

**Purpose:**

A Victorian State SRC will have two functions. The first is to share resources, run conferences, help strengthen each SRC and share new ideas. The second function is that the Victorian State SRC will be a representative network, communicating with all students to collect their opinions on issues and to then represent those views to the relevant groups.

**Structure:**

It was decided that Victoria be divided up into regions, at the moment working on the regions drawn up by the Department of Education. Each region would then establish a Regional SRC, some of which have already been underway for some time, with the Eastern Region Student Council existing for two years now, and the Northern Region SRC starting up. Other similar networks are also to be found around the state and these can be incorporated too.

The Victorian State SRC would then be run by at least two representatives from each of the Regional SRCs.

**Funding:**

It was agreed that the Victorian State SRC should remain as financially independent as possible. However, the students decided that additional funds should be sought from anywhere we can get it, provided the strings attached aren’t too restrictive.

**Communication:**

- An e-mail discussion list. We are happy to inform everyone that this exists! The address is: Victatesrc@egroups.com
- Regular meetings, both at state and regional level;
- Newsletter.

**Staff:**

The models presented included positions for staff members to assist the State SRC. These were:

- Chief of Staff – Adviser and adult representative of the organisation;
- General Secretary – Assistant with keeping records, communication and finances;
- Research Assistant – To research relevant information/events/resources for the Victorian State SRC to use.

These positions were accepted, but with a general understanding that there was no need to implement these immediately and a final decision could be made down the track.

It was firmly decided that at least for the present year, these staff positions would be purely voluntary.

There is more to come when we finish analysing the outcomes and all the comments from the Forum. We will be compiling a report containing everything from the day, and we would welcome anyone interested in getting a copy of the report to contact us at: Victatesrc@hotmail.com or contact Erica McCalman on mobile: 0401 294 497.

What really came from this conference was that most of the students present were very keen to get straight into it! We have students willing to commit time to ensuring that the project is successful! This, up until now, had been the biggest obstacle of all. Students have made it clear that a Victorian State SRC is something they want, and they are willing to work to achieve it.

There is naturally more work to do, and the students have made it clear that another event or meeting needs to be held soon to keep moving on this. So that’s what we’ll do. This is going to work; now that we have the energy and the direction provided by the Forum participants, we know it is going to work.

Erica McCalman
Forum MC
Victorian State SRC Forum
Region President
Eastern Region Student Council

August-October 2000
Form One Lane # 2

There was absolutely no way we could resist running this event again after the roaring success of #1 in March this year.

"Form One Lane" is a Professional Development Seminar for SRC Teacher Advisers. After all, their job is just as important as any subject, so they deserve the opportunities for Professional Development too. "Form One Lane" is run by the Victorian branch of the Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers (PASTA). "Form One Lane" #2 was held on August 24th at LaTrobe University.

The idea behind "Form One Lane" is that teachers and students can 'merge into the one lane of thinking' about the purpose and direction of SRCs. It can be difficult to find the time to think about what precisely the purpose of an SRC is. Where is it heading? And this is even more difficult for teachers new to the job. "What support is out there for me?" Often there is none within the school because there is no-one else with the experience to pass on.

At "Form One Lane" seminars, the approach is not to lecture or routinely hand out information as though that will solve all problems. We rely instead on each participant being willing to share their experiences and ideas. All our outcomes are based on the discussions that the participants have.

Preliminary report: Some of the outcomes

Defining the SRC and the Teacher’s Role:
The SRC should be: (these were raised and discussed by the participants)

- An organised voice for students
- Get students involved in decision making
- Learn decision making
- Developing leadership skills
- Role models
- Finding ways to achieve student desires

The SRC in the future will be:

- Totally student operated
- Extremely popular
- A confident SRC with respect from teachers and students, and the support of the school administration
- In their own SRC office
- Self-sustaining and not just collapsing when the year ends

Teacher’s Role:

- To give students a go
- Teach methods of democracy
- A coach
- A “crash” preventer
- Resource provider
- Giving progressive goals to the SRC members
- The initiator
- Liaison between staff and students

These were discussed in depth during the morning session. Not everyone agreed unequivocally with all these points, but there were clear directions to be drawn from all of them.

"Making the SRC Fun"

Why shouldn’t the SRC be fun? Fun for its members, fun for the student body and fun for the whole school? The image of the SRC would be raised very quickly if even their surveys could be done in a fun way. More people would turn up to meetings if they were more fun.

Some elements of fun:

- Breaking the rules
- Energy
- Variation
- Music
- Something Crazy
- Excitement/Enthusiasm
- Food
- Surprises/Interruptions

These were some of the elements of fun brainstormed in a fast-paced session. How do we then inject these elements into our activities?

- Out of Uniform days are a clear example of being allowed to break the rules.
- Keep the Energy going in any activity by keeping people moving, keeping them talking; the presenter needs to be full of energy too.
- Random interruptions are an excellent way to break up a meeting or stop something from becoming dull. It stirs people a bit and then you can bring them back on track somewhat refreshed.
- Have food and music at meetings.
- Change the format of meetings regularly so they aren’t too predictable, or vary the style of activities that the SRC runs: one day a dance, another a conference, another a free dress day, another a carnival day and then maybe end the term with a sports challenge.

The aim at the end of the day is not to institute a set of practices that need to be followed, but rather to provide each SRC Teacher and Student with a bag full of ideas that they can try. Participants leave with a firm idea that their role as the Teacher Adviser is not to do the work of the SRC, but to coach and to guide the students to achieve.

At the first PD Seminar, held in March, the teachers requested that future seminars include more Secondary Students so teachers could hear from them first hand. As a result, "Form One Lane" opened to Teachers and Students from SRCs, and it became clear that this was definitely a good move. Both students and teachers clearly got a lot out of "Form One Lane".

We are still in the process of compiling the report. There will be more in the next edition of Connect, including photos! If you wish to receive a copy of the report, please contact us:

PASTA – Victoria
03 9499 2755
pastavictoria@hotmailcom

We are thrilled to report that Form One Lane #2 has been an absolute success. We are so encouraged by the participants’ enthusiasm and eagerness that Form One Lane #3 is inevitable. We are certain that these seminars will become a regular feature of the year.

All the participants from Form One Lane #2 have gone back to their schools saying how inspired they now are to attempt lots of new ideas, to help make the SRC into a genuine force in the school and with the knowledge that there is some support out there for them.

David Mould
Seminar Manager
Form One Lane
Secretary, PASTA - Victoria
The NSW State SRC Conference was held at Vision Valley Conference Centre, Arcadia from Tuesday 1 August to Friday 4 August, 2000. It was planned and conducted by twenty student leaders who formed the State SRC Conference Working Party. Each of them was elected at the end of 1999 by their peers at district SRC forums. This group met over eight days, including five weekend days from March to July. The working party was supported by three SRC teacher advisers and the SEO 2, Student Participation and Leadership.

The key goals of the conference were to increase the motivation and understanding of student participants so that they could be involved in effective follow up action to increase student participation in districts and schools.

This year’s theme involved the encouragement of participation in school life by all students, with SRCs operating as change agents.

One hundred and twenty student leaders participated, all elected by their peers from district SRC forums across the state. There were ten Aboriginal student leaders taking part, all of whom are involved with the Department’s drug education ‘Healing Time’ Program in their schools. Conference participants were supported by sixteen SRC teacher advisers and two Aboriginal education assistants.

Setting the scene and exploring different aspects of Participate, It's Great!

The conference was opened by Dr Meredith Burgmann, President of the NSW Legislative Council. Keynote speakers were Dr Ken Boston, Director-General of Education and Training and Laffit Sotiriou, member of the Premier’s Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Laffit Sotiriou gained much of his leadership skills through participation in school, district and state SRC forums. Dr Boston’s keynote address follows this report.

Throughout the conference students participated in a wide range of stimulus activities including, reflective drama, an audiovisual production, the Paralympics ‘Basketball Roadshow’, a hypothetical, a boys’ dance program, an award winning school ‘pop’ band and a participatory wall mural. Ten workshops dealt with encouraging students to overcome barriers to participation:

- Vocational and Careers Education, Pathways to HSC Success
- Skool’s Kool! - Students Who Don’t Enjoy School
- Kids Like Us - Students with a Disability
- Aboriginal Student Participation
- A Positive Me and You! - Student Health and Well-Being
- Bugged by Drugs? - Overcoming Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Dismissing Discrimination - Focusing on Sex and Homosexual Anti-discrimination Measures
- What do Martin Bryant and Kevin Costner have in Common? - Bullying and Harassment at School
- Making Family and Peer Relationships Work
- Helping Grieving Peers Participate through Support and Understanding.

Young people: part of the solution

There were six workshops that dealt with student leadership and empowerment:

- Taking Active Roles on School Committees
- Linking SRCs with School and Community Projects
- Getting Into It, Not Out of It! - Activities for Helping SRCs to Help Other Students
- Improving Student Leadership Skills by Living a Balanced Lifestyle, Managing Stress and Time
- Improving School Spirit, Culture and Environment
- Strategies for SRCs to Promote Equity, Fairness and Participation in School Life

The conference was closed by Ms Carmel Tebbutt, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth and Ms Natalie Galea, an Olympic athlete in judo at Atlanta in 1996.

Developments in Student Leadership and Participation

Key features of the conference included:

1. The 2000 NSW SRC Report, from the state’s peak student leadership body. The twenty two members (including two Aboriginal student leaders) have:
   - created strong links with government and non-government bodies such as the Commission for Children and Young People. The concept of a youth card is being investigated by the Commission.
   - sought agreement for the provision of additional funding to rural and remote districts to assist SRC networks.
   - encouraged SRCs to focus participation of secondary students on student welfare issues particularly anti-discrimination, driver safety, young mothers in education, drug education, school
   - minimisation and resilience.
   - developed the concept of rural/urban 'sister districts' to improve communication.
   - commenced a long term project to promote the image of public education.

2. The Student Forum. At the conference, participants debate recommendations forwarded from school and district SRCs. These help set directions for the NSW SRC in the ensuing year. The outcomes of the forum were to:
   - continue the focus of SRCs on student welfare issues
   - raise the status of student leadership and SRC teacher advisers in schools
   - create links between primary and secondary school SRCs
   - encourage SRCs to move beyond fundraising as the principal activity
   - further develop electronic communication between SRCs across the state.

Student responses from the conference

'As soon as I get back I'll start using the ideas back in the school and at district...I would recommend the conference to anyone'. (City based student)
Dr Ken Boston, Director-General of Education and Training, NSW

Conference Keynote Address

I wish to begin by acknowledging the Darug people, traditional owners of this land. Thank you to the working party for the invitation to address your conference. It is a great pleasure for me to be with you this morning. I would like to congratulate the working party on the quality of the conference program. You have worked very hard and I am sure that the outcomes of the conference activities will repay all your efforts.

I also add my welcome to all delegates and staff. I am confident that the tremendous effort that many of you have made to be here will be rewarded over the coming days.

This conference is a very important event. It is important simply because the clear representation of student views in our schools is becoming a very important matter. For schools to be effective learning communities, it is vital that all students, including those who have become disenchanted with schooling, have a constructive voice.

Your SRC, like your school, operates in an environment of constant change. That can be unnerving and it can be exciting and it reflects what is happening in society. In less than a generation, the roles of institutions like church and family have changed dramatically. How we communicate, what we do for entertainment, how we acquire information have all changed. We are increasingly part of a global society. What happens in other countries affects Australia now like never before.

This is a new world. And the extent to which Australia thrives in this new world will depend in large part on how effectively it engages its citizens.

Within this changing environment, the way we operate our schools is also being challenged. There are some in the education community who would claim that schools should not change - that they should be some kind of oasis where traditional values, traditional relationships and traditional skills and knowledge reign supreme. While there might be something to be said for that sentiment, it is my view that schools cannot be quarantined from the rest of society.

We do our young people, you, a great disservice and perhaps irreparable damage if schools do not move to reflect the new realities of the new society.

For these reasons, it is critical that the SRC establishes its place and its role in the modern school.

I am going to focus this morning on three major questions which I hope might give you some food for thought both over the coming days and later when you return to your schools and districts. The questions are:

• Why are SRCs important?
• What makes them work?
• What are the major challenges they face?

Firstly, why are SRCs important?

First and foremost, SRCs give students a voice.

You may have heard about the unfortunate events at a high school in the Hunter Valley a couple of months ago. In its alarmingly simplistic way, the media reported the events as the students going on strike because they wanted the rights to smoke and kiss and swear. The students claimed that they were not being listened to when it came to the administration of the school discipline code. They were wrong. The school had consulted with all its students and with its community in developing its discipline code. The code was administered in a scrupulously fair way. But the students, whether out of ignorance or sheer bloody-mindedness, ignored the democratic processes available to them. Regrettably, the resulting student strike and media coverage did the school great harm. It was a traumatic event for the staff, students and parents. It was divisive and it was unfair.

As you might know from experience, such events can cast a very depressing shadow on the whole school. But it also illustrates very powerfully how important are an understanding of and respect for democratic processes, and how damaging it can be to ignore them.

These things are critical in the education of all young people. They are also fundamental to a successful society.
As you well know, these goals can be achieved through the effective operation of a democratic SRC. The SRC can give students a legitimate voice.

In New South Wales, we have no school subject called ‘Civics’ as many other education systems have. Nevertheless, everyone in New South Wales would acknowledge that what is taught and learned in those civics courses is extremely important.

This conference is an opportunity to explore how we can make this learning happen. To put it simply, the aims of ‘Civics’ programs where they do exist is to create a ‘civil society’. ‘Civil society’ is a phrase that is gaining currency and popularity around the world, though it is by no means new. A civil society is one that I think we would all aspire to. A civil society is one based on fundamental principles of liberty, equality and fairness. A society where everyone’s rights and responsibilities are understood and respected. A society in which all citizens understand the social, political and cultural institutions and have opportunities to participate in them.

We are fortunate to live in a society that, although not perfect, is founded on those principles. A society in which we as citizens have clear control over the direction we take.

This is due in no small measure to what is learned in our schools. And one of the clearest manifestation of educating young people about a civil society is the Student Representative Council. Through the processes of nomination, election and representation, students - you and your constituents - acquire a fundamental set of knowledge and skills about the processes of our democracy, representing others, solving problems, resolving conflicts and making decisions.

The SRC is a clear example of empowering young people by teaching them about a civil society.

To the benefit of schools that do this well, it is a way of recognising and capitalising on the creativity and energy of young people. It is a way of demonstrating that students want to have the capacity to contribute in the here and now, not just in the future. It is a way of reminding adults in the school and in the community that students value being treated fairly and with respect and that students are, in fact, the primary clients of schools. It is a way in which schools can contribute to the Government’s clear desire to promote and listen to the views of young people. Most importantly, it is a very practical way of initiating young people into a decision-making environment.

Having described their importance, let me move to my second question:

What makes SRCs work?

Your SRC handbook tells you that an effective SRC is educational, democratic, responsible, sharing, caring, fun and rewarding. Another list of characteristics of successful SRCs can be found in literature from the United Kingdom. Effective councils have:

- democratic election of class representatives;
- good communication between representatives and classes;
- regular and frequent meetings;
- an annually elected executive;
- council members respecting and listening to each other;
- defined boundaries for the council;
- a supportive and effective link teacher;
- supportive staff and Principal;
- a bank account and a budget (however small);
- training for the class representatives;
- easy access to the Principal or Deputy;
- a manageable council size.

What these lists tell us is that SRCs work when there is something like this set of principles:

Firstly, they truly understand their constituents and represent the views of all students.

This is not to say that all students will be happy with all the decisions that the SRC makes. But they will respect the decision of the majority if the views of the minority have been considered. In the words of Larry Flynn: “Majority rule only works if you’re also considering individual rights. Because you can’t have five wolves and one sheep voting on what to have for supper.”

Secondly, SRCs work when they have and follow agreed processes.

The best SRCs are elected through processes that everyone knows about, are understood and are honoured. They meet regularly and follow meeting procedures that have been negotiated thoroughly and that work. They are supported by a dedicated member of staff.

Thirdly, good SRCs are respected by the school community and have a role in making real decisions on real issues.

As in all organisations, there are some areas of responsibility that are delegated to particular people and groups. SRCs should be clear about what their real areas of responsibility are and work energetically in those areas. But as well, SRCs should feel empowered to express representative student views on a wide range of issues and to give advice to those who have the responsibility, such as the Principal. Again, the outcome will not always be what students want. But students should respect the outcome if their opinions have been genuinely considered.

Fourthly, SRCs work when there are clear channels of communication.

These channels must exist:

- between the council members and the students they represent;
- among the council members themselves; and
- between the council and the school executive.

And the communication must be honest, not tainted by fear or intimidation of any sort.

My last question follows on from these things:

What are the major challenges for Student Representative Councils?

Challenge Number 1: Generating interest

I recently had the opportunity to have a discussion with Professor Alan Smith from the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. Alan is heavily involved in educating young people in schools about civics and citizenship. The need for civics education in Northern Ireland is in

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your face. Every time students in Belfast walk out their front doors or turn on their television sets or catch the bus to their segregated school, they are confronted in the most graphic ways with civic issues: the history and ideologies of their neighbours, social power and control, upheaval and distress caused by social violence. The question for civic educators in Northern Ireland is how to make a difference to their society and how to make it quickly.

In Australia, we have different challenges. We don’t have parts of our neighbourhoods being blown up by terrorists and our lives being in constant, unpredictable danger. We don’t have the grave imperative of finding a solution to these enormous problems of ideology and political history.

In your school, you are more likely to encounter apathy. Or a view that understanding how our society works can wait. Or is irrelevant. Or is too hard.

The challenge for all of us, SRCs included, is to overcome this apathy. To make our future citizens understand that they should be active for social improvement, not passively awaiting direction or, worse, subverting the social good through truanting or bullying or interfering with the rights of others or vandalising property.

In other words, they should participate!

**Challenge Number 2: Achieving credibility**

Gaining the confidence of the various groups in your school - students and teachers - is a major challenge. But if you want to make a difference, you must have credibility! My advice to you is to gain acceptance by demonstrating that you can make things happen.

Adult perceptions remain that students are in school to be told what to do. A belief that if adults don’t tell kids what to do, school will be in chaos. You will no doubt encounter subtle examples of this belief in the operation of your SRC. When you do, it might be worth remembering the following anecdote:

I recently heard of a skateboard park that was built by a local council in Sydney. The council had done all the right things and had involved the local skaters in the design of the ramps and jumps. When it was finished, the council wanted to erect a sign that listed what skaters were allowed to do and not to do - mostly not to do. The local kids convinced the council that this was unnecessary and that such a sign wouldn’t last long anyway. In effect, they claimed that the kids could ‘self-govern’. And that’s what happened. The local skaters developed a set of rules and protocols about how the park was to be used and a set of sanctions if anyone failed to comply. The rules were never written down, but everyone knew them and everyone abides by them. There has never been any trouble. The reason? These rules were devised by the kids, for the kids. They own them. They work. The kids demonstrated that they could do it, and everyone benefited.

I think there is much to be learned from this example. To be credible, your SRC has to demonstrate that it can do it.

Think outside the square when devising real programs that could be ‘owned’ by your SRC. There are schools where the SRC runs peer tutoring schemes, anti-racism seminars, after-school interest activities and student newspapers. Ask if your SRC can be represented at P&C meetings so that you can listen to the views of parents as well as demonstrate your desire to be included in the discussion of important issues.

I’m sure you could come up with a range of real programs and ideas that would benefit the students in your school as well as enhance the credibility of your SRC.

**Challenge Number 3: Inclusiveness**

Stories of students’ lives changing through their involvement in their SRC are common. There is untapped talent in many of our students, and appearances can often be deceiving. But in each of these stories, the student gets the benefit of representing on the council itself.

The greater challenge is to encourage everyone in the student body to participate in the society of the school. This involves overcoming the barriers of apathy and the need for ‘cool’ that we know exist. It means engaging students beyond the successful and the popular.

I have no magic wand. The results will come from following the principles I outlined earlier - from understanding your constituents and giving them a voice in the issues that are important to them.

This means that you must take your responsibilities to understand and represent the voice of all students seriously. Spend time in your SRC meetings discussing what representing other people’s opinions really means and evaluating how well you think you do it. Tackle projects specifically designed to benefit students who are disenfranchised or marginalised or who have particular needs.

Schools frequently concentrate on their discipline code without adequately rewarding cooperative behaviour and productive contributions to school life. Develop proposals to encourage and reward students.

How you respond to these challenges will determine the success of your SRC. Sometimes the best solution is the simplest. If you can demonstrate that you can do it, the rewards will follow.

The message of this conference is that you will be truly successful; when you have engaged all students at your school, not just the ones who are easy to engage.

The next few days offer you a golden opportunity to discuss with like-minded friends how these ideals can be accomplished, and how your best ideas can be conveyed to district forums and eventually to students across the state.

It is a very important task. Have fun doing it - I wish you well.

**Ken Boston**
Director-General of Education and Training, NSW
Vision Valley
Arcadia
Tuesday, 1 August 2000
What’s happening in Queensland state education?

An interview with Professor Allan Luke

Recently, as the Head of the Graduate School of Education at The University of Queensland, Allan Luke squeezed in an interview with Lisa Hunter to talk about his work with education in Queensland. In 1999 he took up a temporary position as Deputy Director General in Education Queensland. His task was to respond to concerns raised by parents, students, teachers and school administrators regarding the appropriateness of current curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in Queensland state schools.

Allan, how would you describe what is happening in Queensland state school education?

In Queensland, working with the government, the unions, the universities we’ve sat down and come to an understanding that business as usual will not suffice. Our Education 2010 Strategy tells us that we need new approaches that are based on new economies, new cultures, new communities, new forms of at-riskness, new knowledges, new ways of teaching.

So what do we do? In Queensland we’re trying to build an intellectual coalition with some new ideas. The overarching framework is called Education 2010 and it talks about new teacher professionalism, new focus on equity, on the new equity clientele and some of the new issues that have arisen. We’ve also argued very strongly for an outcomes orientation but not a testing outcomes orientation.

The three education tiers of the package are about aligning what Bernstein called the message system of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and doing them together. So part of the problem is that in the three and four year governmental cycles in these states, you fix curriculum one year then you get onto pedagogy in five years, then you overlay a testing system that doesn’t match your curriculum reform and so forth. So you get all these anomalies, a car with three wheels out of alignment that’s still driving in spite of the fact that they’re pulling in different directions. Some of the classic anomalies are as follows. You could put in, in your area of Human Movement Studies, a brilliant constructivist, socially critical curriculum but, if the high-stakes assessment and accountability system is driven by rote testing, you get a discrepancy between what your curriculum says it values and what you’re actually assessing. You can have all these wonderful goals about problem solving, learning to deal with new technologies, critical literacy, critical thinking, planning your life pathways - you can even have some ‘new age’ values around entrepreneurship - but if your test isn’t testing for those things and your system isn’t being driven towards those things you’ve created a contradiction. You’ve sent out contradictory messages. Part of the problem is that nobody has come up with a standardised number five pencil and paper test for testing critical literacy, entrepreneurship, problem solving, issues of identity (nor might we want them to). At the same time you can have wonderful curriculum, you can have flash assessment systems, but if you don’t have a systematic school-based focus on pedagogy, the heart of teachers work, it doesn’t much matter. You actually won’t get better outcomes from kids.

For us the New Basics was an attempt to try and conceptualise, in an ideal world, what we want in curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, working with teachers by 2005. Now everybody says we’re dreamers, it’s a form of idealism, it’s progressivism recycled. There have been a lot of criticisms, some quite sound and others quite tacky, that have already emerged but we were tired of tinkering with what was given in a national agenda and the state agenda that, simply, was quite retro. Especially, when we found that many educational jurisdictions were making the brave move towards more futures oriented work: Singapore, Sweden, Ontario, Chattanooga. We actually wanted to reconceptualise, in a post-industrial, semiotic based economy with new forms of poverty and new forms of at-riskness, what would we be wanting to teach kids.

So where are students situated or where do you see them being situated in all of this?

There are two or three things that we’ve come up with on this. First of all we realise that to engage in any reforms without bringing teachers on board, which was the old drive-it-from-the-centre mentality, we’d fail. So we looked very closely at the school reform and the school change literature and realised that it had to be an outside-in reform process in which teachers were intimately involved in planning these new curricula (see, especially, the work of Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves in Canada, Theodore Sizer and Ted Newmann in the US). Where the kids come in is this: the approach to curriculum that we’re
proposing is not a strong centrally driven syllabus approach but is actually to identify a series of what we call ‘Rich Tasks’ or key educational outcomes described in more holistic educational terms as opposed to atomised basic skills. The notion of the Rich Task – which arises in Sizer’s great book ‘Horace’s School’ – has been around for a while. We could find it in John Dewey and the notion of the ‘enterprise’, circa 1912; it’s from Vygotsky’s notion of a zone of proximal development, Friere’s problem-based education. The notion of getting people to work towards meaningful, significant, community focused, outward looking educational projects is an old one. What’s different from the old notions of getting kids to work in integrated and progressive curriculum is our strong emphasis on assessment – on teacher moderated assessment and state standards around rich tasks that will actually deal with the ‘dumbing down’ problem that can occur in many classrooms. We need to raise the intellectual bar if we’re going to turn around students’ performance, especially the most at-risk.

We also know from our University of Queensland data – now based on 800 classroom observations – that giving kids ‘warm fuzzies’ and creating socially supportive and culturally appropriate environments is necessary but not sufficient to begin closing the equity and achievement gaps. In other words, having socially supportive environments, having kids working on integrated projects, having kids doing stuff that they feel is motivating and relevant is but a first step in turning around and improving the outcomes for the most at-risk people, for the underclass kids, for the working class kids, for the aboriginal kids and so forth.

At the end of the day, what influence the school does have can only be asserted if we’re meeting two conditions that we’ve identified in the University of Queensland/Education Queensland study and that Newman and colleagues also found in the Wisconsin work: We have to deliver for these kids higher levels of intellectual engagement, cognitive demands, critical thinking, etc. To our colleagues, we’d say that “let them eat basic skills” or “let them eat social support” is not good enough. We have to deliver high stakes knowledges, complex discourses, higher order thinking, critical metalanguages and intellectual engagement. The other thing that we have to deliver to turn around their performance is some degree of connectiveness to the world, connectedness to these new economies and cultures. It can be done; it is being done. We’ve got plenty of data and examples.

In terms of curriculum, we’re looking at four new categories: multiliteracies; social futures and lifeways; environments and technologies; and active citizenship. We’re getting consistent complaints from teachers and parents that school is trying to do too much and not doing it well enough. I have no problem with the KLAs and nothing against any of the existing syllabus documents, but part of the problem is the sheer weight of trying to keep up with change and the exponential multiplication of knowledge by adding more. So, in fact, with eight KLAs, dozens of outcomes per KLA the year 6 teacher is going to grudge. In sum, we’re operating according to outdated curriculum theory and principles: trying to add on and more, and to dissect the universe into smaller and smaller bits. We need to shift the debate from trying to keep up with Bill Gates universe to trying to reconceptualise what kinds of skills, knowledges, flexibilities will be needed. Curriculum isn’t the ‘best that has been thought and said’ – it should be a sustainable, flexible tool kit.

Will this still situate kids as something that education is done to or do you see them having a greater role?

There’s a much stronger emphasis in the Rich Tasks on active learning, or constructivist type projects, or kids engaging in problem-solving. Check out the work of Barbara Rogoff and Luis Moll in the US. Both are Vygotskians with a focus on community-centred tasks and activities. Another prototype could be found at Buranda Primary School in Brisbane, where Lynne Hinlon and staff have used Phil Cam’s Philosophy for Children program to build a whole task-based, outward looking approach to learning. And, guess what, all their standardised performance indicators went up, while they were focusing on the higher order outcomes. If there is...
a hidden curriculum to the New Basics, it's about getting kids to become scientific and social science researchers of their worlds and their communities. So there's a very strong focus on active engagement, active learning, on constructivism, on kids being able to see what the connectedness to the world of the particular activities that they're undertaking is.

But we'd like to avoid a fall back into the tenets of 70s progressivism that we just need to negotiate with kids what they need to learn. There's a very hard assumption in Vygotsky that teachers should be experts, that they should have very strong mentor-mentee, expert-apprentice relationships with kids. I think there's been a falling off into notions of teaching as facilitation that fails to recognise that, particularly in knowledge-based economies, teachers have a responsibility, an epistemic responsibility to superior and critical knowledge. We as adults and participants in these cultures do know things that kids don't know and that they need to know. We as a system have to actually stand up and designate some knowledges, some skills, some competencies as non-negotiable, as things that everybody will learn. We want more constructivism, more active learning, more engagement, more problem-based learning etc but we actually need to profess what state schooling stands for and what it is that all these kids will need in ten years time. These no doubt will be interesting hybrid blends of old and new, of low tech and high tech, of canonical and critical knowledges and texts.

So you would maintain that teacher-student relationship that is currently there?

I think that's up for grabs. The average age of teacher in this state is about forty five or forty six. That means that between 2005 and 2010 we're going to see a huge roll out, the beginnings of almost a 50% to 70% turnover of baby boomers as they leave the system. What this means is that the student teachers are the Gen Y people who bring new technological competencies, wired and on-line knowledges, CNN/BBC world views, knowledges of popular cultures, cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary university trainings and life experiences into the field. I'm sick and tired of hearing that these people are deficient. Simply put, they can't do some things we could do when we were trained in the 1970s, but there are things they know far more about than we do. By definition, the generational and spatialised knowledge is closer to the kids we're teaching. So we need some inter-generational succession planning and mentorships - and enough of this staff room deficit talk about the young teachers. Wouldn't it be ironic if our generation of teachers headed for the turnstiles muttering how deficient the kids are, how deficient the governments are, and how deficient the young teachers are. Not a pretty picture.

There's a very strong focus on active engagement, active learning, on constructivism, on kids being able to see what the connectedness to the world of the particular activities that they're undertaking is.

With the new knowledge comes probably the potential for changed social relations, changes of power relations, change of pedagogical relations around new technologies. I think that we could talk as much as we want about democratic, emancipatory education etc, but the fundamental social relations between teacher and student probably have not been changed for a hundred years. That really the new technologies have the potential to fundamentally alter the power-knowledge relationships. The internet seems to be almost defying a centralised control as it was established by the RAM Corporation, as it acts rhizomatically as opposed to centrally. In fact teachers are having to act as navigators and much more as co-investigators dealing with new forms of knowledge and dealing with kids that have access to knowledge that they can't centrally control. So, in fact, this centralised didactic relationship between teacher and student is actually going to come to head. The new 'zones of proximal development', the teacher/student, mentor/mentee relationships opened up by the new technologies are as important as anything they can teach us qua content. Simply, for the first time since the second world war, many of these kids have better access to the cultural capital and power of the new technologies than their teachers.

To sum up: will this work? The Education Queensland work is in a three year trial in 38 schools. Already some are vaulting ahead, some struggling, others waiting. Whether and how we get there - with new curriculum categories, a school-wide focus on pedagogy, and strong teacher-based assessment systems - is up in the air. But the great thing about all this is that we're having a state and national debate around issues that matter. What really irritates me is the way that we keep getting dragged back into retro debates. Some are important - the proper funding of state schools - but some are actually very clever leg-hold traps to distract us from what really matters. Take, for example, the debate over the content of the Studies of Society and Environment syllabus. Well, there are those who would drag us back into interminable debates over 'which version of history should count'. Well, we've been there and done that. What's badly needed is that we actually pull back and have a debate about what kinds of knowledges, skills and competencies are needed in these new economies, cultures and communities - and that we put our time, money and efforts around recapturing teaching, curriculum making, and, yes, even educational planning policy making as intellectual work. Pedagogy and students' life pathways are our job.

interview by Lisa Hunter
The SRC: A Student’s View

I'm Emma vander Veldt. At the moment I'm a year 11 student at St Helena Secondary College and the President for the Northern Region SRC in Melbourne. The SRC at my school has been a big part of my life whilst I have been at high school. I first joined in year 8, when our structure consisted of two representatives per class - adding up to roughly 160 members. This changed the following year, as it became clear that the SRC was not playing the role it should be. We cut it down to one representative, per year level, per sub school, leaving the new SRC at about 30 members. It worked well. At the start of this year, our SRC was divided into mini-schools: years 7 and 8, years 9 and 10, years 11 and 12. Gradually we have been working to ensure that each year level and student is being represented adequately - we're developing better and better all the time. Because of the mini-schools, we are able to call meetings more frequently, and meetings are easier to run: less people means more work gets done! But it brings us back to common questions people have: what is the SRC? Why do we need an SRC?

Firstly: what is the SRC? Personally, as a student, I see the Student Representative Council as something that brings together the ideas of students, teachers and parents. It’s not only to represent the student body, but also to bring forward those ideas of the people that help us run the schools. The school community works as a team to make a school - it’s everyone’s right to have a say in how activities run. The SRC can also act as a resource or place people can go to if they need opinions on new ideas - to get advice on how to go about it, whether assistance from the students is required etc. The most accurate way to answer the first question is to say that the SRC acts as a bridge of communication between students and teachers.

Secondly: why do we need an SRC? Essentially to provide the students of today with a voice. It’s as simple as that. As I see it, students are the ones who attend the schools - they should have a say in how things are run and operate. Teachers also have valid points, but students sometimes don’t see this, often seeing them as authority figures that couldn’t know what students want. The SRC works with the idea that teachers are there to help - and without it, it’s a lot harder to create ideas into reality. With a Student Council, it provides everyone internal and external to the school community with a network of communication.

On Tuesday evening, my Principal held a Principal's dinner at the Secondary College and met with everyone, especially the newly elected year 7s. One question that came up was: where do we see the SRC in three years? Everyone agreed that for an SRC to continue, we need to educate more kids at a younger year level so they will continue enjoying speaking publicly on behalf of students. We felt that, as senior representatives, it was part of our responsibility to publicise who we are - and that we do make things happen.

Last year, our SRC was a key participant in Banyul Council’s DART (standing for Discussion, Action Representation and Thought) project (see Connect 12: February 2000 for more details). We held three successful Youth Forums during term 3 - the results were put in report that is now being worked on by Peter Satori. The purpose of the forum was to trial an inclusive democrats model to give young people a voice. Whilst most model are very selective or with narrow representation, the DART model gives all students an opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and ideas, and to have their recorded.

Numerous fundraising activities were also held such as out of uniform days and involvement with Diabetes Australia, the Kosovo Appeal, and the Red Cross East Timor Appeal and State School relief.

Over the past few years, the SRC has improved the school by placing video cameras to reduce vandalism - this has been very successful. We've updated our old uniform, built a new shelter for wet weather, provided local bands at lunchtimes, purchased sporting equipment for borrowing by students, improved facilities such as microwave and kettle for our year 12 common room, and opened classrooms for when it is raining and freezing cold outside!

From my point of view, teachers and students alike should work together to be making the school more advanced and more enjoyable. SRC representatives seeing teachers as people who can lend a big hand in developing plans. I know that without teachers' support, finding a venue and planning an agenda would be a lot more difficult. SRCs should be a meeting point for student and teachers: even if it means talking about something until both groups are blue in the face.

From a student's point of view, with all this in mind, however, I believe it's important that teachers have a role of 'supportive team' - while students have the freedom to express their views. The way I see it, it's obvious young people are our future - we should all be encouraging students to get up and say: "Yes! We want this to happen! And this is when and how!" I think it's important to let young people shine - we should all be helping the young people of today to express themselves.

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Student Participation and Democracy

The extremely big picture

Student democracy and participation in schools is a very complex subject, which ties in with other areas such as youth affairs, politics and sociology. Being an elected official in an SRC or another similar body can be a unique experience and a mind-blowing responsibility. Being an adult involved in the field can also be confusing. The ways in which you perceive your job and the issues surrounding it can be disorienting, as it is like looking at a landscape that constantly changes. Everyone has something to say and their own philosophies in how student democracy should be.

Whether you are an SRC President, an SRC member, a teacher, a Principal, a parent, or a student participation guru, it is up to you how you see what your obligations are. Many people who become very involved in this area hit a point where they ask themselves a few questions like: “Why am I doing this?” “What wrong am I trying to right here?” and “What is making it difficult to succeed?”

I'm a seventeen-year-old, year twelve student and a Regional SRC President. Thanks to the inquisitive nature of the human mind, those questions have been keeping me awake at night for at least six months now. After much soul searching, examining, thinking and observing, I think I have an answer. We are up against something bigger than just an antiquated school system. Somewhere along the line society got involved too.

Pop Quiz

Attitudes towards students and young people being involved in their society or institution are varied. They are usually encouraged to contribute via passive or non-controversial means. For example: at the recent Youth Expo in Melbourne, the Rotary Club put up a display of artwork from year 9 students. The theme was multiculturalism and all the pieces of art were in the A+ to B range. There were bands also paying on centre stage, mostly consisting of aspiring year 10 musicians. To add further culture to the mix, there was also writers and poets reading out their works. Out of all of these displays, none were making a statement or a comment on the status quo that would be mused over by the audience, nor would have made any impact if they did.

These artistic pursuits are safe for students and young people to be involved in because they are perceived as mediums for expression, not change. If a sculpture by a student makes a statement about the pressures and competitiveness of the VCE, people can look at it, say to themselves: “Gee maybe the VCE is getting out of hand” then go home and forget about it.

On the other hand, if a student looks at the VCE and decides to run a seminar for teachers and students across Victoria to devise a new system together and then suggest it in a report to the Board of Studies, the reaction can vary from praising the student to being downright offended by them. Is this because students are at a confusing point in their lives, when they are perceived as young adults, where they are allowed to have the responsibility of a learner’s permit or a mobile phone or taking out the garbage but are still too young to be responsible for solving their own problems?

Pop Quiz: outside university groups (which usually preside exclusively over their own campuses), can you name one organization that deals with youth suicide, drugs, or another big issue, and that is run exclusively by a group of people under 21 and that has stood the test of time. Difficult isn’t it? The message is simple: students are still not allowed to be proactive without adult supervision.

Toilets, Schools and Videotape

It is my belief that this attitude starts in schools and is then projected out into the community. The first thing to do is to look at the environment that your typical student lives in everyday and where they learn their place in the world. Democratic awareness and action for students is becoming commonplace in schools but a lot of it has its constraints and there are some bigger issues that even the most progressive schools will not hear of.

Sadly, another occurrence that is commonplace, is of students being treated at an almost sub-human level. Some schools claim that a school is a model of the workplace, preparing the people in it for the real world. In some cases the things that students are subjected to would be deemed unacceptable in the real world and the workplace. Everyone has encountered a report at sometime or other that a school is putting security cameras in toilets to stop students from smoking or partaking of the consumption of some ‘exotic mind altering substance’. I hear that the school captain at the latest school to attempt this is still fighting against it, and good luck to him.

Students may have some influence, but in general at schools students are still the underdogs. This is the image that is projected and accepted whether we know it or not.

From my experience student participation wise, schools come in three categories: Progressive, Middle Ground and Conservative. These names only indicate schools' attitudes and the criteria for classification is interchangeable, so please do not take offence. Progressive schools embrace the diversity of their students, encourage democratic student leadership, encourage their school captains and keep an open mind about student spawned initiatives. Struggles for student empowerment are few and far between and most disputes are negotiable between the students and
the administration without outside assistance. Middle Ground schools are at the middle of the spectrum: their SRC works reasonably well, the school council are willing to consider some suggestions from students before knocking them back, and the staff are willing to give students a voice they are will listen to. Eight times out of ten, Middle Ground schools are on their way to becoming progressive, but they are just a bit apprehensive about it. Conservative schools are by far the ones where students are at the bottom of the system and the ones where most of the vigorously proactive students come from. These are the schools that usually have a set hierarchy of power, which often keeps student involvement to a minimum. If a student does have a position of power, it is usually on appointment by the Principal and a panel of high-ranking teachers. An SRC may be in place but it is rarely effective beyond anything besides fundraising. If a student breaks ranks and begins to draw attention to and tries to fix problems in the school system, they are labelled a troublemaker and are dealt with accordingly. It is in these schools that the struggle for student participation can become so intense it gets ugly.

Save us from ourselves!

In the community the media also plays its part. There are two stereotypes in popular culture that portray students: the Straight “A” Student and the Troubled Teen. The Straight “A” Student is shown to the public as clean-shaven, minimal make up, tidily uniformed, smiling, dutifully carrying their books to school. They have an equally saccharine boyfriend or girlfriend, are on top of their studies and rarely have a complaint against their school. Their biggest fight with their parents is that they aren’t allowed to go out on Friday night and if they are involved in any community projects, it will be something to do with the environment or the arts. The Straight “A” Student gives parents at least a small indicator of what their children would be if they were perfect; it helps perpetuate the myth that a student who finds no problem with the institution they are in, is a well-balanced person. This stereotype is dying out thankfully because people are getting a toothache whenever one pops up on an ad or television show.

On the other side of the coin, the Troubled Teen is the one wearing the slightly grungy clothes, who gets average to poor marks in school, has a problem with authority, is ‘apathetic’ and ‘self destructive’. This gives the image that teenagers and students still need their parents and other adults of authority to solve all of their problems and save them from themselves. It also portrays no credibility for them as a group.

From these two, a third stereotype has emerged: the Average Kid. Average Kid is a mixture of the other two, a pretty good student with a few romance problems, fashionable clothes and the ability to get into trouble from time to time. This has the advantages of portraying at least 80% of the teenage population in a realistic enough tone and still has the ‘no credibility’ factor built in. Any grievances with the system that this character has, are seen as trivial.

These three images of students have got two things in common: they are all teenagers and no one in media land takes them seriously as individuals who can make a difference. In the real world, students are all bits of these three examples and on rare occasion just one, so why should anyone take them seriously? How dare they demand to be taken seriously?

Politicians, Crackpots and Bra Burners

How does this connect to us? Allow me to get more specific. In the greater society in which students are expected to contribute, the students who fit the right picture are rewarded. The ones who organise for a vacant space of land to be reforested or work with children or are successful at sport or organise a community activity or create an exceptional piece of art, get an award. Of course they deserve it: they rightfully earned it with hard work. They are the ones who schools put in their brochures and publicity photos. They adhere to the Straight “A” Student and Average Kid image and they are what people want to see and they are what parents want their children to become, which is what gets students sent to particular schools at year seven.

Never underestimate a parents’ role or the extent that they are manipulated. Notice how on a lot of school open days/nights the school is initially selling to the parents, not the prospective studer who will be there in day out for six years. Funny about that.

SRC members and student democrats have never been able to shake off the stigma of rebellious leaders. If a school is microcosm of society, we are the sect which represents politicians in the lower house, bra burning feminists and UFO researchers who sit in their backyard at night in their gumboots staring at the skies. We even have the same sense of community that those groups have.

Now you begin to see why most parents don’t brag about their child being treasurer of their SRC. Even now in schools, some are putting a new spin on the: “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” philosophy by encouraging students to go for School Captain or SRC, not because of the important role in the school community they should be fulfilling but because it will look good in their Curriculum Vitae. Not surprisingly the word “tokenism” has been flung around accusingly over the place in the past few years.

Everyone Deserves a Freddo

Depending on who you are on a subconscious or a very conscious level, we see these influences or students and come to the conclusion that they are wrong and must be stopped. After all, if students don’t have their own democracy, how can it be properly understood and maintained later on? We still have a long way ahead of us.

Do not despair, we have come far and we are doing well. The dedication that comes from people in this line of work is phenomenal. The SRC executives who spend months drafting a watertight constitution for their SRC, the President who stays up all the night to get a conference report out in the morning, the School Captain who lies in bed rehearsing what she will say the next day at a School council meeting, the SRC teacher who tries to negotiate with the Parent’s Association and the SRC member who pulls a thirteen hour day to help prepare for a school open night all deserve a round of applause and a strawberry freddo.

I now only have one question to answer for you from my introduction: “Why are we doing this?” The only reason: because we love it.

Erica McCallan
Websites Run By Young People

http://www.youthwhocare.com
Global Youth Network is a non-profit organisation run by young people who want to help improve the world. It is maintained by a group of young volunteers from all around the planet.

http://www.cyberyouth.org
This site is made by the young and old members of a 'civil society' financially supported by the Ministry of Culture in South Korea. This cyber space is called by many names: "A Powerhouse of Youth Culture", "The Basement for the Youth Movement", "Rainbow Communication Station" or "Head Office for Solving 'Adult' Problems".

http://www.yomag.net
Yomag.net is the on-line magazine for young European consumers. They are offering information and entertainment and would also like to have discussions with you. The articles are written exclusively by young people.

http://www.cenews.org
Children's Express (CE) is an international news service reported and edited by young people aged 8 to 18 years, for adult print, broadcast and on-line media. A non-profit journalism and leadership organisation, CE's mission is to give young people a significant voice in the world.


Link Up

What is Link Up?

Link Up is an on-line international event which is designed to showcase the creativity of young people around the world in their use of interactive media. It is an opportunity for young people to pitch their ideas and have an on-going dialogue with television and online producers and the media industry around the world.

Link Up will culminate in the 3rd World Summit on Media for Children, in Greece in March 2001 where all participants from around the world will meet in a virtual forum to discuss their work and experiences.

Who are the participants?
The participants are people between the ages of 10 and 17 who will be chosen from around the world to represent their country on-line.

Over the twelve months prior to the Summit they will be asked to paint a picture of their lives and of the media issues that concern them using the internet as a medium to express themselves. During this time they will also prepare their own agenda items to be discussed in a Virtual Forum during the summit itself.

Their work and ideas will be displayed on-line on sites hosted by a range of countries around the world.

How to join

You can become involved with Link Up in one of three ways:
1. By becoming a representative of your country and producing a series of on-line postcards about your life and interests. You can create a number of 1-2 minute videos, web pages or graphical postcard diaries. These postcards do not need to be professionally produced - they should express through the on-line medium (using one or more of the following: video, animation, interactive pieces, graphics, audio, photography and text) who you are, where you live and what is important to you. Have a look at one of the Australian participants' introductory postcards.
2. By sending your creative work to exhibit on-line in your space.
3. By joining in the regular chat sessions or contributing your thoughts to the guestbook in 'have your say'. For more details, check out the diary.

Contact
E-mail: linkup@your.abc.net.au
URI: http://www.abc.net.au/children/linkup
TAKING CHILDREN SERIOUSLY

A New Publication with both International and Australian contributors

A publication of the proceedings of a National workshop held in July 1999, on the topic Taking Children Seriously and edited by Jan Mason and Marie Wilkinson is now available for purchase.

The edited proceedings include an opening address by the Human Rights Commissioner, Chris Sidoti. It also includes keynote contributions by Leena Alanen from Finland and Berry Mayall and Allison James from England - all recognised as leaders in research in the area described as ‘new childhood studies’ or ‘the new sociology of childhood’. This paradigm provided the theoretical basis for many of the contributed papers.

There were two main ways in which the contributions of those attending the workshop addressed the goal of ‘taking children seriously’. The first was by placing children centrally in theory and research. The second was by considering the importance of and strategies for, increasing children’s participation in issues that concern their welfare. Those attending and presenting were researchers, policy makers, practitioners and students. They represented various organisational contexts - health, education and welfare.

In addition to the opening address and keynote presentations, the edited publication includes contributed papers and panel presentations. It is organised under two themes. These themes are ‘Constructing childhood and social policy on children’ and ‘Taking children seriously: Issues and examples’.

Purchase of the publication

The cost of Taking Children Seriously is $22 including GST.

To purchase a copy of this publication please send your cheque with your name and address to the address below, or phone CYPRU on 02 9772 6586 and leave a message with your contact details.

Speak Out

National Youth Platform

A National Youth Platform is built by gathering a minimum of 1000 diverse surveys from young people in a particular country. Each Platform will be presented to its country’s leader, ideally by a National Youth ACTION Council. This may include a National Youth Convention to have young people interact with presidential candidates.

National Youth Platforms are merged into a Global Youth Platform which will combine the top issues of young people worldwide and be presented to world leaders, heads of state and the United Nations.

The Youth in Action Campaign is based on three key questions to be presented to today’s young people:

- What are your top three concerns for your country and your community?
- What are your solutions to address your concerns?
- What is your message to political candidates and leaders?

Prior to the National Youth Conventions of 2000, the youthlink.org website will provide the communication necessary for thousands of young people from across nations to contribute their ideas for improving their nation and the world. Youth delegates will summarise these top issues and solutions to create National Youth Platforms.

Youth Summits

The process to form a National Youth Platform begins with Youth Action Summits to be held and organised by a group of young people who show interest. Youth/Student initiatives submitted to GYAN (Global Youth ACTION Network) or Youth in Action will be invited to submit proposals for up to $1000 and given to projects that fulfill community needs and create positive impact.

Any interested young people/students should contact their community’s/school’s youth leaders, community services, parents and carers to discuss and create a local Summit Action Team. This group must select an appropriate date and location to hold this session; recruit and support the negotiations of (3 youth delegate maximum recommended) to attend, and facilitate the event. Once a site and date are secured, please contact GYAN headquarters.

Contact

Global Youth ACTION Network
211 East 43rd Street, Suite 905
New York NY 10017 USA
Tel: +1-212-661-6111
Fax: +1-212-661-1933
E-mail: gyan@youthlink.org
URL: http://www.youthlink.org/gyanpekuupdate.html

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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:

ACSA Annual Report (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) 1999
Approach (Approach Youth Services, Banyule City Council, Ivanhoe) Issue 6, 2000
Building Skills (Construction Industry Training Board VET in Schools, SA) Vol 1 No 2, March 2000
Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 20, No 2; June 2000
Network News (Network of Community Activities, Surry Hills, NSW) June, September 2000
Rights Now (National Children's and Youth Law Centre, UNSW, NSW) June 2000
Starlink (Victoria University, Vic) Issue 40, June 2000
YACSAround (YACS, Adelaide, SA) Issue 3, August-September 2000

International:

Infoyouth (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Seoul, Korea) Vol 6 No 1, June 2000
National Coalition News (NCACS, Michigan, USA) Vol 25 No 1; Spring 2000
Organising an Inter-Club Leadership Conference (Earl Reum, NASSP, USA) 1999

Democratic Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work
Descriptions and practical information about active citizenship in primary schools
$7 a copy (posted); $12 for 2 copies

Sherbrooke Community School
Sharing responsibility...

continued from page 14...

students do not have a common class text imposed on them; rather they may negotiate which common texts they would like to study and which they will study independently. All texts are selected from the VBOES list. Likewise, issue work and Maths projects are discussed with students whenever possible, so that Sherbrooke students have some negotiation available to them in their VCE studies.

A team of Sherbrooke Year 10 students won the National Schools Conflict Resolution and Mediation competition in Brisbane last year (see Connect 121, February 2000). We believe it is the on-going negotiation of work by students at the school, from Year 3 upwards, which empowers our students to excel at the mediation process. Sherbrooke students leave the school with strong, independent learning and cooperation skills, which fit them for further education and employment.

If we want students to be motivated and involved in their education, then surely they must have some say in what they learn. Sherbrooke's negotiation model teaches children to be responsible for the achievement of their work requirements in their classes. At this time, when the education of students in the 'middle years' is a catch-cry around the Department, shouldn't we be looking at more negotiation of work in classes, so that they are able to see the relevance between school and their aspirations for a career?

Viv Hammett
Sherbrooke Community School

Documents

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

A full, computerised 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
473 PASTA - Victoria Submission to: Public Education: the Next Generation Review (PASTA Victoria) (2 pp; $0.60)
474 Promoting Democratic Political Attitudes: By Having Students Make Decisions in their Schools (Suzanne Mellor), paper for the SLO International Conference: Emerging Democracies, Citizenship and Human Rights Education, June 18-21, The Netherlands (18 pp; $1.80)
475 NSW State SRC Conference Report (2000 NSW SRC, August 2000) (4 pp; $0.80)

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• Cross-referenced index to contents of Connect back issues ($3) $ .............

Miscellaneous Resources:
• Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) $ .............
• ‘Youth Radio’ issue of 3CR’s CRAM Guide (1985) ($1) $ .............
• Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) $ .............
• 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) $ .............

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