Connect
supporting student participation

Number 122:
April 2000

Junior School Councils
Student Representative Councils

Secondary Schools
Primary Schools

Also in this issue:
- JSCs/SRCs at 7 Primary Schools in 3 States
- Belconnen and Gold Creek High School SRCs Report
- Doing Democracy and Learning Democracy
- SRC Teacher Professional Development
- Resources: Action Exchange

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #17

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Way back in Connect 35 (October/November 1985) we carried several stories about active student participation in primary schools. We sub-titled this: 'Student Participation: The Primary Issue' (By the way, copies of this issue are still available - $4 - see page 32.)

In saying this, we mean to convey that essential attitudes - by both students and teachers - to active student participation are largely formed in primary schools. The choice between regarding students (on the one hand) as competent, people with ideas and views and important things to do, and (on the other) as incompetent, dependent, and incapable is pivotal. It forms how students see themselves; it forms the institutional responses of schools at both primary and secondary levels.

Many schools do respond extremely positively to these challenges. Groups of students negotiate curriculum content and approaches; class meetings work democratically and collaboratively to plan and implement learning; whole-school student organisations (JSCs/ SRCs) play a real and important role in school decision making; learning is based in approaches that extend beyond the classroom and that have real community value. Over 20 years, Connect has provided exciting and inspiring stories from many classrooms and schools (ask us about an index of these): primary school students tutoring, making radio programs about their community, designing and building shade areas, conducting local research, undertaking community action and so on.

This issue concentrates on some stories of formal decision-making: the ways in which students organise in SRCs or JSCs to take action to represent students and to improve their schools. It is possible to look at the range of activities and approaches, and to describe things here that student groups 'do', ideas that they 'ask' others to implement, and decisions that they 'share' with others (teachers and parents principally) within the school.

The challenges outlined in Connect 35 remain:

- we need to hear more of the curriculum forms of active participation in primary schools to sit alongside these 'governance' examples;
- in particular, we need stories about how curriculum negotiation occurs within primary school classrooms;
- we need to explore different forms of governance structures that broaden and strengthen participation in this area. (Have JSCs become too standardised?)

As we noted then, the primary issue is not a token issue - it's the continuing essential issue. We want to hear more; we want to tell more. More ... more ... more!!

Roger Holdsworth
Reflections of a Junior School Council Guide

Our school prides itself on student participation in many areas of learning and decision making, from student led conferences, to class meetings, to negotiated curriculum and individual and class learning contracts.

1998 was my first year at Mooroolbark Park Primary School, and at running a JSC. I was very excited and enthusiastic about the prospect, but had never really seen one in action. I had previously worked at a small school, where there had been a JSC, but I never actually saw them do anything. I decided to base the JSC on my many years' experience on School Councils. Perhaps this 'mature' approach and experience helped challenge the students more than if I had expected less of them because they were 'children'.

My first year was obviously a steep learning curve. I had a shy, but very capable president at the helm. Only one student had actually been on council before, so she was our experienced member. The rest of us learnt together.

My second year at Mooroolbark Park Primary School, in 1999, was a very busy and successful year with regard to JSC. I guess we had passed the 'teething' stage, and were now just enjoying the challenge. It was our 'take-off' year. With a new bunch of kids, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and myself with more confidence, it fed the wheel of success and fulfilment.

I had a fabulous bunch of kids. They were more extroverted and confident, and perhaps more eager because they had seen and experienced some of the things we had achieved the year before. At the helm was a superb President. He was a natural public speaker and leader, and very dedicated to the job, as well as the concept of student participation and respect. It certainly made my job easier.

My Vice President lived in his shadow, but was also very worthy. I didn’t appreciate him until 4th term when the President was absent for one of our activity days, and the Vice President took the reins, and ran with the glory; not even undermined by the fact that parents were involved in the day, as well as every class.

All of the children were enthusiastic and hard workers until they were overcommitted to other projects around the school. I found that the JSCs were 'gifted' in many areas and thus were involved in a multitude of activities, like "As the Crow Flies", "Tournament of the Minds", Peer Mediation, monitor responsibilities, school representation at conferences, our Meeters and Greeters Program, Visiting schools program, choir, athletics and sporting programs. A very frustrating period when trying to complete jobs and maintain an active status within the school. The trouble being, the more success we had, and the more PR we had, the more jobs we were given to do.
I guess it was also the mid year/winter grind, where we were all feeling bogged down. The secretaries (as with all our roles, they work in pairs) were getting weary from writing so many minutes/letters. Often with students busy at different things, the pairs of councillors found it difficult to meet up with one another to do their jobs. They also disliked having to wait for their partners or others to turn up for meetings, resulting in a lot of wasted time and a little negativity. As they were so over committed, they also just needed some freedom and time to themselves, and thus began to begrudge giving up their lunch times.

Three councillors quit within a month after elections. We also had more girls than boys on council, with one grade 3 boy really feeling the pinch, wanting to resign. Both of these things led us to change our JSC organisation and scheduling.

This year we are trialing our elections at the beginning of term two. This enables all children in their new grades to get to know one another more, before voting. Nominations are held in first term, and as a prerequisite for council, all nominees must attend at least one meeting to get the feel of JSC, and to help them decide whether they can stick it out.

We have also made it mandatory that the grades must elect a boy and a girl from their classroom, thus providing a balance. We foresaw also that in term 1 of the following year, ie this year, that we could potentially lose half of our council as the grade 6s graduated and left us. So we have also stipulated that councillors come from each grade level in the composite structure eg in a grades 5/6, there must be one boy and one girl, one of whom is in grade 5, the other in grade 6.

This also allows hopefully more balance in the structure of our JSC roles, particularly in term 1, as this year for our first term we have no president or vice-president.

Along with our success we have increased pride and encouragement from staff in particular. They do give us more jobs but I guess that is to be seen as a compliment, that we are capable and worthy of making decisions. I guess though sometimes with those few staff, when you aren’t supported, it can get you down and it certainly does with the kids.

Overall of course, it’s a great joy and a very rewarding experience. That’s why I keep saying yes.

Amy Groves
Junior School Councillor
Mooroopna Park Primary School

Vicki Soule
MPPS JSC Guide
Mooroopna Park Primary School Junior School Council
What We Achieved in 1999

We organised several successful fundraisers, namely:

- 'Guess the egg' jar competition. Money raised for our funds.
- 'Colouring-in' competition. Money raised for our funds.
- Out-of-uniform day. Money raised for the State School's Relief Fund.
- 'Madhatters Tea Party'. Cake & coffee stall. Money raised for the Anti-Cancer Council. 'Hat' competition money to our funds.
- 'Butterfly Day'. Sale of badges to the Deafness Foundation of Victoria. Disco and out-of-uniform money to our funds.
- 'PAL' label collection for the Guide Dog Training program.
- 'Cup Day' Races. Piggy-back races
- During the year, money was also donated to the Kosovan Refugees.
- Sale of Remembrance Day poppies for the RSL.

We also organised and contributed to other projects around the school, namely:
- Planned, financed and planted a commemorative garden at the front of the school.
- Created a JSC display poster for the JSC seminar.
- Discussed lost library book issue, and decided children should pay.
- Drink tap survey, indicating where students wanted the new taps located.
- Outdoor seating survey, indicating where students wanted the seating to be located.
- Fete slogan. Parents and Friends asked us to create a slogan for next year's fete.
- RSL visitors, discussions, and assembly for Remembrance Day.
- Purchased 10 'litter' tongs, 3 tape/CD players, 3 microphones, blank audio tapes, audio cassette cleaner

We communicated with our school community, at various levels, including:
- The Principal, through meetings, and JSC meeting minutes.
- Senior School Council, through a shared meeting, and JSC meeting minutes. School Liaison Officers also attended a Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting.
- Parents and Friends through JSC meeting minutes. Also the Social Service Officers worked with P & F for Madhatter's Tea Party.
- Canteen staff through meeting minutes.
- School staff, through Miss Soule's representation, and JSC meeting minutes, and an end of year staff meeting presentation.
- Students, through assembly announcements, advertising, class meetings, and 'open' JSC meetings.
- Parents, through newsletter articles and assembly announcements.
- Wider community, through newspaper articles, and the 'Meeters and Greeters' program.
- Year book - Not only as a keepsake for JSC members, but also a valuable record for the school, on JSC's achievements for the year.
- PMI evaluation at class meetings, in December

We communicated with others at a wider level, including:
- Peer Support Foundation newsletter article.
- Connect - JSC magazine articles.
- Victorian School News article.
- Letters to other schools.

We participated in and represented our school as:
- Quality Conference - 6 members were part of the school's presentation team.
- Quality video - A video was created by the Quality Council. Our JSC featured in this.
- Remembrance Day ceremony in Mooropna.

JSC EVALUATION

In December, last year, the Junior School Councillors at our school had to do a PMI (Positive, Minus, Interesting facts) for our evaluation. We asked the children in our classes, and our buddy classes, if they thought the JSC members were doing their job very well or not. We wrote down about 5 points for each aspect of the PMI. We also had to do a PMI of our own on how we thought JSC was going and 'if we liked it or not, and how we went with our jobs.

The thing that students liked the most was the Cup Day Races that the JSC organised. The Cup Day Races were when children piggy-backed their buddy in a race about 50 metres, on Melbourne Cup Day. We held preliminary races before the day. We shouted everyone a free Milky Freeze that we bought from our school canteen. The second most popular activity was a disco that we held for Butterfly Day to raise money for the Deafness Foundation.

The things that students didn't like were that there were not enough Cup Day races, and that some children, like the Preps, weren't on JSC.

The most popular interesting fact was a suggestion for us to have Easter egg and spoon races. For the Junior School Councillors' PMIs they did about themselves, some positives were: 'I liked helping the school.' 'I liked how my class liked the new stuff we put around the school.' 'I was glad I joined JSC.' Some minuses were: 'When I went to the first meeting, I got butterflies in my stomach.' 'I did not like the staff presentation.' Some interesting facts were: 'It is interesting how much money we raised.' 'It is interesting how we had a partner and different jobs.'

Amy Groves and Jessica Graham
Junior School Councillors, Mooroopna Park Primary School

April 2000
Tongala Primary School, Vic

Student Leadership on Tongala PS

Tongala Primary School is a rural primary school in the Goulburn Valley, Victoria, with a student enrolment of 235. The Junior School Council at the school was first formed in the early 90s, initiated by a classroom teacher wishing to address the issues of student leadership. Children from prep to six were included on the council, with two elected class representatives from each grade. The teacher chaired meetings held monthly.

Issues such as fundraising, playground improvement and the selection of “Aussie of the Month” were addressed at these meetings. Many reasons contributed to this JSC evolving into purely an “Aussie of the Month” committee, still made up of two class representatives from each grade.

Concerns voiced over the years by different members of the school community has focused on a need to address the children’s sometimes lack of respect for others, care of their school environment, maintaining community spirit and pride and care for others. It was felt that the students lacked leadership amongst the older children.

Over the past three years we have begun a school captains program. This process of electing two girls and two boys from grade six has been a learning experience for both the children and teachers. The elected captains have taken on a variety of roles from showing visitors around the school, to coordinating fundraising activities. They have also discovered the role of captain or vice-captain is not an easy one, and frequently means sacrificing their own time. We believe the children who are now captains have learnt from the previous captains.

The opportunity to develop a JSC was made possible by our inclusion in the Discovering Democracy project. We have not rushed into the program, but have spent valuable time educating the children now involved.

Last year four children, then grade fives, attended a JSC training day run by the Peer Mediation Group. This was at a nearby school, Moorooroon Park Primary, where children from schools in our district met to share their experiences on JSC. These four children wrote reports of the day’s activities for our newsletter, and then reported back to all the grade fives on a special training day with all our grade fives, who responded well, brainstorming, role-playing, problem solving and discussing the make up of our future JSC.

Finally the time came this year when the children in grade six were invited to nominate for one of the office bearer positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary. There were two office bearers have been inducted and presented with badges that they proudly wear daily.

Each grade from three to six has elected two class representatives, a boy and a girl. We have had two meetings, the first to teach the children about correct meeting procedure. They have been shown quickly, and our Presidents chair the meetings with confidence. They have already invited guest speakers (children) who have presented a proposal to run a disco as a fundraiser. It was encouraging to see they had written to JSC outlining their proposal, with many organisational aspects covered.

Children have discussed issues such as the neatness of the yard, computerised toys being a disruptive influence in the rooms and reporting at Senior School Council. They look forward to this opportunity with confidence.

Even though we are still only beginning with JSC, we feel that a need has been met and the children have taken on this leadership in the way we hoped would happen.

Maree Downey and Gail Andison
Tongala PS, 28 Miller Street, Tongala 3621
At Reservoir East, we have run a Junior School Council (JSC) for many years. At the start of the school year, the children are reintroduced to the school's Welfare Policy and all its ramifications. As well as this, we look at aspects that make a caring, conscientious student, attributes that will make a 'good' JSC representative for the grade. Usually (and where possible), a girls and a boy are elected from each classroom from grade 2 and up. These children are presented to the school at assembly. Later (after several meetings), the children are asked to sign a pledge to be a 'good' JSC representative; a parent or guardian, and the school Principal also sign this pledge. We then try to get someone prominent in the community to present the students with their certificates at a whole school assembly.

We meet once a week, usually at the recess break. The JSC elect themselves a President, Vice-President and Secretary. At these meetings we decide on what initiatives we wish to undertake, which organisations we fundraise for and the like. In the past we have raised money for various charitable organisations by selling their merchandise or by running functions at the school eg 'guessing competitions', 'discos', 'out of uniform days', 'special dress-up days' or 'wheel-athons' and the like. We also look out for special exemplary behaviour that is shown by students in the yard, that we wish to praise. These children receive an 'Aussie of the Month' certificate at the school assembly. The JSC also selects four students a month who go out for breakfast with the Principal.

The older councillors work on a roster basis in the canteen at lunchtimes for approximately the first 15 minutes of their break. In 2000 they have also been asked to volunteer to help in the technology room of a lunchtime, when the younger children are scheduled for free time, to assist them with their endeavours.

As well as all this, we are lucky enough to belong to a cluster of Junior School Councils that work together and share ideas. We have participated in several Forums run by the cluster, where children meet and mix with councillors from other schools in the district. In 1999, the Forums were:

- Getting to understand the JSC
- Beyond JSC: looking at how a local council works, how decisions are made etc
- Speaking to other people who help in the community either voluntarily or on a paid basis

These forums and the sharing of ideas in the cluster have been helped over the last year by funds from the Victorian Government in a Civics and Citizenship Education initiative. The teachers who help these students in their individual schools are to meet in 2000 to look at the issues of Civics and Citizenship and how this is taught within individual schools. We will be looking at latest educational initiatives, including the Discovering Democracy kit.

The councillors at Reservoir East report back to grades after a meeting; some report to the younger grades that don't have a representative on the committee. A report is also presented to the senior School Council which is made up of staff, parents and interested community members. The JSC also get to decide what the funds that we raise (especially in the canteen) are spent on.

There have been several initiatives that have been undertaken by the councillors at Reservoir East. Perhaps one of the most rewarding has been when children have seen behaviours happening that are not acceptable and have acted upon them. They inform teachers and strive for a resolution. This is something that makes Reservoir East a 'good' place in which to work and learn for all.

Carol Humphreys
JSC Coordinator
Reservoir East PS, Boldrewood Pde, Reservoir 3073

April 2000
Eltham East Primary School, Vic

Our JSC in 2000

At Eltham East Primary School we have a Junior School Council (JSC). Teachers can’t always sort out problems around the school, in the playground and so on, and in some cases we can. We can improve the school and make it a better place. We can take other people’s ideas and discuss them at a JSC meeting.

There are ten members of the JSC this year. The younger members (grades 3 and 4) are elected within their grade, and then by the grade level. The grade 5 members have to prepare a short speech and perform it to the whole grade 5 level, whereas the grade 6 members also have to prepare a short speech in front of a panel of three teachers. The School Captains are also in the JSC; they are appointed by the Principal and teachers.

The JSC meets every second Wednesday. We have two leaders (BB and Emma) who run these meetings. We discuss things like how to improve the school or fix any problems that are occurring. We discuss what fundraisers we will have to get the money for the things we want to have and do in the school. After we have agreed on something, we take it back to our classes and talk with them about what we are doing. We also put an article in the school newsletter so that everyone knows what we are doing.

In the JSC this year, we will be planning an action called ‘Lids for Bins’ - to stop wasps and things that get in them. We will have to organise a lot to do this. We must discuss it, do some research, talk with the Principal and find out where to get the lids from. We need to find out how many lids we need and what size they are. We’ll need to get quotes for the costs, and perhaps raise some money for them - but we don’t know how much yet. We also will have to tell other people in the school about our plans. It’ll be a lot of work.

The hardest thing to do might be to find a place that sells the products that we are looking for. Convincing the Principal might also be hard. More generally, we must make sure that, when a discussion is taking place, everyone has their say and finally agrees. But if we can do, all the hard work will be worthwhile.

Briana (BB), Caitlin, Dale, Ellen, Emma, Erica, Grant, Justin, Michelle, Nick
Eltham East PS JSC, Grove Street, Eltham 3095
(written at a training day, March 2000)

Preston South Primary School, Vic

...Because we can help others

At Preston South Primary school, all grade from 1 to 6 are represented on the Junior School Council (JSC). The JSC representatives are elected by members of their grade and serve for the whole 12 months. There are 12 students on our JSC - one girl and one boy from each grade. Some times we form subcommittees, involving other students in the organisation of special projects. Many students are very keen to be involved in our JSC projects.

We have weekly meetings, from 2:30 - 3:30 pm each Wednesday. Each grade has been asked to have a mini-meeting from 12:20 to 12:30 on Wednesday, so that representatives can bring their ideas and/ or concerns to the meeting.

Our office-bearers have to carry out special tasks throughout the year. We have a girl and a boy president, treasurer, secretary and publicity officer. In this way we can share many of the tasks.

The JSC conducts a Thursday morning Assembly each week at which a report of activities is given and awards are presented to people who have done worthwhile things around the school. Some people receive awards for being kind to others, some get recognition for an achievement or good effort in class.

We raise money to help other people outside our school eg the Children’s Hospital, and we also finance some special developments in our school eg new computer programs.

Our ideas are taken to the school Principal and other teachers and they sometimes ask for our help when they want to know how students feel about issues.

On Wednesday 22nd March we held our badge presentation ceremony. The Mayor of Darebin, Chris Kelly, came along to give us the badges. She talked about the importance of being good listeners and said that some of the best ideas she was given had been given by some of the quietest people. As JSCs, we have the chance to listen to other people and share our ideas.

We think that our decisions do make a big difference to our school. Students can share their ideas with JSCs and say what they really think. They are sometimes scared to tell the teachers. JSC surveys have helped us to work out what kids want and like about our school.

Being a JSC makes us feel proud because we can help others.

JSC, Preston South Primary School
Hotham Street, Preston 3072
Hambledon State School, Queensland

“What Democracy means to me”

We have quite a focus on student participation in democracy at Hambledon State School. Our year 7 students opened a Discovering Democracy Conference in Cairns on 17 March with the school captain speech (right). These speeches were entitled “What democracy means to me” and sum up some of our activities pretty well from a student perspective.

We have also produced a booklet with a “Discovering Democracy” grant in 1999, which details a variety of activities within the school which actually ‘do’ democracy ‘through’ democracy, rather than learning about it. Our history is related to the Active and Informed Citizenship Key elements and we really started getting serious about this issue in about 1992. Active and Informed Citizenship was a state priority in 1992-1993, and we’ve taken it from there, through the Prime Minister’s Civics Expert Group stage, to the current “Discovering Democracy” kit which we trialed.

The part of our booklet presented here deals with Student Captain Election processes, Class Parliaments descriptions, and Student Council operation in the school. We also have student participation in other ways – Junior Red Cross, members of school committees, Voice of Youth Public Speaking, Nature Trail guides, Junior Workplace Health and Safety group, Kidpower group, Resource Centre Assistants, to name the most obvious. A cover design featuring suggested slogans for the school also shows the ethos towards participation and equity we strive to achieve at Hambledon State School.

Anne Holden
Acting Deputy Principal

Student Council

At Hambledon State School, the School’s Student Councils set up with a consistent set of guidelines, based on Active and Informed Citizenship principles. The processes as follows:

- Selection Criteria are issued to all Year 7 students.
- Class lessons are conducted addressing the writing of selection criteria applications.
- Dates are set for return of the applications for Male and Female Captain and Vice Captain positions. (Second place becomes Vice Captain)
- Depending on the number of applicants, all are preselected and advised of a date for presentation of their campaign speech to Year 4-7 Assembly. (We have not had to preselect a shorter number as the selection criteria seems to minimise greater numbers.)
- Campaigns are conducted throughout school involving how to vote cards, captions, slogans, posters and similar devices.
- Speeches are presented to School Assembly.

What does democracy mean to you?
Well to me it means the freedom to live the way we want to live and the freedom to do what we want to do.

At our school, I believe we learn about democracy in lots of different ways and through different activities, like class parliament, student council, class meetings, camps, and elections for school captains, house captains, and class representatives. All these things give us the opportunity to do our jobs how we want to do them as long as we abide by the rules.

The dictionary meaning of democracy is “a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them under a free electoral system”, which is how I became school captain. In class parliament, we, the students, have been shown how a democratic election takes place. All our new student leaders were chosen by our fellow students by a majority vote, which is the same as how the Australian Government is chosen. During our class discussions, we are all given an opportunity to have our say which I think is a great way for all voices to be heard and ideas put forward. This to me is the best way to hear what everyone wants and thinks.

I myself feel very lucky and privileged to be living in a democratic country, to be able to walk down the street, have my opinion listened to, watch what I want on TV and listen to the music I want to listen to without anyone dictating to me what I can and can’t do.

We are all very lucky to be living here in Australia.

Emily Jaye
School Captain

- Electoral Officers visit the school to train election officials and obtain names of candidates for voting papers. (Video – Training for Polling Officials, AEC, Canberra)
- Voting registration forms are handed out to all eligible voters.
- An electoral roll is prepared with names of all students from Years 4-7 and all teachers and staff.
- Election Day is held with help from the Australian Electoral Officers. Preferential system is used. (Rate of informal voting in 1999 was less than 4%.)
- Winning School Captains are announced in classrooms and in school newsletters.
Class Parliaments

In Year 7 during Term 1, each class establishes their own class Parliament. These may differ slightly across the classes but follow essentially the Australian Parliamentary system with one important difference. We do not encourage oppositional politics. Our Shadow Ministers in every area are assistants to the Minister and help with the portfolio. Portfolios may include Prime Minister, Finance, Arts, Sport and Recreation, Social Justice (attend school Social Justice meetings), Foreign Affairs (liaise with lower classes to report to their own class to ensure a view of smaller children is heard.)

In fact every child has a role. Some are also Hansard reporters and Hansard is kept as permanent records of class Parliament activities. Many other schools have sent teachers to observe our class parliaments in operation and teachers involved believe it is an extremely effective model for real involvement of students in decision-making in the school.

This is the way it works:

- Early in Year 7 all classes study government in Australia. All students watch the video "Class Parliament" produced by the Parliamentary Education Office, Canberra. (This sometimes involves professional development for, and preparation on the part of, a new year 7 teacher.) Discussions in class then centre on ways of making this work within the separate classes. Each class individualises the parliamentary sessions and parliamentary people, but basically all conduct business in a similar manner.

- Much time is spent examining the roles of various parliamentary people. Students role-play Parliament with a special Opening Ceremony attended by the 'Governor General' (Principal or Deputy Principal)

- Actual responsibilities evolve and are negotiated. Frequently this is a matter of catering for learning styles and aptitudes of students in the class. No one is forced into a role but all students eventually opt for a part. These may include Minister for External Affairs (Responsible for lower grades welfare), Minister for Social Justice (Representing students on school Social Justice Committee), Minister for Finance or Treasurer (coordinates class fundraising etc) and of course, the speaker who conducts the sessions, the Prime Minister, and Deputy, the Leader of the Black Rod, and Hansard Reporters.

- At every session of Parliament - usually once a week - class issues are raised, bills passed, reports given and debates held.

- Resources to assist this process have been accumulated over several years and separate school budgets are kept for Student Council and Active and Informed Citizenship. (Videos: The People of Parliament 1989 PEO, Canberra, That's Democracy, 1986 AEC, Canberra, Democracy at Work, 1991 ABC, Who Really Cares? 1993, READ School Support Centre Media Unit, Canissi. Other Resources - Electoral Education Teachers' Resource Folder, AEC Canberra; Parliament Pack 1, PEO, Canberra; Activa and Informed Citizenship Kit, READ SSC, Media Unit Cairns; The Informed Citizenship Project, 1997, DEETYA)

Classroom Meetings

All classes are encouraged to conduct class room meetings to allow student opinions to be heard. These may be conducted by class teachers, student councillors (either for their own class or their buddy class in Yrs 1-3). Early in the year, classroom meetings are modelled for beginning teachers, especially in Year 4 as this is when student councillors begin throughout the school. We encourage participation in decision-making through this method and model respect for other people's opinions across the school.
## CITIZENSHIP AWARDS

Our school aims to promote active community involvement by all students and encourages students to become responsible community members. With this in mind, we have devised a Citizenship Award program where our students earn points on a yearly basis for involvement in community activities. These points are credited to each student and are recorded on a class Citizenship Award chart; this is to be handed in at the end of the school year. Certificates are awarded annually from Yrs 1-7 on a rating that increases with each year level, beginning with 20 points in Yr 1.

The following is a suggested list of activities undertaken annually by Hambledon State School Students; these have been listed by Student Council and points allocated by them depending on the amount of personal effort and time they think each activity requires. There may be more and teachers are encouraged to add to the list as events occur in classrooms. A major point to remember is that Citizenship by its nature can not be competitive and simply needs to be rewarded and recognised to model this form of behaviour towards other people. The total possible points from this list would be approximately 145 points per year. The aim of this scheme is for each student to achieve the highest possible award by the time they complete year seven. Certificates are awarded in years one to three while medallions are awarded to students in years four to seven. Awards are allocated as follows - Bronze award after 140 points, silver award after 300 points and a gold award after 500 points. Awards Days will be held annually and year 7 students will receive their award at the end of year Celebration Dinner.

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<td>Red Cross</td>
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<td>Arabian Parade</td>
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<td>Happy Gram</td>
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<td>RAD Roll</td>
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<td>Obligation</td>
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(More documents from Hambledon State P-7 School in the next issue of Connect: Role Descriptions and Application Forms)

### Education for Active and Informed Citizenship

The key elements of Education for Active and Informed Citizenship are outlined below. These elements are interrelated, and relevant when exploring issues at local, national and international levels.

#### Values
- **Democratic processes** include: respect for and acknowledgment of equitable decision-making processes, diverse opinions, political choice, the right to vote, legal and moral principles of justice, peaceful resolution of conflict, personal integrity, cooperation, fairness in speech and action.
- **Social justice** includes: concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people; a focus on equity of outcome for all, equality of access to opportunities; recognition of legitimate struggles to remove discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity, socioeconomic background, religion, physical or intellectual differences.
- **Ecological sustainability** includes: respect for the well-being of all living creatures and environmental heritage, and enhancing in an equitable way the quality of life of present generations without prejudicing the well-being of future generations.

#### Knowledge
- **Democratic rights and responsibilities** include: awareness of UN conventions regarding fundamental freedoms of conscience and religion, belief, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association; human rights, civil liberties and struggles for political freedom, enhanced citizenship and social justice.
- **Historical perspectives** includes: significant national and international events and social movements that have influenced our ideas of citizenship.
- **Cultural diversity** includes: understandings about diverse values, beliefs, customs and traditions within societies, especially Australia.
- **Inter-relatedness** includes: studies about the inter-related ecological, social, cultural, political, legal and economic systems and peoples' place within them.

#### Cognitive Processes
- **Active and investigative learning** includes: skills of defining issues, acquiring, organising, classifying, interpreting, synthesising, substantiating and presenting information.
- **Critical and creative thinking** includes: recognising points of view, distinguishing facts from value positions, detecting bias, identifying cause and effect relationships, making generalisations, suggesting solutions and drawing conclusions.

#### Action Skills
- **Personal skills** include: developing confidence, empathy, building self-esteem, demonstrating initiative and assertiveness, goal setting and accepting responsibility.
- **Inter-personal skills** include: sharing, cooperating and negotiating, resolving conflicts, considering alternative points of view, accepting construct criticism.
- **Community participation** includes: public advocacy, lobbying and representing interests, voting, writing letters and petitions meeting with others informally or as a member of school and community groups such as: school project clubs, community welfare organisations, service organisations, social action groups, charities and other groups.
Hambledon Theme Ideas

A fair go for all.

If it is to be it is up to me.

Where people count.

Genuine respect for people.

United we stand.

We care.

Learn and Grow.

Working as a team for the future of our students.

I care/Share,
You care/Share,
We care/Share.

Together we are wiser than we know.

When spider webs combine they can tie up a lion.

Kids First.

One for all and all for one.

We all participate in the decision-making process.

In each other we trust.

Committed to a better world for kids through education.

Because we work at relationships.

We believe there is always a better way to do things to make the learning environment better for the kids.

We touch the future.

There's no failure, only feedback.
PASS THE PASTA

The First International Student Representative Conference to be held in Sydney from 13-17 December, 2000 is a dual conference for all those interested in Student Leadership, Student Councils, prefects, peer support and peer tutor schemes, whether they be students or teacher advisers within secondary education. The vision is to bring together student and adult representatives of secondary school student and adult organisations to explore issues of relevance to youth and to initiate action that will address such issues. This inaugural International Conference aims to bring into being an International Student Representative Committee which will be responsible for carrying forward this initiative at Olympiad II in Athens 2004 and for establishing a regular Olympiad of Citizenship and Representation in each Olympic host city. You can be part of this inaugural event.

States, districts, individuals, schools, and educational bodies should be looking for ways to support delegates to and participants in the conference which will be part of the Sesquicentenary Celebrations of the University of Sydney. Responses to conference publicity are already rolling in. More than 100 expressions of interest/applications have come from local, interstate, and overseas students wishing to be delegates or presenters. PASTA's representative on the New South Wales Student Representative Council, Kadie Martin, and Student Coordinator Anna Samson report that the New South Wales State Council wishes to present a workshop at the conference. Forty other Australian applications have been received. Overseas interest is growing too. North American coordinator Nancy Griffin-Bonnaire has received applications from 42 students and 16 teacher advisers wishing to visit Australia for the conference while the National Coordinator in Canada, Gane Olsen, has applications from 45 students and teacher advisers. So it's good news that some families in St. George District have expressed interest in billeting visiting students.

This is your opportunity to get involved in the Olympiad of Citizenship and Representation, whether you live in the ACT, Victoria, South Australia, or Tasmania. Promotional material is being distributed by PASTA representatives now. Every High School in New South Wales, including State schools, Independent Schools, Catholic Education, Central Schools and Schools for Special purposes, has received promotional material about the conference. If you, reader, have not seen this material ask your Principal and then tell your student leadership group about it. Visit PASTA's web page:

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

or email bowtech@ozemail.com.au
or ckingston@interact.net.au

for more information.

And what about a workshop? What's an issue for you in this end of Millennium year? Registration ($A500) due by date is 31 July, 2000. Be a presenter. Dare to fly - fill out a registration form now! Reach for the stars - you can do it!

Jeanne Bow
Tips for Treasurers

Many of us take on executive positions in our SRC's without really knowing what we are letting ourselves in for, or for that matter, without really knowing what we are expected to do once we are given the position. One of the most responsible positions for any organisation is that of treasurer. If you are thinking of taking on this position, the following may be of assistance. PASTA would like to thank the Professional Teachers Council, NSW for allowing us to use this handout, which is an extract given to treasurers at a recent meeting conducted by them.

Things you need to keep:

1 Payments book - in which you list all cheques, bank charges and any other withdrawals. The information you need to record is date, who the cheque was for, cheque number, total amount of cheque and what it was for eg purchase of publications, speaker’s fee, postage, etc.

2 Receipts book - in which you list all deposits plus any bank interest received. The information you need to record is date, total amount of deposit and what it was from eg sales of items, activities, etc.

3 A folder to keep all bank statements together. (Note - all statements must be accounted for.)

4 A copy of the completed monthly bank reconciliation.

If you keep the records using the above method, reports will be easily generated and the finalisation of a financial year becomes much easier. In other words, keeping good records enables your SRC to manage funds more efficiently and plan for the future.

Bookkeeping Suggestions

- Use one cheque requisition form with each cheque written.
- Make sure you have supporting documentation for expenditure when drawing a cheque.
- Reconcile cheque account monthly ie. Bank Reconciliation.
- Note in the deposit book what the money received related to e.g. membership, publications, fund raiser, etc.
- Present reports at regular intervals at committee/general meetings.
- Get approval recorded in the minutes for major expenses (prior to expenditure).

Rules to be Observed in Keeping a Set of Books:


The following rules are essentially practical in nature and are so fundamentally necessary to a properly kept set of books that they are given here in the hope that students will learn and apply them to the point where they become an integral part of their bookkeeping technique.

- All entries must be made with permanent ink - lead pencils must not be used.
- Writing must be clear and legible - printing is preferable to illegible writing.
- All figures must be clear and distinct so that there is no possibility of confusion.
- When entering figures in the money columns, keep units under units, tens under tens and so on.
- Where no entry is required in money column, a dash at half-figure height is preferable to ditto marks or noughts.
- Where a figure requires alteration, rule out the whole of the amount - not just that part of it which is incorrect - and insert the correct amount immediately above.
- Use a ruler for all lines in journal and ledger.
- Remember that as each document (eg. Invoice, duplicate receipt) is entered in the journal it should be cancelled in some approved manner to ensure that it is not entered twice - or put to fraudulent use.

Bookkeeping is the art of keeping accounts and correctly recording in a set of books all transactions which involve the exchange of money. It is a written record of business transactions and three essential facts are kept in connection with each transaction:

(i) its date of occurrence;
(ii) its nature (whether a deposit or a withdrawal);
(iii) its value.

Remember, as treasurer, your aim is to make a permanent, clear and concise record of all the money transactions of your organisation so that others can easily see how money has been earned and/or spent.
First International Student Representative Conference

Building a Better Today

to be held in
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
The Olympic City

13 - 17 December 2000

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)
1st International Student Representative Conference
13-17 December 2000

PROGRAM
"Student Representatives: Building a Better Today"

Preliminary Days:
Monday-Tuesday
11-12 December 2000
Venue: Sydney University
- Pre-arranged early arrivals
- Meetings as notified (e.g. Conference Committees, International Steering Committee)
- Presenters and Performance rehearsals
- Set-up of displays, exhibits, resource material

Conference Day 1:
Wednesday, 13 December 2000
Venue: Sydney University
"Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage"
- Registration, Workshop Presenters and Advisers Orientation
- Exhibits, Campus Tours, Internet Centre, International/State and Display Rooms Open

- Official Conference Opening
  - General Sessions: Keynote Addresses: "Tolerance and Acceptance in an Increasingly Globally-Integrated Society"
  - Interactive Discussions - The Cultural Identity of Young People
  - Workshops and Roundtables - Multiculturalism, Racism and Young People
  - International Buffet
  - Cultural Showcase (highlighting country/state/cultural groups)

Conference Day 2:
Thursday, 14 December 2000
Venue: Sydney University
"Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century"
- Day Registration and Interactive Group Meeting
- Exhibits, Campus Tours, Internet Centre, International/State and Display Rooms Open
- General Sessions: Prepared Formal Debates (Topics open to ideas at this stage)
- Youth Challenge Workshops - Topics to be selected from the following based on submissions and resources (let us know those of most interest): youth suicide, unemployment, poverty, sexuality and sexual health, homelessness, violence and crime, public space, recreation and entertainment, public education, drugs, child exploitation, illiteracy, feminism, fundamentalism, sexism, ageism.
- Travel to and Tour of Sydney Olympic Site at Homebush
- Parade of Nations and States Ceremony
- Evening at Darling Harbour, Harbour and City Tours

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

Program topics can be added according to your interests, needs and suggestions.
### Conference Day 3:
**Friday, 15 December 2000**
**Venue:** Central Coast Campus; University of Newcastle

**“The Environment: Preserving Our Future”**

- Travel - Sydney Harbour to Central Coast
- Visits to Old Sydney Town and Australian Reptile Park
- Meet Central Coast host schools/tours of Campus

**General Session:**
International Panels: Young People and the Environment *(Let us know those environmental issues and projects of most interest to you, and of projects involving you, who have found practical solutions to problems.)*

- Workshop and Roundtable Issues arising from the Panel *(Delegates are encouraged to think about how they can become involved with existing environmental campaigns or develop their own.)*

- Voting on priority issues and recommendations for Day 5 student forum

- Students Dinner with families/schools and social (dance) or rock concert on Central Coast

- Advisers Evening Program: Issues and action forum dinner

### Conference Day 4:
**Saturday 16 December 2000**
**Venue:** Sydney University

**"The Media, the Political Process and You"**

- Mid-morning start: Day Registration and Interactive Group activities
- Internet Centre, International/State and Display Rooms Open

**General Sessions:**
Parliaments, Power and Profile: How Can These Be Made Real For Representative Young People

- Workshops: Getting Things Done and Influencing Others (active citizenship through voluntary action, starting a newspaper, conquering the air waves, setting up an SRC or similar structure, lobbying, starting an action group, how to get into and survive parliament, *Let us know those of most interest. Add your own.*)

- Preparation for Day 5 Forum
- Special Presentation of CSC (Community Service Certificate) Awards
- Entertainment/Refreshments
- Evening Dinner for Host Families
- Adviser Sightseeing

### Conference Day 5:
**Sunday, 17 December 2000**
**Venue:** Sydney University

**“SRCs Furnishing Their Home in the Global Village”**

- Day Registration/Internet Centre, International/State Rooms Open
- Interactive Groups: Discussion of Forum process and possibilities
- Roundtable Discussions/Formation of recommendations/resolutions and brainstorming possible activities (including the launching of an International Conference Committee responsible for coordinating organisation of future conferences and the carrying of these international activities to Athens in 2004 and beyond.)

**SRC 2000 STUDENT FORUM**
*(THE MAIN EVENT)*

- Action Group Sessions *(Aim: to action plan each project)*

- Action Group Plenaries *(Action group representatives present outcome of deliberations; Delegates from other groups have chance to sign up for more than one activity.)*

- Close of Conference

---

**Register now at:**

April 2000
Expression of Interest

to ATTEND and PRESENT at the
1st INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE CONFERENCE
Sydney, 13-17 December 2000

A. I ................................................................. wish to apply to attend the above Conference as a:
[ ] 1. Student Representative
[ ] 2. Adult Representative
[ ] 3. Committee Member

NB: A Conference for Advisors as well as Students!

B. The name of the group I will represent is: .................................................................

C. My position in or role with this group is: .................................................................

D. My/our contact details are as follows:

1. Mailing Address: ........................................................................................................

2. Phone/Fax and E-mail (if available): ...........................................................................

E. [ ] We DO/DO NOT (cross off whichever does not apply) wish to apply to do a presentation on the theme of (tick):

[ ] Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage (Day 1)
[ ] Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century (Day 2)
[ ] The Environment: Preserving Our Future (Day 3)
[ ] The Media, Political Process and You (Day 4)
[ ] Building a Better Today (Overall Conference Theme - Day 5 or any day)

F. Please examine the draft program and send us your suggestions for the issues, resources and types of sessions you would like to see at this Conference.

Upon confirmation of your application, a more detailed form will be sent to you for mutual exchange of further details.

What Does It Cost?

Registrations: A$500 (ca. US$350) per representative as funded by self, school or other representative group - by July 31st.

What Does Registration Include?

Host family accommodation for students. All programming, registration packets and resource materials, access to Internet Centre, meals and transport, and entry fees associated with the Conference program.

NB: Adult advisers coming for the Conference and/or accompanying student representatives need to arrange their own accommodation. On-campus accommodation and a list of recommended hotels will be available to all registered applicants outside the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Who’s Invited?

• Any school student representatives of school governance and leadership groups from any country.
• Any adult advisers of these and other sorts of student and youth groups within education.
• Interested people of whatever age in youth leadership, participation and - especially - representation.

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/
Leadership Grab Bag

By John L. Waters

OBJECTIVE

- To provide an introduction (ice-breaker) for any leadership topic or activity which may lead to further information/discussion on selected topic
- To provide a more exact outline for discussion of leadership characteristics and responsibilities

MATERIALS

Paper or plastic bag, chalk, chalkboard, markers, and paper

TIME REQUIRED

1. 10-15 minutes if used simply as ice-breaker
2. Class period if used to generate outline for further discussion

1. As an ice-breaker:

Gather group in circle. Pass around a bag and, without saying why, have students contribute something they have with them (pencil, watch, gum, necklace, nametag, etc.). Some students are very creative and you might be surprised what shows up in the bag.

After everyone has contributed to “Leadership Grab Bag of Tricks,” select someone to begin the activity, such as the one with the birthday closest to that day, or the shortest hair, etc.

The person selected reaches in without looking and pulls something from the bag. He or she then describes quickly how that pertains to a leader or leadership. For example, a pencil is selected - a leader makes a point; an eraser on pencil - leader makes mistakes along the way and has to correct them and learn from them; leaders make notes, and so on. He or she then gives the item back to the owner and that person goes next.

If you complete the entire activity, the last person to receive his or her item ends up holding the empty bag.

Processing

A leader wears many hats and much is expected of a leader: Tie in many examples that the students shared and add anything else that comes to mind. If this is leading to an exact presentation or further discussion on a related topic, you could tie in what they presented to the next topic being discussed.

2. As an outline for a more thorough discussion of leadership characteristics and principles:

Have the group brainstorm and think of some of the skills required of a leader: communication skills, organisational skills, time management, personal skills, goal setting, etc. Identify and write these on the chalkboard or poster paper.

Follow the same procedure of having students contribute to the leadership bag of tricks and pull something out of the bag. At this time the student must identify the area the item pertains to and how it relates. A recorder or individual participants could write these in the proper categories.

Processing the leadership topics:

Point out the skills the students identified that a leader should possess and discuss what they added. Use this as the introduction to your next activity.

There is a lot of flexibility built into this activity that will enable you to make it fit what you intend to accomplish.
TREASURER’S CHECKLIST

When you accepted the job of Treasurer, were you given:

- General ledger
- Receipt book
- Previous year’s Balance sheet
- Account Reconciliation sheet

What you need to record each time a transaction is made:

- All deposits
- All payments from cheque requisition slips
- All petty cash from docket
- Money you owe / invoices received
- Money owed to you / invoices sent
- Reconciliation

What you need to complete for end of your Term of Office:

- Payments book / Receipts book
- Profit and loss statement
- Balance sheet / Reconciliation
- Petty cash

Thinking Outside the Square

How often as leaders have we been faced with situations that need us to look for solutions that are out of the ordinary. How often have we been amazed by the ingenuity of our students when we have given them the same problem to solve. Often children can come up with a solution to a problem that we adults would think is not possible. This extract entitled ‘The Sandbox’ is from a book titled Chicken Soup for the Kid’s Soul, one of many in the inspirational Chicken Soup series, and gives a solution to a problem that is as unexpected as it is touching.

One day, when I was five, I went to a local park with my mom. While I was playing in the sandbox, I noticed a boy about my age in a wheelchair. I went over to him and asked if he could play. Since I was only five, I couldn’t understand why he couldn’t just get in the sandbox and play with me. He told me he couldn’t. I talked to him for a while longer, then I took my large bucket, scooped up as much sand as I could and dumped it into his lap. Then I grabbed some toys and put them in his lap, too. My mom rushed over and said, “Lucas, why did you do that?”

I looked at her and replied, “He couldn’t play in the sandbox with me, so I brought the sand to him. Now we can play in the sand together.”

By Lucas Parker, age 11 from Chicken Soup for the Kid’s Soul. Copyright 1998 by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Hansen and Irene Dunlap.

If you would like to see more of these stories, you can subscribe to a free email service provided by the Chicken Soup group, by contacting them at their website:

http://www.chickensoup.com

Join PASTA: the Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers

Membership provides: a support network for SRC teacher/advisers; special resources for students and teachers; practical workshop ideas for use in schools; regular seminars, workshops and conferences at an Association, State and National level at reduced registration rates; regular newsletters and journals; training and development within the SRC area; access to SRC networks; opportunities to be involved in discussions on the future of SRCS at all levels; attendance and participation in meetings of PASTA.

Contact PASTA Inc.: 12 Dyson Drive, Norah Head NSW 2263

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

PASTA Newsletter - Supplement to Connect 122
Celebrating the SRC

Cowandilla CPC-7 School in South Australia recently celebrated the election of its SRC for the year 2000 at a special assembly.

In the month prior to the celebration, all classes were involved in lessons and activities which focused on the democratic process and decision making. Students examined the qualities and skills required to be an effective representative and developed their written and oral literacy skills by preparing and presenting speeches and posters which were used in campaigning for the SRC election.

Election Day saw the whole school (CPC-7) involved in electing SRC representatives and proxies for their classes. Parents and helpers marked names from the 'electoral rolls', and assisted junior students to mark their Ballot papers and counted votes.

The assembly was attended by Ms Stephanie Key, member for Hanson, guests from the Education Department, members of the School Council, parents and friends.

Guest speaker, Mr Kim Ryland from the Australian Electoral Commission, spoke to the children about the importance of student decision making and how participating in decision making at a young age leads to confidence and greater participation as adults.

The CPC performed three songs from different cultures and the 1999 SRC highlighted the multicultural nature of our school. The Principal, Ms Terena Pope, and Mr Graeme Smale, Chairperson of the School Council, presented certificates to the new SRC.

At the end of the assembly, all the children sang 'Imagine' by John Lennon and waves their 'wish for peace' flags. These flags were made in class and expressed each child's wish for peace in the world in the new millennium.

Following the singing of 'Imagine', the whole school moved to the oval and were photographed sitting in the shape of a peace symbol, with each child holding up a 'wish for peace' flag!

Cowandilla has produced a curriculum document which outlines a process to develop literacy skills through decision making. Books are available for $20 plus $5 postage: contact 08 8443 7800 or fax: 08 8234 2445.
We have SRCs in our schools to make sure students should have a say - because without students, there is no school! SRCs provide a recognised body with power and credibility, that can organise things as well as solving problems. We notice that students aren’t always comfortable talking to teachers, so an SRC allows us to have student to student ideas.

We also have an SRC so that we can represent the school and reach student agreements. We use a process to reach possible agreements through assertive arguments.

We feel that students know their own learning abilities so they know how much or how little they can or can’t learn. It’s a ‘proven fact’ that students learn more when they’re enjoying school.

Some of the things an SRC can do are:
- raise funds for charities;
- voice the opinions of students;
- create a good atmosphere for learning.

In these things, we are an important and integral part of the school. Without us, students wouldn’t have a say in what they are learning, in extra-curricula activities or social activities. The biggest mistake is that people don’t recognise that we are here for the good of the school and that, without their support, we can’t run the SRC properly.

Many schools have some sort of Student Council or SRC. We want to tell you about ours...

Gold Creek School SRC

To start an SRC at Gold Creek School, we set up an electoral voting system in which students from each year level are elected to fill a one-year term. In years 8, 9 and 10 four students are chosen from each level (two boys and two girls) and from years 6 and 7, one boy and one girl are chosen from each level - to fill the one-year positions. All up there are 16 level year representatives. In addition, there are about 25-30 other students chosen as class representatives (one from each roll group) every term.

Class representatives form ‘action committees’ to respond to and act on proposals being brought to the SRC.

Senior Years Tops Committee, Net for Basketball Committee.

Our proposal for lockers was at first rejected by the Principal, but then we tried again and this succeeded - along with many other proposals.

Belconnen HS SRC

At Belconnen High School, the SRC is elected in years 7 and 9 for two year terms. Each year level has two boys and two girls as representatives. All SRC representatives meet on a weekly basis and discuss issues involving students’ opinions. In addition, each morning, students from the SRC meet for 10 minutes in roll call and hear about coming events.

At Belconnen the SRC has fundraised for various charities and made contributions to the school and community in many ways. Some of the things we have accomplished are:
- voiced our opinions in community projects;
- provided a pay phone facility for our students;
- made financial contributions to school equipment (such as a rock-climbing wall and a retaining wall);
- raised nearly $30,000 for numerous needy charities such as the Sunflower Foundation, Fred Hollows Foundation, the Millie Campaign (for a sick girl in Canberra), Jeans for Genes Day, the Children’s Hospital etc;
- represented our school at the Anzac Day Parade, Government House Functions;
- helping with school activities like the Expo, year 6 orientation days and open days/night.

In 1999, these sub-committees handled the organisation of many things throughout the school: Fundraising Committee, Socials Committee, Lockers Committee,
Difficulties

We have both found that the main things that stop us being able to work effectively are:
- a lack of money for the SRC;
- it is hard to get people involved;
- people waste time at meetings;
- we sometimes have a lack of support from teachers and parents;
- we have hardly any time to do things;
- sometimes we find it hard to communicate with our fellow students;
- people sometimes don’t trust our decisions;
- we find it hard to achieve goals and plan things.

These are the main problems and barriers facing our SRCs.

Some Recommendations

These problems could be at least partially solved by making the following changes:
- students should be given more importance and say in the way that the school is run;
- at the classroom level, students should have more say in what they learn;
- SRC members, or maybe just the office-bearers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) should have a free line (eg SRC as an elective) to take care of SRC business;
- SRC representatives should attend all staff meetings to improve communication with teachers;
- we need to work on ways to increase communication between representatives and students; this might include a suggestion box for students who don’t want to talk with us;
- we should promote the SRC through the use of posters around the school etc;
- we need to stress what has been achieved by the SRC;
- the SRC should wear special jumpers or badges so that they can be more easily recognised and therefore stand out and be noticed by students.

For more information, contact:
Belconnen High School, Murrangi Street, Hawker ACT 2614
Gold Creek School, Kelleway Avenue, Nicholls ACT 2913
LEARNING DEMOCRACY IS MORE THAN JUST LEARNING ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Derry Hannam
(English School Inspector and adviser/trainer for the Council of Europe in Education for Democratic Citizenship)

Learning about democracy and citizenship when I was at school was a bit like reading holiday brochures in prison. Unless you were about to be let out or escape it was quite frustrating and seemed pointless.

Fortunately this is no longer true of all schools and is much less true in some countries than others. However research in several countries tells us clearly that civics courses about politics and government that consist of no more than lectures from teachers are often experienced as very boring by students (Verba et al. 1995). I am sure that in your company I do not need to argue that schools can and should be much more democratic places than they often are if they are to educate effectively for democracy. To be effectively educated for democracy means being able to be a democratic citizen. It means, as the title of our conference says, knowing how to do democracy and not just knowing about it or passing written examinations.

I did not enjoy school much. I have never liked being told what to do. I don’t like telling other people what to do. So why did I become a teacher? Well I absolutely loved history as a child. Especially the history of transport networks - canals, railways, aviation. In some aspects of history I knew that I knew more detail than my teachers even though I did not always understand its wider significance. But they were not usually interested in what I knew or what I wanted to learn. I was especially irritated when they said things that I thought were not accurate but were not interested, in fact became angry, when I tried to correct them. I was probably a total pain in the neck - as my American friends would say. But it was school that made me a subversive pain in the neck to my teachers. I wanted to be an enthusiastic learner. The teachers could not accept that they might learn something from me, that I and my friends might know something useful to the class - that teachers and pupils/students could learn together and from each other. That all should be citizens with rights and responsibilities in the learning democracy.

I became a teacher because I wanted to do things in a different way.

(By the way these words ‘pupil’ and ‘student’ are a bit of a problem in English! In the United States all young learners in any kind of institution are students. In England until quite recently we called anyone at school a pupil. A student was someone at university. This is similar to French (eleve and etudiant) or German (schuler and student). More recently some secondary schools in England have started to call their pupils students. In my view a pupil is one who needs to be taught while a student can think and learn more for themselves. This is not always how English secondary schools treat young people even though they call them students! Even so I am going to use the word student for all young people in secondary schools.

(We have a further problem to understand what we mean by a secondary school. In most of our countries secondary school starts at around ten or eleven years of age. I think only in Denmark do young people go to the same school from seven to fifteen or sixteen - the folkeskole. However in many countries many students transfer to an upper secondary school, a gymnasium or lycee at around fifteen or sixteen when the law no longer makes school compulsory. Here they stay until eighteen or nineteen. In England students usually stay at the same secondary school from eleven until this age though from sixteen to eighteen they are in a separate department called the sixth-form. I guess that GLO in organising this conference are especially interested in making the upper secondary stage more democratic though I hope that we will also have time to consider the needs of all secondary schools.)

Demos in Greek means ‘people’ and kratia means ‘authority’ or ‘government.’ So democracy is the government of the people by the people. Authority or power is shared amongst the citizens who have equal rights and responsibilities as members of the democracy. If they elect representatives to speak for them then they can remove these representatives if they stop speaking for them. In ancient Athens where it all began not everyone was a citizen. Women, children and slaves could not speak or vote. Things have improved in Europe for women and slaves but the period of dependency that begins with childhood gets longer and longer as full-time education of the young is extended. Over two thousand years ago Alexander the Great was king of Macedonia by the time he was twenty and had conquered most of the world as he knew it before most of you will have finished at university. This seemingly endless delay in becoming a full member of society is problematic for young people today. I think and makes it all the more important that you should be fully involved in the decision making processes of your schools and wider communities. It is crazy to expect human beings to be passive at the very time in their lives when their metabolisms are most active. We should not be surprised at the increasing incidence of psychiatric illness amongst young people if society treats you in this way. The problem is even worse for the growing minority of young people who feel that they are failures at school and who too often drop-out to become the criminalised underclasses in all our countries. Their difficulties and their sense of alienation are of course even greater if they come from minority ethnic communities.

As a teacher I always tried to share power with my students as far as my responsibilities allowed. I did so for three reasons.

• Firstly I believed it was their human right - now set out in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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Secondly I believed they would learn many things from the experience that could not be learned from me lecturing them - perhaps most importantly the skills and attitudes necessary for democratic citizenship. The courage and confidence to participate - to speak out for their own rights and the rights of others. To recognise that minorities also have rights. To be able to negotiate. To listen and be tolerant of the ideas of others. To be able to make good rules/laws and if necessary to enforce them. To collaborate, compromise and make decisions. To take responsibility for those decisions and change them in the light of experience. To deal with money and budgets. I hoped that if students had some control over what and how they learned they would learn how to learn and to love learning. And so on and so on and so on - etc., etc., etc.!!

Thirdly I quickly learned that the class or the school became a nicer place to be when the students' ideas were taken seriously. Nicer physically as the environment became more interesting and better cared for (Titman 1995), and nicer psychologically as relationships between adults and students and between students themselves became more open and honest. The administration and management of the school became more effective and efficient with less time and money wasted repairing things or investigating problems.

There was also a fourth reason which is perhaps the real source of my motivation. It was more fun to be democratic! Though some other teachers did not always agree with me!!

I am a little embarrassed standing in front of you giving a 'keynote speech' partly because it is horrible to feel that you might be very boring but mainly because I don't think there is any such thing as an expert in how to make schools more democratic. The knowledge is only just beginning to exist. We are gathered here to share and also to create some of it. New knowledge will have to be created in each country around its own unique traditions and recreated in every school around its unique community experiences and problems. It will then have to be recreated in every learning community or class within every school.

What I am sure about is that the process has begun and that it will continue. For two reasons. One political; the other economic.

Firstly the political reason. Almost every country in the world now claims to be a democracy. Even our involuntary guest in England, General Pinochet says that he is a democrat. In nearly all these democracies politicians are worried that young people are becoming alienated from political processes (Crewe et al 1996, Weber 1998). Where they take an interest in social or environmental issues it is not usually through national political parties but through single-issue pressure groups such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International. Fewer eighteen to twenty five year olds bother to vote in elections. Politicians feel that young people don't like or trust them enough - poor things!! There are growing problems of nationalism, racism and xenophobia threatening to political stability in many countries. Research projects have been set up to find out more about the problems of citizenship and young people. All of them are finding that to be effective education for democratic citizenship must be experiential giving young people the right to participate in school decision making. To experience being a citizen in the mini-society of the school. This means that many schools have to change. Most countries in Europe have laws that require structures to exist in schools to give students a voice - sadly not in England though half our secondary schools choose to have student councils (Baginsky and Hannam 1999). Many countries have organisations of school students like GLO that are supported and consulted by governments - sadly not in England, though I am proud to be involved with PEG (PEG 1997 and 1998) which you will hear more about later from Jodie and Dawn.

The IBE/UNESCO research in 17 countries concluded that:

- One single structure that appears to be most influential in a variety of dimensions of citizenship preparedness is the existence of and participation in a students' council. The simple existence of a students' council at the school level seems associated with higher participation in other school activities ...and seems to encourage positive attitudes towards political pluralism. For those directly involved in managing

the students' councils, the impact appears to be even more important; they attain higher levels of positive attitudes towards civic tolerance and political pluralism and tend to be more involved in out-of-school activities. (Albela-Bertrand, 1997)

The even bigger project of the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) in 24 countries concluded at the end of its first phase last year:

- Civic education should be cross-disciplinary, participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment...

- There is often a dichotomy between what is learned about democracy and the reality in school and the classroom...

- There is a gap between the learned factual knowledge and the meaningfulness to the students...

- In many countries teachers are afraid to tackle controversial issues, have difficulty in changing their pedagogical approach, and feel uncertain in multi-disciplinary content matter. (Torney-Puria, et al 1999)

The Council of Europe 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' project which ends this year stresses the importance of students participating in decision making in schools (Council of Europe 1998). When the foreign ministers of the member states met in Budapest in May to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Council they included as a key issue in their declaration the importance of learning democracy in school and university life, including participation in decision making and the associated structures of pupils, students and teachers. (Council of Europe 1999) So my first reason for optimism is that politicians say that they want young people to participate more in schools. (Whether they always say what they mean is of course another question!)

The second reason is economic. No one disputes that literacy and numeracy - reading, writing and mathematics - are important. But in many countries employers, especially in the hi-tech information and computing industries, are beginning to say that they want young people who can think creatively, identify their own questions and problems, draw
information from many places and make sense of it, work collaboratively in seeking new solutions and communicate them effectively to others (Baylis et al., 1996 and Seltzer and Bentley, 1999). These are the skills that can come from active participation in school decision making. They are not learned from listening to teachers talk, making notes and learning the answers for questions asked by others in examinations! It is interesting that Bill Gates of Microsoft, the wealthiest individual in the world, took study leave after one year of boredom at Harvard University and never returned. There are many similar examples - Ricardo Semler of Semco in Brazil (Semler, 1992), Richard Branson of Virgin or Anita Roddick of Body Shop in my country. All call for education that is active and creative and involved in the real world.

It gives me some hope for the future that the skills needed by business are the same skills needed to make democracy work. There is little demand anymore for obedient workers to do repetitive work in factories. Some schools and some school systems have not woken up to this!

I sometimes hear it said that these days the world is run by multinational corporations so there is no future for democracy. I don't agree. We had an example recently where my government was pressured by the agricultural chemical industry, particularly Monsanto supported by the government of the USA, to allow genetically modified crops to be grown in the UK. These would have infertile seeds so that farmers would have to buy more seed from Monsanto every year. Using the internet thousands of people quickly learned that other governments such as that of Switzerland had banned these crops. They forced supermarkets to label the foods that contained them. The supermarkets then stopped buying the crops and now the value of Monsanto shares has collapsed forcing the company to sell its agro-chemical division which is actually now worthless! That's economic democracy in action folks!! It required information, organisation, determination, collaboration and self-confidence.

So there is lots of high level support for the idea of student participation in schools. It is perhaps even ironic that governments and business are saying that the qualities that they want young people to get from education are the qualities that could enable us to democratically control them. There are lots of encouraging words. Lots of words. But what about reality? How much have schools changed since I was a reluctant school student? Where school students are participating are they actually making decisions, are they being consulted by others who make the decisions, and when they are consulted are their opinions really listened to? I am really looking forward to learning from you on this.

How much is happening in the schools of your twenty-one countries? I often meet your teachers but I rarely have the chance to meet you.

From my experience and my research there seem to be three areas in school where young people are involved in decision making (Hannam 1998, Hannam 1999, Baginsky and Hannam 1999) The most usual and the least threatening to teachers is the extra-curricular area. Organising clubs, trips, visits, expeditions, discos, bands, raising money for charities, helping people in the community such as the very old or the very young. These may be managed by elected student councils or by ad-hoc groups of students involved in the different activities. They may have an official budget or they may have to raise their own money. They can add a tremendous amount to the school experience of some students and may give students the opportunity to meet with teachers and parent organisations, the school board or governors as we call them in England, and community groups. In a few schools ways are found to inform and discuss issues with all students.

The second most common way that I see students becoming involved in school decision making is in what could be called administrative matters. In many European countries students are elected to the school governing body, council or board - though not in England. In some schools' ways are found to inform and discuss issues with all students and not just the few members of the students' council. I have visited one or two schools where each student and teacher had one vote in the school parliament and there was a clear 'separation of powers' between the legislative, the executive and the judicial functions all of which involved students. Administrative matters could include issues such as the catering arrangements, the care for and improvement of the school environment, the management of the school library, setting up systems to help students who are being victimised or bullied. In England where most schools make students wear uniform they may have a say in changing it - though almost never in abolishing it which is what many would like to do. (Though others say that it avoids competitive dressing and stops the rich showing off!) Sometimes, but less often, students share in decisions about the organisation of the school day and the length of lessons. Sometimes, as in parts of Germany, student councils are required by law to be involved in making the school development plan. In some schools students may be involved in making the laws or rules for the school, usually for the students but sometimes for everybody including the teachers. I have visited schools with tribunals, judicial committees or courts where students share in enforcing the school laws. In others students are involved in deciding who should come to the school - and also who should leave it! Sometimes the opinions of students are included in the appointment of new teachers including head teachers though I only know of a few schools world-wide where students actually make the decision and even decide the salaries. This would be illegal in state schools in England. A recent European Commission project on school self-evaluation involving over 100 schools from all the countries of the EU found that the process was most effective when students were seriously involved (Macbeth, et. al., 1999) Though I must say that I got a bit annoyed when I read that teachers were surprised "...that the pupils were so serious and useful in the project." Why on earth is this surprising? What I found surprising was that this was said by a Norwegian teacher! I was very pleased that OBESSU was directly involved in that project.

The third area for student involvement is the curriculum - what is taught and how, and what is (or isn't) learned in classroom lessons. This is the area where change is hardest to bring about though it is supposed to be the main reason for
having schools. It involves all students. They will either become excited about learning or, as is too often the case, will see no point in much of it and may be put off learning for a long time and perhaps for ever. In most countries it is in this area of classroom practice that teachers feel most threatened by student democracy and are most resistant to the idea. They believe they are the experts and should have the authority. The Nordic countries seem to be the most progressive. Teachers in England are amazed when I tell them that in Denmark the law requires teachers in the Følkeskole to discuss and plan class projects with the students. They are equally amazed when I show them the books given to Norwegian upper secondary school students explaining their choices and responsibilities in the curriculum and advising them how to make their schools work democratically — that the law expects the student council to discuss learning and assessment in the school and not just the colour of the toilet paper! (I invented the bit about toilet paper — but not the rest!) (National Centre for Educational Resources, 1994) In Sweden section 2.2 of the 1996 Education Act requires teachers to ‘show respect for the individual pupil and organise daily work in democratic ways.’ Does it really happen? Do students just have choices provided by teachers or do they actually identify their own questions and solve their own problems? Some Norwegian teachers that I met recently in Malla were anxious about the new powers given to students — does this mean that the reforms are effective or the opposite?. A recent research study comparing student attitudes to teachers and schools in France, England and Denmark (Osborn, 1999) showed clearly that both teachers and schools were more popular with Danish students than the others. Interestingly there was no difference in the attitudes of boys and girls in Denmark. In both France and England many more boys than girls do not like school or teachers. Another piece of current research called the ‘Euridem Project’ finds that the commitment of young people to democracy in schools is particularly impressive in Denmark and Holland. It is probably no coincidence that a recent Amnesty league table of the human rights records of different countries puts Denmark, Norway and Finland in the top category of having no significant incidents of abuse. My country, and some of the others represented here, come quite a bit further down the list unfortunately.

A first step towards a democratic classroom is to seriously involve students in evaluating the lessons. In Vienna, Austria students evaluate their lessons in each subject at the end of each term or semester as well as the teachers assessing the students (Blum, 1997). At the Hyper Island School of New Media Design just across the water at Karlskona, Sweden where students work on real media projects the course is redesigned every year based on the evaluations of the students (Seltzer and Bentley 1999). I have been in schools where groups of students evaluate the work of whole subject departments. There have been experiments in the United States with 'after-class groups' of students who stay behind after the lesson to evaluate it with the teacher and together plan the next one (Shor 1996). This is the next step in democratising the curriculum. Students negotiate what will be studied and how from options offered by the teachers. The step after that is for the students to create the options.

Some successful attempts to create a democratic curriculum have taken place in areas of social deprivation in the United States where projects have been built around the real-life questions and problems identified by the students, their parents and their communities (Apple and Beane 1999). Groups of students work collaboratively with each other and the teachers. Some projects bring about real change in the local communities. Assessment is not just by the teacher or outside examiners but includes other students, experts from the community and even parents. This changes the power relations between teachers and students. I have visited schools where students can choose whether to attend lessons or not and marks or grades are only given when the students ask for them. Others where the students, sometimes in mixed age groups, can negotiate with teachers for courses to be created. Others where there are spaces for private study and students construct their own time-table or schedule. Others where students spend most of their time learning outside the school. And just two schools where the whole school meeting of all staff and students decide together which teachers of which subjects are required for the following year and for how many hours based on the interests of the students. One of these two schools, Sands School in England, is actually owned collectively by the sixty-five students who attend it. I only know of one school that was actually started by students - again not far from here. The Forsoksgymnaset in Oslo, Norway which began in 1966 and is still controlled by a student majority on its school council or governing body which has decided that the headteacher should be paid the same salary as the other teachers (Oygarden and Svartdal 1979).

It is difficult to be creative and imaginatively democratic with the curriculum where there is detailed central control of what will be studied such as exists in England or France. But even here some things are possible. I have recently been in a school in Solihull, England where the teachers offer the students the opportunity for small groups to choose topics that interest them in the A-level history, politics, and sociology courses. Each small group prepares and teaches some lessons on their special topic. The teacher is available as an adviser when required. Interestingly the students never miss lessons that are taught by other students. Essays are assessed by the student teachers and the teacher together. Another big state school in Wiltshire, England is experimenting with students choosing their teacher in some subjects.

The three organising questions of all my research into democratic schooling are

- Does it work?
- If it works why doesn't it happen more often?
- How can we make it happen?

The research evidence suggests that when schools work more democratically students have a more positive attitude to learning in school (Alderson, 1999) and to themselves as effective learners after they leave school. In democratic schools inter-racial friendships are more common (Conway et al. 1993), there is less pressure against studious students because there is more tolerance of difference and respect for individual rights (Zalaznik 1980), fewer students are excluded for anti-social or rebellious behaviour because there is

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less of it (Davies 1998), schools become safer and less violent places, ex-students are more successful in their lives not just in gaining employment or starting their own businesses but also in making lasting relationships and avoiding criminality (Shweinhart et al., 1993).

Yes, we can say that; democracy works in schools when it is allowed to happen. So why doesn’t it happen more often? Here we need to explore the training and attitudes of teachers, the actual behaviour of politicians, the anxieties of parents - and also, dare I say it, the conditioned expectations of many students to be told what to do. However I meet more and more young people who struggle without success to make sense of and find meaning in the school curriculum they are given. More and more often I hear the question “why do I need to learn this?”

There is a dangerous tendency for older human beings to hold on to the past when they feel threatened by new events - especially those who have power. And yet we are a learning species capable of successfully adapting to new environments. We are a creative, curious and collaborative species - or we would not be here today! So let’s get on with our task of designing more creative and collaborative schools!!

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This was the keynote speech at the International Conference for Students on Democracy in Education: “How Do You Do Democracy”; organised by the Danish Union of Upper Secondary School Students (GLO); Copenhagen 28th - 31st October, 1999
"Form One Lane" was the theme and title of the recent Professional Development Seminar, aiming to have the views and ideas of SRC Teacher Advisers to ‘merge’ and form one lane with students, that they might head in the same direction.

Held on Friday, March 31st at LaTrobe University, the Professional Development Seminar was a fantastic success. Whilst not without its faults, the seminar met most of the participants’ needs and as they said ‘exceeded our expectations’.

The management team of this Professional Development Seminar held out little hope that there would even be enough interest to continue, but were pleasantly surprised. Just under forty secondary school teachers turned up to share ideas on strengthening SRCs and to discuss many of the different problems they can be faced with. Some secondary students turned up too, and far from feeling out of their depth, contributed as equals with the teachers.

Participants were overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and eager to share ideas. We couldn’t have held them back had we tried. It was clear that this sort of support for SRC Teacher Advisers had been lacking in the past.

The program was designed so that most of the answers and resources that would be drawn upon came from the participants, and not from the presenters. As an introductory session, we looked at what an SRC was about, and the things it did. A wide variety of structures for SRCs emerged from the discussion; situations were different for different schools. Also discussed was the role of the SRC Teacher Adviser, and the best methods of supporting SRCs without taking away from the independence.

A session on networking and support for teachers followed, after some brief commercials, teachers discussed exactly what sort of support they would like to have, the resources they want, and the benefits of networking between teachers. These comments were then directed on the spot to the Eastern Region Student Council and PASTA to see what they could provide. In particular were suggestions of small conferences for teachers, and ideas-books as resources to be distributed. Both organisations liked all the suggestions that were brought up and agreed to carry them into practice wherever they could.

The final session for the day was three different workshops: "SRCs Working Cooperatively with School Administration", "The SRC Image Problem" and "SRC Utopia". Each workshop designed and presented in depth strategies and creative solutions to the problems that SRCs faced.

Workshop and session presenters were either teachers themselves, experienced with SRCs, professionals supporting SRCs, or secondary students involved in SRCs. A wide range of expertise and knowledge was called upon for the seminar, but by far the most useful resource was teachers being able to talk to each other and share their experiences and ideas.

Some of the comments we received in our evaluation:
  • "I wrote eight pages of ideas in just half an hour – my hand is aching."
  • "Philosophising - Where was the practical and realistic?"
  • [Some issues] "Way too huge... to discuss in such a short time."
  • "Gave me some good ideas to use for future activities."
  • "Practical, informative, gave everyone a chance to contribute."
  • "I’d like to see plenty more events like this."

Clearly the seminar didn’t reach everyone, but most of the participants were thrilled with the day, and everyone was keen to see a repeat of the day.

All the seminar content, ideas generated on the day, and strategies that were designed are being compiled in a report to be distributed mid April. For a copy of the report, contact the seminar manager, David Mould, on (03) 9499 2755, or e-mail ercsstudent@hotmail.com

"Form One Lane" was a joint initiative of the Eastern Region Student Council and the Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers (PASTA) – Victoria.
Have you ever felt that your rights have been trampled? Or that no-one is listening to you?

If so, you should check out the Convention on the Rights of the Child, also known as CROC. Long funny name, but it's all about helping you!

CROC talks about young people's rights - at school, at home, on the street and in the community.

CROC says that, as young people, you have the right to have your say and be listened to. Pretty basic rights - but how often are young people ignored? Now is your chance to remind everyone that young people have rights!

Have you and other young people got together to make a difference in your school or local community? If so, you're exercising your right to participation and it's time to shout out and tell everyone. You could win a cash prize in our new competition.

Extract from Action Exchange, which can be viewed at www.lawstuff.org.au

Action Exchange is a joint project by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, which aims to promote and encourage youth action and participation throughout Australia. The project is intended to promote that 10th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12, and other provisions which promote youth participation. Article 12 provides that a child capable of forming his or her views has the right to express those views and have them taken into account in all matters affecting the child. Action Exchange is about young people working together to be heard.

Part of the Lawstuff website (www.lawstuff.org.au), the project informs young people of their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and gives examples of youth action in Australia and across the world. Young people are encouraged to submit examples of projects they have been involved in, large or small, to improve the lives of young people and make themselves heard. Cash prizes are offered for outstanding examples of youth action.

One of the examples described on the website is the story of two young women who initiated a project for children of alcoholic parents. Another real life example is that of the Youth Advisory Council of Margaret River, Western Australia, who worked to improve facilities for young people in the area.

The closing date for submissions to be made is 30 June 2000. Winning entries will be publicised on Lawstuff from August 2000. For more information, contact Rebecca Neil on (02) 9398 7488 or at: r.neil@unsw.edu.au Or check out Action Exchange at www.lawstuff.org.au
Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can’t lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on:

(03) 9489 9052 or (03) 9344 9637

Australian:

Farewell YACVic (YACVic, Vic)

Network of Community Activities (Surry Hills, NSW) Annual Report 1999

Other Ways (AERG, Chirnside Park, Vic) Issue 83, March 2000

Schools’ Handbook (The 2000 RACV Energy Breakthrough, Vic)

YACSAround (YACSA, SA) 1/00 January/February 2000

Youth Studies Australia (ACYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 19 No 1, March 2000

International:

Communication Research Trends (Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, St Louis, USA) Vol 19, No 3, 1999

Democracy and Education (IDE, Ohio University, USA) Vol 13 No 3, Winter 2000

Education Now (Nottingham, UK) Issue 27, Spring 2000

ESSIC News (European School Student Information Centre, OBESSU, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) February 2000

Leadership (NASSP - Department of Student Activities, USA) Vol 28 Nos 6, 7; February, March 2000

National Coalition News (National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA) Vol 24 No 4, Winter 2000

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• Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) $ ...........
• Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) ($7 or $12 for two copies) $ ...........

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