Planning for Participation 2015

Resources:
• DO something! Ideas for actions
• Children’s Voices Research Report
• Real Time Learning - introduction
• 23rd International Democratic Education Conference
• VicSRC: Regional Conferences; SunSmart
• In the Picture
• Connect ... on facebook ... archived ... available on-line ... access to other resources on-line ...

• Students on Staff Selection Panels
• Transition to Student Voice: Project-Based Learning for Wellbeing
• Student Voice and Action: USA and Canada
• VicSRC: Training, Trust, Transformation
• VISTA: In charge of Student Council - now what?
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.

This Issue:

I should, myself, attempt to answer the same challenge I put to some students for this issue: "What are your hopes and plans for 2015?" (see p 15)

It’s important that we take stock periodically, assessing what is needed and planning what is possible, rather than simply wandering onwards. So what is on the Connect (and personal) radar?

I continue to talk with people about the longer-term future of Connect - considering where it should go, perhaps over the next five years. I’d like to move Connect from being a ‘one person’ show, to a more interactive and communal production – something that can outlast me (not that I’ve any intention of shuffling off just yet). So maybe it could become some form of automatic blog where stories and resources can be shared and archived – but who knows where the facilitative technology will be in the next five years.

In the nearer future (this year - Connect’s 36th), I’m aiming to produce six issues, with one of those (possibly October) being a double issue (covering issues 214 and 215). That will enable attendance (again) at the international Student Voice Conference in Cambridge (UK) from June 22nd to 24th. At that conference, I’m also hoping we can have some form of on-line link-up between national, state and regional student organisations from around the world, building on the skype and face-to-face discussions that occurred in 2014. (Contact Connect if you’re interested - or want further information.)

On the agenda for the conference is explicit consideration of directions for the international ‘student voice movement’. Maybe the conference focus should move round, and perhaps we should offer to host such a conference in Australia at some stage in the near future. While Connect remains an Australian-based and -focused practice journal, it is being increasingly read internationally, and that is positive recognition of the great work happening in many Australian schools.

There continue to be many hopeful developments for documentation this year. Locally (in Victoria), I remain excited by the VicSRC’s Teach the Teacher program, which has been funded for expansion to more schools (and for a restructure of its support materials) over the next three years. This will both yield some great stories and require some careful thinking about program intentions and outcomes.

Several schools are developing passion projects, either within a year level or, in some cases, across the whole school. Hopefully Connect can play a role in sharing some documentation of these approaches, starting with next issue. And we should start looking at a reinvigoration of Student Action Teams - both their practice and support materials - learning from international Students as Researchers initiatives. So much is possible!

Next Issue ...

As noted above, the next issue of Connect hopes to focus on ‘passion projects’ approaches - and also on students teaching students. The deadline is the end of March for your stories.

I hope the year has started well for you ... and we’d all love to hear what you’re doing and learning.

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Deadline for material: end of March, 2015
Students on Staff Selection Panels

At Melton West Primary School we nurture and encourage Student Voice. We feel very proud that our students have a voice. An excellent example of Student Voice at our school is the inclusion of students in the staff selection process.

The Student Leadership Team, which consists of four Captains and 12 Junior School Council Representatives, has an ongoing opportunity throughout the school year to participate in the process of interviewing and voicing their opinions on the qualities they wish their teachers to possess.

Student Leaders work with the panel to determine which teachers have the desired qualities to work at Melton West Primary School. Students sit on the panel, listen to applicants' responses to questions posed by the panel, take notes, and evaluate and help to rank the applicants.

Students have hired a total of nine staff, including the Leading Teacher and the Acting Assistant Principal. Students know that their opinions are respected and taken into consideration.

Why do we do this?
The idea of having students on selection panels is about creating a contemporary learning environment that encompasses 21st century learning skills. Collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity and curiosity are central skills to 21st century learners, and the selection panels encourage these skills.

The idea was really an extension of what students were already involved in. Students were doing a tremendous job on panels for selecting School Captains and so we thought why not involve them for selecting staff. We reasoned that students were the ones who knew what qualities an excellent teacher possessed.

We thought it was a wonderful way to consult learners and involve them in decision making processes that affect them, so they are enabled to feel ownership and take on responsibility. It is a fantastic opportunity to hear their perspectives and let them know that their voice is heard and valued.

How it works in practice

In practice we have two students sitting on a panel, together with three staff members. At the moment all Junior School Councillors (there are 12 representatives from Years 3-6 and four School Captains – all Year 6 students – these are the Student Leadership Team) have an opportunity to sit on a panel throughout the year.

The Student Leadership Team meets with me at the beginning of the school year and I provide an induction/information session regarding the panels and their specific role. Some areas discussed in the information session include confidentiality, the selection process, the role of the Principal, the role of other staff members on the panel, the process we go through to short list for interviews (though students are not yet involved in this bit of the process).

Preparing for the panel

The week before the interview, the two students who opt in to be on the selection
them the staff members who will be on the panel with them, the role we are interviewing for, and we discuss from the staff perspective what we are looking for. We discuss our school values and the qualities the applicant would need to reflect these values. Our school values are communication, respect, trust and team work.

**Involving other students**

At the moment students on the panel are encouraged to informally chat to other students about what their ideal teacher would be like. I also encourage students to reflect on teaching and learning in their classrooms. I ask them to think about how the teachers make lessons interesting, how the teachers involve students in their learning, what good teachers do that makes learning enjoyable. This is an area we need to expand on in 2015.

**During the interview**

During the interview process the students mainly listen to the applicant and take notes under the following statement: “Qualities you think the applicant has that will help our students/school.” There is a short period in the interview where the applicant is asked to leave the room to take some time to reflect; at this time there is a brief discussion amongst the panel, where the Principal touches base with all members and asks students their thoughts. At this time students are able to ask any clarifying questions, express their opinions and may seek to ask a further question when the applicant re-enters the room.

**Confidentiality**

The issue of confidentiality was something we had to work through with some staff, as some thought it would be too hard for students to keep confidence. When I first brought the idea forward about students being on panels, it was the adults who became nervous, not the students.

In practice, we have had no issues at all with students breaking confidentiality at all. We explain to them at the very beginning the importance of confidentiality and the trust we are placing in them and they take all this on board and are extremely mature about it. They ask me what they can tell their families/friends and I say to them they can say how exciting it was etc but they can’t repeat what any member on the panel said or what any of the applicants said etc. The Principal reiterates confidentiality to the students at the end of the process before students leave.

**Reflections**

I have learnt that students are so in tune with what they want in a teacher and can pick up on aspects of a person’s character in a way that adults simply cannot. When a candidate walks in to the interview and they first see students on the panel it is very interesting to see their reactions. These reactions tell us so much about the way they see students.

Through this process I have learnt the true meaning of placing the students at the centre of all we do. What better way can we communicate to students that they have a say in what happens in their school than involving them in choosing the teachers who get to work with them. The relationship between students and teachers has changed for the better due to this initiative, as staff who are on panels walk away shaking their heads in amazement at the insights, comments and recommendations given by students.

We have changed which students are on the panel. Initially we only had the four School Captains taking part, but we have expanded this to include the Junior School Councillors – which means we have students as young as Year 3 taking part.

A further change we will make for 2015 will be that, the week prior to the interview, the students on the selection panel will have an opportunity to speak with other students regarding what their dream teacher would be like: what skills, attitude and knowledge would they possess? Students will be given a simple graphic organiser to help them with this. Students on the selection panel will be responsible for collating this information and then using it to help get ideas for selecting the ideal candidate.

An additional change in 2015 will be involving students in the construction of questions. We will ask students to come up with a question and they will ask the question at interview.

**Kathy Cvitkovic**
Assistant Principal

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Article about the process in the *Melton Leader*, November 25, 2014
**Student Responses**

Here are some comments from students who have been involved in these processes:

- **How important is it for students to have a voice and be listened to?**
  - It is very important for students to have a voice and be listened to, because if you don’t have a voice then you won’t be able to get across what you want to say. It’s important for students to have a say so they can get across what they would like to happen in our school. (Maddi)
  - The students of this school are part of everything here, so it’s very important that we hear from them. (Nick)
  - It feels amazing to have a say in who gets to come and teach at our school. I think more students should have a go at being on the panel, because I believe it will help them in the future. (Kirra)
  - Quite important because students are part of the school and lots of times we notice things that need to be changed and sometimes teachers and principals are too busy. (Connor)
  - Really important because we are the ones being taught and we know what makes a good teacher. (Jake)

- **What qualities do you look for in potential staff?**
  - I like potential staff to be keen, enjoy working with students and someone who is always prepared to have a go. (Maddi)
  - I was looking for staff who were kind, good, helpful – but our staff is already excellent. (Nick)
  - We look for people who are loyal, kind, and are willing to look after and take care of kids. (Kirra)
  - Being motivated to do well at their task and are able to communicate and understand their students. (Connor)
  - Passion for teaching, professionalism, kind and responsible. (Jake)

- **How do you feel about having this responsibility?**
  - I feel very important, proud and very enthusiastic about it. It gets me motivated. (Maddi)
  - I feel very excited and proud to be in the selection panel. (Nick)
  - I am honoured, proud and happy to be a part of this opportunity. (Kirra)
  - Honoured, privileged, happy and excited about being given this opportunity. (Connor)
  - Really good as I said before I get a say and I get to know the teachers that are going to be in the school. (Jake)

- **What did you enjoy most about being on the panel?**
  - I enjoyed the experience and how it was all set out. I liked seeing what is involved in hiring teachers and being part of that. (Maddi)
  - It was a good experience and good fun. (Nick)
  - I enjoy having a new experience that will help me in the future. (Kirra)
  - Having a new experience and an opportunity to do it. (Connor)
  - Getting to have a say and having my opinion about who should be working at our school. (Jake)

- **What have you learned as a result of being a part of the panel?**
  - I have learned that the teachers and principals on the panel put a lot of effort in making sure that we hire the right people for our school community. (Maddi)
  - I learned to be more responsible and to be a better leader. (Nick)
  - I have learned that our Principals and teachers put so much time and effort into choosing new staff. (Kirra)
  - Teachers and Principals put a lot of work behind the scenes to make our school run well. (Connor)
  - I have learned what qualities are important to me when looking for a teacher. (Jake)

Maddi Hodge, Nick Psarras, Kirra Young, Connor Poulton and Jake Merry (all 12 years old; Grade 6)

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**Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group**

[www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/)

This open Facebook group was initially established by Professor 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.
Transition to Student Voice: Project Based Learning for Wellbeing

Transition to Student Voice was a project in my Year 7 Transition class in 2014. Transition is a class that takes place at the Year 7 level once a fortnight for an 80-minute period. Students are first taught basic skills that are important for Year 7s making the transition to secondary school: using their diary, lockers and laptops; before concentrating on Social Emotional Learning. Normally the program is taught using a textbook in which the teacher leads a group discussion on the relevant issue before the students record their own answers in their workbook. I teach one of the eight Year 7 Transition classes as well as coordinating and developing the program and curriculum.

I started with the aim of developing my Year 7 students as active citizens through encouraging and supporting student voice. These goals however were quickly extended to other related indicators of wellbeing: engagement; connectedness and agency. By using a constructivist style of teaching and learning, in this case Project Based Learning (PBL), students could potentially have a greater say in what they learn and how they learn, while also being able to use what they have learnt to have a positive impact on their community. In working on authentic projects that were linked to their own ideas and opinions of their transition and orientation, it was hypothesised that indicators relating to voice, engagement, connectedness and agency would all be positively affected. As well as implementing this approach, I wanted to see whether these outcomes would occur.

Background

My school has set its sights on improving student voice. In the 2014 Annual Action Plan (AAP), the school’s leadership noted that “the students will be actively involved in decisions about their learning and at a whole school level.” The strategies cited for achieving this goal however, only focused on a select few of the students, with the AAP listing the Student Leadership Group, student-led assemblies and portfolio leadership positions as the explicit strategies it would use to address this aim as well as ‘other initiatives’. The explicit strategies involve only about 7% of the College’s student population every year.

Further compounding the issue are the problems with the current initiatives. In my role as a House Leader, I am responsible for setting up and facilitating my house’s Student Leadership Team of 14 students. In each House there is a leadership position available for a male and a female every year level, as well as two senior sports leader roles, one for a male and one for a female. A perennial issue across the houses is the recruiting of Student Leaders for these teams. At Year 7 there are always a number of applicants for the two roles available; however, in the other year levels, the number of applications can be inconsistent. It is not uncommon to have an almost total lack of applicants, with House Leaders at times having to talk individual students into applying, while at other times, only having one or two students to choose from for each role. In my most recent applications for senior leadership, I had no more than two applicants for the Senior House Student Leader roles: one female sports leader applicant and three male sports leader applications.

To determine why applicants were often not forthcoming in my own House, I went in search of feedback at the end of 2013. This largely indicated that the students thought that House student leaders couldn’t really do much. They also thought that the Student Leadership Group role, which they had not directly applied for but were automatically drafted into, was ‘boring’.

The College’s AAP, I noted, was focusing on improving the types of
structures already in place. While there was a clear need for this, I couldn’t see how formal leadership roles were going to address the fundamental aims of the AAP – that the ‘students’, not just 7% of the students, would have an ‘active role in the decision making surrounding their learning’. With this in mind, I decided that I needed to focus the development of my project on the ‘other initiatives’ that were ambiguously noted in the AAP and focus my research on curriculum, as curriculum reaches all students and has a natural link with learning.

While Year 7 students apply in droves for leadership positions, this is also problematic. Their youthful zeal, their self-belief, and their confidence in their ability to make a difference can be shaken by not being selected for a leadership position. Additionally, in my role as Transition coordinator, I have regularly an overwhelming willingness from Year 7 students to be involved in Primary School visits and the Orientation Day. With such great numbers of volunteers there are always a number of Year 7s who are excluded from having an impact on their community, despite a strong desire to do so. These experiences, along with the College’s goal for involving students in the decision-making processes that affect their learning and the community, directed me to focus on working with the Year 7s through the Transition curriculum in the area of Orientation – an area the students had little control over but a great interest in being a part of.

Student Voice

So, the original goal that I set out to achieve was the development of student voice, as outlined in my College’s AAP. To this end I began with the notion that developing student voice required leadership programs, student forums and other traditional modes of enabling students to be heard and have a say in the decision-making processes of the school. Student voice involves much more than students merely providing information that schools can use to make informed decisions; it involves active participation in making decisions as well as implementing the subsequent actions (Manefield, Collins, Moore, Mahar & Warne, 2007). A definition adapted from the work of Mitra (2006) and Holdsworth (2000) describes student voice as the process by which students have the ability and opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their own lives as well as those of their peers. Mitra’s (2006) pyramid for student voice (below) indicates what is involved in developing student voice.

At its peak, student participation will build student capacity for leadership. My project tasks were therefore designed to reflect Mitra’s pyramid. The students could express their opinion about something that affected them, make decisions about actions, implement the actions and, in doing so, not only lead an element of the Orientation Program, but also take a lead role in implementing change within their own community. This process shares similarities with Holdsworth’s (2000) ladder for student participation, which begins of with students ‘speaking out’ at its lowest rung before culminating in shared decision-making, implementation of action and reflection on the action.

Inspiring Strategies – SATs and SARs

The project also took inspiration from two other sources: Student Action Teams (SATs) (Holdsworth, Cahill and Smith, 2003) and Students as Researchers (SARs) (Fielding, 2001). Both SATs and SARs were aimed at improving student wellbeing outcomes in schools that had either a direct or related student voice goals. In particular, reports of two SATs provided inspiration for Transition projects:

- An information pamphlet about the school for primary school students by Year 8 students who visited the feeder schools to research student needs
- A joint primary and secondary team produced a video illuminating the transition process as well as surveying students on transition.

The SATs were designed to develop positive self-concept and interconnected factors including: sense of control, sense of belonging and sense of meaning. The similarity between the Transition projects and the SATs led me to understand that there could potentially be an impact on related factors. Sense of control, which I rephrased as agency, is the students’ ability and sense that they can take control of their own actions as well as having an impact on their own environment (Holdsworth et al. 2003). Instead of belonging I focused on connectedness, which involves the students feeling that they have a connection or sense of belonging with others and that they feel valued by those parties (Holdsworth et al. 2003). In the context of this project I was interested in the students’ connectedness with their peers, their community (incoming students, most of whom they wouldn't know) and their teachers.

The SARs project was aimed at specifically developing the voice of students and teachers in the decision-making process of education, with emancipatory processes and outcomes as a goal (Fielding, 2001). In this study students identified issues that they were interested in within their schooling and, with the support of staff, were trained in research techniques to enable them to gather data with which they were able to make recommendations for change.

As we’ll see, the ‘Data Power’ project took inspiration from this study. The students, in collaboration with me, designed a survey for the Year 7 cohort that would give them information that they could present back to their teachers so teachers could better understand the needs of Year 7s. This was as a result of some students noting in an initial focus group that they felt Year 7 was at times more difficult than it needed to be as

Pyramid for student voice (Mitra, 2006).
teachers didn’t understand what they were going through in their transition. ‘Data Power’, at the time of writing, is the only project that has been fully completed with its presentation made to staff at a staff meeting on the 27th of October 2014.

Creating the opportunity to develop a voice: The role of curriculum

The idea of a Student Action Team, and the success it had had in some settings, initially tempted me to trial a similar program with volunteer students. One of the most worrying trends, however, is for schools to create leadership and decision-making opportunities and structures that are exclusive. Student Representative Council participation is as low as 4% (Black, 2011). Therefore, in ensuring that as many students as possible participate in the development of skills that they will need for being involved in the decision making process, the classroom becomes a key focus point (Black, 2011). In response to curriculum and pedagogy needing to develop students as ‘active citizens’, schools are implementing ‘student-centred’ pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning based on inquiry and constructivist methods. In doing so there is a greater collaboration between students and teachers in developing a curriculum that has a connection to the students’ experiences, identities, values and interests beyond the walls of the classroom (Black, 2011).

PBL – Bringing the SAT into the classroom

With PBL and SATs sharing similarities, such as involving teams of students in responding to authentic real-world problems in collaboration with adults, I realised that there was potential for PBL to have a real impact on the areas of student voice, connectedness, agency and engagement. The opportunity to employ PBL as an intervention strategy was enticing due to its potential to have an impact on wellbeing outcomes as well as the alignment with my school’s culture and goals. A factor that I am hoping to be instrumental in achieving a long-term sustained change in the way my school seeks to develop student voice and encourage active participation.

As previously noted there is a link between constructivist student-centred approaches and student voice, agency and engagement (Black, 2011). Through inquiry and constructivist education, students are given greater voice in deciding what they will learn and how they will learn. Additionally Black (2011) notes that through such teaching methods students can engage in solving problems that are relevant to them as individuals as well as the members of their community. This potentially increases motivation and engagement whilst giving the students an opportunity to be active citizens in their community.

Knowing that I had authentic problems that students had demonstrated an interest in led me to believe that I could implement a PBL unit that at the very least was driven by authentic problems and tasks. This was important as authentic real-world problems that have a bigger purpose, and that the students believe in, give students a sense of being part of something that is bigger than themselves and thus add real purpose and motivation to their work. With authentic real-world tasks for the students to take charge of, I was hoping for a powerful learning experience that at the very least would engage the students in their work. I also hoped to provide them with connections to the community, while increasing their sense of agency through having the power to use their own experiences to have an effect on others as well as having increased choice within their learning.

Given the links between PBL, constructivist education and SATs and SARs, it was believed that an intervention using authentic real-world problems with a guiding framework of Mitra (2006) and Holdsworth’s (2000) concepts of student voice could empower a target group to take greater control for their learning, have an impact on their community and build connections, while subsequently being genuinely motivated and engaged by their work.

The TSV Project

I started the process by positioning the target group, the students in my Year 7 Transition class, as the experts in the process. Using their ideas to generate the specific projects was an attempt to share the decision-making process. This began with an invitation to the students to participate in the process (see box). Sharing the decision-making process and working as a democratic leader would, I hoped, ultimately empower and motivate the target group (Doyle, 2004).

Focus Group

In gathering the students’ ideas, I wanted to ensure that all students had a voice. Traditionally I would use a class brainstorming session, but an open discussion amongst the whole class would risk hearing only the dominant voices. So I employed focus group techniques: designing focus group activities that could be first attempted by individuals and then discussed in groups. I used ‘free listings’ such as: ‘Make a list of the most difficult things you have experienced as a high school student’ to determine where efforts improving the Transition and

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Invitation to action

Dear 7B,

Recently as I contemplated how to support year 7s and incoming grade 6s in their Transition to Secondary School I had a realisation. Instead of myself and the School making all the decisions about what grade 6s and new year 7s need when making the move from Primary school to Emmanuel perhaps I should ask the experts. In my opinion who could possibly know more about what it takes to transition from Primary to Emmanuel and what skills/ knowledge/information new Year 7s need to not only survive at Emmanuel but to thrive, be happy and do well socially and academically.

So this is where you come in. I’d like to ask you to help the School to make starting at Emmanuel better for the next group. I’d like to know what you think about Transition, and what you think new students need. I’d also like to ask you to help the future students of Emmanuel with their transition from primary to secondary by taking some action and making your ideas come to life in a way that the students who will follow you next year can benefit from.

What do you think? Are you up for it? Will you accept my challenge and take responsibility improving the Transition experience? What can you do? What do you think we should do? What would you like to do?

Yours truly,
Mr Damon

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8
What New Year 7s Need – According to our research

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Orientation programs need to be focused (Colucci, 2007). I used a ranking system in which students ranked a handful of areas I thought could be improved, before asking for their own ideas of what could be done. The ranking activity, it was hoped, would help foster their ideas. Asking the students: “If you had three wishes to spend making the Year 7 experience better, you would...” was designed to engender creative ideas, as I wanted to lead the project in such a way that the target group would feel encouraged to take risks and be creative within their work (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). The focus group was designed to involve the whole class in a participatory decision-making process in determining the nature of the projects within a short time frame.

Project Ideas

From the focus group’s student generated ideas, I formulated eight projects, mostly based on the elements of the transition/orientation that the students thought needed improving (see box, page 10). Each project came with a project rationale that linked the students’ ideas or concerns they had in transitioning to high school with the project, a driving question that prompted the students to connect with the overall aim of the project, and a brief description of what they could do.

After giving out the projects I gave the students the option to design their own. One student took up this opportunity and came up with the ‘Teacher Guide’ – a booklet with a photo and bio of each the school’s Year 7 teachers.

Choosing Groups

The students were given the option of which project to work on and who to work with. They were also given the option of working in the classroom or in the Learning Street – an open area that our three-walled classrooms flow into. The only stipulations were that the groups needed to be no more than four students and that the project needed to be ready to present by the end of Term 3. Only five periods of 80-minutes were available for the students to work on the projects, which meant that the students would only be able to produce their projects, not present them to their audience, before the report was to be produced. For most students, presentation of the projects would be in December of 2014 when next year’s new students attend an Orientation Day. Some students will not present until 2015 when they will take charge of an element of the two-day Year 7 Orientation Program.

Due to time constraints and the size and difficulty of some of the projects, I made myself available to work with teams during lunchtimes and during some study periods. One group in particular – ‘Data Power’ – took up this opportunity, while others I only met with occasionally, and some I only worked with briefly in class.

I deliberately didn’t provide students with too many specific project instructions. This was intended to allow the students room to develop their own ideas and direction for their projects. Distributing this kind of decision-making on my part required relinquishing some control, and did not come without some anxiety in regard to how that would impact the students’ experience and final products (Day & Sammons, 2009). I hoped that providing the target group with a greater decision-making role than is normally involved in a traditional classroom environment would increase commitment and result in the students developing greater internal motivation (Fullan, 2004).

Deadlines

In an effort to create a sense of urgency and further motivate the target group, I set a due date that would challenge the students (Kotter, 2007). I took every relevant opportunity to remind the project teams of their purpose and discuss their end goal with them. I began each class with a discussion of the projects’ purpose and each group meeting I re-focused the teams’ attention on the delivery of their final product and the purpose for what they were doing. Additionally, in an effort to help the students see themselves as leaders within the community, I encouraged them to envision themselves delivering their final product to the Grade 6s while also discussing with them the confidence of the school leadership in the potential for the students’ work to improve the Transition/Orientation program for 2015. To further emphasise this belief, I organised for the Pastoral Leader and the Leader of Innovation to work with the students over two separate classes.

Trial

To further this notion, I encouraged one of the teams to trial their project with the class by leading a team-building sports session. I gave the team a full 80-minute Physical Education class in which to run their games and activities. I took the opportunity before, during and at the end of the class to remind the target group that most of them would be doing similar for over 200 Grade 6s on Orientation Day. This was designed to emphasise the authenticity of their project, increase their sense of urgency and increase internal motivation. Additionally during the trial I had the team’s mentor (another Physical Education Teacher who would be supervising them on the day) to assess their work and provide the team with feedback. This was in an effort to increase
Your Mission

- Choose a project from the following 8 listed
- Team up with a group who have similar interests to use your collective expertise and skill to produce a resource or activity that will improve the transition for the next group of year 7s
- You will need to have a working draft of your projects complete by week 9 to present to see if it can be used in the Transition/Orientation program – your main goal is to use your expertise to produce something that will help next years year 7s feel prepared and comfortable at Emmanuel. We think you can have a real impact!
- While the projects have guidelines and ideas you can be creative and modify the project in consultation with me.

Good luck. I can’t wait to see what we can produce!

Projects

Project 1 – Data Power
Survey year 7s, work out what they think and feel about their transition so as you can teach the teachers about how year 7s feel and think. With Data Power you will be able to help teachers understand you better!

Project 2 – 15 Questions that you wanted to ask but were too embarrassed to ask (Frequently Asked Questions)
Survey year 7s, work out what questions they wanted to ask coming into Emmanuel and provide them with your expert answers to ease their fears.

Project 3 – Welcome Animoto/Prezi/Film
Make a multimedia resource that grade 6s can view to help them feel welcome to our community before they even come here. Show them how great we are and the great things they will do here.

Project 4 – The Pack You Need
Produce a pack for year 7s with everything you know that need. A timetable explained. Subjects explained. Uniform explained. All those things you were confused by you can peel back the mystery and reduce the anxiety and confusion for new students.

Project 5 – Getting to know your laptop
Laptops are great but they can be so frustrating. Your job is to produce a guide to explain everything new students need to know about how to use their laptops.

Project 6 – Team Building Sports
Improve our orientation day by designing and helping to run the sports activities on Orientation day.

Project 7 – Getting to know you games
Improve our orientation day by designing and helping to run the Ice Breaker and Getting to Know you Games on Orientation day.

Project 8 – Homework Busted – 10 Essential Tips for Dominating Homework
Homework is one of the biggest sources of anxiety and challenge for new year 7s. Produce a guide on what to expect. How to organise for it. How to cope with it.

Example of information provided:

Project 1 – Data Power
Driving Question
How can your team use the experience of year 7s and data to improve the experience of year 7s and improve teacher understanding of year 7 issues?

Rationale – Why do we need to do this?
It was noted in student responses that some students found school difficult due to teachers not understanding them.

What are we doing?
In order to try and change this an Action Team could use the data we have, as well as surveying other year 7 classes, to put together a statistical overview of how year 7s feel. This data could then be represented in charts/graphs etc. that could be presented to the Emmanuel teachers by this team. In presenting the data the Team would be hoping to position teachers to understand year 7s better.

This data can also be produced as an infographic which could be shared with the new year 7s so as they can understand that what they feel is normal.

What skills will this team need?
- The ability to work in a group
- The ability to communicate with other classes
- The ability to use Excel and SurveyMonkey
- The ability to talk to a group of teachers
- The ability to produce an Infographic

Project Schedule
- Process 7b’s data – by week 5
- Survey other year 7 classes – by week 6
- Produce Infographic – by week 7
- Address teacher group – by week 8
the collaboration between students and adults – a key indicator for student voice as outlined by Mitra (2006). Pairing student teams with staff members, other than myself, as mentors was a key strategy in developing collaboration between students and staff and involving other staff in the process.

Meeting with Groups
Due to school camp I was only present for three of the five classes the students had to complete the project, which meant that I had to do a lot of work with the students outside of the set class time. On average I met with the groups as least twice, while with one group – a group with a difficult task (‘Data Power’) – we worked together on 13 occasions out of class. Working with this group I could see that in some instances PBL could bring students and teachers together in a collaborative working relationship. In contrast the ‘Welcome Animoto’ group barely needed my assistance and were quite content to show me what they were doing and only come to me when they needed assistance in gathering material. The ‘Getting to you games – only better’ group provided a clear illustration of just how important the collaborative relationship was.

With eight groups with varying needs I wasn’t able to divide my time equally amongst them during class. I would begin each class by being pulled to whichever group demanded me and then, when I got a chance, I would observe and work with each group as much as I could. The ‘Getting to know you games – only better’ group appeared to be working well; however, it wasn’t until late in term 3 when I returned from camp, and set aside out-of-class time to meet with them, that I noted that they were having significant difficulties understanding the task and producing work together. After two meetings with this group, the students quickly got back on track at the end of term 3. In the first week of term 4, one of the students from the group approached me and asked for a meeting. During the meeting each student was able to share their ideas and we tested them in my office as a group of four people. This collaborative meeting time was critical for them as, without it, their group had failed to function and produce.

Reflecting on the Process
I kept an ongoing journal as a systematic attempt to provide a narrative account of the action as well as my reflections (Mertler, 2012). Within the journal I included observational notes of the process, outputs and outcomes. Taking observational notes also helped me adjust my actions as the project unfolded. Reflecting on the comments one student made in a group meeting, I was able to encourage his group to share the workload by helping them to outline specific tasks/roles for each student. This led to me checking on other groups and encouraging them to do the same.

At the completion of the projects, I had planned to conduct a focus group with a student from each project team. Noticing that there were some big personalities in the group, and wanting to ensure each person had a voice, I instead chose to conduct individual interviews. I used a semi-structured interview process to ensure consistency for data analysis, using set questions but asking additional questions for clarity or to further explore an idea (Mertler, 2012).

To gain some plurality in observations I enlisted two other teachers to observe the target group in action (Klein, 2012). Their observations mirrored my own. The majority of students were engaged in the work, while some struggled. I also conducted a survey to gather quantitative
data that I could use to validate trends and themes in the qualitative data.

Findings
The data I collected through interviews, observations, journaling, and a survey of the 28 students involved in the trial suggest that the use of PBL in this context has achieved positive results in the areas of student voice, engagement, connectedness and agency.

Student Voice
Ten students were interviewed. Six of the 10 students made a total of 17 comments relating to student voice, all of which were positive. Some of the students had a very clear perception of their voice being heard and acknowledged:

- "Teachers want to find out what students feel about their transition to Year 7. I think this is good for students to have an opinion. To have a voice – which is good. Teachers really made sure that we really expressed what we thought.

One student's comment closely reflected the characteristics of the definition of student voice, which outlines student voice as the process by which students have the ability, and the opportunities, to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their own lives, as well as those of their peers (Mitra, 2006; Holdsworth, 2000):

"You can use your experience to improve the orientation program. You knew what was wrong with the orientation program and you had a chance to improve it."

Student-Teacher Collaboration
One of the aims of the intervention was to promote collaboration between students and teachers. Fifty per cent of the target group in the survey noted that they believed decision-making was shared between students and teachers. This was believed that decision-making was shared in the survey noted that they believe decision-making was shared between students and teachers. Fifty per cent of the target group in the survey noted that they believed decision-making was shared between students and teachers. Fifty per cent of the target group in the survey noted that they believed decision-making was shared between students and teachers. Fifty per cent of the target group in the survey noted that they believed decision-making was shared between students and teachers.

Engagement
The data indicates that the students were highly engaged and had increased interest and motivation when working on the PBL projects. The survey results showed that 26 of the 28 students preferred the PBL experience to regular Transition. More illuminating was the 82% of the students who noted in the survey that they looked forward to Transition so they could work on their project.

This data was supported by my observations recorded in my journal. On many occasions when entering the classroom to teach Physical Education, I was asked by students if we were going to work on our Transition projects. Students discussing Transition in Physical Education had never previously happened to me before. One student regularly expressed a wish to work on his Transition project in PE, while several students spoke to me about their Projects during PE or contacted me in their own time, either via email, in my office or in the yard, to talk about their project.

My journal has records of four of the eight groups approaching me independently for meetings to discuss their work outside of their class time and three of the groups sending me emails to ask for assistance and update me on their progress. I even received an email while at Mt Buller asking me to check the work one group had done while I was away – another indication of the students' interest in their projects.

Seventy-eight per cent of respondents agreed that the other Year 7 classes should have an opportunity to work on similar projects, while 81% thought that the projects reflected their interests. This was also supported in the interviews in which all students, even the one who preferred traditional Transition, thought that the other Year 7s should complete a similar unit. Overall there were 28 comments made by interviewees that directly related to increased engagement, suggesting that PBL can have a significant impact on improving student engagement in Transition in my school's context. Some of the 28 comments that I interpreted as positive signs of engagement:

- "I have a happiness when we get the work done and it's up to standard.

This term it was less just sitting through and asking questions. All the questions we went through last term – I didn't really want to do them. They were boring and easy. This term it was a bit more thinking.

Well last term was basically just working out of the textbook, working on bullying. But in this project we were able to explore PBL coming into transition. Which makes it more fun because we get to work on a project instead of working on a booklet.

Yes (quick yes). It's more effective. I know that I have learnt much more this term than I have last term. Me doing it myself really helps.

We were really excited – because we will do it – not something that we will leave behind such as questions in a book.

Two students in the survey and one student in the interviews expressed a preference for the traditional Transition classes. Despite this, the student interviewed expressed appreciation for the project: "I think everyone should have a voice" and that he was "glad...we had a voice." His dissatisfaction with the unit had more to do with enjoying the previous Transition units: "I really enjoyed it; I enjoyed reflecting on those things," as well as interpersonal issues he had had in working with his group. "I had struggles with my group," he noted, "clashing heads with people" and "trying to get people collaborating to do work" was a significant issue for him. He, along with one other student, saw the classroom environment as disorderly: "The environment is very chaotic... just really like hyped." This was in contrast to another student who when asked about his impressions of the classroom environment commented: "I kind of feel like the rest of us were teachers."
Other students expressed similar sentiments, with one girl noting:

Subs don’t usually like having us because we are too talkative but when we had subs for this project everyone was just straight on. People were like I want Mr Damon to see this. They actually want to do more work.

So, while some students can perceive the classroom as disorderly and need supporting, as noted in the research of Levine et al. (2010), most students found it highly workable, with some even finding it empowering. Notably the students who had negative perceptions of the classroom environment also had negative experiences of their group dynamic, while the students who were a part of a functional group all spoke more positively about the classroom environment.

Issues with group dynamics were a common theme for the interviewees with seven of the 10 noting it once in their respective interviews. So while four of the students interviewed did have significant issues with their group, they did have a powerful learning experience in regard to how to work with each other.

I guess I’ve learnt that I should really listen to others more. When they ask for help I should really put effort into helping them. Each group member relies on the others I suppose.

**Connectedness and Agency**

Developing connectedness was a significant success of this intervention. In total there were 40 positive comments relating to connectedness in the interviews. Of the 40 comments that indicated students were developing connections, 23 of them were in relation to thinking about the transition of the incoming students. Working in groups and connections to peers was mentioned positively 16 times and by all but two of the students interviewed, indicating that students found working in groups to be, on the whole, a positive experience.

As one aspect of agency involves a person’s ability to have an impact on his/her environment, there is a link between connectedness seen in this project and agency (Bandura, 2006). In this respect there were 23 positive comments in the interviews and as mentioned previously a high percentage of students in the survey also expressed beliefs that their projects would benefit incoming students.

In relation to personal agency, 70% of students thought that they were given more ‘choice’ in this project while 82% of the students believed they had more responsibility given to them in working on the project. These numbers would also suggest students were involved in the decision-making process. Additionally there were 20 comments in the interviews that indicated the students felt they had some control over their work. Only one student did not mention this. One student articulated having choices and control very clearly and strongly:

I'm in control of what we're doing. If I want to change anything I can. If there is anything I need to fix I can. If it was a normal project I wouldn't be able to fix it, but I know I can change this one. We are in control in this one. Last term we just learnt off the teacher. This one we learn ourselves.

Another student compared the change between the project-based work and regular Transition classes by noting: “we usually sat down and listened to the teacher speaking (in normal Transition). This time we are relying on ourselves to work as a team to complete this project.”

Such comments, along with a comment by another student about feeling like a teacher, suggest that the projects empowered the target group to think for themselves. Indeed one student commented: “this term it was a bit more thinking.” This could indicate a nexus between developing agency through student-centred authentic projects and developing students' ability to think independently.

There is compelling evidence that every student interviewed had been thinking about the needs of others in their community as a result of their project work and that they valued this. Every student interviewed offered at least one comment noting the potential positive impact of their work on the incoming students, with six students making multiple comments on this topic. Perhaps the most meaningful student responses came before they were explicitly prompted to think about the impact on the community, were:

I prefer this one because we are doing it for the Year 7s next year. You can understand what the new students will experience and that helps to make the project better.

I'm able to help the Year 6s when they come to Emmanuel College. I feel good about helping them. I feel good about myself because I'm helping them. So they don't feel stressed in the first few days. It can be really good for them not so stressful and overwhelming.

Delivering their projects to their own target audiences should give the students real leadership experience, but unfortunately this data was collected before project delivery for all groups, meaning that the full impact of the project hasn't been recorded in the data.

**Findings Summary**

Overall the intervention had a clearly positive affect on student voice, engagement, connectedness and agency. Some students found the process challenging; however, the interviews provide evidence to suggest that it is the problems that students face that provide some of the most powerful learning experiences.

**Implications**

The next step in this project is to work with my students as they work with their own target groups – the incoming Grade 6s and their own teachers - so as to ensure that the intervention, which I sold as being authentic, is truly authentic. In finishing the project I am aiming to involve as many Transition teachers and members of leadership as is practically possible in an effort to extend the coalition of people in the school who are willing to support implementing the change process I have begun (Kotter, 2007). I know that for this project to have an impact at the cohort level I will need to involve others in its planning; engendering greater ownership of the project in Transition teachers will be key to long term success.

A significant challenge in taking this project from a trial into the mainstream curriculum will be ensuring the projects remain authentic. It is evident that the students’ engagement and passion for their work largely stemmed from their belief in the projects’ authenticity. During the interviews students could clearly outline how their projects would affect the incoming students and most of the students felt that having an impact on their target group would make them feel good. This was because, with only eight groups, each group can legitimately get involved in the Transition/Orientation process and
work directly with their target group. With a whole cohort of eight Year 7 classes, this is perhaps not practical. We suspect that the best way forward would be to employ a similar process, with only the best projects being selected for use during the Orientation days. But this may mean that, in pursuing an inclusive intervention that is designed to develop student voice, connectedness, agency and engagement, the access to authentic participation is still exclusive and therefore the impact limited.

Both teachers and students will need support in adapting to a democratic, student-centred learning environment. While only a few students perceived the environment to be disorderly, teachers without PBL experience will most likely have an adjustment period (Levine et al. 2010). The transition to a democratic, student-centred environment could potentially be difficult for some teachers.

Despite the potential issues that could decrease the value of replicating this trial across a whole cohort, this study has demonstrated that, in this context, PBL has had a significantly positive impact on the majority of the target group. It has increased their interest and motivation in their learning, given them a chance to have their say and to use their ideas and opinions to implement change in their community. Thus the students have not only had a voice, but also used their voice to develop leadership skills and, in the case of the ‘Data Power’ group who have already presented, developed real leadership experience.

References


Colucci, E. (2007). ‘Focus groups can be fun’: The use of activity-oriented questions in focus group discussions. Qualitative Health Research, 14(10), 1422-1433.


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All about Student Action Teams, including some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:

www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams

Connect on facebook

Connect has a presence on facebook. Find us at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Connect/360372760717566

We’ve been posting some news and links there to complement what you see in the on-line 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 - since we started in June 2013!
Our Plans and Hopes for 2015

The start of a new year is a great time to refocus and develop hopes and plans for achievements. That’s why we’re drawn to make good resolutions at this time.

Student Councils should be starting to plan the possibilities and practices that will enable students to be active members of their school communities. That might mean an SRC camp or a planning day - getting together to talk about priorities and how to achieve these.

Minaret College, Springvale

The year 2015 for the Minaret College SRC means a number of changes, as well as the introduction of new initiatives, with the primary focus on cultivating a positive school culture.

My name is Qais Sadat, and I’m the school captain at Minaret College, as well as one of the SRC chairs. This year, as part of these roles, my aims are to introduce initiatives that will benefit students in varying ways, ranging from academic to sports and social skills. Through this, I hope their sense of belonging and sense of community will not only be strengthened but sustained – thus contributing to a positive culture among the students.

It is important that our students realise the importance of working together to achieve common goals, which is why my motto for the year will be: One Team, One Dream.

Qais Sadat

Lalor Secondary College

My goal for 2015 is to have my SRC refined even greater than before.

When I hear about the role of SRCs anywhere, I usually hear information about representation, student interests, voice, concerns, ideas and decision making, as well as developing skills including leadership, organisation and many more. For any student taking up these roles they also, no matter what, further their confidence skills.

For my SRC this year, I’d really like to have everyone participating to help nail these aspects down, as I believe it would further their experience within the operation of the SRC. But also, whether or not they continue this awesome position in school, I want them to keep everything they’ve learnt with them for their entire lives. As with every SRC in each school, I know mine has the potential to do many great things.

Ron Garcia

Northern College of the Arts and Technology, Preston

My hope for my SRC in this coming year is to continuously build the foundations of our SRC.

Our school’s SRC was formed last year and, as such, last year wasn’t a strong year for it. I hope that, with the dawn of a new year, we can structure and organise ourselves better, to create more meaningful change.

So, in essence, a goal for our SRC is to establish ourselves properly, and to also create a framework for the SRC – so that coming SRC representatives can continue with our vision. This year our SRC is all about getting the ball rolling!

Natalie Elizabeth

Footscray City College

My name is Spencer Davis and I am from Footscray City College. At my school we have had a massive boom in student voice in almost all aspects.

This leaves myself and the rest of the SRC with big shoes to fill. With the integration of a house point system, there is a lot of organisation and presenting to do. This is a completely new idea and hasn’t even been released to the rest of the students yet.

With all of this new change, there are many and more areas for students to have their voices heard on a school wide level. I, personally, also have hopes of getting the lead in the school musical which is coming up soon. This means a busy 2015 for everybody!

Spencer Davis
Yarram Secondary College

Hi! I’m Kristen Sellings, and I have been a part of Yarram Secondary College’s SRC for the past four years.

Last year, our SRC became a bit ‘hectic’, our structure and discipline as a group going slightly astray, so it would be great if we could get back to working together as a whole team, becoming more organised and prepared to share responsibilities, rather than forcing some of the group to carry the entire load. We’re also hoping to implement a Random Acts of Kindness week sometime during 2015, which we hope will create a more positive and considerate culture across our school.

Kristen Sellings

Casey Grammar School, Cranbourne East

Our SRC and student involvement in the school has been strengthened each and every year, and this year I hope to lead and guide further development of student participation.

I hope that the younger students and new students will feel just as inclined to contribute as the veterans of the student leadership team. I would really like to organise something really special for the Centenary of the ANZACs, and also a really good house event that isn’t just athletics. I am really looking forward to another positive and successful last year at my school.

Samantha Chapman

The Mac.Robertson Girls’ High School, Melbourne

Fired Up! Ready to Go. This is the slogan that fuels the ethos and drive behind Mac.Rob’s SRC in 2015.

Last year, our presidents began an initiative called Open Meetings where, for the first time, the SRC opened its doors for students across all year levels to take part in discussing the issues that affect our school community. A major concern voiced by our student body was an inability for students to communicate their ideas and feedback in regards to the classroom environment.

It was from this we envisioned the Creating Conversations project. Inspired by the VicSRC’s Teach the Teacher, this program is aimed at generating positive and constructive discussion between teachers and students about the classroom environment. Creating Conversations provides a unique opportunity for a student-led project to work alongside teachers in order to actively help shape the school’s development and future as one of Victoria’s leading secondary schools.

As the SRC President, along with the Vice-President Dinusha Kalaroopan and the entire SRC family, we aim to not only launch Creating Conversations, but also to build a strong foundation so that the SRC continues to inspire and empower all young women of Mac.Rob. So yes, we truly are fired up and ready to go!

Anamika Chowdhury

I go to a school where student voice is praised and sought after by the teachers, parents and students.

Last year, in 2014, our school managed to have our first two SRC open meetings where students gathered to discuss the many things that needed fixing and praising in the school. Also, for the first time, every single ‘minutes’ from every SRC meeting were emailed to every student in the school. Without a doubt, the school is progressing and thriving with its passion for student voice.

For this 2015 year, I hope that we can go bigger and better in the school community. So far we’ve only collated the big ideas – but now we have to act on them.

One of the more favoured ideas was to have a day every month where students in VCE could gather and have a fitness day. Many girls claimed that they didn’t prioritise sport and fitness in VCE because they just didn’t have enough time. So this year our school SRC wants to take action on the things that the students have reported back to us.

Margaret Tran
Templestowe College

This being my final year of high school, I plan to do as much as I possibly can.

That may sound silly to some people, as the common attitude to Year 12 is normally: stop everything and focus on your studies. Yes, this may work for some but not me. I see this year like my final year of childhood and I want to make the most of it by taking absolutely every opportunity that comes my way.

I believe it’s important to find the balance between studies and other activities and opportunities because they can be just as beneficial in the long run. Some of the things I’ll be doing this year include representing Victoria in Gallipoli for the 100 year commemoration of the landing at Anzac Cove in 1915, performing as part of a production of Young Frankenstein: the Musical and attending the Victorian College of the Arts Musical Theatre Saturday School.

This year I will be the President of my school’s SRC and, as a team, we hope to continue tackling topics such as student wellbeing, student voice in decision making, student/teacher relationships and, of course, raise money and awareness of charities for disadvantaged communities.

Our SRC also runs the annual Gala Day. This event brings together the entire school to celebrate the year and all our achievements, with live student-performed music, bouncy castles, fairy floss, food, games and fun.

Not only am I looking forward to the many opportunities that I am taking advantage of this year, but I am also looking forward to having a busy yet somehow relaxing year, having fun with friends and simply enjoying life and all it has to offer.

Tess Shacklock

Malvern Central School

Last year was our first year of our new model for Junior School Council at Malvern Central School. That year was all about laying the foundations and getting our new model started.

This year, I hope that we can continue to encourage more student voice at our school. I also hope that our Junior School Council for 2015 will do a great job at hosting the VicSRC Regional Conference.

I hope that this year’s Junior School Council will develop lots of new leaders with new ideas for our school and that those leaders will bring their knowledge back to the learning spaces so that we can all become better leaders.

Emily Hill

Bentleigh West Primary School

Hi, we are Zoe, Lill and Amelia, and we are the SRC Captains at Bentleigh West Primary School.

This coming year of 2015 will hopefully bring positive changes to our school. For the future, we hope to see a balanced collective of students in the SRC.

We aim to represent all students in the school. In the past we have done things like leadership workshops, excursions, school markets, film festivals and fundraisers. The film festival – a student idea – is a fun optional activity that involves students who would like to produce a short film that incorporates an object that has to be somewhere in the film.

We hope everyone who is in the SRC at our school this year enjoys themselves and has a fun, enjoyable time.

Zoe, Lill and Amelia

Tess Shacklock
Having made a decision to support an issue that students are passionate about, what next? What sort of action is possible and appropriate?

Let’s assume you’ve done the ground work: you’ve defined the issue, investigated it and developed a vision of what the issue could or should be like. What next?

This will depend on what the issue is, what you want to achieve and what your resources (time, energy, funding) are. In the Student Action Teams materials, it is suggested that you don’t have to only focus on making big changes (like building things or restructuring things). It suggests there are four types of action that you could take: the 4Es:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>eg Building things: changing structures like timetables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement</td>
<td>eg Stopping/punishing negative behaviour: public rebukes, telling off, restraining etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>eg Rewarding positive behaviour: public praise, providing funding, good examples, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>eg Providing information: telling or training people, supporting others to investigate, etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But you still might be faced with a general or undefined decision that you should ‘do something’ about an issue; perhaps other students have asked for an SRC to take action on it, or you have a decision that the issue is important to students. It might be a big issue or a small one; you might have lots of time to devote to it, or not much time at all.

So we’ve put together a table to sort out some possible types of actions you could do to respond to the need to ‘do something’.

These actions range from simply making a statement about the issue or idea, to developing a big campaign. Each of these options has implications - for the amount of time and resources you will need to allocate, for the support you can get. These implications will help you determine what is possible, as well as what is needed.

There are also lots of ideas and resources available to help you take action. Amnesty had put together a free resource on their website on how to use social media, engage with the media, organise an event, advocate for an issue and develop your group: [www.amnesty.org.au/activist/skill-up](http://www.amnesty.org.au/activist/skill-up)

Another great site for developing your own petition and other forms of action is: [www.change.org](http://www.change.org)

The table (see next page) aims to help you think further about what you could do.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of action</th>
<th>Possibilities</th>
<th>Resources needed/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Make a statement of belief about the idea** | • You could simply decide on a statement that you believe something about the issue, and record this decision in your minutes.  
• There may need to be no other action at this point - but this statement might then become the basis for or lead to other actions, by you or other students. | • Just need to allocate time for discussion and decision at a meeting  
• Making a statement may not seem very dramatic, but making a commitment can be a valid response to an issue |
| **Communicate the idea** | • However, it would be wise to tell others about your decision, by:  
  o writing a letter (eg to those who have the power to make a decision on the issue) simply stating what you believe; or  
  o publicising your decision by making a poster about it for a noticeboard; or  
  o reporting it at an assembly; or  
  o including it in a newsletter etc. | • Allocate time for discussion and decision at a meeting  
• Then allocate responsibility and time to write up or make your statement in a public place. |
| **Inform and persuade others to agree** | • You might, however, want to do more to persuade others to agree with your decision.  
• You could develop and communicate some arguments in support of the issue and publicise these. You could:  
  o write a longer letter to decision-makers; or  
  o provide examples (case studies) or your own story; or  
  o interview others (students) as evidence; or  
  o have a public debate at assembly; or  
  o write a longer article for a newsletter etc. | • It will take more time and effort to collect and write up stories about the issue and its effect on students;  
• Then negotiate to present these in a publication or at a meeting (eg assembly). |
| **Discuss with decision-makers to get changes** | • Face to face discussion is more likely to have the issue understood and considered seriously, and for a favourable outcome to occur.  
• You could set up a ‘roundtable’ with students and others – particularly those who will be making the decisions – to present your arguments, and seek to negotiate some favourable outcomes. | • Do more background work to have your arguments clear (with examples);  
• Book a space and time for a meeting;  
• Time to invite and arrange for people (decision-makers, Principal, politicians, officials) to attend - follow up a written invitation with a personal approach. |
| **Campaign to increase knowledge and awareness about it, and support for changes** | • Building on these discussions, you could seek to persuade those who make decisions with a larger campaign. You could:  
  o seek face to face meetings;  
  o arrange for others to show the amount of support for the issue by:  
    - organising a petition (see on-line tools at www.change.org),  
    - arranging for statements of support from other groups (eg parents);  
    - making statements to the media; or  
    - publicising the issue on social media (eg set up a Facebook page). | • Allocate the time and resources needed to develop a full campaign;  
• Develop petitions, social media publicity;  
• Liaise with other groups;  
• Be clear about what you want, and realistic (but also optimistic) about your ability to make it happen. |
| **Develop your own direct action or resources** | • In some cases, you might be able to be the decision-maker and help to make the changes you want. Where you have the power to do so, you could simply make these changes - do you have to ask permission?  
• You could develop a resource/kit/information materials and then arrange for it to be used to educate others on the issue.  
• This will mean researching and writing the material, producing it in an attractive form, making it available (web or print) and advertising its existence (persuading people to use it). | • This will take a large commitment of time and resources, including:  
• Research and writing of material;  
• Publication and dissemination (costs).  
• If you can persuade others to make the resource, this might save you some expense and time, but you will still need to put in the work to make it student-led. |

Good luck with your own action developments.

This is just a first set of ideas. By hearing about what others are trying and doing, we can learn and improve the ways we work. Let us know what you are doing, and how it is going.

Roger Holdsworth  
with Krista Seddon, Fiona Campbell and David Mould

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February 2015
Student Voice and Action: Canada and USA

Alberta Student Engagement Initiative

In Alberta (Canada), SpeakOut (SpeakOutAB), the Alberta Student Engagement Initiative, was created in 2008 to support Alberta youth in sharing education ideas and experiences with each other and the Ministry.

Alberta Education sees student engagement as a process of active collaboration with students in an effort to best support their needs, goals and learning preferences. SpeakOut is dedicated to providing students with opportunities to be leaders of change in their schools and communities. Through this initiative, students, ages 14 to 19 years, from across the province, are provided with the tools they need to engage in discussions about their education with each other and with key education partners – on how to improve the education system in Alberta.

Learn more about them at www.speakout.alberta.ca

Student Voice Collaborative

In New York City (USA), the Student Voice Collaborative (SVC) aims to generate a wave of student-led change across NYC public high schools. SVC brings together students from across the City to affect the sorts of change they want to see in their schools and support one another along the way.

While the program started as an initiative of the NYC Department of Education Network 102, with the participation and enthusiasm of 12 pioneering students from five high schools, it has been growing each year. Today, the collaborative is proud to include 36 students from 16 schools across five networks.

Learn more at: www.studentvoicecollaborative.com

Kentucky Student Voice Team

In Kentucky (USA), the Student Voice Team works with the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence to position students as partners in improving Kentucky schools.

Collaborating with student and adult leaders to create ways to share student perspectives on education issues with an intergenerational audience, the Student Voice Team has advocated at statewide education events, testified before the Joint Legislative Education Committee about how students can contribute to the teacher feedback loop, published commentaries in local and national news media outlets on a variety of education policy issues, and facilitated, documented and shared via social media and live presentations policy-oriented conversations with middle and high school students across Kentucky.

Learn more at: http://ow.ly/HZUgc

Denver Student Board of Education

The Denver Public Schools Student Board of Education (USA) is a group of 30 students who represent the 15 high schools in the city. They are charged to serve as leaders in their schools and represent all students at the district level.

Students create projects that affect their local schools and report back on them to the district. They have also created a curriculum that is used in several high school leadership classes.

Details: http://studentboard.dpsk12.org/

Practicum in Community Involvement

In Spokane, Washington (USA), Lewis and Clark High School offers a course called Practicum in Community Involvement that engages students in developing their own year-long learning project. Students must incorporate certain elements into their project, including research, action and reflection, and identify a community mentor to guide them in their learning.

Students’ responses to their experiences grow increasingly sophisticated and powerful, with students regularly exclaiming, “This is the only reason I made it through my senior year.”

Learn more at: www.spokaneschools.org/Domain/119

Boston Student Advisory Council

In Boston, Massachusetts (USA), the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) is a city-wide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools.

BSAC, which is coordinated by the district office in partnership with a nonprofit called Youth On Board, offers student perspectives on high school renewal efforts and informs their respective schools about relevant citywide school issues. In addition to personal skill development and knowledge building activities for their 20-plus members, BSAC students have strongly influenced district policy-making about cell phone usage, truancy, and reducing the drop out rate. They also have regular dialogues with the district superintendent and school board members.

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**SABLE**

In California (USA), a select group of high school students gather in the state capitol to draft and present refined proposals to the State Senate and Assembly Committees on Education. The **Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE)** is the only conference in the USA that allows students to directly voice their opinions and concerns to education policy makers, and the results have made huge improvements on California schools.

**SABLE** is part of the **California Association of Student Councils**. Learn more at: [http://ow.ly/HZUuW](http://ow.ly/HZUuW)

---

**SABE**

Also in California (USA), the **Student Advisory Board on Education (SABE)** has met for more than 40 years. Student representatives from across California have met annually to find ways to improve our schools.

Through the **SABE** each November, students present their recommendations to the State Board of Education. They work with the board members to implement their ideas across California. **SABE** is also part of **California Association of Student Councils**.

Learn more at: [www.casc.net/programs/sabe](http://www.casc.net/programs/sabe)

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**YATST**

In Vermont (USA), **Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST)** is a network of youth and adult teams committed to building school communities in which learning is engaging for everyone and students are fully empowered.

High schools across the country are remodeling to meet the needs of our rapidly changing world. School-based **YATST** teams in Vermont join together to take a lead role in this work, driven by youth and adults in equal measure.

Learn more at: [http://ow.ly/HZUuW](http://ow.ly/HZUuW)

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**SpeakUp Ontario**

These examples are provided by Adam Fletcher through the **SoundOut** program, and were initially shared through the **Student Voice Research and Practice** facebook group (see page 5).

**SoundOut** is an expert assistance program focused on promoting **Student Voice** and **Meaningful Student Involvement** throughout education.

It works with K-12 schools, districts, state and provincial education agencies, and nonprofit education organisations across the United States and Canada. It has a variety of practical resources available.

Learn more at: [https://www.facebook.com/SoundOut](https://www.facebook.com/SoundOut) or at: [www.soundout.org](http://www.soundout.org)

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**District Board of Education**

In Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) in Maryland (USA), students have participated as voting members of the **District Board of Education** for more than 25 years.

The student member is a high school senior who votes on all issues, including all areas of the school budget, discipline, and fiscal issues. In addition, all advisory, curriculum, and study committees, along with special task forces in the district, include students, working on everything from grading policies to alternative learning.

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Learn more at: [http://ow.ly/HZUqV](http://ow.ly/HZUqV)
Welcome back for 2015! For those of you starting out in your first year of teaching, and those of you who have taken on the role of SRC Teacher Adviser in 2015, we extend a special welcome to you and congratulate you on discovering Connect Magazine.

The Victorian Institute of SRC Teacher Advisers (VISTA) is the professional association for SRC Teachers working in primary and secondary schools across Victoria. We aim to help you and other teachers looking after Student Councils by providing you with resources and opportunities for you to network with other SRC Teachers locally and around the state.

Resources for Getting Your Student Council Started:
If you are new to the role of SRC Teacher Adviser, the VISTA website is loaded with resources to help you get your Student Council off to a great start in 2015 and is a great way to connect with other SRC Teacher Advisers.

As a VISTA member, you can access from our ‘Members Only’ section the following resources:
• Agenda and Minutes Templates
• Calendar of Major Events
• Action Planning Templates
• Creating a resource kit for SRC Members

Visit our website at http://www.vistasrc.org and check them out now.

Renew Your VISTA Membership – or Join Today!
For those with memberships due to expire in the next 6 months, we shall be sending our renewal notices shortly. If you have updated your details or are not sure if you school membership is current, please contact us at info@vistasrc.org.au so we can ensure that your contact details are correct and up to date. Be sure to renew ASAP to get the most from your membership.

Not a VISTA member? Why not? As a VISTA member your membership entitles you to...
• A range of networking opportunities locally and across the state.
• Subscription to our ‘members only’ e-newsletter alerting you to upcoming events and new resources.
• Discounts with Second Strike for tailor-made leadership training days
• Discounts to Form 1 Lane: the professional development seminar for SRC Teacher Advisers.
• Access to our ‘members only’ section of our website.
• A copy of The VISTA Compass Resource CD when you join.

By comparison, VISTA membership continues to remain well below the prices charged by other professional teaching organisations. We are now also offering special membership discounts to pre-service teachers. To become a member, download your membership form from our website today.

Scott Duncan
VISTA Executive

VISTA currently receives no additional funding to operate its programs and relies heavily on memberships to support its programs. Visit us at www.vistasrc.org or e-mail us at info@vistasrc.org for details on how to join.
Real Time Learning (RTL) is an exciting initiative at Mt Eliza Secondary College in Victoria, which focuses on enhancing student engagement. The program allows students time to participate in authentic activities.

RTL is built around the principles of Expansive Education, where engagement occurs when students feel a sense of connection to others and a level of control over their learning. When the tasks they undertake have meaning for them, they will experience true engagement.

The program encourages strong community involvement and offers students opportunities to participate in real world ventures.

You can explore the website and experience some of the exciting things that are happening in Real Time Learning (see below). More details hopefully in a future issue of Connect.

https://mtelizarealtime.wordpress.com/

Senior Techies and RTL

RTL students will soon be working with the Senior Techies and technology trainers (www.seniortechies.com.au)

Senior Techies (ST) is a social enterprise, fully supported by volunteers, based in Melbourne. Senior Techies was founded in early 2013 by Merv Stewart. It helps seniors to better connect with family and friends using iPads and SmartPhones.

ST delivers training programs with the help of young volunteers to show how easy, fun and entertaining it is to use this new technology. Students gain training skills, develop relationships with the community and help older people to find new ways to connect with the world through technology.

Luke Kerr
Mt Eliza Secondary College
lkerr@mesc.vic.edu.au

“We must ensure our children have a voice. We must listen to them. We must learn from them. In doing so, we empower them, give them confidence, and teach them that it is safe to express their fears, share their dreams and ask questions.”

Sir Peter Cosgrove, Governor General of Australia; International Children’s Week, 2014

http://www.social-peek.com/Keywords/missionaust/20/
VicSRC Key Dates for 2015

2015 marks the VicSRC’s 10th anniversary!

Please mark the following key dates in your diary:

Regional Conferences 2015
12 Metro and Regional locations | 9 March to 22 May 2015
For more information see ‘Regional Conferences 2015 – Now Booking!’ opposite, and pages 26-27.

10th Annual VicSRC Congress 2015
Ormond College, University of Melbourne | 8 to 10 July 2015
This annual conference is a highlight on the VicSRC calendar. Over three days, the conference brings together secondary students from across Victoria to discuss and debate issues that are important to their school communities. The conference sets the policy agenda for the VicSRC for the coming year and appoints the Student Executive who will implement it. Students participate in student-led workshops, activities, and formal decision-making through a parliamentary-style congress.

2015 VicSRC Recognition Awards
Metro Melbourne | Thursday 29 October 2015
Celebrating the achievements of SRCs and presenting examples of best practice in student voice, student-led action and student participation in Victoria.

Regional Conferences 2015 – Now Booking!
Leadership | Action | Student Voice

Bookings are now open for the VicSRC Regional Conferences 2015.
VicSRC Regional Conferences allow students to network across schools, gain new skills and work together on common issues and define what really matters to students across Victoria.

- one day conferences
- for Year 7-12 SRC members and their teachers
- take action on issues you care about
- learn how to be more effective student representatives
- 12 locations across metro and regional Victoria
- free side PD available for teachers

What other students have said:
- “I’m a part of something bigger and together we’re powerful”
- “It was a great learning experience; I feel I can contribute more to my SRC”
- “I enjoyed meeting other students from different schools and finding out how their leadership model works”

Register online: www.vicsrc.org.au

VicSRC Membership discounts
Did you know that you can receive discounted ticket prices to events if you have a VicSRC Membership?

If you are not a member and would like to take advantage of discount ticket prices to Regional Conferences, simply add a VicSRC Membership (Annual School Membership) to your registration when you RSVP for your group.

Need help? Contact Fiona Campbell, VicSRC Events and Communications Officer on 03 9267 3777 or communications@vicsrc.org.au

With thanks to our sponsors:
The VicSRC Executive training and planning day held on Wednesday 21st January was a great bonding opportunity for the whole Executive team. While we already had a great working relationship, this day, along with the camp, helped to solidify relationships and trust between us.

Together, as a group, we managed to muster great energy throughout the day, so that even when some of us began to tire we could keep up and be motivated through each other. We all learnt many skills that can help us in our Executive term and our daily lives and possible futures.

The presenters spoke of matters that could really hit home and were easily required. We were joined by Pete Goss from the Grattan Institute, who gave us an in-depth look into the federal and state education policy landscape. It was fascinating and so helpful to see the links with our 2014-2015 Resolutions.

Our second presenter for the day was Nathan Strempel. Nathan is a blogger, MC, radio host, one-time Big Brother contestant and presenter, and he took us through a journey of media training. A big highlight was facing some of our fears: filming ourselves to camera and then giving each other constructive feedback. Most importantly, the session helped us do the prep work to land on a new VicSRC mission statement:

“We exist to empower all student voices to be valued in every aspect of education.”

Days like these can set up a multitude of opportunities for the Executive as both individuals and as a group. It also means that, when the Executive is required for either quotes, interviews or meetings, we can show a much more professional persona, raising both personal and VicSRC profiles.

The energy from this day has continued to carry on with a surge of activity happening on our portfolios. We continue to keep in regular contact as we further develop our advocacy work. This has certainly set up a good working base and relationship for the Executive team, staff and volunteers in 2015 - the 10th anniversary year of VicSRC!

Spencer Davis
VicSRC Executive 2014-2015
VicSRC Regional Conference 2015 dates and locations:

**Term 1**

RSVP for Term 1 Regional Conferences closes on Friday 6 March 2015

**GRAMPIANS**
Friday, March 13, 2015 from 8.45 AM to 3.00 PM
Stawell, VIC | Northern Grampians Shire Council, Entertainment Centre at the Town Hall
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/Inhdl

**EASTERN SUBURBS**
Tuesday, March 17, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Templestowe, VIC | Templestowe College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/InhP9

**SOUTH EASTERN SUBURBS**
- PRIMARY SCHOOL CONFERENCE
Thursday, March 19, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Malvern, VIC | Malvern Central School
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/InhZg

**BENDIGO**
Tuesday, March 24, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Bendigo, VIC | Bendigo Senior Secondary College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/IniU3

**HAMILTON**
Thursday, March 26, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Hamilton, VIC | Baimbridge College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/IniHn

**Term 2**

RSVP for Term 2 Regional Conferences closes on Friday 10 April 2015

**HUME**
Tuesday, April 14, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Benalla, VIC | Benalla P-12 College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/IniT9

**WESTERN SUBURBS**
Wednesday, April 15, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Footscray, VIC | Footscray City College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/Injky

**GIPPSLAND**
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Morwell, VIC | Kurnai College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/InjwM

**SOUTHERN SUBURBS**
Wednesday, April 22, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Keysborough, VIC | Haileybury College, Keysborough Campus
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/Inkih

**GREATER GEELONG**
Wednesday, April 29, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Geelong, VIC | Northern Bay P-12 College
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/InkBt

**INNER MELBOURNE**
Friday, May 22, 2015 from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Melbourne City, VIC | Melbourne High School
REGISTER ONLINE: http://ow.ly/InkHU

**NORTHERN SUBURBS**
Date TBC from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM
Watsonia | Location TBC
REGISTER ONLINE: see VicSRC website for latest information

The VicSRC receives funding support from the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne. It 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: manager@vicsrc.org.au

VicSRC e-News!
To sign up to the VicSRC online e-newsletter ... visit: www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/mailinglist
Regional Conferences 2015

Leadership | Action | Student Voice

VicSRC Regional Conferences allow students to network across schools, gain new skills and work together on common issues and define what really matters to students across Victoria.

- one day conference
- take action on issues you care about
- learn how to be more effective student representatives
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- 12 locations across metro and regional Victoria
- free side PD available for teachers who attend

“I’m part of something bigger and together we’re powerful”.

Regional Conferences student, 2014

Cost
$35 per student for VicSRC member schools
$45 per student for non-VicSRC members

Register online: www.vicsrc.org.au

More information
Fiona Campbell | communications@vicrsc.org.au | 9267 3777

The VicSRC is auspiced by The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.
SunSmart SRC Kit

SunSmart invites Student Representative Councils (SRC) from Victorian secondary schools to join in the fight against skin cancer by devising strategies to help their school community achieve a healthy UV balance.

The VicSRC has partnered with SunSmart to develop a resource for Student Representative Councils (SRC) from Victorian secondary schools. The resource will assist students and teachers to devise strategies to help their school community achieve a healthy UV balance. This resource will guide your SRC through the steps to consider in the process.

Download the Join the fight against skin cancer: Student Representative Council kit.

For more information on SunSmart curriculum resources for secondary school students on sun protection, vitamin D and skin cancer, visit their website:

www.sunsmart.com.au
Children’s Voices

Robinson, C. (December 2014) Children, their Voices and their Experiences of School: what does the evidence tell us?

This Research Review by Dr Carol Robinson of the University of Brighton is a revision and update of the Cambridge Primary Review (UK) Research Survey 5/3 ‘Children and their primary schools: pupils’ voices’ by Carol Robinson and Michael Fielding.

Amongst its conclusions are:

• While teachers are responsible for making decisions that are in the best interests of children, they also have a responsibility under Article 12 of the UNCRC to respect children’s rights and to listen to, acknowledge and give due weight to their opinions in matters affecting them.

• Pupils from schools with a rights-respecting ethos report positive relationships between and among staff and pupils. They also report classroom conditions conducive to learning, positive attitudes towards diversity, and relatively few incidents of bullying.

• If pupils’ perspectives are to be listened to and acted upon, adults in schools need to believe in children’s capacity and competence to engage in dialogue and contribute to discussions on their learning and wider school issues.

• Current practices of listening to pupils commonly take the form of a discreet set of initiatives which promote participation within limited aspects of school life. All too often, these initiatives aim to elicit children’s opinions to meet performativity requirements rather than enhance their experience of school. There is a need to reconceptualise the roles of pupils and teachers and act on current understandings and evidence about their possibilities and potential.

• When working to develop an ethos of participation in schools, it is vital to engage a diverse range of voices in deliberate dialogue about school-related issues. If marginalised, less powerful voices are eclipsed by the dominant voices then decisions made and actions taken will be based on only partial knowledge. This is an ethical issue which raises questions about how schools support, and in some cases, discourage or exclude particular groups and individuals from participating in school decision-making.

• Many pupils express conflict in their thinking between wanting to lead aspects of their own learning while wanting teachers to take charge of it, as teachers are recognised as more knowledgeable and able to provide the information pupils need in order to succeed in national tests and examinations. But if teachers are to build pedagogic cultures in which pupils are genuinely empowered to act as partners in their own learning, pupils need to be involved in reviewing their own progress and to participate in decisions bearing on the way they learn. If teachers and pupils are to move along this continuum away from total teacher control of pupils’ learning towards a greater degree of pupil leadership of their learning, then a serious re-think of pedagogy as well as assessment and school accountability procedures is needed.

• A fundamental shift in initial teacher education (ITE) programmes and training is needed to take proper account of the evidence, values and principles underpinning a rights-respecting approach. Training programmes should model these principles, and those entering the profession should understand the provisions of the UNCRC, the value of schools adopting a rights-respecting approach and ways of promoting children’s voice and rights in schools.

Information about the full and summary report is available at: http://cprtrust.org.uk/research/childrens-voice/ or the full report at: http://ow.ly/HUQJN
In The Picture is a new resource that supports secondary schools to address the influence of explicit sexual imagery.

In The Picture does not provide a ‘program’ to be delivered, but provides guidelines, suggested strategies and a wide range of practical resources from which schools can create a whole school approach to explicit sexual imagery that is tailored to suit their unique community and context.

To find out more, or to order the resource:

Brophy Family and Youth Services

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International Democratic Education Conference

Interactive presentations, hands-on workshops, forums and experiential work groups offer a space for new impulses and unconventional educational ideas. Focus on indigenous ways of learning and youth voice.

Haumi e Hui e Taiki e
Nelson, New Zealand
9 – 12 April 2015

Register now: www.idec2015.org

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Teach the Teacher Kit

A resource kit for students and teachers interested to implement a Teach the Teacher program at your school has been developed by the VicSRC. It is part of the Represent! Plus resources on the VicSRC website: www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/representplus

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ASPRINworld: the Connect website!

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at SPRINworld: ASPRIN is the Australian Student Participation Resource and Information Network (“a cure for your student participation headaches”) – a still-emerging concept. The Connect section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, recent back issue contents and summaries of and order information for Student Councils and Beyond, Student Action Teams, Reaching High and Switched On to Learning. There are also links from the indexes of recent issues to their archived PDFs (see below).

Connect is now also archived and available electronically:

research.acer.edu.au/connect

All issues of Connect are being archived through the ACER Research Repository: ACEReSearch. Connect issues from #1 to #194 are available for free download, and recent issues can be searched by key terms. See the ASPRINworld site for index details of recent issues, then link to and download the whole issue you are interested in.

www.informit.com.au

In addition, current and recent issues of Connect are now available on-line to libraries and others who subscribe to RMIT’s Informit site – a site that contains databases of many Australian publications. You can access whole issues of Connect as well as individual articles. Costs apply, either by a library subscription to Informit’s databases, or through individual payments per view for articles.

Local and International 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.

Australian:

- FSP e-Newsletter (Catholic Education Office, East Melbourne, Vic) Issue 19, Term 4, 2014
- Let’s Get Together: An Overview (A Fairer World, Battery Point, Tas) Diversity Education Program
- Parents Voice (Parents Victoria, Vic) Vol 41 Issue 3; September 2014
- Yikes! (YACVic, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 17 Edition 4; December 2014

International:

- “Examining Relational Empowerment for Elementary School Students in a yPAR Program” (Langhout, Collins and Ellison) Am J Community Psychol, 2014; 53: 369-381
- ReThinking Schools (Milwaukee, WI, USA) Vol 29 No 2: Winter 2014-15
- UP for Learning (YATST, Vermont, USA) Winter 2015
- “Why We Need to Involve Our Students in Curriculum Design - Five Arguments for Student Voice” (Jeroen Bron and Wiel Veugelers) Chapter 7 in Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, Volume 16 Numbers 1 & 2 (2014): 125-139

‘Student Councils and Beyond’ On-Line! FREE!

We’re almost out of print copies of Connect’s Student Councils and Beyond (2005). Many of its ideas are now also reflected in the Represent! kit from the VicSRC (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent).

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