Part of the solution!

- Students Tackling Bullying, Cyberbullying and Female to Female Aggression
- Students Tackling Environmental Issues: NSW, Qld and SA
- NAB Schools First: Student Award Winners Profiled
- Teach the Teachers:
  Student-Led Professional Development in Ten Schools
- VicSRC: The Big Banter; Executive Training Camp
- VISTA: Moving a Motion - a Resource
- International: Citizenship Education in England

Resources:
- ‘How to Move a Motion’ Flow Chart
- Student Voice and AITSL
- Bias-free Discipline: Ontario
- Connect ... on Facebook ... archived ... available on-line
In recent weeks, I had the pleasure of visiting several schools to talk with students and teachers about their initiatives. They proudly showed me their actions around environmental issues or raising school spirit or taking greater responsibility for classrooms and learning.

Some teachers then said to me: “We have set up these groups of students to take action … but we’re not sure whether they are truly Student Action Teams.” My first reaction has been to tell them not to worry about the label we might put on their work, and to assure them they are taking important initiatives to share responsibility, action and solutions (as the first article in this issues says).

But then we usually talk further, and our concerns emerge. Has the idea of students taking ‘action’ (any action) taken over from ‘purpose’? That is, are these groups about students ‘doing things’, first and foremost, rather than thinking about ‘what needs doing’? Are the students really setting the agenda? Are they being challenged to research an issue deeply, as the basis for their action, and then to decide what needs to be done? And if, on the basis of the work they find out (from their research or investigation) then decided needed changes were needed within their school or community, would these groups facilitate and enable that?

I first started thinking about this some time ago, when a school described a ‘Library Student Action Team’ that had been set up. Was this a Student Action Team? Or was it a group of students with limited responsibilities and expectations for neither research nor change? (As we talked in that case, the concept grew, and then decided needed changes were needed within their school or community, would these groups facilitate and enable that?)

It struck me at the time that this thinking parallels how we (teachers mainly) grow into possibilities for more authentic … greater, more meaningful … student participation. Usually we don’t start with the shock of doing something very different; usually we start with that which we’re familiar and comfortable. **But we don’t stop there - and it’s so important that we don’t!** We interrogate, question and challenge the familiar, perhaps in small steps, thinking about limitations, but also about changes that are needed to learning and relationships. We ask the critical questions that take our work to the next step: “Why are we doing this?” “What are we responding to?” “What do we need to know?” “Why do we need to know this?” “Based on what we now know, what will we do?” “How can we do this together?”

Whatever we’re doing – whether we call it a Student Action Team or a Student Leadership Group or a Student Responsibility Team – is driven by this **dissatisfaction** with what we’re currently doing, with questioning and searching for ways to make it more real, more authentic – so we’re sharing more and more decision-making with all students, ensuring that they are all ‘part of the solution’. 

Roger Holdsworth

**Connect Number 203: October 2013**

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**This Issue:**

I first starting thinking about this some time ago, when a school described a ‘Library Student Action Team’ that had been set up. Was this a Student Action Team? Or was it a group of students with limited responsibilities and expectations for neither research nor change? (As we talked in that case, the concept grew, and then decided needed changes were needed within their school or community, would these groups facilitate and enable that?)

Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bi-monthly since 1979.

It aims to:

• document student participation approaches and initiatives;
• support reflective practices;
• develop and share resources.

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**Next Issue: #204: December 2013**
Deadline for material: end of November, 2013
Bullying, Cyberbullying and Female to Female Aggression

Empowering students to be part of the solution

South Western Sydney Priority Schools Programs (PSP) Student Voice has as its fundamental principle the idea of ‘Empowering students to raise their voices and work together with others to create a school and community environment where all feel safe, worthwhile and valued’.

Each year, PSP Student Voice brings students together across a range of South Western Sydney primary and secondary public schools to explore and discuss relevant and challenging issues that young people face in today’s society. This year, Student Voice provided opportunities for students to develop ideas on how to raise awareness and promote positive and proactive responses to bullying, cyber bullying and other forms of aggression. Each participating school sent four student representatives who were also given the responsibility of sharing their learning back in their school community. Part of this involved providing students with a framework (Figure 1) to plan the process of sharing their learning and empowering others to be positive change agents in their schools and local communities.

PSP Student Voice emphasises 21st Century learning skills and capabilities, as highlighted in the Australian Curriculum and new

Working together to create a school and community environment where all feel safe, worthwhile and valued

Student Voice 2013

Leading school action against bullying

Key messages to share

Who will you need to talk to at your school to make this happen?

What will you need to organise and do to make this happen?

What might be the challenges to making this happen? How will we overcome these?

Who?

Students

Staff

Parents

School

How?

When and Where?
NSW syllabuses. **PSP Student Voice** has aimed to provide authentic opportunities for students to practise and develop analytical, creative and critical thinking, so students can be agile and adaptable, better able to problem solve, collaborate, and lead by influence (Wagner, 2013). As such, students are enabled to contribute positively to their current and future communities.

Term 3 2013 saw three **PSP Student Voice** events with a total of 153 students from 38 schools. One event was facilitated by the exceptional **Project Rockit** sister duo from Melbourne, while the other two events were planned in partnership with the Casula Power House Arts Centre. The Arts Centre is a unique venue situated in the heart of South Western Sydney. It provides creative learning opportunities for students and community members to workshop significant and relevant issues.

**Tough Beauty – Exploring Female to Female Aggression**

*Casula Power House Arts Centre; 15 August 2013*

The first of the events featured the play **Tough Beauty** (itself a result of student forums). This provided an ideal vehicle to explore female to female aggression, a growing issue for young women today ([toughbeauty.com.au](http://toughbeauty.com.au)). The girls (aged 15 years and above) found the play to be confronting and yet realistic and engaging, which was an eye opener for some of the teachers and staff, and consequently generated a great deal of deep thinking and discussion around this issue. Students reflected on their learning in groups, to produce an oath challenging female to female aggression. They also produced their own personal responses in the form of a wire sculpture.

The girls welcomed the opportunity to safely discuss this disturbing issue. Some of their feedback included:

“The day was informative and very enjoyable and it gave a lot of insight into this issue which is very important to us all.”

“Today was a really great day. I think it was great ... it was really confronting about just having issues, not just in the play, but representing it in art works. I think we learnt a lot of great ways to overcome this.”

“Coming from a family where I have experienced things like this ... it is an issue that is brushed off quite a lot and it isn’t recognised and it’s something that through group things like this ... it makes us realise and want to make a difference in the world.”

“I learnt that I wasn’t alone and everyone has each other.”

Products from the day (featured on page 5) included the oaths challenging female to female aggression, and the students' personal responses in the form of wire sculptures.

**Figure 2:** Cabramatta High School students' wire sculpture responses, and descriptions of what two of these sculptures represent:

**Third from the left:** “My work is about how there’s always going to be helping hands. These [the thicker coils of wire] represent that you’re always going to be confused in the future because you don’t know what is going to happen but it’s basically saying you have helping hands whenever.”

**Last on the right:** “[It represents] the victim, the victim vulnerable and scared - lonely.”
Unite as one, 
think for two. 
Women have a choice, 
raise your voice.

Girls come together for respect.

I swear to unite with my sisters, support and protect the right of choice against violence.

See the big picture it's pivotal. 
Consider others. 
Live in a loving world. 
Don’t be a coward. 
Be brave.

Take each other’s hand. 
Enough is enough. 
Fight against violence. 
Speak up. 
I deserve better.

Art responses and oaths were created by female representatives from Bankstown Girls High School, Bankstown Senior Secondary College, Condell Park High School, Cabramatta High School, Liverpool Girls High School, Prairiewood High School and Sir Joseph Banks High School.
Student representatives from 19 schools took part in the Exploring Bullying through Drama and Art Workshops Student Voice event.

There were three parts to the day. The first part involved students working with actors role playing positive and safe resolutions to bullying scenarios in a range of settings.

The second part of the day was delivered by artists who provided students with a comic strip template where students could record a scenario from their learning and experiences in the drama session.

The photos on this page reflect the drama and art workshop activities the students engaged in on the day.

The event concluded with student groups and their school staff representatives being given a planning framework (see Figure 1) and reference materials to use back at school to support their sharing and the process of empowering others in their school community to positively address this issue.
Anti Bullying, Cyberbullying and Leadership Workshops with Project Rockit
Hosted at Granville Boys High School; 22 August 2013

Anti Bullying, Cyberbullying and Leadership workshops were used to facilitate and promote deep thinking and understanding of these complex issues.

The Project Rockit facilitators, Lucy and Rosie, created a challenging yet safe learning environment, and through role play and cleverly orchestrated activities and scenarios had all participants and teachers engaged, challenged and reflective. They provided opportunities for students to build on their strengths and stand up for what they believe in. So inspiring were these two women that the students were reluctant to leave at the end of the afternoon and quick to provide positive feedback and ongoing communication via social media avenues (www.projectrockit.com.au).

Outcomes

An example of students’ responses to the day and follow up action back at school is captured by Kerry Leary-Smith, Assistant Principal at Warwick Farm Public School:

“Our kids had a truly tremendous day at Student Voice.

“They reported back to the principal straight away on arrival back at school in the afternoon. They all spoke at a short morning assembly giving one message each from the day. This focussed on bullying being mean and hurtful.

“They also devised a short play to present at the formal Friday assembly. They put their different experiences together and asked if they could change the ending from a negative result to a positive resolution. They did a great job and it was well received by all students. I heard many talking about these students the next week and the good job they did in acting and also the anti-bullying message they demonstrated.

“They are at camp now and will be writing a couple of sentences about their experience in Student Voice for the newsletter and website.”

Take Home Messages:

Everyone is treated fairly
Stand UP for what you believe in
Give everything a go (take positive risks)
Don’t be afraid to be yourself!
Always take positive risks; the rewards are always bigger
Be yourself (BYS) and strive to achieve
Don’t be a bystander ... stand up
Don’t be a follower, be a leader!
Think about ... How Do You Want To Be Remembered ...
Lead by example ... be a role model
Bullying isn’t welcome at our school! No deal. Shut Down!
Live the moment (don’t be afraid)
Be the change you want to see in your school
Project Rockit is receiving national recognition via the Australian media and the internet for their student centered approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying. Their approach assists students to think about how they can influence change in their school through leadership in its many forms. Engaging workshops designed to work through the idea of “being part of the solution and not part of the problem” set the stage for students to generate ideas and reflect on their implications, empowering them to think proactively rather than reactively.

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Student Voice 2013  Leading school action against bullying
Working together to create a school and community environment where all feel safe, worthwhile and valued

Figure 5: Framework for Action (version 2); created by R. Anderson and L. Henson; adapted by K. Murray
On October 11th 2012, the founding members of the Broken Hill High School Student Environmental Council (SEC) (consisting of 11 interested environmentalists) met for the very first time in the school's history. Together, they created a constitution, elected a strong executive team and planned their agenda for the next twelve months.

During the last term of 2012, the committee remained relatively quiet, gaining members by the meeting and strategically planning for 2013. By the end of the year, a committee of 20 people with a clear mandate existed in the school. In the first months of 2013, the SEC planted approximately 40 small flowers and 15 plants in an area that was desolate. The committee has continued to look after this whole area and we have the privilege today to recognise that all the plants have grown and the committee is daily provided with positive feedback and thanks from many staff and students.

Later in the first term, the SEC held a mufti day, raising $350 for the many projects we planned to hold during the course of the year. All members and students enjoyed ‘green and blue day’ whilst recognising the importance of the environment both within our school and within our local community.

In April, the SEC president Dylan Stone met with the manager of the YMCA to discuss a YMCA-SEC Partnership. The partnership was quickly signed. The SEC and YMCA purchased three large recycling bins for the YMCA to boost their waste management strategy and recycling efforts. To date, the recycling initiative and the YMCA-SEC Partnership has raised over $50 for the Broken Hill High School SEC.

Over the April holidays, another partnership was formed between the Broken Hill High School SEC and the Broken Hill High School SRC – promoting cooperation with and support for each other. This partnership has proven instrumental to the support for and strength of the SEC.

World Environment Day (on Wednesday, June 5th 2013) was celebrated in Broken Hill High School with the SEC purchasing five recycling bins to be placed throughout the school. This was only possible due to a partnership between the Broken Hill High SEC and the Broken Hill High School PDHPE Department who have in the past participated in recycling at the school. The bins (although only being in the school for several months) have raised a substantial amount of money for the committee.

In term two, the SEC held a forum in which all members attended. The Deputy Mayor of Broken Hill and the Chairperson of the Broken Hill Tidy Towns committee attended the forum to present an informative and interesting workshop. The forum also attracted many ideas and helped build up previously decided ideas to allow the SEC to be stronger in its approach towards the school's environment.

In the final week of term two, the SEC held an Earth Hour day where all teachers participated by turning off lights, laptops and other non-essential electrical items. Many students and teachers at the school dubbed this a great success and the SEC has vowed to hold the event in the future.

Term three was definitely the term where the SEC performed strongest and really began to make an impact in the school. In the first few weeks of term three, the SEC signed a partnership with the Broken Hill Youth Council to promote cooperation and support towards both committees. This partnership has also proved to be instrumental to the SEC's success!

Early in the term, the SEC represented itself at the Broken Hill volunteers' expo in which we displayed photos and posters,
and members explained to many interested people how the SEC works. The SEC received much positive feedback at the community expo. Only a week later, the SEC was invited to participate in the Broken Hill National Tree Day in which the SEC represented itself in our local community to promote a greener Broken Hill and a cleaner environment. The SEC later in the term held a Pizza Day fundraiser that raised approximately $120 as the SEC served 42 hungry customers. Once again, the SEC gained much positive feedback.

One of the SEC's biggest achievements so far is the introduction of an SEC sport within the school's timetable. This generated two hours every week for ten weeks for the SEC to conduct projects and initiatives within the school. Within ten weeks, the SEC cleaned every area of the school and planted trees in many areas. Most notably would be the planting of flowers in the school's main play area. The area where the SEC planted the flowers was previously known as a waste dump and one of the dirtier areas of the school. Since the flowers were planted, waste has been reduced exponentially.

One of the best things about being a member and the current president of the Broken Hill High School SEC is the fact that you witness a total change in the school's attitude towards the environment. Within the (almost) year in which the SEC has been active, we have witnessed recycling increase dramatically, littering reduced exponentially and the school become a greener and friendlier environment.

For a committee that is only a year old, we have as a committee achieved outstanding results and, as individuals, every member of the SEC has grown to become a stronger leader and stronger member of the community.

As the current president of the Broken Hill High School SEC, I commend the efforts of all 21 members of the SEC for the effort and achievement they have provided to create such a fantastic and prosperous committee. To be elected as the president of this committee is an outstanding honour and I will continue to serve as president to my full potential.

I would also like to take the time and gratitude to thank all current and former members and executives of the SEC, all students at Broken Hill High School, our teachers, principal and deputy principals, those with partnerships or links with the SEC and those community members who have offered us total support in our first year of operation. Thank you so very much to everyone who has offered us support throughout the first twelve months. The SEC looks forward to another fantastic and productive year ahead!

Dylan Stone  
current president of the Broken Hill High School Student Environmental Council  
dylan.stone@education.nsw.gov.au

YEC South Australia

Since 1997, the Youth Environment Council (YEC) of South Australia has provided young people a voice in key environmental issues facing South Australia and has given them opportunities to take action to achieve a more environmentally sustainable future for SA.

In 2013 the Youth Environment Council provides an opportunity for like-minded Year 5-10 students to share, learn and be inspired about sustainability. The YEC offers free camps, online workshops and forums to give students the skills and knowledge to run their own environmental action projects in their local community.

The Youth Environment Council aims to:

- Raise youth awareness and encourage learning and involvement in our environment
- Empower youth to take action on environmental issues
- Ensure students see themselves as active citizens today and not just “leaders of tomorrow”
- Develop skills such as leadership, team work and public speaking
- Develop a network of youth environmental and sustainability leaders
- Enable students to share ideas and actions.

The YEC is a joint initiative of the Department of Education and Child Development and the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board. State wide support and coordination for the YEC are delivered through partnerships with other South Australian Natural Resource Management Boards and environmental agencies.

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Dylan Stone with SEC members
NAB Schools First has announced the ten winning Student Awards for 2013. Each winning applicant will receive an Apple iPad and their school will receive $5,000 in award money to get their partnership idea off the ground. They are sharing in $2 million in awards that will go to schools across Australia to recognise and celebrate outstanding school-community partnerships.

Congratulations to the following 2013 NAB Schools First Student Award winners:

- Maddie: Aberfeldie Primary School, Vic
- Sarah: Alfred Deakin High School, ACT
- Ashley and Sonja: Camberwell High School, Vic
- Ethan: Dodges Ferry Primary School, Tas
- Josh and Chris: Gilroy College, NSW
- Kasey and Grace: Illawarra Sports High School, NSW
- Mikaylie, Eloise and Sarah: Ku-Ring-Gai Creative Arts High School, NSW
- Liliana and Simone: North Sydney Girls High School, NSW
- Katelyn: Western Cape College (Weipa Campus), Qld

NAB Schools First said: “We’re extremely proud to watch these students’ partnerships develop. FYA will be running workshops for the winners later in the year, to help expand their knowledge of planning and communicating the partnership idea, and to share some innovative and fun ways to work with the community partner and make their ideas come to life.

“We’d like to also thank all the students across Australia who had the passion and commitment to submit an application for their partnership ideas. While we can’t award all applicants, we encourage students to follow through on their ideas and work with their community to help enhance the educational experience of their peers.”

Further details of these ten student proposals are included in the next pages.

NAB Schools First

Now in its fifth year, NAB Schools First is an awards program open to all Australian schools. It rewards outstanding examples of school-community partnerships that deliver improved educational outcomes for students.

A school-community partnership involves schools actively working together with local business, industry and the wider community.

Winners receive award money to support their partnership and recognise their school’s commitment to growing school-community partnerships.

Program Partners

NAB - National Australia Bank

“At NAB, we are motivated by a belief in potential of our people, our customers and our community. Understanding that students do better at school when involved in their community, we sought to enhance educational opportunities for young people by encouraging schools and communities to work together. And so, in partnership with The Foundation for Young Australians and the Australian Council for Educational Research, we created NAB Schools First.”

nab.com.au

FYA - Foundation for Young Australians

“At The Foundation for Young Australians, we are an independent organisation that is committed to improving the learning outcomes and life chances of young people. To effectively deliver on this commitment, we undertake research, deliver education initiatives, invest in individuals and youth-led organisations, and advocate on the issues that matter to young people.

Above all, we support and empower young Australians to become successful learners and creative, active and valued citizens. Our long-term vision is for an Australia where all young people achieve their full potential and are valued by all.”

fya.org.au

ACER - Australian Council for Educational Research

“At the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) we are committed to creating and distributing research-based knowledge, products and services to improve learning across the lifespan in both formal and informal settings.

Established in 1930, we have a long history and solid reputation as a provider of reliable support to education policy makers and professional practitioners. As a private, not-for-profit company, independent of Government, we receive no direct financial support and generate our entire income through contracted research and development projects, and through products and services that we develop and distribute.”

acer.edu.au
Alfred Deakin High School, ACT
and Yarralumla Nursery

Sarah is in Year 10 at Alfred Deakin High School. She has developed a plan for her school to partner with the local nursery to improve the garden around the science block at her school. Sarah has noticed that the courtyard outside the science classrooms is run down and often floods when it rains. She has identified this as an opportunity to fix up the garden and introduce an outdoor learning space with increased biodiversity and a place for the science teachers to help students conduct outdoor experiments.

The partner organisation that Sarah believes will be able to help her realise her idea is the Yarralumla Nursery. Sarah would like the nursery to help source suitable plants and trees for the space. She hopes that representatives from the nursery will be able to visit her school to assist students with the planting. The nursery will gain wider publicity in the community for their involvement with the school and will have the opportunity to pass on their extensive horticultural knowledge to willing learners.

Sarah is a member of her school’s environment committee and she thinks the improved outdoor learning space will encourage native wildlife to visit. She will conduct a biodiversity study to identify the wildlife in the area and, with help from the nursery, the students will select appropriate plants to meet the needs of the wildlife.

Aberfeldie Primary School, Vic
and Essendon Historical Society

Maddie is in Grade 4 at Aberfeldie Primary School. She has come up with an idea for her school to form a partnership with the Essendon Historical Society. In History classes, Maddie learnt about the background of her school and the surrounding area. She noticed a lot of old photos showing the school’s history displayed in the corridor. She also found that the Historical Society has photos of the school and documents relating to the history of the community that could be used to teach the students.

Maddie would like the Historical Society to help her school create digital storybooks showcasing photos and information about the history of her school and the local area. She has proposed regular visits between the school and the Historical Society to share information and sort out their photo collections together. Maddie has also suggested video interviews with past teachers and students to gain more information for the digital stories.

The resources could be shared on the school website so that more people have access to the history of the school. The partners would present the digital storybooks to the community at an afternoon tea held at the school. Maddie believes this would also be a great opportunity for her school to showcase its partnership with the Historical Society.
Camberwell High School, Vic and The Progress Leader

Ashley is a Year 12 student at Camberwell High School who has come up with the idea for his school to partner with the local community newspaper. Along with members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), Ashley identified a need to enhance communication among students at the school, leading them to introduce the idea of a student newspaper. Ashley recognised that the best way for students to gain knowledge about how to run a newspaper was to engage with professional journalists working for the local paper.

The Progress Leader is a local newspaper that covers issues relevant to the community. Ashley believes that by linking with the school students, the Leader will gain insight into the local youth and be better able to report on youth issues in the paper.

Ashley and Sonja, a fellow student, have developed a plan that involves students from the Student Representative Council attending workshops at the Leader to learn about analytical writing and reporting. They would also like to start a work experience program at the Leader. They hope that participating students will develop ongoing mentoring relationships with the journalists and receive career advice and industry training as a result of the school-community partnership.

Dodges Ferry Primary School, Tas and Okines Community House Inc

Ethan is in Grade 5 at Dodges Ferry Primary School. He would like to establish an outdoor classroom and learning space that can be shared by his school and the wider community. Ethan was inspired after seeing another school implementing an outdoor classroom successfully. He has come up with the idea for an outdoor classroom at his school because he believes some students learn better in an outdoor setting, rather than being inside a classroom.

Okines Community House is the community partner Ethan has chosen to help realise his idea. Ethan’s school already has some contact with Okines Community House volunteers, who help out with cooking and gardening classes once a week. Ethan would like his school to work together with the volunteers to create and build the outdoor learning space.

The school students would be able to use the outdoor space for classroom activities and this would enhance their engagement in learning. The Okines Community House volunteers could use the space to run workshops for other community members and to teach woodwork or yoga to the school students. The shared space would also be available to others in the community to use.
Gilroy College, NSW and SITA

Josh is in Year 12 at Gilroy College and, with the help of Chris in Year 10, he has come up with an idea for his school to partner with a recycling management organisation. The boys realised that there is no recycling program at their school and that the school only offers garbage bins to dispose of waste. Josh believes that the students at the College don’t know enough about recycling and that they need to better understand the benefit to the community and the environment that can be achieved through recycling.

Josh has identified SITA as a suitable community partner to help his school introduce recycling bins into the classrooms and playground. He believes that allowing students to have input in the partnership will help create a sense of ownership of the project and increase student self-esteem.

SITA is a company specialising in recycling solutions and waste management. They assist companies and councils to reduce their environmental impact through sustainable resource recovery solutions. Josh’s idea involves SITA helping the school to source recycling bins and then running workshops in the classroom to educate students about recycling and how to use the bins. The students can also go on excursions to visit SITA recycling facilities to learn more about the industry. Each year the workshops and excursions can be held between SITA and the school for new groups of students.

Illawarra Sports High School, NSW and the Nan Tien Temple

Kasey and Grace are Year 9 students at Illawarra Sports High School. They have thought of a plan to tackle issues of bullying and unhappiness at their school through a school–community partnership with the Nan Tien Temple. Their school is made up of students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The girls observed that many students were experiencing racist bullying on a regular basis and that feelings of worthlessness and despair were common among their classmates.

Nan Tien Temple is a Buddhist Temple situated near the school. The Temple runs cultural and educational workshops open to all members of the community. Kasey and Grace approached the Temple to find out what they could offer the school through a partnership. The girls believe that the Temple’s teachings of respect, patience, resilience and mindfulness can benefit students in their school.

A group of 20 students, selected by teachers, will attend workshops at the Temple to learn about intercultural communication, and gain leadership skills and enhanced self-esteem.

These students will become student leaders who will return to the school and host workshops for their peers to share the Temple’s teachings. Based on past experience, Kasey and Grace have identified that students are more willing to listen to positive student role models than to teachers.
James Ruse Agricultural High School, NSW and The Hills Shire Council

Tanya is in Year 11 at James Ruse Agricultural High School. She has thought of a way for her school to partner with the local shire council to introduce a recycling program that will benefit the whole school. Tanya noticed that her school only provides garbage bins with no separate recycling bins for students to use. As a result, she observed many students placing recyclable items in the garbage bins. After conducting a survey of her fellow students, Tanya found that many students at her school had no knowledge of what types of plastics are recyclable or how much of their lunch waste could be recycled.

Tanya has chosen the Waste Services sector, which is part of the Hills Shire Council, to be the partner involved in her proposed school–community partnership, as they have recycling expertise they can share with the students. The local Council has been active in spreading environmental messages and Tanya has identified this as one of the reasons they would make a successful partner. She would like to see her school and the Council working together to install recycling bins at the school and educating students.

The next step in her plan is to organise the Council to come and talk at the school and give presentations at school assemblies. The Council will provide posters and materials to educate students on how to use the bins. The school and the partner could also organise lunchtime activities and rubbish sorting challenges to keep students engaged in learning about recycling. By increasing students’ knowledge about recycling, Tanya is hoping her school will become a cleaner and greener space. She would like to see the school and Council working together to create resources about recycling that could be shared with other schools.

Ku-Ring-Gai Creative Arts High School, NSW and The Black Dog Institute

Mikaylie and Eloise, along with their friend Sarah, from Ku-Ring-Gai Creative Arts High School have thought of a way their school could partner with a group in the community to enhance student wellbeing and help students cope with difficult issues that arise in their lives. The girls conducted a survey on their fellow students and identified the kinds of issues students were dealing with, such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and stress. Many students indicated that they thought they could be better supported.

The community organisations that Mikaylie, Eloise and Sarah have identified as potential partners include the Black Dog Institute and Headspace. The girls believe these organisations are well-equipped to provide professional assistance and advice to students in need. The students would benefit from having access to services aimed at their age group and they would experience a stronger feeling of support. The girls have researched information to suggest that students with strong support networks and enhanced wellbeing will behave better at school and be more likely to engage with learning.

Each semester, student representatives from each year level will meet with the partners to work together to identify specific issues affecting students. The partners will facilitate fortnightly programs in the school based on the students’ feedback about the most important issues to be addressed for the different year levels. The girls expect students to experience improved health and wellbeing as a result of community involvement with their school.
North Sydney Girls School, NSW and Royal North Shore Hospital

Liliana and Simone are in Year 11 and 9 at North Sydney Girls School. They have thought of an idea for their school to form a partnership with a local hospital to provide volunteering experience for the students. At their school, the girls have noticed that many students lack real life experience with community engagement. They also believe students want to volunteer their time, but have not been able to find a suitable location to do so.

A school–community partnership between the school and the hospital would allow the students to build their confidence and engage in activities aimed at helping others. The school students could visit the children’s ward at the Royal North Shore Hospital once a week to cheer up the patients. The students would observe the nurses while they are visiting and learn appropriate professional behaviour in the hospital.

Liliana and Simone would like to improve resilience and wellbeing in the students at their school and the sick children at the hospital. They have planned some activities that the visiting students could engage in with the children at the hospital, including performing plays or musicals and reading stories. The girls hope that the sick children will benefit from having regular visits from students close to their own age, since the young patients can become isolated from a standard school experience if they are in hospital long term.

Western Cape College (Weipa Campus), Qld and Weipa SES

Katelyn is a Year 8 student at Western Cape College. She would like to develop a partnership between her school and the local State Emergency Services (SES) in Weipa. Her school is situated in a small remote community in Far North Queensland. In times of crisis the community relies on the SES to provide disaster relief and support.

Katelyn’s idea is to increase students’ awareness about natural disasters and emergencies, and how to cope with them. She would like to work with the SES to teach students at her school how to develop disaster management and planning skills. The students would benefit from a greater understanding of the dangers posed by natural disasters and would be better equipped to deal with crisis situations.

Katelyn developed her idea for a school–community partnership after realising how important the SES are to the town. The community is isolated and must be self-reliant in times of crisis. Katelyn realised that increasing students’ knowledge about how to deal with disaster would help the SES by providing a greater pool of community members trained to handle emergencies.

As part of Katelyn’s partnership idea, the school students would organise fundraising events in the community. Katelyn would like the SES to provide students with survival kits and information packs to teach them about safe ways to respond in an emergency. By helping to raise money, the school students will ensure that the SES can continue to develop important resources for the students and the community. Katelyn believes that greater student involvement with the SES will help increase community appreciation and awareness about the role of the SES in the town.

Further Information

As well as the Student Awards, NAB Schools First offers Impact Awards (that recognise and reward outstanding school-community partnerships, offering A$30,000 in funding to 25 schools to enhance or expand an existing partnership) and Seed Funding Awards (that recognise and reward school-community partnerships in the early stages of development, offering A$15,000 to 55 schools to help the partnership develop further).

Further information, including winners in all categories, can be found at the Schools First website: www.schoolsfirst.edu.au
Ten Schools Developing Teach the Teacher

Teach the Teacher is an innovative program written by students for students. It provides a space for students and teachers to have a facilitated discussion about the issues that affect their learning and work environment. The program provides a mechanism for students to provide feedback to their teachers, while providing opportunities to work together to identify areas of teaching and learning that could be developed together.

The VicSRC is working with 10 fantastic schools to pilot the Teach the Teacher program:
- Bayside P-12 College (Williamstown Campus)
- Narre Warren South P-12 College
- Portland Secondary College
- Edenhope College
- Frankston High School
- McClelland College
- Bellarine Secondary College
- Mt Ridley P-12 College
- Bentleigh Secondary College
- Ringwood Secondary College

Seven schools have completed the VicSRC Teach the Teacher training, delivered to students to prepare them for running a Teach the Teacher session. The best part of this program is seeing how each group of students puts their own individual spin on how they deliver the program so that it is unique to their school.

At McClelland Secondary College, SRC Science captains are using Teach the Teacher to provide feedback to their Science teachers on what students most enjoy about the Science curriculum. Students and teachers are working together to create the best Science lesson possible.

At Bentleigh Secondary College, students are using the results from the Attitudes to Schools Survey to inform the questions they will ask their teachers during their Teach the Teacher session.

We look forward to sharing with you the results of the pilot program in December. However, interest in the program is gaining momentum with three new schools also expressing an interest in running the program in Term 1 next year. If you are interested to run Teach the Teacher at your school, please download the Represent! Plus resource from the VicSRC website: www.vicsrc.org.au The resource provides a step by step guide on how to deliver Teach the Teacher at your school. For more information, please contact the VicSRC Coordinator: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au
Our First ‘Teach the Teacher’ Session

Teach the Teacher basically means that students from a school get to become the ‘teachers’ and discuss some problems or issues within the school. In June, a group of students from years 7-11 at our school, Portland Secondary College, in south-western Victoria, came together as a whole to conduct such a session.

The first group session was an introduction and training session. We met with Krista from the VicSRC who told us about the whole idea of Students Teaching Teachers and why it was a good idea. She believed that the students notice more issues and problems throughout the school and that having sessions like these would improve the learning in classrooms.

We started the training session with an ‘icebreaker’ - something to get everybody excited and ready for the session. We did two different icebreakers: the first was an ‘organisation’ sort of game, where the group leader says something like: “Arrange yourself from tallest to shortest”, so that’s what we did. The second icebreaker was called ‘Desert Island’. We all took in turns to answer this question: “If you were stranded on a desert and you had to take one luxury item, one piece of music and a book, what would you choose?”

We then brainstormed a bunch of topics to talk to the teachers about. We all talked and contributed and came up with our selection of topics (see later in this article). We were put into groups of three: a speaker, a note taker and a time keeper. In each of our groups we took one of these topics to discuss and made up questions for the teachers to answer. After making up some of these questions, we all got back together in a circle and did a little role play based on the questions. We did this so we could experience what the real session with teachers might be like. We sat in the circle and one group of three students asked all the other students some of their questions. This role play worked pretty well; it was a bit nervous-making for some people. That was the last activity we did for the first introduction day and I think most of us were ready to do the real session.

The session happened the next term. Several weeks had passed without much notice about the session but then, about a week before the session was to be held, the group of students who would be conducting the session were called together to finalise the groups and questions. This meeting lasted a short time and we were told that the session with the teachers would be the next week.

That week passed quickly and it was the day of the first ‘Teach the Teacher’ session at Portland Secondary College. At 3.30 pm, after school, the group was called up to get prepared. We got into our groups and were assigned a room. Each group had about 10 or more teachers to talk to.

When we got into our rooms and the teachers sat down, we started the session off with an icebreaker. This actually really helped: it got the teachers really excited and happy. The icebreaker took a long time to finish because the teachers enjoyed it so much. But once the icebreaker was over, we got into the questions that our groups had decided on and assigned.

We had questions which were around the four main topics we had decided on:

1. Open Learning Spaces
2. Use of Netbooks in Classes
3. The transition from Year 7 to Year 8 homework wise
4. Do teachers organise their classes together when teaching together?

Each group had worked out about six questions to ask the teachers. We got some good feedback and really got into answering and discussing each question. The session lasted about 15 minutes and worked really well. The teachers seemed to really enjoy the session, because they gave some of the groups’ members good feedback in the days after. Maybe the discussion won’t change the way teachers teach, but we think that teachers might now look at teaching a little bit differently – after all, students are the best critics.

So in conclusion, the session worked well, though it needed more preparation and communication within the student group.

We’re pretty sure that this school will conduct another session. This time it will be more organised and maybe have more people so the groups are smaller and easier to handle.

Nathan and Rory
9C
VicsRC Executive Training Camp

The first training camp for the 2013/2014 VicSRC Executive was held on the 23rd to 25th of September. Along with our coordinator Krista Seddon and supporters Scott, Roger and Dave, we went to the DOXA Camp at Malmsbury for three days. Here are reports and responses from some Executive members:

*Margaret:* Imagine a room filled with passionate leaders wanting to make a change in their world. But now imagine these leaders are students from 14 to 17 years old. This was what the Executive training camp was like for us. It was such an amazing learning experience, filled with a lot of laughing, food and information. We were taught many different things: how to write an article, what an SRC does, the importance of student voice, background information about the VicSRC and, of course, teamwork.

Over the three days of camp, I definitely grew closer to my fellow Executive members and to the four supporters who came with us. It was like we had known each other for a lifetime and already we were like a family. This came through the team bonding exercises and the work that we had to complete.

I know that we, the new Executive body of the VicSRC, will definitely achieve our goals to provide Victorian students with a voice and a chance to act upon that voice. I can't wait to work with all the executives over 2013 and 2014.

*Kristen:* We received our operational and resolution portfolios, which we are to work on for the rest of our term, learnt more about the technical side of the VicSRC, including its financial aspect and history, and got to know each member of the Executive better. The camp was a really great way to understand our roles better and start to connect with each other – becoming a really hardworking and supportive team. It made me even more excited and also slightly nervous at the same time, about the coming year ahead and what we can achieve!

*Emily:* We had a full-on agenda of team-building activities, hard work and group discussions. Everyone had sessions to brainstorm ideas for their portfolios, get everyone's opinions and set aims and goals for the following year. The camp was a great way for us to get to know each other and to teach us everything we need to know to continue improving Student Councils and schools around Victoria.

*Sammy:* The camp was a great way to get to know everyone and build some essential teamwork skills that we will need for our term of office. It was a really good starting point for us to plan for the year. Along with getting plenty of work and teamwork challenges done, we honestly just had fun – becoming closer friends.

*Qais:* It was an amazing experience for me, as I got to know the other Executive members and the volunteers better. It allowed me to improve my leadership skills, and to decide on portfolios that I will work on for the next year or so. The highlight of the camp would have to be the Giant Swing; it proved to me that the best way to get rid of a fear is by facing it. I had a great time.

*Ron:* Three days at Doxa campsite – the best camp so far since Grade 6. There, it was more than just an in-depth discussion and complete understanding of our roles in the Executive. It was an absolute bonding experience, as we only had some knowledge of each other before this important and major event on our calendar. The activities, especially the Giant Swing and the ‘find pieces of history about the VicSRC around the entire camp at night,’ which was awesomely exhilarating, the teamwork and the laughing, all made us even more familiar with each other. I really look forward to future meetings and events, especially the next camp.

*Sarah:* The VicSRC camp was an informational and educational event, that was great for giving us a chance to both plan the rest of the year and click better as a group. As we got our portfolios, I was excited to get this first term underway. We spent many sessions going over the nitty-gritty details and planning that is necessary for us to get our jobs going. The giant swing, low-ropes course and team building sessions really brought our group together and I’m really happy and proud with how the team bonded. I’m sure this progress will lead to a better success of our resolutions. Altogether the camp and food were awesome!

*Bridin:* As a new group of Executive members, planning together and working on teamwork really helped us to bond and work well. As part of the Executive, we mainly work on two or three portfolios for the year – one or two operational portfolio (newsletters, promotion, conferences, website etc) and also one of the resolutions passed at the 2013 Congress. In asking the group about the decisions we should make, new ideas and concepts blossomed. Hopefully every executive camp will be as constructive as the first one.
The Big Banter

The Big Banter, a meeting for young Australians about the rights that young people have, was recently chaired at YACVic by Megan Mitchell, the National Children’s Commissioner. The meeting involved seven Executive members of the VicSRC and three young people from other organisations.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss children’s rights and what they meant to us as children/young people. We talked about issues that were important to us and also how children’s and young people’s rights can be better protected. In groups of three, we wrote down the rights, rules and regulations that our ideal world would have.

The friendly and relaxed environment helped us to get our brains around what rights are important. It was a really good opportunity for the VicSRC Executive members, as young people, to understand what rights we have and how they can affect the opportunities and responsibilities we have throughout our lives. The things that we discussed and also what other young people in Australia have said in these meetings will be incorporated into a report that Megan Mitchell will make to the Australian Government.

Margaret Tran and Bridin Walker

2013 VicSRC Congress Report Now Available

The VicSRC 2013 Congress report is now available online for reading and download:

www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/congressreport

The VicSRC is about to rebrand and go online! Keep your eyes open for new VicSRC online newsletter.

To sign up to the mailing list visit:

www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/mailinglist

The VicSRC receives funding support from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and is auspiced by and based at the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic). It can be reached there on 03 9267 3744 or, for the cost of a local call from outside Melbourne on 1300 727 176; or by email: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au
The third annual JSC Congress will be held in Parliament House, Victoria on Monday 18 November 2013. The topic is: We are citizens too! What we do can make a difference.

Victorian schools can apply for students to attend the 2013 State Junior School Council Congress. These students should be from Year 5 or 6 and have been involved in Junior School Councils, Student Action Teams or other forms of student representation.

Before applying, principals and teachers should read the information for principals and teachers at http://civics-citizenship.wikispaces.com/JSC+information – applications should then be made online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/juniorschoolcouncil

Applications close on Friday 18 October 2013. Schools can apply for up to three students to attend the Congress, unless otherwise negotiated. Overall numbers are limited to 100 students. Schools will be notified as to whether their application has been accepted or not by email by Friday 25 October 2013.

What is the Junior School Council Congress?

A JSC Congress is a way in which Grade 5 and 6 primary school students can actively experience and practise democracy. Students come from many different schools throughout Victoria. Students debate and vote on key issues about which they are passionate. By using the formality of parliament, students develop skills such as persuasive and public speaking, confidence and a greater understanding of Australian citizenship.

The Congress model has been developed by Second Strike, a company that has provided training and support for student participation projects and Student Representative Councils for more than 10 years.

Previous Congresses

In November 2011, the inaugural JSCC was held at Parliament House, Melbourne with over 100 delegates from 17 primary schools. The second JSC Congress was held in November 2012. Students debated ‘Going Global: the opportunities and challenges of our online world’.

Four regions (Hume, and the Eastern, Northern and Western Metropolitan Regions) each hosted a congress in 2011. These congresses were designed to support regional priorities and citizenship initiatives in the context of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008. More than 400 students were involved in these activities.

There is no cost to students, teachers or parents to attend the Congress. Schools must make their own arrangements to cover the cost of travel to and from the Congress, and the cost of replacement teachers if required.

After schools and delegates are selected to attend

The wiki at http://civics-citizenship.wikispaces.com/JSC+information provides background material for delegates to prepare for the Congress. Delegates complete a survey in their schools before the Congress as research into the attitudes of their peers on the topic.

All participating schools are invited to nominate a student to present a one or two minute opening statement that reflects the views of students at their school. There are ten places available in the opening session. If accepted, delegates need to prepare a logical and informative speech that provides relevant information to the Congress for consideration.

Teachers accompanying the students are invited to attend a briefing during the morning while students work in small groups to develop motions or bills.

Contact

For further information contact Ms Chris Finch, Acting Manager, Languages Unit, Learning and Teaching Division, DEECD: (03) 9637 2318 or email: finch.christine.a@edumail.vic.gov.au
The Moving a Motion flowchart has been developed by experienced SRC teachers to assist both primary and secondary students with the process of moving a motion in a formal meeting and learning the vocabulary associated with doing so.

You may like to print this resource in poster size and display it within your classroom/meeting location for students to refer to, provide copies for your students to use as a quick reference guide when running meetings, or discuss the flowchart with your students and model its use during a training session or explicit lesson.

THE PROCESS OF MOVING A MOTION:
The process commences with an idea. This is done by moving a motion. A motion is an idea or matter you would like the group to consider and make a decision on.

When moving a motion, the person who wishes to do so (the mover) begins their statement by saying: “I move a motion that...”. An example of this might be: “I move a motion that we change the day of SRC Meetings to Wednesday”.

Once a motion has been moved, the chairperson will then ask for a seconder. This is another person who agrees with the idea that is being put forward by the mover. Usually this is done by the seconder raising their hand and being acknowledged by their chairperson; however once the motion has been moved, the seconder may just wish to state: “I’ll second that motion” to speed up the process. In the event that the motion does not get a seconder, the motion then lapses as it does not have any further support to proceed and the meeting proceeds as normal.

With the motion now having a mover and seconder, the chairperson can decide if discussion is required. For simple motions, such as accepting the minutes, discussion is usually not required. However for larger decisions where there is a difference of opinion, discussion gives those present the chance to share their viewpoints. Discussion commences with someone speaking for or in favour of the motion; usually this is done by the mover of the motion. Following this, someone can speak against the motion. A second speaker for the motion (usually the seconder) may then speak in favour of the motion. This process is repeated until three people in favour and three people against the idea have had the chance to speak.

At this point, the chairperson can decide to extend the discussion to additional speakers or choose to put the motion to a vote.

The chairperson will then call for the vote by asking for: “all those in favour”. Those who agree with the motion then raise their hands to show their support for the idea. Once the chairperson has counted those voting in favour, they will then call for: “all those against”. Those who disagree with the motion will then raise their hands, with the chairperson counting the total.

If more than 50% of those present vote in favour of the motion, the motion is then passed or carried. If less than 50% of those present vote in favour of the motion, the motion is denied or defeated. The motion, along with the names of the mover and seconder and the result of the vote, is then recorded in the minutes.

An important and often overlooked step, once a motion has been passed, is to then decide what next action is required to make the idea happen. Choose what needs to happen, who needs to do it and by when, and be sure to also record this in the minutes.

AMENDING A MOTION:
Prior to a motion being put to a vote, it is possible to “amend the motion”. This means that the wording of the motion can be altered to remove or include additional details. Using the previous example, it could be proposed that the motion be amended so that it says: “we change the day of SRC Meetings to Wednesdays at 1:30pm” as it provides more detail. For a motion to be amended, the mover and seconder of the original motion need to accept the amendment. If they accept, the motion is simply amended and the process continues. If the mover and seconder do not accept the amendment, the amendment must be moved and seconded, discussed and voted on before the process continues. Again the mover of the amendment and any rewording need to be recorded in the minutes.

OTHER RESOURCES:
Copies of the flowchart can be downloaded from the Free Resources section of the VISTA website (see below). VISTA Members can also access our exclusive resources section that includes templates for minutes, agendas and other resources. Episode #6 of the VISTA Podcast explains meeting procedures in more detail. You can access it from iTunes or our podcast website.

We would love to know if you use this resource and find it useful or can think of ways it can be improved. Send us an email at vista@srcteachers.org.au Additionally, if there are other resources or materials you are searching for, be sure to get in touch so we can develop them with you.

Scott Duncan
VISTA President

VISTA currently receives no additional funding to operate its programs and relies heavily on memberships to support its programs. Visit us at http://srcteachers.ning.com or e-mail us at vista@srcteachers.org.au for details on how to join.
Using student voice to inform teachers’ professional practice

Australind Senior High School (ASHS), an award winning regional high school in the South-West of Western Australia, is the only school in Australia to be selected to trial AITSL’s professional standards for teachers. Nigel Wakefield reflects upon his initial motivation to trial the standards at ASHS.

Considering the school improvement cycle to date, I thought that the next big ticket item to be introduced should be the national teaching standards. Finally, we would have something to anchor a quality teacher program to: standards that are consistent across the national stage.

Prior to my current role, I worked for the Department of Education WA as a Principal Curriculum Officer in Professional Support, delivering professional development and consultative support in data analysis and school planning across the state. On reflection, I was accustomed to delivering blanket professional learning to schools - a one size fits all model where attendees sit through the session regardless of individual needs or aspirations.

What excites me about the Standards is that teachers, regardless of their developmental stage, can map themselves to the Standards, and thus engage their thought processes to assess performance and plan for improvement. This is an exciting revelation, when one considers this on a national scale. However, the conundrum always lies with the accuracy of one’s own judgment. It’s therefore necessary to seek other forms of feedback to help triangulate actual teacher performance.

With this in mind, ASHS has taken a progressive step towards student engagement in a pilot study titled Using Student Voice to Inform the Improvement of Teachers’ Professional Practice. Although the use of student feedback has been trialled in many studies across the world, it is still not a common practice in Australian schools. We wanted to break the mould, to challenge the belief that the classroom teacher is the fount of all knowledge. We intend to develop a culture where student voice is valued as quality feedback in the teacher development cycle.

I am well supported in the project by the head of Society and Environment, Richard Ewing. We have designed a school improvement model using collaborative pairs of teachers from a range of learning areas. The pairs will film classes and analyse each other’s performance in relation to specific standards that have been identified by individual teachers as areas for improvement. Students within classes will be surveyed to seek the targeted feedback required.

Richard and I were thrilled to attend the training sessions in Melbourne. The response from the Science, Information and Communication Technology and Mathematics Education in Rural and Regional Australia (SIMERR, the University of New England) and the project team from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was warm and extremely positive and we found the training that they conducted in Melbourne outstanding. It was an amazing professional development opportunity and networking experience, where we were able to whistle down our ideas and crystallise them into a coherent project design. We are now very keen to start analysing the student feedback data – to see what comes out in the wash.

Nigel Wakefield

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Developed by AITSL and Education Services Australia with funding from the Smarter Schools National Partnerships through the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

AITSL is funded by the Australian Government
Student Participation and Voice ... and the new English National Curriculum for Citizenship Education

When the first Blair government was elected in the UK in 1997, it is widely believed that the first ‘New Labour’ Minister of Education, David Blunkett, did a deal with his boss. This, rumour had it, involved Blunkett allowing the Head of Ofsted, Chris Woodhead, who was very unpopular with the teaching unions, to remain in that post in exchange for the Minister being permitted to introduce Citizenship Education into the English National Curriculum. Blunkett had suffered from blindness from childhood and, with good reason, felt that his academic potential had been seriously underestimated at school. As a mature student he finally found his way into higher education where his Politics tutor was the late Bernard Crick. Bernard later told me that Blunkett, who proved finally found his way into higher education where his Politics tutor was the late Bernard Crick. Bernard later told me that Blunkett, who proved to be an excellent student, told him that when he became Minister of Education (as he was determined eventually to be), he would summon Bernard to the ministry and together they would create a Citizenship Curriculum. He attracted to his aid a diverse group of enthusiastic and very experienced supporters and helpers from NGOs such as the Citizenship Foundation and CSV (Community Service Volunteers), think-tanks such as the IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research), and research outfits such as the NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research).

At the time, I was involved in the Council of Europe EDC (Education for Democratic Citizenship) project and was running courses for teachers and officials in various countries on how to create effective Student Councils in schools and how to offer as many students as possible (ideally all) the experience of participating in democratic decision making in their schools and wider communities. Part of my work had involved reviewing research into Civics courses in European countries. It seemed obvious that unless they were at least in part experiential, little of lasting value came out of them. Democracy was something that students needed to learn to ‘do’ and not just ‘hear about.’

I and others contributed this firm impression to Bernard Crick’s melting pot of ideas and he took it very seriously. He and the Minister commissioned some small scale research in 2001 to see if secondary schools that already had higher than average levels of student participation and action were above or below average for examination results, attendance and exclusion when compared to schools in similar social circumstances. The results were generally positive and there was no association between above average levels of participation and poor performance – quite the reverse.

‘Participation and Responsible Action’ duly became part of the Citizenship Order of 2001 which became compulsory for all 11-16 year olds in the state sector from 2002. The implementation of the order was accompanied by a well funded and extensive seven-year longitudinal study which was to be conducted by NFER and which has now delivered its final report. The many volumes of work that the study produced merit close reading but overall there is no doubt that, over time, the new curriculum did enhance the opportunities and scale of student participation/voice in a growing number of (though certainly not all) English secondary schools. The work of Schools Councils UK, an NGO specialising in helping schools develop effective Student Councils, expanded rapidly until, by 2010, virtually every secondary school had one. It is of course a big step from having a Student Council to having an effective Student Council. Unsurprisingly one of the findings of the longitudinal study was that there could often be a gulf between the view of the head teacher with regard to the effectiveness of a school’s Student Council and the perceptions of the teachers generally – and then another gulf between the perception of the teachers and those of the students. Nonetheless there was no doubt that progress in participation/voice was being made.

Bernard Crick’s overall plan was near visionary in my opinion. Alongside the curriculum and the research he saw to it that a number of university education departments ran courses for the specialist training of teachers of Citizenship. This ran alongside yet another prong of the design which was the creation of a professional association for these teachers – the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) which has now gone from strength to strength. NGOs such as Schools Councils UK were funded to produce materials and run subsidised courses. I had the pleasure to co-author a manual for secondary schools on...
how to set up and run an effective Student Council.

Ofsted developed inspectorial competence at the same time. A senior HMI took responsibility for the subject, ensuring that inspectors were given intelligent guidelines on how to distinguish between tokenism and meaningful reality with respect to participation/voice. All the people who had contributed to Bernard Crick’s various working parties, from the construction of the initial 1998 ‘Crick Report’ to the development of all the prongs of his programme, continued to work together in many mutually supportive ways. In correspondence with the author shortly before his final illness and death, the by now Sir Bernard Crick showed himself to be more than a little pleased with what had been achieved.

Then came the 2010 general election. Michael Gove became the new Conservative Minister and it was widely believed in Citizenship Education circles that he, or certainly some of his advisers, did not favour the continued existence of the ‘Crick project’ or the subject as part of the National Curriculum. It was believed by many head teachers and not a few teachers of Citizenship that the subject, and the careers of the specialist teachers, had no future.

The research by now was showing that Citizenship most effectively infused the operation of a school when a specialist trained teacher was at the Citizenship helm and when dedicated time was allocated on the time-table. These teachers were beginning to appear in schools in growing numbers but, at this time, several wrote to me saying that much as they enjoyed and believed in their role, their choice of training had been a mistake as they sensed a distinct ‘cooling’ of enthusiasm for Citizenship in their head teachers.

Gove announced a review of the National Curriculum and the intention to severely prune the existing version. The period from late 2010 to February 2013 was one of anxiety and trepidation for teachers of Citizenship and their support networks.

Personally I wondered if this was entirely justified, as I had noticed some small signs of hope. For example Gove agreed to speak at a gathering of Student Council representatives and their teachers in his Surrey constituency during this time at the invitation of Kate Parish, who had been instrumental some years before in creating the National Youth Parliament, and who then led one of the organisations that followed the financial demise of the original SCUK. He was reported to have been enthusiastic about students learning about democracy by playing responsible roles in their schools – though one of the teachers at the event later told me of a new anxiety in that he feared a sub-text that ‘student voice’ could be used to feedback to head teachers and inspectors on the competence of teachers. Although I don’t see why students should have to endure incompetent teachers, this idea of student voice as _surveillance_ of teachers had some unpleasant Stalinistic/Stasi overtones. I have no idea whether Gove intended to give this impression.

In February 2013, proposals for a new National Curriculum were published by the Department for Education. There was considerable surprise in Citizenship Education circles when Citizenship Education remained a part of the statutory curriculum and the Minister issued a press statement saying that he was a believer in its value. What emerged however did not satisfy many in the Citizenship Education community. There was little emphasis on anything that could be seen to specifically require or even encourage head teachers to develop the student participation/voice aspects of the original curriculum dating from 2001/2 and strengthened in 2007.

The many concerned organisations created an umbrella organisation called Democratic Life to campaign for something better during the period provided for discussion and response to the Gove proposals. The lobbying was intense and a wide spectrum of political influence was brought into play, drawn from all parties, some from members of the original Crick Working Party of 1997/8.

The result of this lobbying was published as the final version of the new National Curriculum in September 2013 and the many organisations behind Democratic Life, and Democratic Life itself, expressed themselves as being well pleased with the result. This despite the fact the new programmes of study for Key Stage 3 (11-14 years of age) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years of age) cover a mere three pages compared to the extensive detail of the original Citizenship Curriculum that was formally discontinued from September 2013 while implementation of the new curriculum from September 2014 was in preparation.

Rather than describe the new curriculum, it is brief enough to set out in full (see opposite page).

In my view it lacks the specific concern for ‘democratic’ participation in the life of the school and/or the wider community that was a major strength of the previous curriculum and is thereby not such a direct vehicle or opportunity for all students to engage their voices in their schools. It has seeds of the danger that Bernard Crick feared that Citizenship Education could fall into – namely that it could become merely advocacy for the ‘good citizen’ who volunteers for ‘good works’ but who has neither the skills not the inclination to engage in active democratic and sometimes controversial political activity – who waves to fully demonstrate what Bernard described as Political Literacy and who lacks the capability to understand and if necessary challenge and speak truth to power.

But the Citizenship Education organisations are pleased with what they have achieved, as are many specialist teachers of Citizenship – and the original minister David Blunkett himself. I can see that, if a head teacher wants to create a ‘citizenship school’, with fully developed student participation/voice, then the new curriculum will enable her to justify doing so. How much pressure, particularly inspectorial pressure, it will put on the less enthusiastic head teacher remains to be seen.

It is timely that the think tank IPPR has chosen this moment to publish a new book advocating the creation of ‘Citizenship Schools’ that are fundamentally built around notions of voice and participation. Let’s hope that it can fill the gaps in the new curriculum itself.

Derry Hannam
derry.hannam@yahoo.com

Citizenship: The National Curriculum for England

Purpose of study
A high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education should foster pupils’ keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. It should also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

Aims
The national curriculum for citizenship aims to ensure that all pupils:
• acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government
• develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced
• develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood
• are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs

Attainment targets
By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

Subject content
Key stage 3
Teaching should develop pupils’ understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding while developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action.

Pupils should be taught about:
• the development of the political system of democratic government in the United Kingdom, including the roles of citizens, Parliament and the monarch
• the operation of Parliament, including voting and elections, and the role of political parties
• the precious liberties enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom
• the nature of rules and laws and the justice system, including the role of the police and the operation of courts and tribunals
• the roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities
• the functions and uses of money, the importance and practice of budgeting, and managing risk

Key stage 4
Teaching should build on the key stage 3 programme of study to deepen pupils’ understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Pupils should develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society.

Pupils should be taught about:
• parliamentary democracy and the key elements of the constitution of the United Kingdom, including the power of government, the role of citizens and Parliament in holding those in power to account, and the different roles of the executive, legislature and judiciary and a free press
• the different electoral systems used in and beyond the United Kingdom and actions citizens can take in democratic and electoral processes to influence decisions locally, nationally and beyond
• other systems and forms of government, both democratic and non-democratic, beyond the United Kingdom
• local, regional and international governance and the United Kingdom’s relations with the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the wider world
• human rights and international law
• the legal system in the UK, different sources of law and how the law helps society deal with complex problems
• diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
• the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity
• income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent
The Benowa State High School’s Environment Council is a primarily student-run organisation operating within school boundaries. A meeting is held weekly (Every Thursday, First break, N2) under the supervision of the biology teacher. The group’s primary concern revolves around making the school not only more environmentally friendly but also making students more aware of the environmental implications of their actions within the home. The Council is always looking for new and enthusiastic members; any students interested in joining the Council should feel free to come any meeting during the aforementioned time and place. The Environmental Council is currently organising to raise money in order to install water tanks in the school.

Bias-Free Discipline

What is the purpose of discipline in schools if students don’t learn from it? Here are thoughts from last year’s Ontario (Canada) Minister’s Student Advisory Council about what bias-free discipline looks like.

From: SpeakUp Ontario: https://www.facebook.com/speakupontario
The Teacher Learning Network Journal is published through the TLN, an education initiative of the Australian Education Union (Victorian Branch) and the Independent Education Union (Victoria and Tasmania). The Journal focuses on professional, curriculum and classroom issues.

The most recent issue (Vol 20 No 2, Winter 2013) compiles articles around educational leadership. It includes an article on ‘Student participation in school leadership’ that provides an overview of current initiatives in this area.

The Journal is sent to TLN member schools, but additional copies are available from the TLN by phoning them on (03) 9418 4992 – $15 for an individual copy, or better prices for larger orders.

Contact: admin@tln.org.au

All about Student Action Teams, including some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:
www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams

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We’re already posting some news, links and stories there to complement what you see in the print version of Connect. It would be great if you could go there and ‘like’ us, and watch there for news of each Connect’s availability on-line - for FREE - that started in June 2013!

Student Voice Research and Practice Facebook Group

www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/

This open Facebook group was initially established by Dana Mitra, and is now supported by the work of academics, practitioners and students throughout the world. It provides a valuable community of people working and interested in the area of ‘Student Voice’ - in Australia, USA, UK, Italy and elsewhere – as well as access to useful resources and examples, and up-to-date information about initiatives. You can easily log on and join the group at the above address.
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www.asprinworld.com/connect

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Australian:

Parents Voice (Parents Victoria, Wandong, Vic) Vol 40 Issue 3; July/August 2013

Leading School Transformation through Participatory Learning (National Partnership Principal Professional Development – Central Coast Alliance, NSW) Conference, August 2013

8th Annual VicSRC Congress 2013 (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) Report

TLN Journal (Teacher Learning Network, Abbotsford, Vic) Vol 20 No 2; Winter 2013

Annual Report (Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) 2012

Bodies, health and gender: exploring body work practices with Deleuze (Julia Coffey; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 34; October 2012

Non-traditional students making their way in higher education: An Australian case study (Andrew Funston; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 35; November 2012

Gen X women and the gender revolution: Pioneers or traditionalists? (Hernán Cuervo, Johanna Wyn and Jessica Crofts; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 36; November 2012

Safe and strong schools: Supporting schools in Papua, Indonesia in their efforts to reduce violence (Helen Cahill and Sally Beadle; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 37; March 2013

Learning Partnerships (Helen Cahill and Julia Coffey; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 38; April 2013

Young people with a disability: Independence and opportunity – A literature review (Helen Stokes, Malcolm Turnbull and Johanna Wyn; Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Vic) Research Report 39; May 2013

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