Connect
supporting student participation

Number 130:
August 2001

Paving the Way in Victoria

VSSN Set Up
Victorian Secondary Student Network

Also in this issue:
- Paving the Way Conference Report
- NSW State SRC Conference:
  Student Leadership is Alive in the Public Education System
- Classroom as Community
  Developing Citizens and Learners
- Winter Training Camp: Berwick Secondary College, Vic
- Resources: conferences, materials, action research

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #24

Print Post Approved: PP 340646/0008
ISSN 0158-4995
$4.00
The Paving the Way Student Conference (held in Victoria in July) is highlighted in this issue. What an exciting, emotional and significant event this was. It built on many years of hard work by students and others in this state. The challenge will now be to ensure that the strong commitments made at the Conference are maintained and put into action.

Copies of this issue of Connect are being sent to all Conference participants. Keeping in touch is vital to an on-going network and, through this journal, you are connected to others with similar plans, practices, ideas, concerns and experiences throughout Australia. Unfortunately, Connect cannot afford to keep sending out free copies if you want to continue to be an active part of that network. I urge you to take the small step of subscribing and keeping in touch.

And how about the slightly larger step of telling others about what you're doing? That's what Connect is all about - documenting and supporting practice.

Why do we network - through organisations, journals, meetings, discussions? The students at Ballarat clearly identified three outcomes they wanted from a Victorian Secondary Student Network (VSSN) - and they're the same three outcomes we'd expect from other networks:

- to improve our individual practices - they said that they want the VSSN to assist them in their own skill development;
- to improve our collective practices - they want the VSSN to assist SRCs to operate more effectively;
- to have an impact within larger arenas - they said that, by joining with others, we can influence and shape the context/system in which we work.

That's the challenge in front of the VSSN now: to plan and implement activities that deliver those outcomes for all students (not even just those active in SRCs). If it cannot, it will have no legitimacy in the eyes of Victorian students. If it can, it will be a significant force.

The same challenges face teachers and others who support SRCs and other examples of student participation: how to build their own skills, how to work together, how to influence policy and practices.

Students in Victoria have, through their enthusiastic creation of a student-run statewide organisation (that will work in partnership with others in education), thrown us a challenge to build similar structures that will support and enhance the real educational participation of all.

Roger Holdsworth

Photographs:
(front cover and throughout)
of the Paving the Way Conference
by Ivan Gaal, Triple A Productions.
Coming together with 200 high school students for three days of fantastic discussions, new friendships, fun activities and motivational workshops was a great way to spend the last week of our school holidays. There was such an electric buzz in the air for the duration of the conference, which not only demonstrated what inspirational and dedicated young people we have in our schools, but also saw the formation of the new VSSN (Victorian Secondary Student Network).

These students, from across Victoria, attended the Paving the Way conference in Ballarat from July 11 to 13, 2001. The conference was run by students, for students.

The conference Steering Committee had a dream, in which students from across Victoria get together and work together on the bigger issues - issues that an individual or a single SRC can't handle alone. We had a vision of a body that was independent, and in which all aspects of its organisation were decided by the students. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Education Trust Victoria Ltd and to the support of the Victorian Office for Youth (who both made Paving the Way possible), we achieved our dream when all the students present formed the VSSN.

The conference involved long debates on issues from the operation of SRCs, to curriculum topics such as driver education, to the proposal for a statewide network of students. We had some amazingly inspirational students at our conference and the energy surrounding us for the whole three days was nothing short of amazing.

On day three it was with great joy that, after elections for members to represent each region, the Conference Steering Committee 'handed the baton on' to the new representatives who now form the VSSN. They will iron out the proposal and make the VSSN a huge success.

Paving the Way was the beginning of a new era for students of Victoria. We now have a voice!

Planning the Conference

A hard working team, composed mainly of students, took months and months of planning and organizing to get this event underway. Two existing groups worked together to make the Conference a reality.

Since December 2000, the Victorian Student Leadership Council Executive had been trying to plan a conference to recreate and continue the one that started them off in October 1999 (see Connect 120, December 1999). The group recognised that as they were getting older and many of their members had moved on to University or other commitments, they needed new blood to continue these initiatives.

At the same time, another group in Victoria, called the Victorian Student Representative Council were doing the same sort of thing (see Connect 119, October 1999 and Connect 123, June 2000). Operating without formal Departmental support, this group of students had held discussions and conferences about possible structures and processes for a Statewide SRC.

In early 2001 these two groups teamed together to form the Steering Committee that brought together the Paving the Way conference.

Over the first six months of the year, the Steering Committee met about once a month to organise the conference. Our first challenge was to decide exactly what we wanted from the conference, then to plan how it would be run and what we would be doing there. The Steering Committee saw that this task was not as simple as it may have sounded, but we were dedicated and enthused. We decided on venues, times, agendas, guest speakers and even argued endlessly about conference T-shirts. We were both the Planning Committee and the Conference facilitators.

Through many discussions and increasingly frequent meetings, over e-mail and in person, the conference came to be. And it was all students who put it together. But in saying this, we must also acknowledge several important adults who helped us along the way: Roger Holdsworth, Steve Metcalfe, Cathey Dragas and David Mould.

The Steering Committee had a dream and we achieved it through a lot of hard work that really paid off and was worth the effort.
The 'Paving the Way' Conference

Day 1

Day 1 (Wednesday 11th July) started well. "Could everyone please calmly make your way out of the building?" These few comforting words, as fire alarms were ringing, just as we were about to start the conference registrations, signalled the 'real' opening to the 2001 Paving the Way Student Conference. We evacuated the building. (Not that this was the only hiccup that occurred: sessions ran over time and buses, for those who stayed at Sovereign Hill, made us all late. But whatever challenges we faced, we overcame them and ended up on top.)

What looked to be a grim start to the 'big event' - standing outside in Ballarat's freezing morning - was simply part of the 'entertainment' for what ended up being three days of fantastic discussions, new friendship, fun activities and motivational workshops. It was a great way to spend the last week of our school holidays.

After registration, the formal proceedings started with...

Ice-Breaker Activities

200 students standing in a large room. Standing next to people who they didn't know and who were (most likely) from the opposite side of the state. So what is there to do?

Before every discussion session at the conference all participants were involved in 'ice breaker' activities which were run by the student facilitators.

What did we do in these activities?

We hopped around on one foot saying 'hi' to people we didn't know. We played games of chance in which we had to stand up and put our hands on our head or behind in the hope that we could win a prize. The most chaotic game involved balloons: each person got a balloon and tied it around their ankle with a piece of string. The aim was to pop everyone else's balloon while defending yours. It was hysterical. Two challenges we faced were: forming a circle and sitting on each other's knees without falling over, and untangling ourselves after grabbing another person's hand in the game 'knots'.

The aim of these games was to give participants an opportunity to 'let loose'. Even though most of us thought they were crazy, they gave us a chance to meet new people, to relax and, most importantly, to have fun.

Opening of Conference

From the warm-ups, we went to the main theatre where students were welcomed by Veggie Cari on behalf of the Steering Committee, and the Paving the Way conference was officially opened by the Minister for Youth Affairs, Justin Madden. The Minister (on a video hook-up) was introduced by Karen Overington, the local Member of Parliament. This started the conference on a high.

Ben Quick and Zack Pretlove from the Conference Steering Committee also talked about their hopes and expectations for the Conference, and got audience members sharing and participating in these aims.

Homegroups

After this, it was right into it. A group of 20 students worked as facilitators to the conference, which involved early mornings, late nights and being nice to everyone all the time. Each facilitator had their own 'colour animal' groups to work with and befriend, and it was their job to explain the issues, start conversations and encourage people to voice their opinions.

School and Student Council Issues

The first set of workshops was on school and SRC issues that students had identified. They covered topics like:

- Why have an SRC? ("Are SRC's effective for the wider student body or do they operate as 'one man bands'?"

- How can we improve the image of the SRC? How does an SRC communicate with the rest of the school community? ("You are an unrepresentative group of teachers' pets, who don't really know what is going on in your school, let alone what's affecting other students!"

- What is the role of SRC (teacher) advisors? ("To ensure meeting success, your Teacher Advisor must set the Agenda.")

- How much can an SRC actually do? ("Are SRC's all talk and no action? How can we change this?")

- SRCs and Official School Committees: ("Do we need to be on School Council and other committees? When can they help and when can they hinder our goals?")

- How do we run efficient and effective meetings? ("Order! Order! Umm, didn't we talk about that last week; what did we decide?")
• Why have a constitution? ("An SRC doesn’t need rules, and guidelines, it will always be democratic and secure.")

• What other leadership/participation approaches are possible? eg VVDP, SAT ("Student participation?? But you’ve GOT an SRC!! Aren’t you satisfied??")

• How do we communicate with the Administration? ("He said NO again! What can we do?")

• How do we get on the SRC? Who gets to be on the SRC? ("Democratic elections? America didn’t do it so why should we? I’ll get all my friends to vote for me ... POWER!!!")

and, for the teachers present:

• What role should teachers play in SRCs? ("I’m confused - do you want me to help or not?")

A full report is being prepared on the outcomes of these workshops.

Fishbowl: Issues that are bigger than SRCs

If you’ve ever wondered what it would feel like to ‘put the shoe on the other foot’, then the ‘fishbowl’ is a game for you. Basically you put 200 students in a room, give everyone a role, ranging from an SRC member to a teacher adviser to a representative from the Department of Education or even a parent (to name a few). You then read out a hypothetical situation and groups react accordingly (or try to anyway).

The aim of the game was to get everyone thinking about what it would feel like to be put in the position of another group within the school system, and to try and imagine how they would react to or handle the given situation.

The Fishbowl was a fun and sometimes silly activity to do, but it got people thinking ‘outside of their box’, trying to understand how it would feel to handle a certain situation from a different perspective. The game also helped students to understand that, when conflict arises, or things aren’t always going their way, then there is usually a reason, and sometimes the best way to deal with a conflict and come to a resolution, is to look at the issue from all angles.

The Fishbowl was a bag of laughs, which sent us all an important message!

Conference Dinner

A conference dinner was held on the Wednesday night to round off the first day, and we all dressed up for the occasion. We heard speeches from our sponsors - Sujatha Parnell from the Education Trust and Jennifer Fraser from the Office for Youth. We also had an inspirational interview with Jason Smith from the Titans.

Day 2

After some ice-breaker activities, and a motivational presentation from 'MoMedia', Day 2 (Thursday 12th July) started with further discussions around the possibility of a State Student Council. An Open Mike encouraged all participants to put forward their ideas from day 1. Then a panel of students and others provided some information about the history of student networking in Victoria and the current situation interstate.

This felt like when the real work started. We discussed the history of previous attempts to achieve a state organisation and, through that, we incorporated and formed our own ideas on how this new network would run.

Home and Regional Groups

We also broke off into our colour animal groups and then into regional groups to discuss what this network would do for the state and also each region. Here small groups developed recommendations and amendments to the main proposal being put forward by the Steering Committee.
Issues Workshops

In the afternoon, we formed small issue groups, where we discussed what kind of role our organisation may be able to play in education organisations all around the state. We had guest presentations and discussions on:

- the Alpine Leadership School;
- Models for Youth Participation;
- the Creating Conversations program;
- Pre-Licence, Pre-Driver or Driver Education;
- the environment (Conservation Volunteers Australia);
- Health Education/Sexuality Initiatives;
- the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria;
- the proposed Victorian Children’s and Young People’s Commission;
- Indigenous Participation in Education;
- School Councils;
- the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority;
- Challenging Middle Years Students;
- Active Citizenship in School;
- Is Sport Cool?; and
- Bullying.

FreeZA Gig

After a long day we all had a chance to relax with a FreeZA gig provided by the City of Ballarat.

Day 3

Day 3 (Friday 13th July) started with warm-up activities and discussions in the colour-animal groups, and the ideas and proposals generated here were brought together in a main plenary session.

Decision-Making Session

This session, chaired by Beth Atkinson, saw all the hard work pay off. By 11 am the entire Conference had officially formed the VSSN (Victorian Secondary Student Network).

This main plenary session of the conference was carried out amidst ‘orderly chaos’, as several motions were put, all of them relating to the proposed new student network. The first motion, that the conference agrees to forming some sort of student network, was carried unanimously, after being moved by Siri Sao of the Conference Planning Committee.

Then followed an energetic debate on the name of this proposed organisation, with several names being put forward. Eventually, after a diligent debate, it was decided that the new name of the organisation be the: “Victorian Secondary Student Network” (VSSN).

Then followed several debates on the structure of the network. Five amendments to the original guidelines were put, and three were passed:

- That, in 2.1 (a) School Group, replace “open to all students, including non-SRC students” by “open to all Victorian students in the secondary education system”;
- That the diagram under Student Member Participation include ‘clusters’;
- That the following statement be added to the section on Student Member Participation:

  “In an area where there are a few schools in close vicinity, these will be urged to take advantage of this by forming a cluster. In an area where schools are sparse, these will be urged to cross the distance and get closer by forming clusters.”

As Beth said, the proposal was now set in ‘wet concrete’, ready to be shaped by an incoming State Council of students.

The amendments that were not passed were both on the same theme as the second amendment, and as such were not considered as important as some of the others. Several more amendments were deferred to the incoming VSSN executive, and the meeting was duly closed with the motion that the revised guidelines be accepted. Considering the difficulty of the task, chairperson Beth Atkinson did a superb job, and the 200+ students that were present rarely lost focus.

Contact:

The VSSN web address:
http://www.studentsvictoria.org

The VSSN e-mail address:
vssn@studentsvictoria.org
Regional/Area Groups

The last order for the day was to organise each of the nine regions in Victoria to elect two representatives who would be a part of the VSSN Council or executive team.

Victoria is divided into nine ‘education regions’: Western Metro, Northern Metro, Eastern Metro, Southern Metro, Barwon South-Western, Central Highlands-Wimmera, Lodden Campaspe Mallee, Goulburn North-Eastern and Gippsland. Due to the size of some of these regions, some would form into “natural cluster groups”, which is a group of schools within a region. Thus one region could have two or more natural cluster groups, while some wouldn’t have any.

During the conference, we had regional meetings of the Conference participants and made decisions on many things such as deciding on cluster groups, meeting dates, and state VSSN representatives. These were also a time to explain about the VSSN and regional structures, as many students were unaware of these. We decided to hold meetings in each region, and these will be left up to the regional representatives to organise. Anyone is invited to these meetings, to know more about plans, just log onto the VSSN website:

http://www.studentsvictoria.org

The two regional representatives will come together to form the VSSN State Council or Executive Committee, and discuss relevant topics.

The following students were elected as Regional members to the VSSN State Council:

- Ana-Maria Maghiar (Southern Metro)
- Dale Mills (Southern Metro)
- Ben Reynolds (Eastern Metro)
- Kathy Franklin (Eastern Metro)
- Natasha Whitelaw (Northern Metro)
- Paul Tresidder (Northern Metro)
- Leigh Hetherton (Western Metro)
- Natasha Ljuba (Western Metro)
- Natalie Hawthorn (Barwon SW)
- Nicole Mentha (Barwon SW)
- Edward Freeland (Central Highlands Wimmera)
- Sara-Jane McIntyre (Central Highlands Wimmera)
- Holly Pietsch (Lodden Campaspe Mallee)
- Marji Kennedy (Lodden Campaspe Mallee)
- Ashley Kline (Goulburn NE)
- Melissa Walker (Goulburn NE)
- Angela Mawdey (Gippsland)
- Leigh Clifford (Gippsland)

The continuation of the VSSN will depend on the students of Victoria. Right now, we are trying to get all the regions up and running to get this thing off the ground, but without strong foundations, this never would have happened.

Closing Session

With all that done and many t-shirts signed, the Conference closed on the Friday afternoon with an address by Peter Wilkinson (Office for Youth), thanks to the Steering Committee, and congratulations and challenges to the in-coming student committee.

And the final message was, as Zack Pretlove said at the end: “Never give up!”

August 2001
The 'Paving the Way' Conference

What did participants think?

"The memories for us: Living on Campus at university when you haven't even finished puberty yet; meeting 200 people with similar ideas and goals from right across Victoria in just three days; attending a nice sit down dinner where teenage boys wore shirts and ties... without being forced to; meeting an Australian Olympian; seeing all of your hard work and effort pay off before your eyes; implementing a student-run and student-designed project that will see students' voices heard and supported as one all across the state. Ever thought all this was possible? Well, it is and it happened. Paving the Way was a student conference designed by students, for the future of students. It combined all of this and more. With financial help from our sponsors, The Education Trust, Delphin Limited and the Office for Youth, we had three fantastic days of experiences I know that none of us will forget, and saw a student network set up which will be imperative for the future of power and students' voices." 

Kate Buchan and Siri Sao

"For me the conference was a great chance to meet and work with some of the most amazing people. But, more importantly, it was the beginning of something great, of a new era for students in Victoria. It was a dream that became a reality." Beth Atkinson

"I attended the conference in the belief that I would just meet and interact with people from all over the state. Little did I know that I could actually make a difference! Every single one of us was a small link in a large chain of thoughts, ideas and discussions. I went away from the Conference feeling satisfied that I provided sufficient input towards the VSSN. Not only did this Conference enable me to interact with students statewide, I also gained self-confidence and the ability to stand up and say what I believe. I am not the only one that has benefited from me attending this Conference, for my school community and our SRC representatives have also received parts of my knowledge from the conference. I just hope that we, the younger generation, can work together to keep this network operating." Natalie Wallace

"For me, Paving The Way was everything, and a whole lot more. It was the end of one era, and the beginning of another. Although there were a few moments of doubt, and not to mention conflict, we were all reaching for the same goal. And we made it. Being a part of the conference, seeing how it all came together and knowing that the months of hard work had paid off was something I will never forget. The Steering Committee really did 'pave the way' towards a statewide student network, and I am sure that the VSSN can keep our dream alive." Lyndall Nutty

"Just to put in my two cents, I think the VSSN is in very capable and enthusiastic hands. It was an absolute pleasure to facilitate and help put this Conference together. I have no doubt that the spirit of the VSSN will continue well into the future, as there are many capable students willing and able to push for student representation." Leigh Hetherton

One school reports on their conference attendance...

We went to the Paving the Way conference with the aim of setting up a statewide secondary student network - which basically means we wanted to have communication links with other students around Victoria, not just Melbourne. In doing this we hoped to have a student voice in regards to our future including our education.

You can put the words 'Victoria' and 'Education' in a sentence and it'll sound boring because students aren't incorporated or listened to when they have something to say. (Sometimes SRC and SAT are like exercise and diet - they just aren't enough). So we hoped that putting the word 'Student' in this sentence and then mentioning the VSSN (Victorian Secondary Student Network) and taking out the word 'Education' will get you more 'excited'.

The VSSN was just one of the results of the conference; others included heaps of friends (numbers), fun, informative workshops and yummy food. Another result of this was regional links (for those of you who are challenged, we are in Northern Metropolitan) which is basically an alternative to clusters and allows us to meet up when necessary to discuss issues and concerns within our region. We attended workshops about issues such as bullying, Middle Years problems, student participation, curriculum, and SAT achievements among many other things.

One of the most engaging thing about the conference was that we would sit in a room with 198 other students and everyone could express themselves openly and everyone had something to say. Also the conference was student run, which was good because we didn't have a whole lot of 20 year olds talking at us and forcing their views upon us. (We're thinking of putting a proposal to DEET that teachers not be over 23, except history teachers coz it's important we have an eye-witness account of white settlement).

The conference was not only fun but also education. It was only a three-day trip but we had a great time and learnt a lot from the experience. From here we hope to get other students involved in the network, as you don't have to be an SRC (Forum) member to have your say.

Alice Williams and Rose Connolly
Princes Hill Secondary College
(from the College newsletter)
"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Steering Committee from the day we first got together in April - the task ahead of us, to plan a conference. Thank You! I’ve been truly privileged to be given the chance to work with so many fantastic, committed people over the last few months leading up to our conference."

**Paving the Way** is indeed what we have achieved - we have set down the path, the foundation for a much needed and much wanted student network in Victoria. 

I continue to be inspired by the commitment of all the young people working to make this ‘Vision’ we all have, a reality.” *Cathey Dragasia*

"The Conference for me was an eye opening experience. To meet over 200 students who came to Ballarat for the same reason was inspiring. I thought the Conference was a great idea as it let students state-wide talk about a range of issues in the hope that a network (of soris) would be set up. The biggest reward, from all that hard work, was to see all of our efforts come together. Over those three days I met new people and felt like I knew them for ages and, most importantly, saw history in the making.” *Cara Robb*

"To me, **Paving the Way** was a chance to find within the conference participants an inspirational motivation to make a difference, which I had long ago lost within myself.” *Kate Buchan*

"I found the **Paving the Way** conference both interesting and useful. The fact that it was also helpful in terms of establishing links between Victorian students was an added bonus. Not only was the meeting able to pass a number of new resolutions, and make many recommendations for a Student Network, but, on a personal level, I was also able, by acting as a facilitator at the conference, to improve my own leadership skills, and was given the opportunity to meet and make friends with a wide variety of students. There was some hard work involved too, and late nights spent planning for the next day’s activities did sometimes take their toll, but I felt that the positives outweighed the negatives enormously, and had a fantastic time. I’m looking forward to next year.” *James O’Malley*

"The conference which many eager secondary students attended during the holidays was a great inspiration and well run. The conference ran for three days and involved over 150 students. The conference covered many different topics, from bullying to how SRCs run in ways different to each other. During the time there, we students created the VSSN, the Victorian Secondary Student Network! I am sure that I can say this on behalf of everyone: we all had a great time and learnt a lot in a great atmosphere filled with friendly people.” *Tina Howard*

"I think that the conference is a turning point in youth action, and that with this new network we will be able to be heard on important youth issues. This new network will prove to be an invaluable resource in the future.” *Dale Mills*

"Attending the conference was a wonderful, life-altering experience, during which I made many, many new friends. It was terrific to meet students of such differing backgrounds from all over the State, all working towards a common goal and I was continually astounded by the extraordinary outpouring of energy and enthusiasm displayed by all. It was exhilarating and inspiring to see everyone so genuinely excited and positive about the whole venture. I believe I have gained enormously from this wonderful opportunity. I have not only enhanced my leadership skills, but I have also learnt more about myself and had a unique opportunity to work and share thoughts with so many talented people. I am filled with optimism for our future; if the conference is any indicator, our leaders of tomorrow should be remarkable. In the more immediate future, I am also optimistic that a state-wide student network is indeed possible and I hope everyone involved with the conference will continue their contribution towards the VSSN and make this dream a reality!” *Sarah Horan*
"Being a member of the Steering Committee and a facilitator, I was relieved when we were able to overcome all that was thrown at us (including an emergency evacuation five minutes prior to the start) and get the conference underway. Being able to discuss the formation of a statewide student organisation with students from all over the state was our aim, and this was achieved. The VSSN has two representatives from each of the nine regions, forming a state body. The VSSN will now work actively to overcome issues facing the students of today. I think that this conference has taught us we can achieve anything if we put our heads to it."  

Dale Mills

"I was fortunate to be a participant in the Paving the Way Conference. It gave me the opportunity to have an input into the way we would go about setting up and running a statewide student organisation. It also gave me a chance to meet and form friendships with students from other schools and from different parts of Victoria. We often split into smaller groups to discuss how we thought a Statewide Organisation could be formed. We also formed regional groups and figured out how our region was going to work together. Berwick is in the Southern Region. At the Conference we managed to achieve the forming of the VSSN, which will hopefully provide a link between students all across Victoria, and together we can influence the government and large organisations on youth issues."  

Kirsty Manning

"I participated in workshops on a variety of topics. I attended a session about Student Action Teams/Victorian Youth Development Program. We talked about whether we should have leadership courses other than SRCs. I also attended a session with YACVic discussing whether or not we should have a Children's and Young Persons' Commission. Finally the last session was with the VCAA (Board of Studies); we talked about the VCE and other year levels with a representative from the VCAA. Overall I had heaps of fun, made new friends and learnt valuable information to improve our Student Voice."  

Janelle Kenny

"The role of the facilitators on the conference was to assist the Steering Committee in the running of sessions; to ensure that all items on the conference program were successful; to ensure an outcome was achieved from each of the groups; to ensure each participant would gain the most out of the conference; and finally to develop a statewide student network. The conference was a success and all who attended - facilitators, Steering Committee and participants - gained many valuable lessons in leadership, problem solving and also how to improve their school system. All in all it was a great experience and now we all look forward to the VSSN establishing a working network, to be set into 'wet concrete' until it dries and a full blown working network is formed."  

Danie Bunting

Some anonymous evaluations:

What was the most important thing that you got from this conference?

"A sense that I had given something that had helped start a revolution for youth."  

"There was so many things - the opportunities, the ideas, the people, leadership, ENTHUSIASM, inspiration, communication, motivation. I learnt more from this conference in three days than I have learnt in three months at school!"  

"Leadership Skills!"  

"Just to be a part of a real decision-making process!"  

"Learning that every SRC or equivalent is different."

"Heaps of ideas, new friends and a new organisation."  

"Understanding needs of students throughout Victoria and at the regional level."

"Uniting all the various sectors of secondary schooling can be extremely beneficial in dealing with issues."

"That together we will be able to achieve everything and anything we want."

"Helping make a difference. Being able to take new ideas back to school and teach others. New networks. New friends."

Support:

Paving the Way was supported by the Education Trust Victoria Ltd, Delphin Limited, the Office for Youth, Connect, the Youth Research Centre, Raise Your Voice and Second Strike Productions.

To ensure the future of the VSSN, support will hopefully continue to come from these and other groups; in particular the support of the Office for Youth, through its state office and also via regional liaison people, will enable us to function with government support and involvement and maintain links with government officials.
Student Leadership is Alive Within the Public Education System

Over the past months, not a lot of positive things have come to light regarding the Public Education System, that is not until a group of dedicated high school students came to the forefront.

This group of students are members of the New South Wales Student Representative Council (NSW SRC). Composed of twenty-two students, both male and female, this council addresses important issues relating to high school students in NSW. They come from all across New South Wales, ranging from Broken Hill, to Clarence/Coffs Harbour, and down to Wagga Wagga.

The NSW SRC gives the students of NSW a voice, a voice that until now has very rarely been heard. Such is the prestige of the position, that even the NSW Minister for Education and Training, The Hon Mr John Aquilina, has taken time out of his busy schedule to attend a meeting of the Council and discuss and listen to the issues the Council is dealing with.

Student Leadership is a major part of life in public high schools in NSW. Our high schools are the breeding ground for our country’s future leaders. Schools are now an environment where students can actively participate in the decision making process.

Dr. Ken Boston, the Director General, Department of Education and Training, commented on the importance of SRCs: "It gives the students a voice and respect for democratic processes. Understanding them is critical in the education of all young people because they are fundamental to a successful, constantly changing society."

Year of the Volunteer

With this year being the ‘Year of the Volunteer’, highlighted by last year’s Olympic Games, NSW public schools are moving towards acknowledging the volunteers in their school that help with their day to day running. The list of volunteers in a school is never-ending, from the canteen ladies/men, to the P&C, and even those people who help out with reading. Where would schools be without them?

The overall success of a student and/or even a school relies heavily on the quality of its teaching staff. Many people underestimate the amount of work teachers put into their jobs. Many teachers volunteer for extra-curricular activities including sporting teams, SRCs, and year advisors, to name a few. Teachers aren't paid for these extra activities: it is done out of their good will and their desire to have a positive impact on the lives of students apart from the academic teaching in the classroom.

Just Like Us

On Friday 25th May, the NSW Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Mr John Aquilina, officially launched ‘Just Like Us’, a resource for Student Leaders and SRC’s focusing on encouraging students with disabilities to participate more fully in school life. Julieta Ringrose, a NSW SRC member and a Year 11 student at Forster High School, addressed the guests and Mr Aquilina at the launch. At the completion of the launch, Mr Aquilina made a point of meeting every NSW SRC member, speaking individually to each one on issues and points of interest. The outcome of this day was a step forward, as Mr. Aquilina has invited the council to meet with him once a month to discuss issues of concern from the students’ viewpoint.

State Conference

Working alongside the NSW SRC is another organisation of students, whose main responsibility is organising and running the annual State SRC Conference. This body of NSW public school students is called The State Working Party. Each State Conference follows a theme. Previous themes include:

1997 ‘Drugs Exist, Know the Risk’
1998 ‘A Fair Go For All’
1999 ‘Youth Matters’
2000 ‘Participate, It’s Great’

The 2001 State Conference will follow a theme relating to school spirit and culture. This relates back to the launch of ‘Just Like Us’ with the primary idea of inclusiveness.

The State SRC Conference has a philosophy of a cascade flow back through our District SRCs and then to our school SRCs. It is vitally important for all participants at the conference to take back to their respective schools and districts what they have learnt through the week-long, intensive leadership conference.

The Public Education System is doing many great things for the people of New South Wales. What we read about in the media are normally the things that are not going according to plan. The education a student can receive from the Public Education System, whether it be in High School or Primary School, is very rewarding. People need to learn not to judge a book by its cover, but to read further, ask questions, speak to people who have experienced a Public School Education.

Amy Wadwell
Campbelltown Performing Arts High School
Campbelltown District SRC President
New South Wales Student Representative Council

August 2001
BEING REFLECTIVE THROUGH SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY AND WRITING

From time to time Connect or the PASTA Newsletter will provide ideas gleaned from the many workshops available to teacher and student delegates alike at ISRC 2000. In the February edition of the PASTA Newsletter the high school leadership curriculum, as developed successfully by teacher Kathy Coll in Pennsylvania, was highlighted.

The two workshops presented by University of Western Sydney Lecturer Les Vozzo stand out as enhancing professional development ideas for all ages. Post Conference in particular, Les’ guidelines for reflective writing to properly review and build upon experience are invaluable.

Prior to his current role as a Faculty of Education member at UWS, Les has been a double-decaded activist and avid supporter of student councils, student leadership and teacher/adviser initiatives. He was a Co-Founder of the Regional Association of Student Government (RASG, Western Region NSW - 1981-1987), Co-Author of “The Hitch-Hikers Guide to Student Government” - 1982, the brains and energy behind the Liverpool Association of Student Activities (LASA, NSW - in the mid 80s) and a systematic proponent of alternative curriculum approaches in teacher training throughout.

Here follows some of the theory aspects of his very action oriented sessions. Like most such experiences, it is impossible in print form alone to capture the essence of grappling with this material. Like good active citizenship, the real ‘test’ is in the process. So try some. Or join PASTA and contact Les for the stimulus material to continue. Or - the inevitable question: How do I fit this in along with everything else?

Contact: l.vozzo@uws.edu.au

Charles Kingston

We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our touch, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit. (e. cummings)

So began the notes for another ISRC 2000 workshop last December. In another context and from another writer (Art Pearl) “If it hasn’t been written, it hasn’t happened!”

As Les Vozzo explained, one key element in improving what you do as a student representative or teacher adviser is being reflective and critically self-appraising your practice. In this workshop participants experienced how to systematically evaluate and communi-cate what they do.

Some specific objectives were to examine guidelines for conducting systematic inquiry into current practice, to integrate their own experiences within the guidelines provided and to explore different forms of writing as a means of raising and discussing key issues/concerns about student participation and advocacy.

1. What does BEING REFLECTIVE mean?

Some questions to ask yourself are:

- What did you do? ... Why did you do it? ... What were some of your concerns or issues in doing it? ... What other ways could you do it? ... How would you help someone else do it?
- In diagram and in other words: Find a starting point ... Clarify the situation ... Undertake action strategies ... AND (the essential of the reflective exercise) GO PUBLIC.

2. So what is ACTION RESEARCH?

- “a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve ... their own practice, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p 162)
- The graphic ‘cycles of action and Learning’ suggests two cycles: Reflect - Plan - Act - Observe followed by Revise Plan - Act - Observe - Reflect. Like all perfect circles, the process is continuous.

3. Step by step for SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY AND REFLECTION

- STEP 1: Describe your present situation.
- STEP 2: Write down what you want to change.
- STEP 3: Write down your action plan.
- STEP 4: Keep an account of what you do and collect evidence.
- STEP 5: Reflect on your actions and write a narrative about your actions and what you have learnt.

4. So where do I get my SOURCES OF EVIDENCE?

- Learning logs, student interviews, flashback notes, photos, documents, field notes.
- ‘Make sense of the data’: by reading the comments given by students participating in a school leadership training program. (What do you mean your school doesn’t have one?!) 6. Moreover, what’s this ‘PATCHWORK TEXT’ caper?

- Write short narratives about two situations you have experienced and then connect the two pieces with a brief commentary.
- Constructing a ‘Patchwork Text’ requires you to “... choose your combinations carefully. The right choices will enhance your patchwork, the wrong choices will dull its vividness, hide its original beauty. There are no rules you can follow, you have to go by instinct, and you have to be brave.” Adapted from the film, How to make an American Quilt by Universal Studios (1995)
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 24 - August 2001

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

SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM ON THE WEBSITE

PASS THE PASTA

In this International Year of the Volunteer, the voluntary nature of the work of SRC Advisers in Schools should be examined. There is great variation in both the motivation of individual advisers and the recognition given to them. Great progress has been made in New South Wales with the appointment of a State Coordinator at the level of Senior Education Officer Grade 2 (SEO 2). This Coordinator has access to forty District Welfare Consultants at the level of Senior Education Officer Grade 1 (SEO 1). For them, Student Leadership is about 1/7th of their portfolio. It is understandable, therefore, that the frequent urgency of other aspects of a welfare consultant’s work package distracts from SRC-student leadership, which in schools is extracurricular and staffed largely by volunteers. Students and teachers complain of a general lack of flow through of information and resources from the network to individual school SRCs and, after some reflection on the status of Student Representative Council Teacher Advisers in the New South Wales network, it seems that a change of policy might be needed to bridge the gap that exists between them and Student Welfare Consultants (SEO 1) in the District Office.

A similar gap exists between the Student Representative Council Teacher Advisers and PASTA, their Professional Teacher Association. Subject-specific Associations have an obvious interest for teachers in each subject area. However this interest is not evident for teachers involved in SRC. Student Leadership needs to have its own syllabus, including history and the theory of government, roles in the parliament, the politics of representation, methods of voting, formulation of policy and the like, with Student Council as a practical component. A fair and equitable approach would be to have this accessible to all students, with the potential to create an informed citizenry. Perhaps staff could elect to teach Civics and SRC as part of their paid teaching load. If you have some ideas that could help change policy and the status of SRC Teacher Advisers in schools, making the SRC network more effective in a legitimate curriculum area, please write to PASTA Inc. Australia, or email your suggestions to me at bowtech@ozemail.com.au

Our congratulations to the Victorian secondary students who met in Ballarat recently and voted overwhelmingly to form a Victorian Secondary Student Network. Well done! We hope other states will follow your lead. On the national scene, PASTA is pleased to advise that our Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN) is 097 143 587. We are encouraging the formation of local Associations which will join with PASTA in an ‘Educational Districts Model’ so that a National Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers and a National SRC network can be formed. Please contact us for further details of this project.

PASTA will be providing a Training and Development opportunity on Friday 26 - Saturday 27 October at the Professional Teachers Council Conference Centre, corner of Norton and Marion Streets, Leichhardt NSW. We will focus on Australian issues, activities for SRC and resources for SRC Advisers. Information about PASTA’s international link projects with SRC networks in the United States, Canada and Thailand, will also be available. Check out Connect and our website: http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/ and join PASTA Inc. Australia now and help us to help you keep up-to-date with current PASTA activities.

Jeanne Bow
President, PASTA Inc.
2001 PASTA TOUR TO NORTH AMERICA
Student President’s Report

Each of the fifty States of the United States of America elects a State President to represent their State at official functions whilst at the National Association of Student Councils Annual Conference. While we feel that this is not a necessary part of the tour, we respect the wishes of our hosts and select one student from amongst the delegates to fill this role. This year it was Lachlan Wallace from Epping Boys High School in New South Wales. The following is the report he gave to the PASTA executive upon his return.

It is dedicated to the rest of the delegates: Anna, Ruby, Lauren, Jamielle, Heath, Amie, Emily, Richard, Alicia, Rey, Jackie, Tim, Kirby S, Alfie, Joel, Kirby W, James, Lisa and Mimi.

Friends and family

For each student of the Australian Delegation to pinpoint the exact moment when the Fourth successful PASTA North American Tour 2001 began is impossible. For all of us, this tour, like its predecessors, began with a dream. The dream became a reality and our experiences will now become the catalyst for many more opportunities for student leadership and involvement. This tour not only served as an opportunity to advertise and recruit for ISRC 2002 but it also strengthened relations with Bordentown Regional High School, the Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers (CASAA) and justified the adoption of Australia into the NASC family, under Region 7. Moreover, each delegate has grown from our once-in-a-lifetime experience. Without doubt, we have all been most fortunate for being given and having experienced this wonderful opportunity.

The hardest question that I have ever been asked was, upon our return, “So what did you learn?” The difficulty I face in answering this question lies in my inability to summarise all we, collectively and individually, learned into something shorter than War and Peace. With each moment of the tour, we were learning - everything from the sensational ‘big is better’ at NASC, to the everyday nuances of American and Canadian teenage culture, for example, driving on the ‘wrong-hand’ side of the road and even ordering ‘fries’ - to the cohesiveness and goodwill of the North American student leaders and the approaches they use to motivate and inspire their student populations. To say it has been overwhelming would be an understatement.

There are so many individuals who supported us in our quest. Obviously our wonderful families and friends who ate untold kilos of chocolates, supported our fundraising, kept the dream alive when fatigue set in and were there to see us off and greet us on our return; our schools, teachers, SRC members and fellow students who enthusiastically said ‘go for it’ and took notes when we missed class; and our sponsors who believed in us and what we were doing. Thank you all!

Most importantly, we would like to thank Ken and Sue, Ralph and Ellen. It is difficult to describe what they did for us and in how many ways they supported us. They nurtured us, disciplined us, cared incredibly for us, bought us ice cream and were the closest thing we all had to family. At NASC, although they didn’t stay with us, we were aware and acknowledge their commitment to us (and future tours) which saw them working and organising and attending meetings long into the night.

Ralph’s light-hearted and humorous approach to so many situations is responsible for maintaining our sanity on many occasions, when we all felt overwhelmed. Without Ellen, we technically would never have returned home! When we were just ‘going with the flow’ she in fact was directing it - no mean feat. Our tour mum Sue was in fact our ‘mum’. She cared for us when we were ill, supported us when we were weak, and quietly and gently encouraged us throughout the whole trip. Personally, I know I would not have survived the SYLC in Canada with its stark contrast to the NASC, its isolation from loved ones and all its mental and physical demands, without Sue being there for me.
And then there is “Pops”. Ken taught me some of the most valuable life lessons, at times just in a conversation, and at other times in having to bring us back to reality and remind us of our duties. His job was tough. All his actions and words were necessary and valuable. I hold Ken in the highest regard.

As for Charles and Greg ... in Hawaii, during our de-briefing session we recognised and acknowledged the incredible time, effort and enthusiasm invested by these men. However, the problem lies in the fact that Charles and Greg weren’t in Hawaii to receive these accolades! On behalf of the students who were nurtured into being proud representatives of their country and were the recipients of an incredible amount of love and literature, I thank you both.

THE TOUR:
The Positives and the Not So Positives

The Orientation Meeting at Gorokan High on 21-22 April this year was invaluable. Although Ken and Sue generously travelled to Tasmania to brief Alicia and Kirby, they, together with Tim Rutzou of Scots College Albury, felt it would have been less inhibiting for them had they been there to meet and get to know everyone beforehand.

The cancellation of one of our flights (from Atlanta to Philadelphia) resulted in a much-needed rest. However on our arrival in Bordentown we were treated to ‘Six Flags Theme Park’ which boasts the world’s steepest roller coaster. Although the cancellation of the flight was no-one’s fault, perhaps the itinerary should allow for a less physically frantic first day. However, this was a great experience of American teenage culture and I believe this was necessary before we became involved at NASC.

The relationship with Mike Nolan (Student Council Teacher Adviser) at Bordentown Regional High School, New Jersey is excellent. Compared to Epping Boys’ High (1100 students), Bordentown is quite small. However they were excellent hosts and adopted our delegation as their own. Like our Houston hosts (Klein Forest High), our experience with Bordentown High School has shown us how we should prepare (what works and what doesn’t work) for a proposed small American delegation that would arrive in Australia in April 2002. Travelling to NASC with the official New Jersey delegation was a worthwhile experience as we forged new friendships and shared student experiences in a more intimate environment. This, however, only mildly paved our way for the Charlotte venture.

The NASC experience for every Australian delegate was exciting and overwhelming - mainly due to the constant and insistent attention given to the Aussies, as well as the manner in which this Conference was run. It was in complete contrast to our own State Conferences. Vast amounts of money had been spent - we knew this because we were advised that the Conference expenditure was in excess of $1 million Australian dollars. We also knew this because of a wall plastered with sponsor advertising. However, I understand the host school (Providence High School) had to contribute over 50% of the cost. The harsh reality here is that Australian state schools could not possibly compete or even provide this level of commitment to their students with State and Federal Governments that do not fully financially support public schooling. Moreover, any fundraising by the schools is committed to much needed maintenance and expenditure.

My personal experience at the NASC as ‘President’ was, I believe, unique compared to that of the other delegates. I understood well at the orientation that the only reason we selected a President was that NASC required this position from every state. This ‘title’ gave me so many more opportunities and to an extent I feel sad that my fellow delegates were not able to experience them because of two words ‘State President’. Although I was not able to attend any workshops during this time, State Presidents were able to converse and exchange ideas in Regional meetings. They were also given motivational techniques by ‘Mr Phil’ and given an insight into how the Student Council system of each individual State operated.

One of the most rewarding experiences of being President of our delegation was to complete construction of and witness the dedication ceremony of the ‘Habitat House’. Whilst all the other delegates were involved in other community service projects, the 54 State Presidents completed the finishing touches on the house that “NASC Built”. The Habitat House was a community project initiated by the organization ‘Habitat for Humanity’. Not far from Providence High School, North Carolina is a small suburb (Matthews); a section of this suburb is devoted to the building of Habitat for Humanity homes for the disadvantaged. The privilege of completing a project on which so many had volunteered their time, services and sweat was a great honour - and to be doing this on my birthday was even better. I felt very humble. We need to find out if there is an initiative similar to this in Australia. From personally experiencing how this project built spirit among the State Presidents, and witnessing from videos how it brought youth from across the region together, this type of project stands out as one that would be beneficial to everyone.
I understood from our other delegates that they were somewhat disappointed with the lack of relevance of some of the US workshops, eg 'How to Organize a Homecoming'. However this lack of relevance was only to our culture and us. It works for the American student and really highlights how important an event, such as the homecoming, which is a large spirit builder with student involvement, is viewed by students, staff and administrators. Whilst other figures, like a school spending over $80,000 on a Prom, is something quite unrealistic to us, what I find mind-blowing is that a parental committee in fact raised this figure. It was explained to me that this financial commitment by the parents was by way of a thank-you to the student body for all they had done for the school.

To rate the success of the Australian workshops is difficult. Whilst our presenters commented that there was consistent audience participation, the novelty of hearing the 'Aussies' speak seemed to take precedence. Disappointing. There is of course the question of cultural comparison - were our topics relevant? Everyone was well prepared.

Overall, the whole itinerary was fantastic and an enormous learning curve. We were exposed to so many different aspects of student leadership, teaching, and student counsellors and, in essence, American culture.

Despite the positives I felt the Canadian experience was unfairly contrasted to NASC owing to several factors. Firstly, it was back-to-back with the NASC. We were all extremely tired. Secondly, being taken from a hyped environment of over 1,500 student leaders to a 23 member group was somewhat disappointing (an instant and stark reminder that the NASC was over). As well, for several of the Canadians, this was their first camp, which for us meant a repetition of much earlier material. Notwithstanding, the teamwork involved and the application of lessons learnt into physical challenges was most rewarding.

I am unable to comment first hand on the experience at Lake Tahoe although the Australian delegates there informed me that it was a wonderful experience - very spiritual. It was described by most people as a 'Banana Powerish' camp, which would have to be a plus. American Student Leaders are usually only available to go to either NASC or a National Leadership camp (NLC) so it felt like a continuation of NASC on a smaller scale.

Welcome to Houston! With the Canadian crew arriving one day prior to the Lake Tahoe people and the four Bordentown girls who would accompany us during our time in Texas, we were given one day to rest and shop for the essentials - it was very welcome. All our host families in Houston, and indeed throughout the Tour, were truly generous and fantastic. We thank them all. It seemed that Texas was the beginning of the wind-down period. Whether it was purely the Texan culture or our exhaustion - everything seemed to be a little slower! Whilst the opportunity to visit historical places such as the Houston Space Centre and Galveston was culturally brilliant, we as a student body believed that we should have done more 'work', such as gaining a better knowledge of the Texan Student Council System - we literally had only a one day session of question/answer with the complete Klein Forest High Student Council. Still, a lot was gained.

Stop Press! We noted that the size of Klein Forest High School was unbelievably large. One area of the school that caught my particular attention was the drama auditorium with seating for 1,000. Currently Epping Boys’ High is endeavouring to raise over $1 million to construct such a (much-needed) facility. I was advised that, in fact, Klein Forest High’s auditorium was paid for by funds from the state government, who do not fund private education.

Arriving in Hawaii was bitter sweet. Sweet as in the sense: "yes man, we are in Hawaii" and bitter that this is the beginning of the end! What we realised through our de-briefing in Hawaii and our final days together as a family was, in fact, that this is only the beginning ... and where to go from here? We all acknowledge that we have real challenges facing us as student leaders in our schools. How does student leadership become part of the curriculum? How can our ideas be heard and hence become a reality? How do we motivate the student body?

On behalf the Australian Student Leader delegation, I thank all those who made this dream a reality. The experience has been life changing.

Lachlan Wallace
President
4th Annual PASTA Tour
02 9816 3122 (h)
0417 298 601 (m)
email: lachsrc@hotmail.com

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

Are you looking for a different way to present ideas about leadership? Then the following workshop from SYLC 2001 in Canada may help.

Suitable for: Groups of 30 to 50 people
Time needed: From 60 to 90 minutes depending on group numbers
Equipment needed: None, although things like butchers paper, textas, sticky tape, paper clips, string, etc may be used if available. Separate spaces for each group to prepare would also be an advantage.
Aim: To get each small group to give a presentation dealing with an aspect of leadership.

Instructions: Break the large group into small groups (6 to 8 people depending on the size of the large group), and then read out the following:
"You have 15 minutes to prepare a skit/play/presentation about leadership. Everyone in the group must be involved. The presentation must last 5 to 10 minutes."

If props are available, you may add the following eg "Your group is allowed 2 sheets of butchers paper, 1 metre length of string, 30 cm sticky tape, 4 different coloured textas, 6 paper clips etc, if needed. You do not have to use them but they are available if you think they would enhance your presentation. You may not take them with you but may send one person back to collect them after you have discussed your presentation."

While the groups are preparing, you randomly select the order in which each group is to do their presentation. You also appoint a timekeeper. When the preparation time is finished, the groups are brought back to the area where the presentations will take place.

The following instructions are then given: "You have been randomly selected to give your presentation. The order for the presentations is ... At the end of each presentation, the time keeper will be asked to give the time taken for the presentation, unless your group has reached the maximum time of 10 minutes. In that case the time keeper will call time and your group will be asked to immediately sit down. No extra time will be given to allow you to finish. Each group that is not presenting has to score the group doing the presentation with a score from 1 to 10 (10 being the best). You will have 30 seconds to arrive at a group decision for a score for the presentation. At the end of this time, one person from each group will be asked to call out that score, and the scores will be recorded."

Note: the presenting group are not allowed to score their own presentation and total scores may or may not be given at the end as it is not a competition but rather an exercise in teamwork.

Debrief questions
- How did you decide what to present?
- How did you decide on who did what?
- What did you learn about leadership from your group's presentation? From the other groups?
- Were there any ideas on leadership that were expressed by more than one of the presentations? What were they?
- How important are these when discussing leadership?
- Were the same leadership skills/activities presented in more than one way? If so, which was more effective?

FOR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT DETAILS - SEE THE PASTA WEBSITE
http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:
- PASTA Memberships and Professional Development Activities: bowie@ozemail.com.au
- OVERSEAS TOURS (for advisers and students): suopage@ozemail.com.au
- CSC AWARDS (Community Service Certificate Program): RalphMurray@bigpond.com.au
- ISRC, International Linkages and Projects: asamson@wesley.usyd.edu.au
- Website and Independent/Systemic Schools: ckingston@interact.net.au

August 2001
ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS
This is an adaptation of the schoolyard game of the same name.

Suitable for: Unlimited number of students
Time needed: 20 to 30 minutes
Equipment needed: None
Aim: To make one long line of students

Instructions: Each person in the group selects a partner and plays rock, paper, scissors with them. The loser has to join onto the winner by standing behind with their hands on the winner’s shoulders. This pair then play against another pair (or the single person left over if there was an odd number of students to start with) and repeats the process, with the losing team joining on to the back of the winning team. The game continues until all of the teams have joined one long line.

Variations:
Instead of joining directly on to the back of the winner, the loser must crawl through the legs of the winner, from front to rear. (In the case of a team, the whole team must crawl through.

ELVES GIANTS WIZARDS

Time: 10 to 15 minutes
Location: Indoors or outdoors
Age: 12 or older

WHEN?
Elves, Giants, Wizards is best to play as an energizer around the halfway point in a program although it is appropriate at any time throughout a program.

WHY?
This is an activity that involves everyone so it helps to bond a community of people. It encourages lots of discussion after the game is completed.

WHAT?
This is a type of ‘rock, paper, scissors’ game using your whole body and sound effects that makes everyone a little excited and very silly.

HOW?
Explain to the group that this is a type of ‘rock, paper, scissors’ game where two teams play rather than two individuals. The objective is for each team to try to outsmart the other team and choose one of ‘elves, giants or wizards’ that will overpower the creature chosen by the other team. Just as rock, paper, scissors have actions, so does this game (along with sound effects).

ELVES crouch down part way and have their hands in front of their chin with their fingers pointing out. They say ‘Elves’ in a high pitched voice.

GIANTS stand on tip toes with arms stretched straight up to the sky and fingers pointing straight up. They say ‘Giants’ in a deep, deep voice.

WIZARDS stand with one foot slightly forward, one arm pointing straight ahead and the other arm turned into the chin with fingers pointing out. They say “Wizards” in a spooky, gravelly voice.

In this game the Elves are sneaky and fool the Wizards (elves beat wizards), the Wizards put magical spells on the Giants (wizards beat giants), and the Giants stomp on the poor little Elves (giants beat elves). (Are you with us so far?)

Have the two teams form a line facing each other. On the call “huddle” each team will form a circle and decide which character their team will be. Give them a 30 second time limit to start with. As the game progresses, decrease the time limit by 5 second intervals. Within the time limit, the team must huddle, decide on a character and be back in their line up or they forfeit a player to the other side. When this is done have both teams again line up facing each other.

On the count of three each team will assume the position of the character they have chosen and in the correct voice yell out the name of that character. If both teams choose the same character simply carry on and do it again. The winning team can choose any player they want, from the losing team, to join their side. You can set an arbitrary goal such as the first team to gain four players wins. The important thing here is to make sure the game doesn’t last too long; quit before they get bored with it.

SAFETY
This game is one of those great activities that really doesn’t have any physical or emotional concerns.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

“Primary and Junior Secondary Activities and Resources for SRC Advisers and Student Welfare Consultants”

WHEN? Friday and Saturday; 26-27 October
9 am - 4 pm

WHERE? Professional Teachers Council
Leichhardt, Sydney

WHAT? A professional development workshop for all
adults involved with student leadership,
representation and participation - in policy,
programs and activities

HOW? Contact PASTA for details of application.
Look for posted material coming to schools.
If NSW government school, contact District
SEO 1 - Student Welfare.

COST? Registration $20 pp per day.
Lunch morning and afternoon tea provided.

OUTCOMES? Raise awareness and develop practical
means of developing:
• status and work of SRC teacher advisers and the profile
of these programs;
• curriculum of student leadership programs and its
relevance to the whole school, including the Civics &
Citizenship curriculum;
• pro-active programs for addressing student/school/
community concerns;
• resource sharing, collegial networking and SRC
workshop training ideas.

PROGRAM?
• Day 1: Activity Programs;
• Day 2: Information Day/Resources.

YOU TELL US!

Are you a Teacher? Consultant? Departmental
Adviser? Student? Principal? Parent? Grandparent?
Interested Citizen?

Whoever you are, you tell us what you think is needed
in this field.
• What do you think PASTA should be doing now?
• What are your most pressing needs in student
activities? Civics and Citizenship Education?
Leadership Curriculum? Colleague Support?
• What topics/speakers/processes should adviser
seminars have?
• What marvellous successful (or not) projects have
you undertaken?
• How can communication with you, your schools
and systems be improved?
• Which student and adult citizens do you have
deserving of CSC Awards?

How? See ‘How To Contact Us’ page on our Website:
http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING
AND ANNUAL EVENTS

• NOW: New financial year - Annual PASTA Membership
Fees Due

• NOW: Applications open - for students and advisers from
all states and territories for June-July 2002: PASTA North
American SRC Leadership Tour.

• 7 - 10 August (Tuesday-Friday): Vision Valley Conference
Centre - NSW SRC State Conference (NSW DET
government schools only)

• 25 August (Saturday): Gorokan High School, Central Coast
NSW - Overseas Tours Committee Meeting - Future
Directions and Action Plans

• 29 September (Saturday): PASTA EXECUTIVE
MEETING - 10 am Professional Teachers Council Offices,
cnr Marion and Norton Sts Leichhardt Sydney. All current
and new members welcome to attend. Have your say/
Pave the way.

• September (annually in different venues): Canadian Student
Youth Leadership Conferences (CSYLC) 2001: in Nova
Scotia (east coast)/2002 - in Saskatchewan (plains)

• 4 - 6 November, 2001: International Youth Conference
-Nepal (Tigertops - Chitwan): Inter Youth Coordination
Council: chauyen@col.com.np

• Terms 1, 2, 3 and 4, 2002 to 2004 (Dates to be decided):
PASTA offers SRC Adviser Professional Development
workshops and conferences - within schools and/or weekend
seminars and/or longer. Contact us for details

• Easter Break 2002 (a weekend): Training for 2002 North
American Tour (SRC Teachers/Advisers from delegate
schools encouraged to attend with parents)

• June/July 2002: 5th North American SRC Leadership Tour
(66th NASC Conference in Virginia Beach, VA - school visits
in the Old South, New Orleans)

Annual PASTA Membership Fees
Now Due!

PASTA Memberships for
2001-2002 were due on July 1:
please use the form on
page 20 to renew your
membership promptly.

August 2001
# PASTA Membership Form

**Tax Invoice:** ABN 49 398 096 539

---

## Membership Fees

- **Ordinary:** $88
- **Concessional:** $75
- **Student:** $27.50
- **Overseas:** $55
- **Corporations:** $110
- **Tertiary:** $55

**Total:** $-----------

**Other (please specify):** $-----------

---

###缴费方式

- □ Please check your credit card number before sending this form.
- □ Please debit my credit card for the amount of: $-----------
- □ I enclose a cheque for: $-----------

**Credit Card:** □ Visa □ Mastercard □ Card

**Expiry Date:** □ □ □

---

### Contact Information

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**

---

### Membership Details

- **Area of Particular Interest:**
  - □ Primary
  - □ Secondary
  - □ Tertiary

- **NSW Department of School Education:**

---

### What does PASTA offer you?

- Regular seminars, workshops, and conferences at an Association, State, and National level.
- Reduced registration rates.
- Access to NASC's Leadership and Student Activities.
- A support network for SRC advisors.
- Regular newsletter and journals for SRC teachers.
- Opportunities to be involved in discussions on the future of SRCs at all levels.
- Special resources for students, teachers, and SRC networks.

---

### PASTA Newsletters

Regular updates and announcements.

---

### PASTA Inc.

- **Address:** 12 Dyson Drive, North Ryde, NSW 2113
- **Phone:** (02) 954 3322
- **Fax:** (02) 954 2362

---

### PASTA Newsletter - Supplement to Connect 130
Winter Camp

The idea of Winter Camp was welcomed with open arms by the administration at Berwick Secondary College. One of the main aims of the Student Voice is to provide students with leadership training. Whilst this already occurs for the 24 Student Voice leaders – through the annual induction camp at Wombat Corner, the annual democracy tour to Sovereign Hill and numerous opportunities to attend other conferences – the leadership opportunities for the rest of the general student body are not that vast.

During camp week, 16 students from Years 8, 9 and 10 undertook a leadership workshop. All participants were nominated by staff members because of their leadership potential. The two day program organised and run by Student Voice saw these potential leaders participating in a variety of activities, learning about the Student Voice, leadership theory, communication, team building, goal setting and school improvements.

The students present at Winter Camp have made a list of recommendations to be taken to Student Voice about possible improvements to our school. Student Voice hopes to act on the recommendations this term in a bid to truly represent the student body.

All participants enjoyed the two days, learning valuable leadership lessons, whilst having fun. Student Voice leaders also attended the workshop, participating, running sessions and generally helping out.

Given the success of this initiative, Student Voice hopes to run an annual ‘Winter Camp’ offering the student body a chance to be trained in leadership skills.
Classroom as community: Developing citizens and learners

I was privileged recently to spend time at The University of Melbourne’s Youth Research Centre, as a visiting academic from Massey University in New Zealand. Apart from the obligatory quips about kiwi accents and customs, I was welcomed into a community of researchers who were clearly passionate about their work to enhance authentic student participation in schools. But I also participated in other communities of practice, like the stitchery group, the children I walked to school each morning prior to joining another community of commuters, and cappuccino and cake consumers. New colleagues accepted me as a ‘legitimate periphery participant’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in their teaching communities. I also watched as our six-year-old became a member of her school community, singing ‘Advance Australia Fair’ with the passion of a medal winner, wearing the local league colours with pride, and generally adopting the sociocultural norms of being an Australian kid.

As an education lecturer, I was intrigued at the speed with which we were all developing new identities. Wenger (1998, p 263) claims that “education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities - exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state”. I began to think about how schools organise for learning, especially the development of citizenship, knowledge, skills and values. My Melbourne experiences served to reinforce the idea that the most effective citizenship education programs must provide opportunities for authentic and active participation in different communities of practice whereby new identities can emerge.

This article first examines the political cynicism that currently plagues New Zealand and Australian youth, and reflects on possible causes for this. It is suggested that one way to redress this situation is to cultivate a participatory and collaborative pedagogy by drawing on principles of two learning theories. A democratic theory of learning is outlined, and shown to support active and authentic participation in community life. Also, a sociocultural theory of learning is shown to support organising the classroom as a community of learners where learning occurs via participation in collaborative activities with more skilled partners (Rogoff, 1998). Elements of both these theories can be identified in the descriptions and reflections made of a range of civics and citizenship education programs in Melbourne schools.

This article also challenges you to think about your own pedagogy. For instance who is responsible for learning, and what are powerful pedagogies for citizenship education? Are classrooms to remain reminiscent of work factories where children are passive recipients of the teachers’ knowledge, or is it possible to organise classrooms so they encourage critical and reflective thinking and collaborative engagement between students and teachers?

A plague of political cynicism

Perhaps our history of passive transmission of citizenship education explains the political cynicism that currently plagues Australia and New Zealand. Research in Australia suggests that young people’s political attitudes are becoming increasingly negative about policies that affect them (Mellor, 1998). High school students have developed a ‘what’s the point’ attitude, believing that authoritarian teachers did not take them seriously, nor did they want them to be part of any real decision-making. If a parallel study were to be conducted in New Zealand, it is likely that similar results would show Maharey (2000) voiced his concern at the Values in Schools Conference, claiming that New Zealand students are simply not graduating from our secondary schools with the commitment, knowledge or skills to participate in political decision-making.

It is argued that this negative political efficacy is a consequence of a forced diet of anti-democratic, authoritarian schooling where decision-making is the preserve of everyone except the learner, and learning is everything except real and relevant to the lives of learners. The hidden curriculum is also serving to silence the voices of young children, who start their schooling passionately questioning their world, yet finish it cynics of their world; that is if they haven’t already ‘opted out’ of school (Dwyer, 1996). An American study revealed four strong student messages about ways to make schools desirable places to learn (Strong, Silver and Robinson, 1995). Students want opportunities to be successful, curious, self-expressive and connected to others in the school environment. Those students are asking to be more involved in their learning; they’re seeking ownership, and they want to be heard. Their plea is supported by an overwhelming body of knowledge that shows increased voice and control by learners in their learning, strengthens commitment and ownership, resulting in motivated and successful learners (McCombs and Whisler, 1997).

It is suggested therefore, that teachers cultivate a participatory and collaborative pedagogy by drawing on the tenets of both democratic and sociocultural theory. A democratic theory of learning emphasises participation by engaging in democratic classroom practices such as open dialogue, critical reflection, real-life problem-posing and -solving and negotiating the curriculum. The classroom is viewed as a microcosm of society, and as such should offer extended opportunities to hear and act on students’ voice so they can
participate in daily decision-making and management. The teacher plays a pivotal role “to encourage this democratic process, to provide opportunities for the development of voice, and to bring forth voices that can lead to action in the larger society” (Poplin, 1991, cited in McCabe, 1994, p 13). Such processes do not just happen; purposeful arrangements need to be made to bring democracy alive (Apple and Beane, 1995).

Sociocultural theory gives a slightly different slant to collaborative participation. This theory emphasises the interdependence of the learner and social interaction in the construction of knowledge. According to this theory, learning is enhanced when participation in the classroom is transformed to see teacher and learner share the responsibility for learning. Rogoff (1990) refers to a process of ‘guided participation’ where learners are seen to serve an apprenticeship with an expert (parent, peer or teacher), who supports and ‘stretches’ understanding. As competence builds over time, responsibility is rightfully ceded back to the learner. Indeed, this process of guided participation is seen everyday as children learn to speak, to walk or to sing, by participating in the “skilled activities of their culture... in supported routine and challenging situations” (Rogoff, 1991, p 351).

**Authentic Australian student participation**

While I was in Melbourne, I was fortunate to visit a range of schools to observe opportunities provided for authentic student participation in school communities. Join me on a tram tour of CCE innovations. (Good citizens validate their tickets first!)

First stop is Preston South Primary School. Preston South is committed to a partnership where students share educational decisions. This democratic participation sees popularly elected students represent their peers on a Junior School Council (JSC). Students as young as seven, hold weekly class meetings to discuss concerns and ideas for the JSC to debate further. The JSC has a regular slot in the school assembly, enabling them to report on possible solutions to problems raised by the school. Citizenship awards, themselves an idea created by the JSC, are presented weekly. Junior School Councillors also participate in a local inter-school forum to learn how to be more effective representatives and to share ideas for running council meetings.

Members of the JSC spoke with strong and confident voices that echoed a shared vision for their school. Their feelings of self-worth born from being able to make a difference as a leader with real responsibilities were clearly evident.

“School is an exciting place to be. We’re listened to and taken seriously here.” These students were learning about cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, decision-making, teamwork and honest representation by doing it.

Next stop, Ascot Vale Primary School where a four “C” policy - caring, carefulness, cooperation and calmness - underpins their learning and teaching innovations. Teachers work in communities of practice, modelling and participating in collaborative planning and development. A similar snapshot exists in their cross-age classrooms. Year One children read alongside their Year Six ‘buddies’, their conversations contributing to a shared understanding of the story. Two children confidently talked about their ‘quiet space’ - a creatively designed space of trees, flowers and seats where they were free to go when they needed to be calm. Their four-C atmosphere could be heard, felt, even smelt.

These students are coming to see that talking about their learning is a catalyst to new ideas, that they can adopt complementary roles, drawing on the strengths of others, and that they are capable of questioning the thinking of others. The classrooms are reminiscent of an extended family where all members, including teachers, share responsibility for the learning that occurs. The children stay in their cross-age groupings for more than one year so the opportunity exists to develop more meaningful relationships. Negotiated tasks address their diverse backgrounds, needs and interests, as well as provide the opportunity for many citizenship skills and values to develop.

By courtesy of a lift, I arrived at The Grange, a large area school west of Melbourne, renowned for its policy initiatives to make learning more meaningful and relevant to their students’ lives. Staff in the middle school use Beane’s (1993) model of curriculum negotiation. Students and their teachers worked together to create a personally meaningful curriculum out of questions and concerns about themselves and their world. Curriculum themes are generated that are common to both world- and self-questions. One example was the theme of ‘conflict’, generated after students asked, “Why is it so difficult to be a teenager?” and “Will there ever be world peace?” Activities that would address these self-initiated questions were negotiated and formed the basis of integrated units of study. Teachers at The Grange acknowledged issues that were powerfully real for their learners. Learners had experienced feelings of alienation and conflict, and they welcomed this as the starting point in their learning journey. Teachers observed higher levels of motivation for learning, perhaps due to their involvement in real and actionable plans (Roberts, 1998).

Even from the outside, Brunswick North West Primary School (BNWPS) looks like a school with a special nature: White roses festoon the entrance, the children’s garden of vegetables, flowers and remembrance are central features of the playground, and groups of teachers and learners walk together in a spirit of camaraderie and mutual respect. Inside, a sense of shared responsibility for learning and living gives this school a very special character. This mutuality is heard when children address their teachers by first names, talk about issues that are intrinsically satisfying, share understandings, and respect each other as individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is also seen when learners take responsibility for feeding the chooks, for tending the flower and vegetable garden, for moving the sheep who graze under the urban forest, for water recycling and for tending the compost and worm farm. A shared community partnership is also seen when staff and
parents host morning teas to celebrate their positive and productive learning relationship. BNWPS has a shared enterprise that enables learners to participate in real acts of value in their school community. The staff at BNWPS believes their success can be attributed to their shared beliefs about learning, as well as the sense of community they have developed with parents and students. Their aim is to genuinely get to know families and be partners with them in the learning process, rather than be ‘one-way’ dispensers of knowledge. Teachers aim to be role models of active learners who are confident to take risks and try innovations.

and designed a landscape that symbolised this shared understanding. The newly landscaped school entrance is a living reminder of how they promoted active and responsible citizen by planning real and authentic learning and assessment tasks.

Reflections

The innovations in these Australian scenarios vary widely in their design for citizenship education, yet they all share a fundamentally common theme: an understanding of how to nurture confident, informed and responsible citizens by participation in real acts of value. Students in classrooms centres of democratic practices (Apple and Beane, 1995). In addition, they resulted from efforts to develop a community of learners, involving both active learners and more skilled partners, who collaborated in shared endeavours.

Developing a community of learners

This paper argues that for a citizenship education program to ensure positive and sustained outcomes, it must include fundamental changes to the ways in which teaching and learning is experienced in the classroom. A model based on sociocultural theory called a ‘community of learners’ is thus proposed to support powerful and enduring citizenship knowledge, skills and values. The essential characteristics of such a community are outlined in Table 1 (below).

Learning in a community of learners implies a ‘transformation of participation’ in the classroom. Tasks are organised so that students work in various collaborative arrangements, requiring everyone to take on different roles of learner, teacher and expert for other community members. This community of learners in the classroom can then interact with communities that function beyond the school environment, thus giving students opportunities to act as citizens in ever-increasing communities of practice.

Table 1: Essential components of a community of learners (Brown and Campione, 1994):

- individual responsibility coupled with communal sharing;
- ritual, familiar participant structures;
- a community discourse;
- multiple zones of proximal development;
- appropriation of new ideas

This shared purpose and responsibility for learning transcends traditional boundaries of what it means to be a ‘teacher’ and a ‘learner’. The way teachers and learners interact and engage is fundamentally transformed from the traditional transmission model of teaching, where

The final school, beyond the tram-line, was Weeroona College in Bendigo. They had just completed an initiative to develop an Eco-civics 2000 project called “Me and My Community”. This was a social studies and science unit with the main objective to integrate environmental research with a CCE emphasis. They used the beautification of the college grounds as a real context for learning. Local community groups worked alongside teachers, not only in the planning, but also in resourcing the project. Students investigated the area immediately surrounding the school and began to understand the man-made changes that had influenced its current look. Computer technology was used to investigate plants that might survive local conditions and the sorts of animal life these plants might attract. Students expressed their ideas about what the school meant to them, diverse ways experienced civic and cognitive apprenticeship, with a real sense of connection to the social and physical environment. To varying degrees, students were engaged as thinkers, as problem solvers, as co-constructors of knowledge, as reflective learners, as carers, and as citizens with recognised rights, roles and responsibilities among students and teachers.

Some stories emphasised the participation of an elite few in school governance, while others were inclusive of all children for sustained periods as part of the learning culture that extended into communities of practice beyond the school. Students were actively constructing their own sense of citizenship by participating as citizens in real and personally meaningful innovations. These active citizenship experiences resulted from teachers’ determination to make their
responsibility for learning belongs with the teacher, to a model where teachers see themselves as learning partners within a community of learners. Teachers in this model listen more than talk, provide space for the multiple voices of students, share decision making, support the collaborative inquiry into students’ questions, connect learning with members of other communities of practice, and genuinely respect learners as potential teachers with valid ideas and expertise. In this way expertise is ‘stretched’ across the community. These features of a community of learners also reflect a commitment to the social virtues that underpin a democratic and socially just society. These values include courage, humility, honesty, restraint and persistance, and they develop as a consequence of the types of learning relationships and partnerships that the teacher facilitates in a community of learners (Renshaw and Brown, 1997).

The benefits of a community of learners are well documented (Brown and Campione, 1998; Rogoff, Matusov and White, 1997). For instance, participation in a community of learners enhances development and flexible use of content knowledge (Brown and Campione, 1998), as well as developing deep conceptual understanding, self-regulation, social maturity, and leadership skills (Rogoff, Matusov and White, 1997). When a community of learners extends beyond the classroom to include the home and local community, it enhances cognitive engagement, learning outcomes, motivation and fosters a sense of participatory citizenship (Brown and Campione, 1994, 1996; Crawford, Krajcik and Marx, 1999; McLaughlin, 2001). Together this evidence suggests that a school structured as a community of learners will not only optimise learning outcomes, but nurture informed, confident and responsible citizens, who are efficacious about their ability to participate in a democratic society.

There are many ways that schools have developed a community of learners. Learners have negotiated the curriculum with their teacher (Apple and Beane, 1995); cooperated in home and expert groups in a jigsaw learning arrangement (Brown and Campione, 1998); ceded control from teachers in processes akin to reciprocal teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1984); worked on real-world tasks as apprentices with community experts (Crawford, Krajcik and Marx, 1999); shared decision-making (Gauvin and Rogoff, 1989); and engaged in collective argumentation (Brown, 1994). A community of learners is thus about creating new ways for teachers and learners to participate in the classroom and the local environment. An air of mutuality pervades, as learners become teachers and vice versa, both with a shared sense of responsibility for learning.

For the rhetoric of a community of learners to become a reality however, teachers need to develop a conscious pedagogy that acknowledges their power to create the conditions for effective learning in a community of learners. A lot needs to be learned about how to make this shift towards a community of learners model, and how to overcome the systemic, social, physical and psychological barriers to change. Research needs to support and document this change process, from several standpoints: the teachers’ view in terms of their evolving theories of teaching; and from the learners’ view in terms of how their theories of learning change in a community of learners.

A shared challenge

This article raises many challenges for professional educators both in Australia and in New Zealand. Collaborative and courageous efforts are now called for to change the way things have always been done. New Zealand now has a new Social Studies Curriculum that explicitly states its citizenship goals with inquiry, values exploration and social decision-making processes providing supportive pathways to authentic student participation. But it is my view that effective citizenship programs akin to what I saw in Melbourne have not yet been developed in New Zealand. Granted, there are isolated incidences of authentic student participation in some New Zealand schools, but until locally written citizenship education policy initiatives are developed, significant change will not happen. Change is never easy, and the proposals made in this paper are made especially hard due to the current emphasis on standardised testing, hierarchical school structures, individual achievement, all of which are the very antithesis of a community of learners. But, if Dewey was right when he said we learn what we experience, then we must make schools places where students
experience democratic participation in a community of learners, and where responsibility for learning is given back to the learner. In this way students can "participate in a changing society as informed, confident and responsible citizens" (Ministry of Education, NZ, 1997, p 8).

It is our shared challenge to put participatory and collaborative pedagogy at the heart of educational practice, and to think about how we, as teachers, can take first steps in transforming participation in our own classrooms.

Alison M Sewell
Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education
College of Education
Massey University
New Zealand

References


Roberts, J (1998) 'Student questions leading middle years reform' in Curriculum Perspectives, 18(1), 71-75.


SRCs and CURRICULUM

How can a Student Representative Council support curriculum development? And, in turn, how can curriculum initiatives in a variety of areas, support the development of a participatory SRC?

In the following ideas, Charles Kingston links curriculum approaches in various Key Learning Areas to SRC activities. These ideas developed from considerations about how PASTA activities - in particular the US Student Council trip - could integrate with schools’ curriculum.

These are some starting ideas in some areas. As space permits, further subject areas will be included in future issues of Connect.

In each area, there are sections about:
- How the SRC curriculum in schools supplements learning in these areas;
- Sample SRC/School Project Ideas which focus on these areas;
- Related reflective question for the whole school community to link with the student leadership/student activities curriculum area

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - HEALTH

SRC involvement in schools supports these curriculum areas through:

a. Developing personal self-esteem and pride in group activity;
b. Engaging actively in the implementation of rights and responsibilities for all students;
c. Dealing with controversial issues;
d. Being (within NSW DET at least) officially a part of the Statewide Student Welfare policies and programs.

Some possible SRC-inspired projects to focus on:

a. Introduce relaxation and coping with stress courses for students and staff;
b. Encourage use of school canteen, offer to help there and examine food price and variety and nutritional value of offerings in it;
c. Sponsor a drug and alcohol abuse program, panel, seminar or weekend workshop, involving local community group;
d. Regularly carry out ‘Just For Fun’ activities eg wear 2 different coloured socks/tell someone who is beautiful that they ARE beautiful/ write yourself a letter/walk around in a sandwich sign full of positive messages and thank your/wear your watches on your legs/call or email someone special and remind them of how valuable they are/wear a Santa Claus suit - In public - in summer.

How can our student leadership/student activity structures help create a positive and supportive school climate?

MATHEMATICS

SRC involvement in schools supports this curriculum area through:

a. SRC fund-raising projects create, count and redistribute figures;
b. Internal SRC financial records require understanding and work on the part of more than just the Treasurer or Project Chairperson;
c. Statistics and surveys and voting all involve maths related skills;
d. Students on school councils help examine school budgets.

Some possible SRC-inspired projects to focus on:

a. Work with Maths Staff to organise and publicise periodic Maths Competitions;
b. Organise a ‘Numbers Needed’ Day in which the entire school for the entire day is focused on numbers - eg The History of Numbers, Surveys and Demographics, Numbers in Voting, Spreadsheets, ‘Count for Your Counter Lunch’ Meals, Colouring-In Numbers, Top 100 Musical Notes, Foreign Language Maths, Gee Whiz Geometry etc;
c. Involve Maths classes in totalling and analysing projects of your SRC or within your school to do with statistics or budgets (eg surveys, fund-raising, transport and accommodation needs, sports carnivals results, drama production costs, school global budgets);
d. Engage non-SRC students who are good at Maths and/or computers to help to train SRC reps in aspects related to their job tasks.

How can our student leadership/student activity structures maintain accurate financial records and sustain a healthy balance of income and expenditure over which students have shared control?

COMMERCE and BUSINESS STUDIES

SRC involvement in schools supports these curriculum areas through:

a. Providing a leadership structure to reach out into the community and involve the school with businesses and service groups;
b. Enhancing best corporate practice by envisioning and enabling the SRC to act as a business for the good of the school community;
c. Enforcing comparative pricing of goods for SRC sale;
d. Examining finance and marketing needs for fund-raising projects.

Some possible SRC-inspired projects to focus on:

a. Start and maintain a Student Hire Service to find part-time jobs for real needs in the student body and community;
b. Encourage involvement and help publicise the Young Achiever’s Program;
c. Regularly organise the order and sale of school windcheaters, t-shirts, caps, badges and/or special activity gear (eg sporting teams, SRC uniforms, clubs, arts groups etc);
d. Enjoin senior Business Studies students to analyse and evaluate best marketing strategies for SRC projects.

How can our student leadership/student activity structures develop marketing/advertising strategies that involve large numbers of students in cooperative community fund-raising projects?

Charles Kingston, PASTA

Future Ideas in this series include:

- SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY (including Computer/History)
- PERFORMING ARTS
- LANGUAGES and CULTURE AND SOCIETY or SOSE
- CIVICS and CITIZENSHIP
- ENGLISH and HOME SCIENCE
- PHYSICAL EDUCATION and INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
- GEOGRAPHY and AGRICULTURE
- HISTORY and LEGAL STUDIES
- VISUAL ARTS
- EVALUATIONS and ACTION RESEARCH
- RESOURCES for NETWORKING and SRCs

August 2001
Radio Pupitre: Onda Escolar (Radio Desk: School Wave) was started on a minor scale in 1991 by the teacher Antonio Navarro Martínez and then grew in collaboration with his colleagues at an elementary school in Granja de Rocamora, Alicante, Spain. This student radio station, set up in the school, is used as a didactic tool. The teachers and pupils, ages 3 to 15, develop the objectives and contents of the broadcasts in their ordinary subjects ie the broadcasts are based on daily classroom activities. When the teacher finds a finished piece of work suitable for radio, the pupils go to the studio for recording and broadcasting, taking part in the whole production process. In this way and for real purposes, learning often becomes more enjoyable, not least for children with problems; these children are also often responsible for handling the radio equipment.

The programs produced by the children consist of, amongst other things, news read from the press, talk, writings, interviews with sportmen, politicians, priests and professionals, jokes, poems, tales and the children’s own songs. Such contents are mixed with professionally recorded music, both from the pupils’ own top ten list and from other, diverse styles (classic, folk, rap, dance, house, rock, soul, boleros etc).

For eight years, Radio Pupitre has broadcast one hour daily at 12.30 pm; the transmissions can be heard by all people living within a ten-kilometre radius, and have attracted attention from the press. Since 1997-98, the radio studio is also used by other schools, and for courses and seminars for teachers.

For further information:
The web site of Generalitat Valenciana (in Spanish and English): http://www.cult.gva.es (tick ‘Area de Educación’, then ‘Formación del Profesorado’, then ‘meses actividades d’innovació’). Samples of Pupitre broadcasts are offered too.

Contact:
Antonio Navarro Martínez
Asesoría de Medios Audiovisuales
CEFIRE de Orihuela
Alda. Dr. García Rogel S/N
03300 - Orihuela (Alicante), Spain
Tel: +34 96 674 27 25
E-mail: audiolorihuelacentres.cult.gva.es

from News from ICCVOS (the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen)
Vol 5 No 1, 2001

2001 ACSA Biennial Conference, Canberra
Education Futures & New Citizenships
Saturday 29 September to Monday 1 October 2001
Registration forms and further information at the ACSA website: www.acsa.edu.au

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

Contact the ACSA Conference Organisers: web: www.acsa.edu.au

Raise Your Voice
Cathey Dragasia
PO Box 1483
Clayton South VIC 3168
Ph: 0418 178 450
ryv_leadership@hotmail.com

Training for Student Councillors in Victoria

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

28
Student Action Teams were established in 20 Victorian secondary schools in 1999-2000. With funding from the Victorian Department of Justice (as part of the then VicSafe Community Safety and Crime Prevention Framework), and through the Department of Education, Employment and Training, students at these schools were challenged to identify and tackle a school or local issue of community safety.

All 20 schools set up small teams of students which, in many different ways, researched, planned, proposed and acted on issues such as truancy, road safety, community development, unsafe pathways and skateboarding. In some cases, these Student Action Teams worked as ad hoc groups, meeting at lunchtime or in spare classes; in other cases, the Teams were incorporated into electives or core classes, or worked as a sub-group of the SRC. Some reports from these schools were included in Connect 128 (April 2001).

A team from the Youth Research Centre (University of Melbourne) worked as 'critical friend' evaluators to the program over the two years. The Centre has now published a Working Paper that draws upon the final report of that evaluation, and includes information on the processes of setting up and maintaining Student Action Teams, including stories from eleven of the schools, an analysis of Program outcomes and learnings against its objectives, and a discussion of several of the emerging issues.

Student Action Teams are now being implemented by the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training through its Middle Years strategy, and a further group of schools is being supported to develop and implement Teams in 2001-2002. A 'How To' Manual: Acting for Change has also been written and produced by the Centre to summarise program learnings and to support the creation of new Student Action Teams.

Acting for Change

This manual presents, in a highly practical form, what was learned from the experience of 20 schools, over two years, in forming and maintaining Student Action Teams that tackled a local issue of 'community safety'. But it also provides a useful resource for any school wishing to set up a similar team of students to tackle any local community issue.

The Manual is organised in four main sections, with information on: 'Forming a Team', 'Choosing a Topic', 'Linking to the Curriculum', and 'Resources'. In each section, information is immediately backed by a worksheet to assist teachers and students with their own planning. In the Resources section, further worksheets are available for use by Student Action Teams as they meet, plan, research, act and report on their work.

Availability

- Working Paper 21: Student Action Teams is available for $11 (incl. GST; but add $5 postage and handling per order; and for orders of less than $50, prepayment is required) from:
  The Youth Research Centre
  Faculty of Education
  The University of Melbourne
  VIC 3010
  phone: (03) 8344 9633
  fax: (03) 8344 9632
  e-mail: yrc@edfac.unimelb.edu.au
  Contact the Centre for more details and for a list of other available publications.


Contact: Gary Buckeridge
phone: (03) 9637 2336
e-mail: buckeridge.gary.l@edumail.vic.gov.au
Youth Researching Youth:  
The Triumph and Success  
Peer Research Project  
(38 pp; RRP £12.95)  

Triumph and Success was a two-year peer research project that recruited eight young people aged between 15 and 21 from different social and economic backgrounds to help undertake research on youth transitions in Sheffield, England. The project was run by a team of youth workers and supported by researchers from a local university. Triumph and Success aimed to construct an approach to working with young people that emphasised choice for those involved, and a research method that put young people at the centre of the decision-making process. The report describes the setting up of the project, the young people’s experience of peer research, the analysis and main findings, and the success of the project and key lessons.  

The peer researchers clearly felt that the project provided them with life-changing outcomes; however, they all wanted their hard work to bring about some form of social change for other young people in their city. It is unclear how successful they were in this regard. The report concludes that Triumph and Success offers a good model for the involvement of young people in the research process, and for helping young people contribute to important debates about how resources and services in their communities should be organised to assist youth transitions.  

This publication can be purchased directly by cheque (pounds sterling) or credit card (Access, Visa, MasterCard) from Sales Department, National Youth Agency, 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester, LE1 6GD, UK.  

Sue Headley  
Both these reviews are reprinted from Youth Studies Australia,  
Vol 20, No 2, June 2001; Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies,  
GPO Box 252-64, Hobart, Tasmania 7001  

Resource Materials on Active Citizenship  

Democracy Starts Here:  
Junior School Councils at Work  
This 48-page book was produced by teachers and students from a group of schools in the north of Melbourne in 1996. Stories from 10 primary schools describe the operation and focus of their Junior School Councils. Then each school provides a brief answer to key practical questions.  
An invaluable resource for developing active citizenship in primary schools!  
$7 a copy (posted);  
$12 for 2 copies  
- from Connect - see back page  

Back issues of Connect  
Each issue of Connect contains stories about active citizenship in the classroom and in school governance. These stories of Junior School Councils (JSCs), Student Representative Councils (SRCs), classroom approaches and projects - all illustrate practical ideas for recognising and developing the active citizenship of young people.  
Back copies of Connect are available (see back page): $4 for a single issue or $6 for a double issue.  
An index to the contents of back issues is also available ($3).  

Connect 130: 30
Local and Overseas Publications Received

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

Australian:

Acting for Change: A Student Action Teams 'How To' Manual (Australian Youth Research Centre and State of Victoria) May 2001


Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 21, No 2; June 2001

Education Links (Centre for Popular Education, UTS, NSW) 61/62, Summer 2000/2001

Network News (Network of Community Activities, Surry Hills, NSW) June 2001

Other Ways (AERG, Daylesford, Vic) Issue 88, June 2001

Professional Voice (AEU, Abbotsford, Vic) Vol 1, No 1; June 2001

Rights Now (NCYLC, UNSW, Sydney, NSW) June 2001


The Voice (Berwick Secondary College Student Voice, Vic) Vol 1, Nos 1, 2; June, July 2001

YACS Around (YACSA, Adelaide, SA) 3/01, May/June 2001

YAC Vic Submission to the Victorian Youth Strategy (YAC Vic, Melbourne, Vic) April 2001

The Year in Review (Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne, Vic)

Yikes (YAC Vic, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 1, Ed 7; July 2001

Youth Research News (Youth Research Centre, Vic) Vol 11, No 2; July 2001

Youth Studies Australia (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart, Tasmania) Vol 20, No 2, June 2001

International:

Education Now (Nottingham, UK) Issue No 32, Summer 2001; plus 25 Years, 2001

Education Revolution (AERA, New York, USA) #32, Spring/Summer 2001

News from ICCVOS (UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, Nordicom, Göteborg, Sweden) Vol 5 No 1, 2001

Documents

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

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

Code Description/Pages/Cost

491 ‘Youth Participation: Some Models’ (Roger Holdsworth, August 2001 - notes for Inner City Regional Youth Committee) (3 pp; $0.70)


Is Your Connect Subscription Up-to-date?

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

Democracy Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work

Descriptions and practical information about active citizenship in primary schools

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

OTHER STUDENT PARTICIPATION SUPPORT MATERIALS AVAILABLE

See the back page of this issue of Connect for listings and order form

Friends of Connect

By subscribing at a higher rate, the following have helped keep Connect going. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since the last issue of Connect:

Sustaining Subscribers ($100 - 2 years):

Steve Wilson UWS, Penrith (NSW)

Supporting Subscribers ($50 pa):

SRC, Warrnambool College Warrnambool (Vic)

August 2001
Copy or use this form to subscribe to Connect and to order materials from Connect:

To: CONNECT, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia

From: Name: .................................................................

Address: ........................................................................ Postcode: .........................

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

I/we enclose a new/renewal subscription to CONNECT:

(circle amount) 1 year 2 years

- an individual or personal subscription $20 $40
- a primary/secondary school student subscription $5 $10
- an organisational (school, library etc) subscription $30 $60
- a student organisation (SRC, JSC etc) subscription $10 $20
- a supporting/sustaining subscription $50 $100
- a lifetime subscription: ... forever: ...

$1000

Subscription Sub-total: $...........

MATERIALS:

Back issues of Connect ($4 single; $6 double issue). Circle issue/s required: $...........

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6/7, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13/14, 15/16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22/23, 24, 25, 26, 27/28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37/38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46/47, 48, 49, 50, 51/52, 53, 54/55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65/66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77/78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85/86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95/96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106/107, 108/109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124/5, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130

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

Miscellaneous Resources:

- Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) $...........
- Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) $...........
- Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) ($7 or $12 for two copies) $...........

Foxfire Resources:

- Sometimes a Shining Moment (Wigginton) ($25) $...........
- Foxfire: 25 Years (Doubleday) ($25) $...........
- A Foxfire Christmas (Doubleday hardcover) ($25) $...........
- Shining Moments - Foxfire video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: $5) $...........

Documents:

- Photocopies of the following documents: $...........

- Cross-referenced Index to photocopies of documents ($3) $...........

(all prices include postage and packaging) TOTAL ENCLOSED: $...........

Connect 130: