Passions for Learning

- **A Focus on Passion Approaches:**
  - ‘I Hated School …’ - *a Principal tells*
  - Students with Purpose
  - Passions and Projects
  - The Power of Passion
  - Passion and Participation
- **Kids Teaching Kids Conference**
- **Buddies Working Together**
- **VicSRC: Executive Camp; Regional Conferences**
- **VISTA: Why Your Student Council Needs a Constitution**

**Resources:**
- How Participation in School Helps You Do Well: an infographic from Scotland
- Student Voice Conferences 2015 ... Cambridge and Dublin
- Student Voice & School Governance
- Progressive Education in Australia: lecture
- VicSRC ‘Teach the Teacher’ Update; Congress
- Connect ... on facebook ... archived ... available on-line ... access to other resources on-line ...
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’ve written elsewhere in this issue about the key elements of the ‘Passion for Learning’ cover focus. But it might be useful to note how this feature came about.

No-one sat down and thought abstractly: “It would be great to have a feature in Connect about our work.” Rather, several strands coincided: I saw Peter Hutton’s great TED piece and met him briefly at a meeting (plus, a VicSRC Executive member is a student at his school); I was seated at a table at that same meeting with Luke Kerr and got into conversation with him and suggested he write something; in an e-mail conversation, I was referred to Amanda Hine and Linda Henry (as well as to Roland Tenefrancia) and contacted them asking for articles. All these contacts were without a coordinated ‘intent’, but as outlines arrived, I realised that all were writing about similar things. In a further conversation, I mentioned this to Maggie Callingham, and she undertook to ‘collect’ a further article.

I’m also tempted to say that all these articles are brought to you, in Sesame Street style, by the letters P and V. Along with the persistent ‘participation’, there’s explicit references to learning that is ‘purposeful’ and ‘productive’ (with ‘power’ hovering in the background). And there’s also ‘voice’ and ‘value’ … but most importantly, there’s ‘vision’.

It’s no surprise that ‘vision’ is an integral part of the DIVAE (define-investigate-vision-act-evaluate) acronym we use with both students and teachers in talking about Action Planning. Without a vision, we are groping around, reacting rather than leading, hesitant to propose direction. So, we advise: sit down with others and talk about the way it could be, the way it should be. See what common dreams and visions we have … and then talk about what needs to change to move us from the current situation (which we are perhaps unhappy about, and have defined and investigated). Only then can we start to talk about what we can do, in order to make those changes, in order to achieve that vision. And to know if we have moved things at all in our preferred direction.

It’s the planning that underlies Connect. When I hear something important and fascinating, or meet someone who is passionate around a table, or am referred to someone ‘interesting’, it enables those happenstances to align with a vision about how Connect can assist to make change, support students’ active participation and power.

So that throws some light on how articles get to be in Connect. There’s no-one trying to contact you to invite your contribution, no obvious theme in mind for the next issue (though there’s always a commitment to continuing ideas and values). In fact, unless you decide to reflect on what you’re involved with, and write a story to tell others what you’re doing, no-one might know about it at all. And as Art Pearl (93 years young this month and still passionate and visionary) said years ago: “If you’ve not written about it, it’s never happened!”

Next Issue ...

So over to you. What do you want to tell us all about? What will be a ‘theme’ that emerges by the end of May? Or what is missing from what you’re reading – and must be addressed? Don’t hesitate. We’ll help all we can to assist you to tell your story – whether you’re a student, or teacher, or principal, or consultant, or parent – or anyone passionate with a vision.

Roger Holdsworth

Connect: #213: June 2015
Deadline for material: end of May, 2015
Passions for Learning

Student decision-making about learning – what is studied, how it is learnt and, most importantly perhaps, why it is learnt – all these things are at the heart of student participation. This decision-making can be individual or collective.

Various critics (famously including Sir Ken Robinson in his TED talks) have pointed to the failure of much current education to empower students to follow and develop their passions in learning. If we are to talk meaningfully about student participation, student voice or student engagement, we must focus on learning – the centre of what schools do.

In the stories that follow, five schools outline how they empower students to follow their learning passions. In some cases, this occurs within a specific area of the school (a sub-school or year level; for a specific time each week); it might exist alongside more traditional approaches in order to address perceived disengagement; in other cases, it is a whole school approach that is central to the entire school’s philosophy and operation.

In reading these accounts, I hear echoes in the ways in which some of these ‘passion’ approaches build on a rich local tradition of Project Based Learning, and on strands of earlier practice variously described as ‘integrated studies’; ‘general studies’ and ‘negotiated curriculum’. They also reflect and provide a school structure for specific examples that have been previously documented in Connect under ‘student participation’ headings: students teaching other students, students working with older residents, students conducting community research and so on.

For many years, in considering how students (and teachers) choose to follow these learning options, I have argued that such curriculum approaches and projects need to address a ‘three way test of value’ to be truly ‘participatory’:

First, they must be seen by students as of value to them (that is, students ‘take control’) - this is necessary but not enough; secondly, they must be seen to have wider or community value (that is, they are addressing issues and concerns that are seen as real and important) - again necessary, but we need to go further; and thirdly, because such approaches and projects take place within schools and broader educational structures, they must have academic or learning value. Such a three-way test is not to be solely applied by teachers (enablers) to ‘allow’ students to follow their passion; rather, it should exist as an agreed set of criteria by which students also judge the value and worth of their learning.

In this way, I also see strong connections here with the final form of partnership described in Michael Fielding’s recent typology of Student Voice (‘Patterns of Partnership – how adults listen to and learn with students in schools’ – see Connect 197, pages 10-14), which he describes as: Intergenerational learning as a lived democracy. This has further been explained as:

students (with staff support) apply learning to a shared commitment to and responsibility for the common good; real and active roles of productive value for students – for selves and others

These approaches continue to provide some of the most exciting and challenging developments of student participation. They focus on the ways in which learning can be both productive and purposeful and how this can happen within ‘mainstream’ school environments.

They also highlight the need for teachers to be passionate … both about specific issues and projects as well as knowledge, skills and attitudes – but also about ways they can enable students to ‘take control’ and be ‘students with purpose’.

How does your school enable students to: ‘learn about something I’m interested in’?

Roger Holdsworth
I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.  

—Albert Einstein

“I never teach my pupils, I only provide the conditions in which they can learn”

Albert Einstein  
1879-1955

http://quoteshelp.com/albert-einstein-quotes/
“I Hated School...”

It is my contention that secondary school at least, only really works for about a third of students. That is not to say that they in any way maximise their learning potential, but they do work out the system, they develop some confidence in their learning, have decent relationships with their teachers and their peers, and they end up getting a score that will get them into a course or job that they are happy with.

For the middle third, it is a pretty average outcome. They cruise through school not getting too much out of it but not putting much in either. They are under invested. These guys know their place. They are nothing special. They know that their skills are not those that school really values.

For the final third, school is an unmitigated disaster. They don’t find their skills, or passion. Because they can’t or won’t play the game, relationships with teachers are poor. They may have friends and surviving school may bring them closer together. But educationally it can be so soul destroying that some never recover from it.

How did we make learning, something that in younger years was so innately pleasurable, get so bad? How is it that simply getting kids to attend school, a place where they can work and learn alongside their friends, has become a real issue, much less them actively engaging in classes?

Most students’ school experience is pretty much like riding on a bus. Thirty kids get on, the teacher assumes their rightful spot at the front of the learning bus and they set off. The kids get taken on a journey; they get to look out the window and see all the interesting things whizzing by: History on the left, a little Science on the right. “I’m sorry son, we can’t stop to look at that; we have a schedule to keep."

What would happen if we allowed students to design and be in control of their own learning and, instead of doing education to students, the staff, school and wider community became resources that the kids could draw from as and when they needed it?

Templestowe College

Templestowe College (or TC as it has become known), is a State secondary school, which caters for students from 12 to around 18 years of age. At TC we strongly encourage students to Take Control of their own learning.

We have very few rules at TC but one of them is that: Yes is the default. When any student, parent or staff member makes a suggestion or request, the answer has to be yes – unless to do so would take too much time, too much money or negatively impact on someone else.

A few years ago a young student called Josh, who was in Year 7, asked if he could sit in a Year 12 Physics class which was his passion. We applied the Yes is the default test. It wouldn’t take any extra time, it would not cost us as a school any money, but could it negatively impact on someone else?

Well yes, it could actually. If Josh were asking the teacher questions that really, he probably would have known the answers to, had he done the intervening five years of science, that could really take away from the other senior students. So we said: Josh you can be in the class; you just can’t ask any questions. You can get a tutor, do your own research or see the teacher after class, but you cant ask any questions. Now we checked on Josh from time to time and, after a few weeks, I asked some of his classmates: “What is it like having this little kid in your class?” and they said: “Well it’s a bit weird actually .... because he sometimes knows more than we do.”

So the next year we formally enrolled Josh into Year 11 Physics, but his timetable lined up more neatly with the Year 9s, so we gave him the option of moving. So Josh ended up as a Year 8, enrolled in Year 9 studying Year 11, having done Year 12 in Year 7. As you can see it was becoming a little confusing.

As our kids have started to take more and more responsibility for their own learning, we have been forced to examine and remove a lot of the processes and procedures that are associated with traditional education, simply because they no longer add value and instead were just adding to the rigidity of the system.

Today our vision for the school is to be a supportive community empowering students to manage their individualised learning and turn their ideas into reality.

But what does that look like...

Students determine what they study

All students have their own individualised learning plan that they develop with their parents and the staff. After showing that they have established literacy and numeracy skills, which they usually complete in the first year of high school, they get 100% choice of their subjects from over 120 electives.

Some electives are student directed, others have a set curriculum, and some senior subjects have a curriculum mandated by the State.

The point is they decide what they will study, at what level and only need
to do the subjects they see as relevant to them and are part of their five year pathway that they construct.

A few years ago we asked the students: “If you could study anything you want in the world what would it be?” What do you think the top response was? … Computer gaming design. They were smart enough to know that playing computer games was not going to fly, but designing them – that might work. So we started a partnership with Latrobe University, who have their own computer gaming design faculty. Their Head of Faculty came out to the school, and would teach a handful of our students on the way home from work, and then they would teach the teacher and the rest of the kids.

We also have a working with animals elective that has an alpaca, goats, snakes, fish, birds, rats and lizards.

We have a boy called Xavier who, in his Geek Studies class, built a Tesla coil with beer bottle capacitors that will generate a three million volt lightning strike and needs to be operated in Faraday Cage so as not to … interfere with the enrolment numbers.

If we do not offer a subject students would like to study, they can complete a Personalised Learning Project (PLP) where they set the learning objectives and, working with a staff mentor, develop a plan for how they are going to achieve it.

**Students decide who they learn from**

At some schools, the students in a particular teacher’s class are viewed almost like their possessions and the student is very much at the mercy of the quality of the teacher. At TC we publish a preliminary timetable and students can see exactly who is teaching their classes and make changes accordingly if they feel strongly enough.

Students are actively encouraged to get help from other teachers, parents, older siblings. We even pay older students to tutor younger students. The research around this says that it is highly effective for both the student and the tutor and only just less effective than being tutored by a teacher, but far more cost effective. Students are told to do whatever it takes … because at the end of the day it is their education not ours.

**School decision-making**

Our students even sit on the selection panels that appoint staff. They sit on the Curriculum Committee, on College Council, and even on the leadership team that runs the school. Forget student voice … we want to share the running of the school with our students.

We even blur the distinction between what is a student and what is a staff member. We employ students to act as receptionists, maintenance workers, and to run activities for other students such as yoga, squash and martial arts. Because of our flexible timetable we allow students to even work in classes as tutors assisting students with additional needs.

Students have the choice to control when they learn; they have the chance of starting school earlier in the day from 7.15 am to 1.15 pm or from 8.45 am to 3.30 pm or from 10.30 am to 5.15 pm, allowing them to structure their day around when they learn best and to incorporate their education around their sports training, work or family commitments.

We also follow the research and don’t set homework for younger students when it is shown that an extra hours sleep would actually produce more academic gain. Instead, we recommend a minimum of 10 hours Home Learning per week, where the student negotiates to work on and document learning tasks of their choice agreed to by their parents. It may include finishing off work done in class, or working in something they just don’t get, but could also include doing their own art or science project, learning an additional language or even attending dance class or scouts or cooking a meal, as long as it is new learning and it ties into their plan for their future.

**Learning environment**

So what is the learning environment like at TC? Well most of our kids are happy and they love their school.

Our students and staff are on a first name basis, there are no bells, no year levels and students are allowed to have their phones in class. We have a One Person Policy where no person is considered better or has more rights than anyone else, regardless of age or position. There is no bullying. And yes, I know what that sounds like – like I have my head in the sand. Naturally we do have our disagreements and even unpleasant behaviour; that happens whenever you put people together. What we do not have is ongoing harassment of others by the powerful over those less powerful. Our kids simply would not put up with it. I think this is also helped by the fact that, because classes have students from different ages all learning things that they are all interested in, it’s like everyone has big brothers and sisters.

**Being the change**

My favourite TED talk is Do schools kill creativity by Sir Ken Robinson. But one of the issues I have is that this video was produced seven years ago and has been watched seven million times, but I don’t see a lot changing.

Whilst it is nice to sit here amongst like-minded friends, we cannot wait for the educational saviour to come. We must be the change we want to see in education. Sir Ken has seeded the ground for change, but we need to take action at the local level.

Students – start pushing for change and having a say in the running of your school through your Student Representative Council. Parents – get on your College Council and push for change. Teachers – make changes within your classrooms, and Principals – encourage and shield those staff who want to make a positive difference.

At TC we make mistakes and we are far from perfect. The school is not nirvana. But we have seen that, when you allow students to take charge of their own learning, great things can happen.
What Makes TC Different?

Well a lot of things actually. Most schools expect the students to fit in with the school, rather than the school trying to adapt to best meet the needs of the individual student. We think very carefully about the direction the school is heading. We want to be leaders and innovators, not followers and we want to inspire these qualities in our students. We believe that the education programs that we are now putting in place will be replicated in many schools in 5 to 10 years’ time, simply because the existing model of education does not work for so many students.

The Learning Program is Different

Students have a choice in what they study from the moment they start @TC

- Right from their first year @TC, as a member of the Entry Class, students choose one third of what they study, choosing two electives each semester from over 20 electives. These electives comprise three 75-minute learning blocks each week. That equals 7.5 hours of study in areas of the student’s choice!!
- Once students graduate from the Entry Class, they can select their entire academic program from subjects in the Flexible Learning Environment. Even VCE subjects are available depending on the student’s interest and ability.

We offer more than 100 elective subject options

- To help us decide what electives to offer, we asked the students what they wanted to study. Our 2014 List of Electives included: art, visual communication and design, photography, media, dance, drama, music performance, fashion textiles design, computer gaming design, food technology, design and technology (incorporating wood, metal, plastics, and 3-D model design), Geek studies (it is cool to be a Geek @TC), personal fitness, IT Software development, extra sport and working with animals.
- In addition, after graduating from the Entry Class, students can study: Pre-Chemistry, Pre-Biology, Pre-Psychology, Pre-Literature, History, Philosophy, any of the 37 VCE subjects offered at a 1&2 or 3&4 level at school, any subject offered by distance education and more than 30 Vocational Education and training subjects offered outside the school.
- The choice is vast, but we have experienced course advisors to guide students and parents through the subject selection process and determine a program just right for each student.

Students can make up their own subject

- If a student has a particular interest that does not fit one of these electives, they can devise their own, called a Personalised Learning Project (PLP). PLPs are supervised by a staff member, with students required to set their own learning goals and targets that must be met. Past students have followed their passion in creative writing, researching their family tree, obtaining a helicopter pilot’s license, composing digital music and have studied eight different languages through Distance Education, the Victorian School of Languages or via online learning programs.

The previous article by Peter Hutton, Principal of Templestowe College in Melbourne, is a transcription of a talk he gave to TEDxMelbourne.

The ‘live’ version of this talk can be seen at: http://ow.ly/Jebkb. You can also read more from an interview on Radio National at: http://ow.ly/L0JLs

The following information from Peter expands upon his talk and article, and is taken from the Templestowe College website:

www.templestowec.vic.edu.au
There are no compulsory subjects after completion of Foundation Literacy, Numeracy and Science

- This reflects Mejers research in an ACER study showing that “the top 10% of students in ... each year are working at approximately five year levels ahead of the bottom 10%.” (F-10 Curriculum Planning Guide, VCAA).

Likewise each student’s level of interest in particular subjects varies dramatically. We believe that once the basics are attained to a mastery level then students should be free to select their learning program with the support and guidance of their teachers and parents.

Each new student has an Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)

- An ILP is a learning plan designed specifically for an individual. These are quite detailed and take a reasonable amount of time to complete and maintain. The staff simply do not have the time to do this on top of preparation and teaching so we have developed a way for the student to write and manage their own ILP supported by their parents or other significant adult supporter. The plan belongs to the student and they need the maturity to take ownership of it. There are regular meetings conducted after school for students and their parents to support this process.

We use the Flip Model of education at VCE

- This is where students complete the basics of a lesson out of class time and then come to class to engage in more hands on experiences working through learning concepts together with their peers in greater depth. This makes classroom learning more interactive as well as enjoyable.

Students complete HomeLearning, not Homework

- Research consistently shows that traditional homework, often comprising worksheets or chapter questions, is of almost no benefit until senior high school levels. This is not to say that students cannot learn at home before then, but rather it is a question of having the right motivation. Pre-VCE level students complete a minimum of 10 hours of HomeLearning tasks per week based on their own SMART goals. Students negotiate what is learnt with their parents during these times. Students taking VCE subjects are required to complete homework so as not to negatively impact on the rest of the class by some students being unprepared or behind.

Each Lesson has its own clear “Learning Intention” and “Reason for Learning”

- All Foundation Subjects and electives that have a core curriculum (ECC subjects) are divided into a series of discrete 75 minute chunks, called Learning Bites. Each Learning Bite has a specific idea, concept of skill to be learnt (called the learning intention) and the reason why it is important to know is explained in student terms. The Learning Bite can be completed in class or at home and must have the capacity to be completed independently. This is sometimes called “Anywhere Anytime Learning” and often incorporates the use of multimedia and computer-based software. If a student misses the lesson for whatever reason, wishes to work ahead in return for additional elective time, or needs to go over a concept previously covered in class, then they have the capacity to do so. Students, parents and guardians know exactly what is being learnt, when it is being covered and even have the opportunity to contribute ideas or material to the lesson and provide feedback.

If a student does not like a subject or is struggling they can change the subject

- Obviously we do not want to see students chopping and changing subjects on a whim, and there is something to be said for resilience building in persevering in a subject one finds difficult. However @TC we allow some flexibility for students to change subjects during the semester where there is a space in another more preferred one. As there can be financial and career implications for changing subjects, parent permission is always obtained prior to officially making a change. This flexibility allows students to try more challenging subjects knowing that if they find themselves out of their depth there is a way out.

Students receive feedback from their teachers each three weeks

- Referred to as the GPA or Grade Point Average, this provides students with feedback on how their teachers believe that they are operating within the class. Parents also receive a copy of this report.

Our students contribute to the design of the curriculum

- The student curriculum committee considers the introduction of new subjects and how existing subjects are meeting student needs. The committee gives voice to student feedback in regards to curriculum and teaching and learning practices @TC.

- In addition students are encouraged and supported to organise their own excursions and camps to supplement their learning.

We offer the option of a Montessori Adolescent Program

- In 2012 we introduced a Montessori Adolescent Program (MAP) specifically designed to support students who have come from a Montessori educational background, or who are well suited to this holistic style of education. We will have two MAP multi-age classes operating from 2015.
The Learning Environment is Different

**Student select their own Learning Mentor**

- Rather than being allocated a random Form or Home Group Teacher, our students select their own Learning Mentor as the person to assist them with school issues and help them set goals for their learning. Because parents know that their child likes this person and that this staff member has made a personal commitment to help and assist their child, this obviously reduces the reluctance parents can sometimes feel to raise issues at secondary school level.

- Students are also allocated to a House overseen by a Head of House who monitors their progress and acts in the role of a parental figure by reinforcing positive behaviour and correcting inappropriate behaviour. Students participate in a wide range of House activities and events throughout the year.

**We have a bully free environment**

- Whilst like any community we will have disagreements and arguments, we do not tolerate bullying or harassment. We define bullying as ongoing harassment where there is an imbalance of power. Harassment of any kind will be addressed and managed in a way that achieves lasting harmony within the TC community. Naturally we can only deal with issues that the school is made aware of, but every step is taken to empower those involved. Anyone who witnesses harassment is required to either take appropriate action themselves or come forward and seek assistance. Any harassment that occurs between members of the TC community is our concern 24/7/365.

**We wish to remain a small/medium school of 650 students**

- We have made the conscious decision to remain a small learning community where it is possible for every student and staff member to be known. Our aim is to maintain a total size of 650 students, including 50 international students. Any size greater than this may compromise our goal to have all students with a detailed and active Individualised Learning Plan.

- You may like to look at the research on school size. The results really are overwhelming.

**Students can have phones in class**

- Smartphones are now a part of life. @TC, rather than banning them, we want students to learn to use technology in a productive, socially responsible and thoughtful way. If a student is distracting themselves or others with the phone, the issue will be addressed by the staff member responsible and a note made to ensure that the same situation is not occurring in several settings. Smartphones can be a great asset to learning, as a camera, video recorder, for instant messaging, in-class voting and feedback, recording notes, and searching for information when a laptop is too cumbersome etc. With this privilege comes significant personal responsibility and the staff member remains the ultimate decision maker regarding appropriate phone use.

**We do not have bells**

- As we seek to prepare students for life beyond school, we do not see the logic in bells. University and most work places do not have bells and yet manage effectively. Students and staff have learnt to look at the time on their phone, on their computer screen or note the general ‘movement of the masses’. It allows the class to have a more natural and civilised start and conclusion rather than a bell or siren signalling the start of the race to the next class.

**We have the option of an early start/ later finish for students studying a VCE subject (starting 2015!)**

- In line with research around adolescent biorhythms and sleep habits, students have the option of an early or late start to the day, attending from 7.15 am to 1.15 pm, the traditional 8.50 am to 3.30 pm, or a late start from 10.30 am to 5.15 pm.

**We do not have Year Levels**

- Given our enormous flexibility in what students study, from 2015 we will no longer refer to students by Year Level. We do identify those new to the school in younger years as the Entry Class, who are kept together as a group for one year whilst they integrate into TC. Similarly we recognise as Graduates those who plan to finish with us at the end of that year. Everyone else is simply identified by their name, or by House if we need to divide people up for administrative purposes.

**Students lead some of the co-curricular activities**

- Students with particular skills or interests have the opportunity to lead activities for other students (and even staff and parents) before school, at lunchtime or after school. Instructors whose classes attract significant numbers may also be paid for their time.

**We provide comfortable places to work and socialise**

- The newly renovated Resource Centre is the learning and social hub of the school. It is open from 7.30 am to
Our Attitude is Different

“YES” is the default
- We have a saying @TC that “YES is the default” answer. That means that if a student, parent or staff member has a suggestion, the answer has to be yes, unless doing so would take too much time, too much money, or negatively impact on somebody else. Whilst we do have a structure that already allows students a lot of flexibility, we are happy to make adaptations and we welcome new suggestions and ideas.

Parents or other adult supporters must remain involved in the student’s education
- Particularly in a student’s first few years @TC, there is a requirement for a parent or alternative adult support person to remain involved in a student’s education. This includes being available for around 45 minutes per night to discuss what was covered in classes that day, look at the preview material for the next day (flipped learning), and discuss and sign off on HomeLearning. There is also a requirement to assist the student to review their Individualised Learning Plan at least once per term.

Staff focus on assisting students with their learning and reaching their goals
- We ask that all students and their families respect the right of staff to spend the vast majority of their time concentrating on working positively with students, providing feedback, teaching, tutoring, finding resources and opportunities to supplement student learning. We do not want to be wasting time dealing with matters such as incorrect uniform, inappropriate language or issues of smoking, etc.
- To this end unacceptable behaviour is dealt with promptly, fairly and respectfully so that we are all able to move on and focus on learning and building positive relationships.

Where possible, our Rules apply equally to all members of the TC Community
- Throughout our lives, we are all subject to rules and are required to conform to certain basic standards of behaviour. We have worked with students and staff to develop a set of common rules that guide all members of the TC Community. We are happy to debate and examine these rules with students and staff and look at why they need to be in place, but we do require all staff and students to abide by them both in word and spirit until such times as they are amended.

Students who disrupt the learning environment or who are not productive are required to leave the class
- The quality of the learning environment is vitally important for students to achieve their potential, and it is unfair if the behaviour of one student negatively impacts on another. @TC we have the two minute rule where any student who disrupts the learning environment or interferes with the learning of others for more than two minutes is asked by the teacher to leave the class and report to the Resource Centre. Ongoing patterns of behaviour or incidents of a more significant nature will be addressed with the student and parents.

Our students help run the school
- The school Leadership Group incorporates eight student positions as full voting members. This is the group that makes all significant decisions on the operation of the school and makes recommendations to College Council on Policy and Strategic directions. There are also three positions for students on College Council. These are usually held by the School Captains and Student Representative Council President.

We are inclusive of individual difference and celebrate diversity
- We insist on a learning environment that is free of harassment, disruptive behaviour and intolerance. The school is a member of the Safe Schools Coalition and is fully supportive of sexual and gender diversity.
- We have a very diverse and multicultural community that operates extremely well.
Our Vision 2014-17

To be a supportive community, empowering students to manage their individualised learning and turn ideas into reality.

Our new vision encapsulates the key philosophical differences of a TC education, compared to schools that operate on a traditional basis. TC is not a school where education is done ‘to’ students, but rather where they have the opportunity, in consultation with their parents, to genuinely drive their own learning. Neither is it a laissez-faire, unstructured model of education where students do as they please, with no accountability measures. Rather we seek to allow the learner to take increasing responsibility for their own educational decisions and directions as they grow in age and maturity. @TC we acknowledge that each person is an individual, with a unique set of relative strengths and weaknesses, interests, ambitions and passions.

@TC Students drive their own learning!

It is a core belief @TC that, given the right information and guidance, students are capable of making good decisions in their own best interests. All of us must eventually stand on our own two feet and take responsibility for our personal development if we are to live satisfying lives. Why not begin this process in early secondary school, where the consequences of mistakes through poor choices are not as grievous, where students can be more closely supported and they are more open to adult guidance, albeit sometimes not from their parents?

Students who are skilled in taking ownership of their learning in secondary school will be more resilient as they face the new tertiary education demands. The attrition rate of first year university students due to their inability to adjust to their new educational independence is well known. This is not a scenario we want for TC students.

Learning should be a challenging and enjoyable experience and it is obvious that we feel more comfortable and committed when we are in control of our circumstances. This is true whether we are students, staff or parents. By giving students greater control over their learning, it means that staff and parents must in turn relinquish some control that exists under an adult controlled educational model.

This can be uncomfortable as we see students occasionally make choices that we might not have otherwise made for them. This is however the cost of raising confident, independent, free thinking, creative young adults who will enter the next stage of their life’s journey confident, prepared and experienced at making good decisions and with a skill set which will allow them to thrive independently in a rapidly changing world.

Educational Philosophy @ TC

A philosophy is a comprehensive system of ideas about human nature, values and the nature of the world we live in. We have developed the TC philosophy in consultation with students, parents, staff and College Council, so that we have an agreed statement of belief that current and prospective members of the TC community can refer to.

@TC we believe...

• Learning is a personal, exciting, lifelong journey where our challenge is to discover and pursue our passions, preferably which contribute to the greater good.
• We each have our own strengths and talents and work best when we are able to follow and explore our passions and interests.
• TC will remain a school small in number but with a global focus, where students have adults and peers who know and care for them, accept them for who they are, support them in their learning and help them to create their own future.
• All people should be treated equally regardless of the position they hold and are entitled to be treated with respect and shown trust, which will grow or diminish based on our actions. We call this our One-person Policy.
• Parents and carers can be a young person’s greatest supporters and we want and value their contribution. Staff and parents/carers need to ensure that they allow students the room to grow and develop their independence.
• Community is important and we all have an individual and collective responsibility to make it work.
• Innovative education should be developed around evidence-based research and high quality student learning data. Every student will benefit from having a detailed individual learning plan.
• With support and accurate information, students are capable of making appropriate decisions in their own best interests. Allowing them to do so empowers and engages them.
• Youth is no barrier to brilliant ideas. Students can contribute significantly to the decision-making process and operation of their school, as well as to the wider community.
• Ensuring a positive learning environment is essential for students to reach their potential.
• Our student empowerment model works best when students are self-motivated, naturally curious and responsible and have already developed a degree of independence.
How Change Happens: The Story So Far...

The Principal, Peter Hutton, was appointed at the start of Term 4, 2009 with a mandate from the College Council, staff and the wider community to ‘turn the school around’. Enrolments had been declining for nine years, from a height of just over 1000, to just over 400; the reputation of the school was not a particularly positive one; and the curriculum was not very inspiring. We still have to deal with occasional rumours of the past, but usually from people who do not know things have changed at TC!

After individually interviewing all staff members, speaking to College Council, students, parents and members of the local community, the first step was obvious. We as a community needed to ‘red line the past’, and not look back. This is not to say that what had gone before was bad or wrong; indeed there have been many brilliant moments in TC’s history. But trying to forever recapture the school’s glory days was holding us back. That is why you will not currently find much of the school’s history on its site. However if you happen to be a past student, parent or staff member we still want to stay in contact and support you, so please get in touch.

We quickly adopted a new school vision “to be a dynamic and caring learning community, recognised for future focused personalised learning” and we were determined to achieve it.

In 2010 we started the year with just 29 Year 7 students. These families were excited by the vision of what TC could become. Working to an incredibly tight time frame, staff introduced the new student-directed vertical electives, the one-to-one Netbook program, the three year VCE and VCAL program, a six House pastoral care system and all students selected their own Learning Mentor for the first time. This year level has now grown into a group of over 70 determined and focused students who commenced their three-year VCE/VCAL studies in 2013.

By 2011, the Year 7 enrolment had grown to 65, with students and families keen to take up the personalised learning options available @TC. For the first time, Year 7s were placed in classes that matched their preferred learning style, comprising direct instruction, collaborative learning and independent accelerated learning. As students’ confidence grew, so did their desire to show their talents. The year saw our lunchtime music concerts grow in number and quality, we participated in the Rock Eisteddfod, held another successful Art Show, and students conducted Student-Led Presentations showcasing their work to their parents and guardians for the first time.

In 2013, we reached our target and welcomed 100 new Year 7 students and their families to TC and, together with a small number of enrolments to fill positions in our Year 8 and 9 classes, we were now full in the junior part of the school, with waiting lists in place and a total enrolment of just over 450 students. This was also a year of having to cope with building works as we received much needed funding of $5M resulting in significant renovations to the Resource Centre, Art and Science areas.

2014 saw our population reach 525 students, the introduction of the Elite Sports Development Program (ESDP) in Basketball and Squash, the start of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program to replace our aging Netbooks, the rapid expansion of the Working with Animals program and the construction of the Performing Arts Centre. In classes Learning Bites really started to take hold, ‘flip learning’ was implemented across the school and the Flexible Learning Environment was started where students from any year level can select units from an expanded range of PreVCE and VCE subjects.

With a majority of programs now in place and the school’s future survival assured, TC welcomed 85 Year 7 students in 2012, along with 65 new enrolments in Years 8 to 12. This year also saw the introduction of our first Erdkinder/ Montessori stream, catering for students from a primary Montessori school background. The quality of our Music, Art, Design and Technology and Rock Eisteddfod performances continued to improve and Drama classes were added for the first time.

Staff spent a lot of the year planning for the introduction of Learning Bites, a revolutionary Year 7-9 curriculum project, that was phased in throughout 2013. The latter half of the year saw the development of our new TC Vision for 2014-17 “to be a supportive community empowering students to manage their individualised learning and turn ideas into reality.”

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There is certainly a buzz around the school and the many innovations already implemented give an indication of our commitment to the challenge of becoming a school of international reputation for innovative and progressive education.
Student Leadership @TC

Lead by Example

It seems strange that a student can be a capable House Captain or School Captain at their primary school, yet once they reach secondary school these leadership skills are often allowed to remain dormant for six years until the student reaches Year 12. At TC we recognise our school leaders at all year levels and appoint school leaders with whole school responsibilities from Year 7 to 12. These students support new students within their year level to fit into school life, but also assist in maintaining a safe, harmonious and productive working environment inside and outside the classroom.

Student leadership is a key element in continuing to develop a culture of student empowerment at Templestowe College. The staff, students and school community attach great importance to the role of its Student Leaders. They will not only represent the College on a number of public occasions, but will also act as an important link between staff and students, exercising skills in both care for others and supervision.

School Captains
Each year the College appoints one school captain from each of the six houses (male and female) from the senior school to represent TC. These young adults display outstanding leadership. They work closely with their other house leaders to build house spirit and in the organisation of academic and sporting activities.

School Leaders
At Templestowe College we also have a group of School Leaders who assist with the organisation of various school functions as well as setting an exemplary personal example in all aspects of College life.

Student Representative Council (SRC)
Students volunteer to be part of this group. The group aims to promote the views and suggestions of the students, encourage students to become actively involved in their school and interact with teachers, parents and volunteers to provide the student body with a voice on the issues that ultimately affect them. They also foster a social awareness through the support of community projects.

Some SRC activities have included 40 Hour Famine, Gala Day, Footy Day, Red Nose Day, Daffodil Day, Jeans for Genes Day and Shave for a Cure.

House Captains
House Captains (Junior and Senior) report to their Head of House. Their roles are to promote and foster House spirit and a sense of caring and belonging within the House and beyond, to act as peer leaders in getting to know all students within the House and in providing pastoral care to other students in the House, and to support the Heads of House in all functions of the leadership of the House. They also work closely with the Heads of House to organise and co-ordinate House teams for inter-House competition and participate in official College functions as directed by the Head of House.
Real Time Learning (RTL) takes the approach that, deep down, we are all curious. Through RTL, we enable students to explore and develop that curiosity. Teachers seek to engage with students’ passions and interests to best engage students.

To facilitate such engagement, students work in small groups - no larger than 12, but typically smaller. Students are allocated a whole day per week to minimise disruptions, such as bells, that sometimes interrupt students’ ‘flow’ of learning. This provides students with an opportunity to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with staff and peers and creates a sense of belonging.

These conditions provide staff and students with greater flexibility to engage in purpose-driven learning that is student focused. Students also work with a variety of facilitators (sometimes volunteers in the community) who act more as guides rather than experts.

This structure provides an opportunity for all students in Year 7 and 8 to participate in learning that sits outside the conventional and often content-driven curriculum. Where a ‘normal’ classroom approach is to be more content focused, RTL focuses on the application of learning – i.e. learning by doing. It also allows students to participate in learning that is not always on site, which is often more practical, hands-on and helps develop students’ ‘soft skills’.

The Program Structure
RTL is a two-year ‘prototype’ that started at this school at the beginning of 2014. All Year 7 and 8 students now work together for a full day per week on RTL – with different groups on different days (except Monday). The mix of ages complements the learning experience.

Students’ work is very diverse and will typically involve working in small teams of about three or four students. It must be flexible like this because the approach is far from ‘one size fits all’.

Students engage with tasks that provide them with a sense of purpose. Remember, these students are 12, 13 and 14 years of age. They seek for ways to make a contribution to the community. They do this in various ways; here are some examples:

- Some students seek opportunities to volunteer in kindergartens and primary schools. Much evidence supports the value of students teaching other students. But our students don’t stop at teaching students; they also teach older adults in the community how to use iPads. To do this, RTL partnered with Senior Techies, a program run by Merv Stewart who is now an ambassador for the Westpac Bicentennial Foundation: https://info.westpac.com.au/200years/
- Forty students at Year 7 and 8 gained food handling certificates and then some put these skills to use when volunteering in the local Neighbourhood House Village Café.
- Students have been capturing events taking place in and out of school through learning the art of making documentaries.
- Students have been working on a property off-site that provides students with a hands-on learning application to ‘environmental science’.
- Students put together a piece on Body Image that was facilitated by a youth worker on placement. The students put on a half hour presentation of how the media has influenced Body Image over the last 10 decades.
- The latest project is a Reconciliation Garden that will act as an outdoor classroom. Students with blood links to Indigenous tribes have
researched the types of plants that should be a part of this garden and have made a presentation to the principal outlining the requirements for their planned outdoor classroom. They have made contact with local Indigenous people to support the authenticity of their work.

Much of this material and evidence of what the students have achieved can be viewed on our website: https://mtelizarealtime.wordpress.com/projects/

**Student Autonomy and Agency**

In RTL, students make many more decisions about the learning they participate in. Their learning is very much what they want to make of it. Students are far more accountable for their learning when it is they who are in control and not the teacher or parent. Research makes the point that students will be more intrinsically motivated when they are provided with choice.

As these students engage in the doing, they can’t help but ‘dive deeper’ and, in the process, experience continued ‘flow’ of learning. It is not unusual for students to want to work through lunch if in the middle of a task. We see students voluntarily take on work to do at home because it matters to them. Having a whole day is important because it provides students with the opportunity to create work they feel proud of. The space acknowledges the time to produce quality work that may be harder to achieve in single or even double periods.

**My Journey**

I found, as a PE/Outdoor Education teacher, it was far easier to connect with students than when teaching them Mathematics. Though I was equally passionate about teaching Mathematics (and have attended conferences overseas on using technology to better engage students in Mathematics), it was difficult to connect the ‘real’ in Mathematics.

I feel having taught PE complemented my teaching of Mathematics because I understood the importance of connecting with the student. I feel very privileged to still play a role in speaking at more events that focus on engagement for students in Mathematics (see: http://ow.ly/L0J5).

Deep down though, to help students connect with passion and interest is for me the greatest privilege. To see students lose themselves in ‘flow’ provides me with the greatest satisfaction.

The reality is that, in my role, I help provide the opportunities, but it is the RTL team that makes those real connections with our students. They are amazing in the way they connect with students on such a deep level and the evidence is just so obvious.

This journey requires all staff to embark on a journey of ‘change’ for themselves. In the passing of Malcolm Fraser I learnt that he had been misquoted. In full context he said: ‘Life’s not meant to be easy, my child; but take courage; it can be delightful’. How true this statement is and inspiring. Personalising learning for students can be demanding, but it is mighty rewarding.

**Changing Roles for Teachers**

Whilst I am not directly teaching students in RTL, I can comment on what it looks like for teachers and students. Students use first names as we don’t want to create an artificial barrier.

Students and teachers collaborate and share experiences; sometimes students and teachers are moved to tears. We should expect emotion when we are building emotional intelligence. I see students walking away not always being able to define what they learnt, but recognising that something very important was learnt.

All of our RTL teachers understand the importance of purpose-driven learning on this day. For example, next term, our students will apply for real ‘jobs’ – ones they will be shortlisted for, interviewed for and then serve as volunteers if successful. Some will not be successful and they will learn how to move forward from this experience. Making mistakes and failure is not seen as bad but normal.

Providing students with ownership/autonomy requires teachers to let go and move from the front of the class to a position more side on. The teacher plays more of the role of a facilitator than expert. The learning evolves and, for some, this can be unnerving. Recruitment for this kind of work is not straightforward. As with industry, it becomes increasingly more difficult to make decisions on staffing in the context of a half hour interview.

We need to provide schools with a more flexible approach, similar to approaches being adopted in industry; for example, multiple opportunities to meet, even work within the program to make sure employee and school are a good fit for one another.

Most of our staff have worked in industry as well as being qualified teachers. This seems to work well as the nature of the work is providing students with very diverse opportunities. They all need to have a developed sense of networking to make links with the wider community themselves. That said they need to also know how to best prepare these students for these diverse learning opportunities.
The Importance of RTL

In 2013, Science Daily reported that 90% of the world’s data was generated over the last two years. What does this say about the shelf life of educational resources? The world has rapidly changed and the accessibility of knowledge means less focus is needed on the retention of such content. More time can be devoted to how students process knowledge. This opportunity to provide students with more meaningful learning means more personalised learning. For example what we know about nutrition has radically changed and the research is readily available to those who might be interested. Once upon a time we had to cram knowledge in whilst we were at school. Now we can learn when we want to be interested. Once upon a time we had to cram knowledge in whilst we were at school. Now we can learn when we want to learn through leveraging the digital. This is a creative licence to redefine/transform the way we educate this next generation. What an awesome challenge ahead! A revolution in education has been long overdue.

In Australia, corporate giants such as KMPG and PricewaterhouseCoopers told the Sunday Age that “soft skills were now valued more than technical ability”. (Sunday Age, 15th March) In this article, Ferrier believes “that soft skills are the new hard skills”. Because the internet provides a great storehouse of easily accessible knowledge:

“having big parts of your brain storing technical stuff is going to be less valuable in the world of the future,” she says. “How you collaborate, solve problems creatively and authentically lead people will matter more.”

Only last month the OECD released a report: “Skills for Social Progress - The power of social and emotional skills”. In the executive summary, it points out policy makers, including Ministers, unanimously agreed on the need to develop a ‘whole child’ with a balanced set of cognitive, social, and emotional skills so that they can better face the challenges of the 21st Century.

The OECD report noted:

“Among adolescents, mentoring appears to be particularly important, while hands on workplace experiences can instill skills like team work, self-efficacy and motivation. Improvements in learning contexts and practices do not necessarily require major reforms or resources. Rather, they can be incorporated into ongoing curricular and extracurricular activities.”

They also add that the earlier the intervention the better. We choose to work with Year 7 and 8 students, focusing on prevention, rather than looking to employ programs for students who typically disengage around Year 8 and 9. This is strongly

As Principal of the school chosen to develop the pilot of RTL, it is my view that the implementation of the program is a good representation of the program itself for the following reasons:

- We started with a passionate belief that something better was needed in secondary education;
- We worked collaboratively with a group of like minded people to research options for learning that started with engagement;
- Together we developed a plan for our work;
- Together we put that plan in place, learning, reflecting and developing as we went;
- Our work is making a difference.

This is exactly the opportunity the program offers students: they identify their passion, work with others with high levels of engagement, plan to action their beliefs and then develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the process. As a result the outcome of their work makes a real difference.

Angela Pollard
Principal, Mount Eliza Secondary College

Dorothy, 84 years, said: “I feel so empowered after spending this morning with my student helper; he was so patient and respectful.”

Intergenerational learning at its very best! Senior Techies are very proud of the positive and committed impact the RTL students have made to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst seniors on the Mornington Peninsula.

Merv Stewart, Senior Techies

The MESC students have assisted at Environment Week for the past two years. They have been invaluable for presenters to assist with engaging primary school and kindergarten students in the various environmental activities. The Bunnings and Sustainable Gardening planting and Soils Alive activities have been especially enthusiastic about your students’ rapport with students and their ability to instruct the children.

Heather Tytler
Executive Officer
Mornington Peninsula Schools Environment Week

I continue to be amazed at the innovative work you Merv, Daniel and all your team members are doing.

In my short exposure to RTL and ST through learning about GarageBand on the iPad from Tom, then visiting the Apple Genius Bar Workshop with your College students, the opportunities continue to grow. Adding the Wooden Surfboards project has included more members of the Mornington Men’s Shed and linked us with additional enthusiastic, environmental contributors at Tree to Sea as we develop the plan to help students build their own surfboards and also donate some.

As I reflect, it’s lifted my enthusiasm, and self esteem in feeling a valued contributor in the real world – and most of all, it’s fun.

Barry Fredrickson
Mornington Mens Shed
supported by the report, which states:

“Social and emotional skills are relatively more malleable between early childhood and adolescence. Early investment in social and emotional skills is particularly important since these skills develop progressively building on past investments made on these skills. Moreover, those with higher levels of social and emotional skills (eg self-confidence and perseverance) are likely to benefit more from further investment in cognitive skills (eg Maths and Science classes). Hence, small ability gaps early in life can lead to significant gaps over the life cycle, and these gaps may contribute to worsening economic and social disparities.”

We often see a widening of the gap in Maths when students are not provided with any form of intervention. So RTL is a program that supports all parts of the curriculum. Whilst not so obvious in content, the value of developing general capabilities cannot be underestimated.

Outcomes to Date

Students look forward to this day. Those who have moved into Year 9 have told me how much they miss the day.

We are seeing students develop better connectedness through building stronger relationships with staff and peers. Students expect their learning to be purpose driven.

MESC is much more visible to the wider community. We see that we will continue to grow more partnerships, which in turn open more doors to opportunity. The community has wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to play their role in a variety of ways. They teach our students voluntarily, sit on interview panels, assist with making craft and food and much more. The community provides the school with glowing reports of how students are making a difference in the community. They post feedback on Facebook. For example, a Year 9 student, as a senior techie, was able to fix a connectivity issue in a class for seniors that instructors were struggling to address. This plays a huge role in raising levels of self-esteem.

I can think of many students who have relayed the significance of RTL in a short space of time. Most parents are thrilled that their children are provided with such rich opportunities. The students see RTL as a land of opportunity; the opportunity to engage in tasks and projects that matter to them. They realise that even in Year 7 and 8 they can make their mark, contribute and make a difference. I could not be happier when I hear students and teachers talk about the immense opportunities. It really is limitless what can be achieved.

As I write this article, I have just got back from a field trip to Apple – Southland. Our students weren’t learning about a particular product. They were learning how to better teach seniors. They asked such good questions and we all - including me - went away feeling like we learnt a great deal. We have a lot of fun in Real Time Learning and this is mostly what the students will tell you.

RTL also enables students to clarify longer-term career possibilities. The Year 9 senior techie is convinced he knows what he wants to do already. He wants to take on an internship with a software engineer. He misses RTL but we will try to help facilitate this student’s journey.

Another student who went on live radio at Year 8 decided he wanted to follow journalism as career. He may not in fact carry this through but for now he feels more motivated in English.

Another student helped out at a kindergarten and realised she may want to work with children. She feels more motivated in class, having received much praise from the parents of the children in these placements.

But there are also impacts and outcomes in other areas. Again to quote from the executive summary of the OECD report:

“Raising levels of social and emotional skills – such as perseverance, self-esteem and sociability – can in turn have a particularly strong effect on improving health-related and subjective well-being, as well as reducing anti-social behaviours.”

We have become aware of intervention pilots about to be implemented across the Mornington Peninsula because of unacceptable levels of depression in adolescents. We would like to think our program can alleviate some of these depressive symptoms. We are currently investigating the possibility of implementing mindfulness programs that give our young people techniques to better cope with stress and anxiety.

Challenges

Redefining the way we educate in the future challenges a system that supports the notion of a fixed mindset. Traditional learning has not accommodated the model of a growth mindset. The challenge for all schools is letting go of the control they have traditionally held on to so tightly. I encourage you to take a look at the Ted Ex embedded in this link: http://ow.ly/L0lY9

The other factor is cost. Schools will need to be creative and refocus expenditure. To provide students with smaller teaching ratios, programs need to look at how they might attract local funding. Our vision is to provide initial seed funding with the help of corporates and philanthropics to help schools get started. Schools will need to employ a community liaison person, who plays a similar role to me, to attract community...
partners. Not only will this person provide staff in the program with opportunities for students, they will generate revenue for the school.

Future Developments
We are not a perfect model - far from it - and we never expect to arrive at one. We will go on ‘tweaking’ RTL because – when do we ever consider a model to be perfect? We will continue to strive to improve our model.

We have to think on two levels. The local level is about MESC, but our vision is to scale up and therefore we think about what it takes to go national. We will continue to work on the model at MESC whilst strategically building a model that can go to scale.

We welcome visits from interested schools wanting to join us in our quest to redefine the way we educate our students in the 21st Century.

We are working with an AITSL Innovation Hub called Learning Frontiers. We have identified some commonality around:

- student agency
- leveraging the digital
- students teaching others
- entrepreneurial and maker skills
- working with like schools and partnering
- skills for life

We are in the process of developing videos to showcase some of the work in different schools as they all take on different expressions. Stay tuned, as I will ensure links are posted on our website.

https://mtelizarealtime.wordpress.com

Finally, some projects I want to see in the future include:

- an onsite internet café open to the public.
- students making documentaries that are of the highest quality
- students making apps and leading innovation

However, it is the students who will determine what projects are developed as they purposefully pursue their passions.

I want our students to be recognised as Students with Purpose.

Luke Kerr
Real Time Learning
Mount Eliza Secondary College
lkerr@mesc.vic.edu.au
Cooks Hill Campus, an annexe of Newcastle High School, opened at the start of 2014. This NSW public school campus was the first site in NSW to be established wholly on the Big Picture Education Australia model. In 2015, Big Picture Education is celebrating 10 years of operation in Australia.

Our campus in Newcastle CBD has this year expanded to 136 students ranging from Year 9 to 11. We are a public school that is committed to delivering a different style of learning, in a small school setting. The Cooks Hill Campus curriculum is based on self-directed, project-based learning. The campus environment fosters adult learning opportunities.

The Big Picture model encourages all students to explore their unique interests, passions and abilities and be active in designing their own individual learning plans based around developing those areas.

Each student’s style of learning is unique, so each student (with their advisor and parents) develops a learning plan that explores their interests and passions, identifies personal learning goals as well as curriculum requirements. The project-based learning model of education is embedded in each curriculum area, as well as students having the opportunity to complete PIPs: personal interest projects that “are our own interests that we research and create a whole project around.” (Cheyenne, Year 10 student)

Learning looks different at Cooks Hill Campus, as students meet with their advisors at the start of each day and, with their planner, note the tasks they need to concentrate on for the day.

“It's different here because you plan out your own day and you're not given a timetable to go off; you have your own time to do things even though they have due dates. You don't have to do certain things at certain times,” said Cheyenne, a Year 10 student with a wide variety of interests and passions.

One student at a time, in a community of learners

At the moment, Cheyenne’s Internship placement is with an automotive business, as she is exploring her interest in mechanics. When asked what she has found to be the best part of the flexible learning delivery, she said: “My best part of the learning here is – if you feel the need you can have some down time and still get work done eg reading.”

Instead of exams, students showcase their learning at the end of each term through presenting an exhibition of their work to their fellow peers, advisor, mentors, parents and other invited guests of the student.

Learning Through Internships

The idea of Leaving to Learn is far more than a work experience program. At Big Picture we believe that learning can happen anywhere, not just inside classroom walls.

In a Big Picture internship, students spend a day a week within a community organisation or business of their choosing to become an active member of their team. Internships usually run over the school term or longer, which allows students to experience more aspects of their work and make strong connections with an adult with similar interests, called a mentor.

“Through the Internship opportunities to work in an interest once a week, I have discovered what I really want to do,” said Georgia, a Year 11 student with an interest in childcare and dance. “I am now teaching dance at a Primary School for an LTI (Learning Through Internship) and love every second of it! Without CHC I couldn't have done this!”

Under the direction of a mentor, students produce meaningful work at their placements in the form of a project. Students and their mentor within the organisation design a project around their passion, one which will give the student skills and also contribute something
During each Internship placement, students become more aware of the requirements of the world of work, as they are exposed to the discipline of learning new skills in a real-world environment. This, in turn, gives a real sense of purpose to their school work – to be able to make the connection between their learning and future pathways. I have received such positive feedback from mentors who experience teaching their craft to a young person with shared enthusiasm.

We are an open and welcoming school and invite any interested community members to get involved in our school.

Amanda Hine
LTI Coordinator
www.cookshill-s.schools.nsw.edu.au
Amanda.Hine3@det.nsw.edu.au

More of what the students have to say...

“You are in charge of your own learning.”

“Instead of going to classes every lesson, I can work alone and concentrate.”

“I can work now, instead of teachers forcing me to do the work.”

“CHC helps achieve my goals because I never knew what I wanted to do work-wise, but CHC allows me to try out different career paths through Internship.”

“CHC helps provide better learning through learning about our own interest.”

“CHC is allowing me to do my Certificate 3 in Child Care; I can study Year 11 at the same time.”

“You have your own personal space; you can decorate your own area and you don’t move around classes which is good, because being in the same class all the time gives you the time to get to know the students you’re in a class with and the teacher (or advisor) personally.”

“I have been given opportunities like Internship and Personal Interest Projects to research and try out what I like.”

“I like knowing that, during school, I can explore interests that I haven’t found yet.”
The Power of Passion

It’s the school holidays and we have spent the day working as a team to complete the last Passion Project – the boys’ graffiti wall looks amazing. Endless hours of research, planning, consultation, collaboration and negotiation have underpinned this project. It is such a powerful experience to watch the boys talk and reflect upon their journey, and how the power of their passion for graffiti has reinvigorated their passion for learning.

The same scenarios have been played out across the school throughout the year, with each passion team producing their own product: a satirical movie on the budget, aptly named ‘Down the Abbott Hole’ (http://ow.ly/L7hpI); a fundraising project for the Exodus Foundation, supported by the Sydney Kings; a volunteering project; a retro Raspberry Pi arcade game machine; and a school rugby jersey that reflects our students cultural heritage – to name a few.

As a teacher it’s these moments that allow you to reflect upon your passion for teaching and learning and how powerful it can be.

Ashfield Boys High School is located in Sydney’s inner west. 73% of our student population come from a non-English speaking background. Students are supported to become independent learners who integrate knowledge from different areas and apply this to real life situations. The aim of this approach is to support the academic, social and ethical development of young men, so that they have the skills to thrive in the 21st Century.

As a Deputy Principal new to the school, most breaks were spent in the playground talking with students about their learning. There was a clear message from Year 9 students: they missed the team structure, and that sense of belonging.

As one student said: “But Miss, why can’t I learn about something that I am interested in?” That was one of the most difficult questions I’ve had to answer on playground duty. It is always easy to build a list of negatives and roadblocks that get in the way of doing something different. The conversations in the playground slowly changed to: “Given the opportunity, what would you choose to learn about?” Most Stage 5 students were able to answer that question in a flash. Of course they wanted to learn about something that they were passionate about.

Co-Creation: How to make it happen - Our Model?

Structure

One day per week was allocated for students to work in their passion teams. The Passion Project days rotated through the weekly timetable, with the exception of Wednesday (grade sport), to ensure equity amongst the faculties. Passion teams and their teachers (enablers) met at the beginning of each day in the hall where they were given some project management timelines and guides before break-out sessions.

Student Voice

“Why can’t I learn about something I am interested in?” That was one of the most difficult questions I’ve had to answer on playground duty. It is always easy to build a list of negatives and roadblocks that get in the way of doing something different. The conversations in the playground slowly changed to: “Given the opportunity, what would you choose to learn about?” Most Stage 5 students were able to answer that question in a flash. Of course they wanted to learn about something that they were passionate about.
The entire Year 9 cohort was involved in this project. Classes were collapsed, and cover for the Passion enablers was provided by the Year 9 teachers. This also freed up learning spaces for the teams to work.

Understandably, some staff enablers did not want to miss teaching their Year 12 classes. This created an opportunity for us to buddy up enablers as required. This was a positive, as it resulted in a greater number of staff being involved in the project and allowed staff to collaborate and share their ideas.

**Budget**

The Passion Projects were allocated a budget of approximately $4,000. Some of these funds were allocated against casual relief (if required) and the remainder to fund consumables that the Passion teams may require, such as software, Apps, costumes, printing and so forth. Ultimately each project had a budget of $80, however very few teams actually needed to use their budget.

Whilst it was timely that the school had just received 60 new iPads, these were not purchased for this project.

**Staff**

Getting the staff on board to try something different can be tricky. The idea of the Passion Projects was presented to the Executive with the data on disengagement. Surprisingly, the idea didn’t require the hard sell. Our Executive were willing to take a risk and try something new.

Hooray! So with that box ticked, it was time to convince the staff. A short presentation at a school development day of my example of a Passion Project and the ensuing discussion delivered another positive. An Expression of Interest was advertised for staff to join the Passion Project Team. I was overwhelmed by the response from staff and unfortunately could not use everyone who applied for this initial project.

Staff from a variety of KLAS were selected and we tried to include staff with a wide variety of skill sets and experiences. The key was to select staff who were willing to take risks, learn something new, step and think outside of both their box and comfort zone – staff who were able to easily form and value relationships with students and able to step back from being the teacher and take on the role of the enabler.

The Passion Project team worked incredibly hard. One morning per week they attended professional learning sessions on technology, had meetings at lunchtimes and gave up many of their preparation hours to take their groups.

**Professional Learning**

Due to the nature of the ‘teams’ in Stage 4, numerous staff have been involved in cross-curricular team projects and variations of Project Based Learning over the years. Passion enablers received some Professional Learning around Project Based Learning and driving questions based on the work by David Price.

Staff also received ongoing Professional Learning around the use of iPads. One morning per week, the team and anyone else who was interested, would meet before school and work on a new App or technique. This Professional Learning was delivered by Education Advantage (as part of the purchase of the iPads), myself or another staff member.

Passion enablers also met on a regular basis before and during the project to share ideas, seek advice from others, on ways to assist their groups. These meetings were ‘just in time’ professional learning and gave enablers the opportunity to collaborate on issues, seek advice and at times share their stress.

**Technology: a steep learning curve**

Until 2014, Ashfield Boys High had always been a PC based school. There was some discussion about purchasing some iPads in 2013 but it just did not happen until 2014. Sam, our Technical Support Officer, had never worked with Apple devices and thus it was a steep learning curve. He became an instant expert on volume purchasing, recharging stations, deployment of Apps and so on. Decisions had to be made around the base set of Apps that groups would need or access. These decisions were made after mapping out the skill sets in the curriculum that we wanted to address.

Some Passion teams brought their own mobile devices and laptops and used their phones as well as the iPads. Others used the school’s bank of laptops and accessed some new Macs within the school. Passion teams were also able to request an ‘App’ or program if required as part of their budget. The iPads were divided evenly amongst the Passion teams. It was the students’ responsibility to pick up their iPads and return them at the end of the day.

There was no intention of restricting the students to any particular device, App or program, however we needed to give the Passion teams some direction.

Since this is a ‘practical guide’, here is the list of Apps that we initially selected for the project:

- Keynote
- Prezi
- Popplet lite
- Dropbox
- Inspiration Maps
- Trello
- Survey Me
- iMovie
- Telligami
- Show Me
- Explain Everything
- E journal

**Skillsets and Curriculum**

The Passion Project team had to decide what curriculum and skills sets we wanted to address. We decided to focus on the following 21st Century skills: collaboration, communication, creativity, organisational, time management, critical thinking/problem solving, technology skills, research skills, literacy and numeracy skills.

As part of the student Passion team presentations, they would need to map out these skills and show where each curriculum area was included in their work.

Passion teams did receive a loose scaffold on which to base their work. On each Passion Project day we would meet as a cohort and provide direction and communicate housekeeping issues. For example:

**Week 1**

- Meeting your team, discussion of a possible project, mind mapping ideas – email it to enabler.
- Set up a Gmail account
- Set up Dropbox – Invite your team and enabler to join

**Passion Teams were required to:**

- Brainstorm
- Mind map
- Research
• Set up: Gmail and Dropbox accounts to save and move their files
• Create Trello accounts for project management and team responsibilities

Teams were required to keep an e-journal of their weekly work, produce a project outline and a fully costed resource list. Every team had to consult with either a community organisation or an expert as part of their criteria.

Passion teams obviously had to devise and answer their driving question, map their learning against their curriculum and then complete a 5-10 minute presentation in which all members of the team must speak.

Passion teams decided on what their answer to the driving question would look like. It could be a tangible product, a movie, a model etc. Initially, some Passion teams struggled with this concept of free choice for their end product or presentation.

Selling it to the kids
The whole cohort and enablers were present for the quick launch. The presentation was around Student Voice and how students kept saying they wanted to learn about something they were passionate about. The message was: “We were listening” and now they were going to get the opportunity to take ownership of their learning.

Initial feedback from students was excitement, with some degree of suspicion. I suppose that, when you have been told what you are going to learn for 10 years, it’s strange when you are given the opportunity to have a voice.

Later in that week, I presented to the students my example of a Passion Project. I had selected one of my passions and put together a presentation that incorporated all the elements we were hoping to see in their projects. A timeline was communicated to the students and the idea that they had the responsibility for making this project work.

Passion Teams - Logistics
Students were given a week to decide what passion they would like to study and find others who were also passionate about the same topic. Lists were collected and a few refinements put into place. For example, a group of two students who were passionate about soccer became a group of four students and so on.

Logistically the team formation was easy, however there will always be students who don’t fit for a variety of reasons. We allowed one of these students to work alone and the others who could not find a passion were assisted with a topic! Not perfect, but every student needs to be involved. Group sizes varied from one to eight but the average size was four students.

Passion teams were then matched up to their enablers. We attempted to match up teams that were passionate about sport with a staff enabler who loved sport and so forth. Balancing the numbers and personalities in each staff enablers group was, at times, difficult.

With the passion teams lists published and the inevitable moaning completed, we were good to go!

The Coordinator’s weekly routine - coffee required
As the Coordinator, I was responsible for daily housekeeping such as covering classes and the room changes and attendance rolls. I was responsible for creating a short presentation for the beginning of every Passion session outlining weekly requirements, timelines, technology as needed.

Coordinating the budget and resourcing of items required by the Passion teams was a time consuming job. All Passion team budgets and resourcing requests came to me via the team enabler. Equipped with an Australian Post Pre-paid VISA, I quickly became an expert eBay and Amazon customer.

Throughout the week, Passion teams would drop in and pick up their bounty. This provided the perfect opportunity to have informal conversations about how they were enjoying having ownership of their learning.

I would organise any ongoing Technology Professional Learning session for the enablers and produce technology guides, which were all accessed via our shared Dropbox folder.

During Passion days I would meet with every Passion team and observe the teams in action. This gave the teams an opportunity to show off their work, get feedback, ask questions and discuss timelines. This support was crucial for all the stakeholders, particularly the enablers.

One of the Projects’ criteria was to involve either the community or a community expert. This meant that, at times, Passion teams were off-site
visiting these external organisations or that external organisations – such as the Sydney Kings – would come to us. Some skyped experts or organisations and others, such as the ‘Down the Abbott Hole’ team, sourced their data on government budget cuts and the impact they were having by interviewing community members at the local shopping mall. This required permission notes, risk assessments and so forth; these were organised by their enabler and I would step into their role and assist the other teams under their supervision if they were off site.

At times, Passion teams required some specialist staff eg Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) teacher to assist them with their task. Passion teams were responsible for negotiating this organisation and I would assist when required by taking a class or employing some casual relief from the budget.

It was important to keep the whole school staff and students informed of the project organisation. Effective consultation and communication allowed us to minimise issues. This communication was essential when we found that Passion teams required more time than we had anticipated, thus we needed to allocate an additional day per week. The school Executive and staff were supportive of these changes.

The Presentations

Passion teams received a scaffold about what needed to be included in their presentations ie topic, driving question, mind mapping, team roles and responsibilities, community links / expert, technology used, resources, mapping their learning against the curriculum and so on. They also received some training on how to create an interesting presentation.

Whilst some Passion Teams’ presentations were all electronic, others produced tangible items such as models, books and clothing items in addition to their electronic presentation.

Due to the fact that our school has a significant percentage of LBOTE students, it was important that the students felt as confident as possible with their role as presenters. Enablers dedicated considerable time to making their Passion teams refine and rehearse their presentations.

Feedback and Evaluation – What we will do differently

The overall timeline for the Projects was very tight and this resulted in two Passion Teams not completing their project in the required timeframe. In saying that, both the teams did eventually complete their projects.

Feedback from both staff and students indicated that whole-day sessions for some groups were too long. Some Passion Teams were off task after lunch and thus the quality of that time was negligible.

This year we are planning to allocate half day sessions for the Passion Teams. The sessions will run across the weekly timetable for equity and will alternate between morning and afternoon sessions for eight weeks, with the possibility of including some whole days as required.

Student feedback indicated that they enjoyed the freedom of choice, working in teams, and loved having staff work with them to bring their project to fruition. They enjoyed using the iPads and also the ability to use whatever technology device they needed.

They felt that the whole day presentations were too long and suggested that, next time, we could upload their material to Youtube so other student groups and parents could see their work. 98% of the cohort indicated that they want to do another Student Voice-driven project next year.

This year we would like to continue with peer assessment but also include some form of formal assessment that could be included in student portfolios, linking assessment to the skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking – problem solving, technology, research, literacy and numeracy. We would like to include community groups or experts in the field as part of the assessment team.

Staff and student feedback on the presentations indicated that a whole day of presenting was too long. This year we would like to have a variety of timeslots for presentations to allow students, staff, parents and community partners to participate.

Technology has progressed since last year, so we are currently working with our Technical Support to select the best Apps and software for our devices for the next projects and a coordinated approach to archiving the teams’ final work.

The Passion Projects have provided us with a timely opportunity to rethink the way we do things. Not a day passes without a student or staff member asking about the next round of Passion Projects. The current Year 9 cannot wait to have their turn and Year 10 continue to ask will they get to do it all again...

Postscript

It’s March 2015, Year 6 Open Night and the Passion Project room is filled with students who have volunteered to present and discuss their work with prospective students and parents. The room is buzzing as the boys talk about their work.

Who would have thought that the passion of Student Voice could be so powerful!

Linda Henry
Deputy Principal, Ashfield Boys High School
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Passion and Participation

McClelland College is an ordinary government secondary school (Years 7-12) in Frankston, a south-eastern suburb of Melbourne with a current enrolment of just over 900 students. The College has a rich tradition of both academic achievement and community involvement beyond the classroom – something we truly value.

At McClelland College, we encourage our students to be participatory and show ownership of their learning and career paths. The College offers multiple opportunities for students to do this. For example, students can pursue their passions in music, sport, the performing arts, productions, the visual arts, international study tours, leadership, the environment, science, competitions, State Emergency Service cadets, debating, magazine production, public speaking, additional languages, chess, camps, technology, Hands On Learning, hospitality, and fashion!

McClelland College has found that students’ passions and participation are best stimulated outside of traditional school structures. For example these opportunities are generally cross-age, involve mixed abilities, have multiple entry and exit points, take learning beyond the confines of the formal curriculum and classroom, involve collaborative student-adult relationships and merged teaching-learning relationships and value student voice. Recognition of these factors led to the launch of the McClelland Academy Program (MAP) as just one more way for students at the College to engage in their learning and to participate in their community.

The MAP is a whole-school innovation designed for students to gain authentic, hands-on experiences in their chosen area of passion. Every Wednesday at the end of period 2 (11:20 am) all classes from Years 7 to 12 cease the formal curriculum. For the rest of the day students and teachers pursue their passions with like-minded individuals from across year levels, with the aim of outworking these passions into community projects. One student explained the student-teacher dynamic in MAP:

“The teachers being involved in the MAP is good because, instead of like a teacher to student relationship … you can teach the teachers and the teachers can teach you, so pretty much everyone there’s a teacher including the students.”

(MAP interview 2014, Visual Art & Design Year 8 Male)

In multiple ways, students at McClelland College display the College values of:

• Ownership as they pursue authentic learning opportunities;
• Community as they work alongside other students and adults to contribute beyond the classroom and school; and
• Growth as they develop academic, practical and personal skills while participating in authentic roles.

McClelland College is not a school in a privileged area. It is an ordinary school. What follows are snapshots from these students about some of the ways they pursue their passions and participate in real roles of value at this school.

Amadeo Ferra
Principal, McClelland College
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Bake Off

I’ve always liked to cook and bake and being in the Bake Off MAP confirmed that I want to pursue that.

In Bake Off, the teachers really encouraged creativity and being an individual. Each semester we completed goals to say what we wanted to achieve in specific areas. We also made our own signature cakes, biscuits and slices. At the end of the year, we got the chance to make anything we wanted from all the subjects and topics and we could let our creativity flow during that.

The teachers understood that not all of us were team workers so they gave us the opportunity to work in groups that we knew and were familiar. They also encouraged us to bring in one person that we didn’t know, which created a community in the Bake Off. We also did Team Bakes where we would make two or four different dishes and each person would do a different dish.

1 http://frankstonses.yolasite.com/
2 http://handsonlearning.org.au/
Bake Off has helped me as far as teamwork and now it's become easier for me in other subjects to work with others. I'm a more independent person and being able to work with people in Bake Off — something that I enjoy and I'm passionate about — has helped me relax and be able to work more fluently and effectively with others. I've also become better at speaking in front of groups when accepting awards for my baking and also just talking in groups. Being in Bake Off has helped me in lots of ways.

It's very easy to apply Bake Off to the everyday world because obviously we cook and bake, now and as an adult. Before Bake Off MAP, I would make cakes but I never thought of it as a potential business opportunity, but now that I'm doing Bake Off, it has shown me that people do enjoy what I make and they are willing to pay and help me develop those skills. It's helped me widen my horizon and get more out of my skills and abilities. Before Bake Off I wasn't being paid for it but now I am. I give potential customers a list of what they can order and I give them a set price for what they want.

In Bake Off, we had a community event and the local primary school kids came over. We helped them decorate cupcakes for Mothers' Day. I was in charge of bringing the kids over to our school and putting them in groups. I think that helped me with younger students because I didn't think I was good with young kids before that.

My experience of the Bake Off MAP has been great; I've absolutely loved it because it allows students in all different year levels to get together and work on something they love. I was with teachers I enjoyed and I was with some of my friends and I got to know other students. They were all really respectful of each other and they encouraged each other and always helped out when they could. It was a great opportunity to develop my skills in that area and students can put down on their resumes that they've participated in community events with their MAP. The teachers in MAP get to know that students have talent in an area and they help suggest ways to develop that skill.

This year I get even more opportunities to pursue my passion at school. In my VCE Business Management subject, we get to create our own small business. My two friends who were in Bake Off, Maddi and Olivia, and I are setting up a baking stall. We're going to sell slices, cakes and biscuits. The money we raise will go to a charity so we're fundraising for Diabetes Australia. I know it sounds a bit ironic but my dad has Type 2 Diabetes, which is the insulin one, so we decided to support that for the fundraiser.

This year I am also doing a VET course, a Certificate 3 in Patisserie Operation. It's a two-year course and I spend one day a week at the local TAFE college. At the moment we're learning about commercial kitchens and then from midyear we'll be spending that day working in a commercial kitchen. This course will get me in on the ground floor of a Patisserie career and I'm hoping it will help me to get into a hospitality college to do a dual Certificate 4 with an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality.

Chelsea Jewell, Year 11

Non-Markable Art

I'm passionate about most technology stuff. Like, if you see my bedroom, all you would see is technology. I've been interested in technology ever since I could get my hands on anything that moved or had a motor in it. This school has given me lots of opportunities for fulfilling my passion. For example, for most school productions, I usually do behind the scenes stuff like the lights and sound and I help set up the mikes. I'm into all of the tech savvy stuff.

How I first got into this at the school was when I was in Year 7. The Performing Arts Co-ordinator came to the Year 7 area and asked for people who were interested in technology to do all the behind the scenes for theatre and productions. I was the only Year 7 who wanted to do it. How I learned to do it was: one of the tech guys, Simon, showed me how to rig lights and work them. And with sound, an older student taught me. And also an ex-student, Jessie, taught me to do more bits of the lighting. There are a few ex-students who like to come back and help out. Now whenever they have a production they ask if I want to help out, and pretty much 100% of the time I do it.

Another thing I did with my passion for technology was in Activities Week I held a class for people who wanted to learn tech stuff. I showed them how to rig the lights, turn them on, and about the coms (the set packs they talk into). About ten people came along, so that was good. Two guys from that class, my mate and one from Year 8, are now interested in helping out with shows. This year I've joined the Musical Theatre MAP because I want to teach people in there all the tech stuff because I'm coming up to three years of doing it now, so I can teach other people.

Last year with my tech stuff I did the Design Media Visual Art MAP. In that I started doing some photo editing with Photo Shop. Since then I've become more intrigued with outside world art. Like, what I'm looking at, at the moment, on YouTube is stuff like special effects for movie sets and theatre, like latex, prosthetics, cosmetics, and stuff like that. And last year at the Expo, I had an outside ‘post-graffiti’ installation. Mr Ryan and I put it together with his own personal rig that he brought in for us to use. How it worked: as people went into and out of the Expo they got filmed and projected on the screen. It’s called non-markable art and you just project it and at the end it doesn’t leave a mark.

Nathan Lovatt, Year 9
Visual Art Expo

When I was little I always liked drawing and painting and all that stuff, so I've always wanted to do it when I grow up. In the Visual Art MAP, I have my own choice, so if I want to do something the teachers will help me; they'll give me ideas, but they won't take that whole chance away from me. They go along with my ideas. That's what makes it different to art class where everyone is doing the same thing.

The Art MAP's given me more ideas, I swear, because when I started I thought all I wanted to do was draw. I didn't know there was a lot of stuff behind art: cultural stuff and other creative stuff. It's helped me get into art a bit more and know what's behind it.

At school, we were creating an Indigenous garden outside and I wanted to paint something for it but I had nothing in my head. Then I was sitting near the window and I saw all these trees and then I looked back in my classroom and I saw a mask, so I was like: "I should paint a mask and do a backboard and paint with indigenous colours," and then I thought: "That's really creative, I can do that and put it in the garden." I liked that it had cultural stuff about it and it would have a lot of meaning behind it.

When we had the Design Media Visual Art Expo, I got to present my indigenous painting and I was really excited because I've never actually gone in front of a lot of people with my work. I don't even really show my parents because it's usually personal. It comes from deep within, from my heart, from what I've seen around, and all these changes that have happened. But I really wanted to open up to that and share it with other people, people who came from different places. People I didn't even know got to see my work. My parents came along too and I really liked that they were supportive. They were really surprised and amazed at what I'd achieved and they were really proud. They also liked that it was cultural because we came from a different country.

You know, it's like art is how I want to say something. So if you look in a painting from artists like Van Gogh, there's something deep in that painting that represents them. And my art represents me as well, because some of the stuff from deep within me, I've got hidden in my paintings. It's how I say what I want to say without actually saying it to people. It makes me feel better because I've let it out but not to a whole crowd of people. I know it's there but they don't; they just think it's a painting when it's actually something deep within me.

There's so much more I want to learn about art. It's like a new beginning and I've just started to do something I really love. It's really opened me up, so even when we do Japanese, it's cultural, so I can do something cultural for my art work; or in global literacy, I can bring art in; even Maths.

Doing the Art MAP last year also gave me the confidence to enter an art competition over the summer holidays. I never would have thought that I would ever have enrolled into a competition. It was for age 12 and older. Deep down I think I always wanted to go in front of judges and show them what I could actually do and that I loved drawing and creating. I felt a lot of pressure but then I thought that I've done all this work for a year now, in front of teachers and students. I'm amazed by where I am now compared to where I was at the start of Year 7. The thing I was really scared about then was doing it in front of other people. My best friend Alex said: "Why are you scared? This is what you really want to do; just show them you can do it and you might actually get more confidence in yourself." So I started doing it and I was blown away from the start – I was confident and I came up with all my own ideas that came to me from all these weird things that happened around me that just zapped into my brain.

If I compared from the start of MAP to the end of the year, I achieved a lot to be able to go in front of thousands of people to do a competition. I never thought I would be doing that. In the competition, we did a lot of different things and then we had a time limit of two hours to complete a piece of work. It was a lot of pressure. I ended up coming second in the competition. That day I met a new friend, a lady who was 56 years old. She started drawing when she was six and she never gave up. She told me that she was just like me with her art and she said that I could go somewhere with all my art work, so that really touched my heart.

Nyaruot Molang, Year 8
My passion is to show everyone around me how important it is to take care of the environment and how precious it is. I would love everyone to care about the planet the way I do. I want to make a difference so that we have a healthy, sustainable planet for future generations.

I try to teach students and teachers at McClelland College to recognise how their actions influence our environment and how they can make a difference. I also try to get students and teachers involved as much as possible with Environment Committee events and with the changes we’re making around the school. I’ve been passionate about doing this in the school since I was in Year 7, starting off as a little Environment Captain. Over these past five years, sustainability in the school has changed drastically. We have had reductions in our water usage and waste, and increases with the habit of students and teachers recycling. Recycling wasn’t even heard of within the school when I first started.

The Environment Committee is student-driven and we work very closely to implement our passion for the environment within the school. Each year we continue to make changes as we strive closer to our goals to make the school more sustainable. We basically get to run with things. We go and speak to the Principal Team when we need approval to run events, or to organise to talk to students at assemblies. They’re always open-minded to our new ideas. One of our ideas has been a week of environment activities to get the school community involved with our environment initiatives, and to learn more about the environment and how looking after it is important. The environment team organised this pretty much themselves and we were given permission to come out of class to get things done.

We don’t just work in our school either. A prime example of how we linked our passion to the community was in September last year, when our environment leaders organised and ran the Kids Teaching Kids Conference. It was exactly as it sounds: we were teaching primary students what we do around our school to make it more sustainable and to help the planet. About 50 local primary school students came along. They were so enthusiastic and, at the end, they all took away something they had learnt to make changes around their own schools.

McClelland College and the environment team are also involved in the Victorian Government ResourceSmart Schools Program that helps schools benefit from embedding sustainability into everything they do. Every school is striving for a five-star sustainability rating. All schools start off with one star. We have recently become a two-star sustainable school for accreditation in the Waste and Water modules of the Program. This took two years of hard effort. Last year we won the ResourceSmart Schools Biodiversity award. We’ve won awards in past years for water and waste, and we’ve been finalists in categories as well.

Jasmine Manly, Year 12

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

Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group
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.
Year 8 students at Ashfield Boys’ High School, NSW, hosted the Kids Teaching Kids Conference at the school on the 12th September 2014. The students conducted different workshops with 67 students from Campsie, Ashfield and Harcourt Primary Schools, as well as from Ashfield Boys’ High School’s Year 7.

The purpose of the program is to provide peer education, where students teach other students from primary schools about environmental issues affecting everyone (see www.kidsteachingkids.com.au). The goals of the workshop include:

- to treat the environment with care and compassion;
- to inspire kids to have a healthy mind;
- to encourage kids to eat healthy food.

The outcomes of the project were presented in an array of practical, technological and interactive initiatives.

Process

Students selected a focus area that they explored in groups. Students and teachers negotiated the area of focus according to their particular interest and the aims of the conference. The team decided to focus on Healthy Environment for the workshop.

The Team Teachers organised a mentor to visit the school and to speak to the class on their selected topic. The mentor chosen was a previous student from the school who was also involved in a special project funded by the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program in 2008. He shared his experiences doing a project and provided the students with the necessary skills to present in front of other students.

We worked through necessary research skills and presentation strategies with students in order for them to build up a solid knowledge base relating to the area of study. Once students obtained enough information, they then planned activities for their workshop. Each workshop contained actual ‘student friendly’ information on the ‘study focus’. In addition, each workshop also contained activities related specifically to the focus ie games, drama, art, speech.

The students prepared their oral presentations in front of peers and Team Teachers and gained constructive feedback. Each team shared their information in a creative manner. This process is based on the notion of ‘students teaching students’.

Reflections

Team Leader Mr. Tenefrancia said: “This project was a great way for the boys to learn in a more collaborative manner. Students were able to work at a skill level that they felt comfortable with and there was plenty of opportunity for them to extend themselves. It also allowed students to move outside their immediate peer group which is an important part of Stage 4 development.”

The project was also an opportunity to consolidate the Team Structure that operates so successfully at Ashfield Boys’ High School, as well provide opportunities for the Team Teachers to learn from other teachers.

It was refreshing to see students taking responsibility for the classroom. They came to realise that it was quite a challenge to communicate effectively and keep other students engaged.
At the end of the workshop, we asked them questions as part of their reflection:

What did you learn doing the Kids Teaching Kids Workshop?

- It's difficult to handle some students.
- They don't listen to us.
- I underestimated the workshop because I thought it was going to be easy.
- It was hard.
- I learnt how teachers feel now when students don't listen to them.
- It's fun teaching other kids.
- I experienced new stuff.
- It's hard to be a leader.

If we are going to do this again, what will you do differently?

- More practice.
- I will be stricter with my team members.
- I will prepare more.
- Better activities and better speech.
- We over prepared. We had so many things to do.

Will you be willing to do this again?

- Yes, because we can do it better.
- Yes, I will do it again. It was hard but it was fun.
- Yes, because it gets easier later on.
- Yes, because we learnt from our mistakes and can do it better.

- Yes, because we know what we needed to improve.
- Yes, I enjoyed teaching kids.
- Yes, it was a good experience. It was fun.
- Yes, because I enjoyed being a leader.
- Yes, but we need more time. It's about experiencing new things.
- Yes, because I learnt new things.
- It was a fun experience but we have to be more prepared next time.
- Yes. It was pretty fun teaching.

For more information, contact:

Roland Tenefrancia
Roland.Tenefrancia2@det.nsw.edu.au

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Kids Teaching Kids

Kids Teaching Kids is an education model that uses local environmental issues as a theme for learning. Kids Teaching Kids starts in the classroom and extends into the community through the Kids Teaching Kids Learning Model and Program. We know kids are prepared to take up the challenges of saving our environment when we give them responsibility to manage their own learning through the Kids Teaching Kids Learning Model.

The Kids Teaching Kids Program promotes positive wellbeing and helps build resilience in young people. It raises awareness and drives action on local and global environmental issues, bringing communities together to solve common challenges and help the next generation of leaders who will take collective responsibility for our future.

We connect and challenge students with real world issues, inspiring them to want to know more. By giving students the opportunity to present a workshop to others during Kids Teaching Kids Week or at one of the Kids Conferences, students see that they can have a positive impact on the world, starting in their own communities. They are given tools to manage their own learning and become confident, caring and informed citizen ready to take on new challenges.

Getting involved

Schools:

Our aim is to encourage hundreds of schools across Australia to develop an environmental workshop to be delivered in their school and wider community. This is the authentic end point for the Kids Teaching Kids Learning Model.

Your school can choose to present a workshop at one of our flagship conferences, at a grass roots Kids Teaching Kids Week event or in your school. Alternatively, if it is your first year you might choose to bring students to participate as active audience members and then present the following year.

Individuals and Organisations:

Individuals and organisations can choose to sponsor an event, volunteer or mentor a group of students. These are very valuable experiences that will enable you to support schools and students involved in the Kids Teaching Kids Program.

In 2015, the Kids Teaching Kids Week will take place from September 7-11.

You can develop a Kids Teaching Kids Workshop on a locally relevant environmental issue and present it to your school and community. You can go one step further and host a mini Kids Teaching Kids Conference at your school during Kids Teaching Kids Week.

You may have an existing student led event that is already scheduled for a date that is outside of Kids Teaching Kids Week, but providing you are willing to include a component of your event using the Kids Teaching Kids method then you can register your event.

More information:

See: www.kidsteachingkids.com.au or contact: admin@kidsteachingkids.com.au or phone: 03 9329 3736
At St Paul Apostle South the senior students are paired up with junior students so that everyone can experience how it feels being friends with someone with whom you would not usually associate. The juniors can go to their older buddy and ask for help if they need it. Buddies will sometimes come to your class and have lunch with you or if there is a special event your buddy will come and work with you. Sometimes you might have a buddy mass and you will go to mass together.

So having a buddy helps you experience friendship on a different level and the little ones feel happy that someone in a higher class calls them by name and says ‘hello’.

We are currently using the Better Buddies Program, which is a fund raising organisation that tries to prevent bullying and violence, by promoting students buddying up with younger students. They sell buddy bears and they teach a special handshake, which you can learn and share with your buddy.

Ben

St Paul Apostle South School is improving its environment to make it a better place where students can educate themselves for the future. The school has been cleaning up to make a pleasant and tidy atmosphere for everyone.

Each class was given an area to clean up with their buddies for the School’s Clean Up Day. After they had finished, the school was looking very smart and tidy for our students to work and play.

Our SRC has prepared a celebration for the National Action against Bullying and Violence. Our senior students have taught the Buddy handshake from the Alannah and Madeline Foundation Better Buddies Program to their buddies and have given them a wristband labeled ‘Bullying, no way!’ to show that, as a school, we are against bullying.

For more details, contact:
Joan Kendrick
St Paul Apostle South Primary School
Endeavour Hills
jkendrick@spsendeavourhills.catholic.edu.au

Our school has been featured doing many things with our buddies. In February, our school took part in a Clean Up Schools Day. Each class was allocated an area to clean up with their buddies. We started after lunch and it went on for half an hour. After that our school looked a beautiful, clean and tidy space for our students to work and play.

At our school we have been using the Better Buddies Program. We have learnt how to treat our buddies with respect and to treat our buddies the way we would like to be treated.

We role model good behavior and this can show them how to be a good student. We do activities with them and they work with us.

Janick and Sara

Mishen

In March we are celebrating the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. The students are learning about bullying and when it can occur. The senior classes have been learning the Buddy handshake from the Alannah and Madeline Foundation Program to teach their buddies. They also gave them a wristband labeled ‘Bullying, no way!’

Gurnoor

Our school is a great and healthy environment. It is a place to learn and share all our talents. We would not be able to get here if it wasn’t for our great students, teachers and leaders.
**Why Your Student Council Needs a Constitution**

Have you thought about having a constitution for your SRC? Where does your SRC fit into the school? Is it recognised within your strategic plan? Does the Principal even know it exists? Is any time allowance or money given to support for your SRC?

Every SRC struggles to have its voice heard in amongst all of the competing voices within a school: “It is all about literacy; it is all about numeracy”, “but what about ‘The Arts’”... as the debates go on. One of the advantages of having a constitution is that it clearly sets out the purpose of the SRC within the school environment, it highlights the activities and the expectations of the SRC representatives, and the role of the support teacher. It also teaches students about meeting protocols including who has voting rights, whether there is a quorum and establishes meeting procedures.

What use is the constitution to the students? Again it clearly outlines the purpose of the SRC. At our school, we have created three documents within the constitution: the actual constitution, a group agreement, and individual agreements that the students sign off on. The actual constitution gets reviewed on an annual basis.

The topic that gets the most discussion is “termination of membership”. For the students, this is a serious issue as they want people who are involved in the SRC to do their job properly! They usually come up with harsher penalties than I would.

This document became critical when the school started preparing for its Strategic Plan. As the Student Voice Coordinator, I was asked: “What is the aim of Student Voice”. I was able to go to the constitution and highlight what the purpose of the Student Voice team, knowing that it wasn’t just my opinion but, most importantly, it reflected the students’ opinion. The first line of our constitution reads: “The objective of Student Voice at Narre Warren South P-12 College is to recognise that students are equal players in decisions which impact our learning community”. Immediately the discussion focused on whether our students were ‘equal players’ in our learning community, and how we could do this better? This is now one of the discussions we are having about our strategic plan and, hopefully, this will lead to the whole school incorporating students into key discussions rather than just selective discussions.

### Some of the topics covered in our constitution include:

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<td>Purpose of the NWSC SV: ...</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Activities: The NWSC SV will ...</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Representation: The NWSC SV will consist of ...</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Expectations: The NWSC SV Representatives will ...</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Termination of membership: if a NWSC SV member ...</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Becoming a NWSC SV member you will: ...</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Role of the SV support teacher: ...</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Meetings: Meetings for SV shall be held ...</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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<td>Quorum: ...</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Meeting procedures: ...</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Working parties: ...</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Amendments to the constitution: ...</td>
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To ensure the constitution became a working document, we created a group and individual commitment document to support the constitution, that each student has to sign.

**Individual commitment:**

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<td>1. As a member of the Narre Warren South P-12 College Student Voice team I will:</td>
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<td>2. As a member of the NWSC SV team I will:</td>
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<td>3. As a member of the NWSC SV team I will:</td>
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Group commitment:

1. To make sure we achieve the NWSC SV goals we will:
   - Attend regular meetings
   - Volunteer to do things beyond the meeting eg.
     - Talk to other students about their ideas; create posters about events; tell other students about upcoming events

2. To ensure the safety of all those involved at our meetings and events we organise we will:
   - Be sensible at all times
   - Inform teachers if we see anything that could potentially be a hazard

3. To protect people's privacy or reputation we will:
   - Only use names, when appropriate
   - Only use photos of people who have photo permission

4. To enable everyone to feel included, valued and respected we will:
   - Call everyone by their name
   - Listen to everyone's opinion

5. To make sure we have school support we will:
   - Notify our teachers if we have a meeting during class time and ensure we catch up on any outstanding work
   - Reflect the school values

For VISTA members, sample constitutions can be downloaded from the MEMBERS ONLY section of our website at www.vistasrc.org. If you don’t have your log in details, email us at info@vistasrc.org and we shall send these through to you.

There are lots of different ways to do a constitution, but ‘give it a go’ to ensure your SRC is going in the direction the students want it to go!

Dianne Parkinson
Professional Learning Coordinator - VISTA Executive
SRC Teacher Adviser - Narre Warren South P-12 College

Join us for our Term 2 VISTA Meet Up!

Monday 6th July, 2015
10:00am - 1:00pm

Abbotsford Primary School
Lithgow Street, Abbotsford

Join us for a coffee, a chat and the opportunity to network with other SRC Teacher Advisers.

Based on feedback from our regional and rural members, we specifically arranged for this event to be during school holidays to allow time for travel and for them to attend.

Our inner city venue is just a short walk from the North Richmond Train Station and close to the 109 and 12 Tram Lines.

Why not make a day of it and throw in a visit to Ikea (just down the road), grab some lunch along Victoria Street and then head back into Melbourne for a spot of shopping.

You could also join your students prior to the VicSRC Annual Congress - kicking off on Tuesday 7th July.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL
To RSVP, visit our website at www.vistasrc.org

Got a question?
CALL THE VISTA HOTLINE

When you’re stuck with your Student Council, who are you gunna call? The VISTA Hotline!

Just give us a buzz on (03) 9013 6 SRC [9013 6772] and a member of our team will get back to you.

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.
The History of SRCs in Australia
A call for help in tracking down reference material

When did the first SRC start in Australia? What came before?
Where was the first SRC for a primary school?

And what about your school – do you know the history of your SRC?

The answers to all these questions are elusive since there aren’t many records kept on the subject. The clues, however, are probably tucked away in a filing cabinet or archive box somewhere in your school!

I’ve been hunting for these references, no matter how vague, at every school I visit – but I really need to ask for your help to unearth these treasures. Whatever you have, let me know, or send me a copy. Photos, newsletter articles – maybe you’ll find a reference to students attending national conferences or organising protests against a war. I may be the only person nerdy enough to find these fascinating but, if you like, I’ll be thrilled to share all my findings with you.

Why is this important?
The history of SRCs has not been recorded before and it leaves a gap in our knowledge about how the approaches and styles have evolved over the years. Some valuable insights might be learned by studying our history.

I have a hope that seeing a long and perhaps highly successful history of SRCs would make students, teachers and principals more likely to take the SRC seriously, maybe even be inspired to achieve great things once more.

To respond:
Write to: david.mould@second-strike.com

David Mould is the Director of Second Strike, an SRC and leadership training company

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
George Santayana
One of the annual events that the VicSRC conducts are the set of regional conferences held across the state. These range in geographic diversity, with students gathering from metro Melbourne to the far flung reaches of Gippsland, but also in representative diversity. This year I was lucky enough to attend the first ever Primary School Regional SRC Conference.

As an Executive member, one of the questions that seems paramount is: ‘Why run these sorts of conferences?’ The simple answer is most likely that these conferences allow students to collaborate together with their peers and so tackle issues, problems or ideas that affect all of them. Connecting people is a powerful tool; after all, most human progress has been a result of collaboration.

So this may seem sufficient to explain the need for the Regional Conferences. They also have, of course, the other benefit of connecting us (the Executive) to students, and thus to their ideas, and this is also an important purpose of representation.

Through the primary school conference I attended, another aspect of these regional conferences became apparent. Witnessing young students, mostly between the ages of 10 to 12 years, being inspired to take action is immensely gratifying. These conferences are premised on a simple yet crucial idea: that these students can, and will, act upon these ideas. Fundamentally, it is this quality that is important: Regional Conferences give people the inspiration for action and, importantly, put them in a position where students are empowered to act upon this inspiration. This sense was visible at the primary school conference that I attended, and I look forward to the other regional conferences that are coming up, with equal enthusiasm.

Lucas Muehleisen
VicSRC Executive
Year 12
John Monash Science School
VicSRC Executive Camp

In the first week of the recent holidays, the VicSRC Executive team headed out for three days to work on the resolutions passed at last year’s Congress, plan Congress 2015 and learn many new skills.

It was an explosion of ideas that resulted in many great outcomes. These outcomes ranged from big Congress decisions being made, to deciding the timetable, to the Executive roles and the Congress workshops.

From this training camp, I also learnt how to present an interesting ‘elevator pitch’ and how to chair a meeting effectively. Some tips I have for chairing meetings are to always validate ideas; never allow the group to think that you are on a higher level than them; and that a meeting is run best in a circular formation. The camp was successful in that we got through all our work whilst bonding tightly together as an executive team.

With only four months lefts until Congress, it is now your turn to get involved with the VicSRC. Sign up to Congress via our website:

www.vicsrc.org.au
and join the debate now!

Margaret Tran
VicSRC Executive

The VicSRC Executive camp for 2015 was an experience that offered extensive insight and learning into skills and more experience in leadership, teamwork, public speaking and event facilitation. In addition to this, there was bonding between the 11 of us who attended (as well as the three VicSRC staff/supporters who came along) – something that, I can imagine, comes with climbing mountains together and teaching each other how to play (and evade rules whilst not breaking them) pool and table tennis.

From planning our Congress conference in July, to learning how to best facilitate a discussion, to ... very passionately ... debating, to gaining insight on the new Technical schools coming and getting to have an input and mapping out our beliefs of what a Technical school should be like, to climbing South Jawbone Peak, to Easter egg hunts, to movie marathons lasting till 1.30 in the morning, the camp was an explosion of teamwork, learning and planning. It gave me, and I’m sure the other ten of us, an experience that (excuse the cliché) I will never forget.

The camp served the purpose of allowing us to gain skills necessary for being leaders and being the representatives of the students in Victoria, but it also allowed for the bonding of the group. Being a latecomer to the Executive, I feel like we came to camp as close friends and that we left as a family. I guess that’s what happens when you climb to the top of a mountain together (the view made the formidable climb worth it!).

I left camp with the feeling that it had been very successful, offering both learning and fun, and my only regret was that it wasn’t longer!

Trinity Duffield-Pugsley
VicSRC Executive
VicSRC Congress is a three day explosion of student voice.

Run by students, for students and attended by the Minister for Education, VicSRC Congress brings students together from all across the state to decide on the issues that really matter to Victorian students.

Through interactive workshops and parliamentary-style debate, student delegates determine the VicSRC policy agenda for the coming year, and appoint the Student Executive that will implement it.

2015 marks ten years of VicSRC and Congress. Three thousand, six hundred and fifty two days of action. A decade of advocacy. Get involved!

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<td>Wednesday 8th –</td>
<td>Ormond College</td>
<td>Earlybird tickets: $125 per student</td>
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<td>Friday 10th July</td>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
<td>VicSRC members: $140 per student</td>
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<td>Non-members: $155 per student</td>
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Who should attend Congress?
Year 7 to 12 students from Victorian state, independent and catholic schools. Each school is eligible to bring up to five students.

Registration
Visit www.vicsrc.org.au

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

VicSRC acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.
Creating positive communities through student-led conversation

Twelve students from The Mac.Robertson Girls’ High School joined us for their initial Teach the Teacher introductory session. Affectionately known at the school as Creating Conversations, the 12 committee members initiated the idea with the help of their SRC president and vice-president and the Director of Student Leadership and Co-curricular Activities, Ms Joanne Howe.

Creating Conversations provides students and teachers with the opportunity to have a two-way conversation about things that matter to them. It will provide real information to the social service group and School Council at Mac.Rob Girls’ High School.

Students have identified Creating Conversations as an opportunity to:

- Reflect on their own learning and identify the best approaches
- Have a broad conversation and hear teacher feedback
- Get the most out of what they learn
- Develop passions
- Empower teachers to understand students more
- Discuss complex concerns more specifically and efficiently
- Better establish student and teacher relationships
- Go one step further than just talking about it and utilise it in independent review
- Adopt ideas when developing a future strategic plan

Students now have the task of surveying a sample of students in each year level to find out what their issues are. The Creating Conversations committee will sort and prioritise the list of issues and concerns into what was most identified, and will form the questions to ask their teachers, based on these topics, at a VicSRC training this month.

Emma Myers
Teach the Teacher Project Officer

Teach the Teacher is a practical way to bring students and teachers together to achieve common goals of improving the learning environments and making positive lasting impacts on their school communities.

We have 20 places available for Teach the Teacher 2015! Free training and resources available for VicSRC member schools!

Our program helps give students the skills to develop and run a Teach the Teacher program at your school. Your students and teachers will work collaboratively together find ways to create positive communities through student-led conversation.

To get involved or to find out more information, please email our Project Officer, Emma Myers: projects@vicsrc.org.au or call 03 9267 3716.

The VicSRC has rebranded! To sign up to the new VicSRC online e-newsletter ... visit: www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/mailinglist

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
Progressive education in Australia and why the history of education still matters

Dean’s Lecture Series: MGSE - The University of Melbourne

Professor Julie McLeod
Australian Research Council Future Fellow,
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
Deputy Director, Melbourne Social Equity Institute

Tuesday 28 April
6pm-7pm
Theatre 230, Level 2, 234 Queensberry Street,
Carlton
RSVP: http://bit.ly/1IkSFPI

Professor Julie McLeod will examine different waves of progressive education, from the internationalist child-centred progressivism of the interwar period to the flourishing of radical agendas and open-plan experiments of the 1970s. She will consider the forms of curriculum and the types of future citizens that progressive education valued as well as those it excluded from view. The ideas and legacies of progressive education will also be explored in relation to larger questions about the place of historical perspectives and inquiry in contemporary educational research and debates.

News and Reviews

Student Voice and School Governance: Distributing Leadership to Youth and Adults

By Marc Brasof
Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Leadership of Education Equity and Excellence, Arcadia University, PA, USA
Routledge, 2015: 192 pages
Series: Routledge Research in Educational Leadership
Release date: June 25th 2015

While student voice has been well-defined in research, how to sustain youth-adult leadership work is less understood. Students are rarely invited to lead school reform efforts, and when they are, their voice is silenced by the structural arrangements and socio-cultural conditions found in schools. This volume investigates problems with the neoliberal school reform movement, and how youth-adult partnerships have resulted in more effective reforms within schools and community organisations nationally and internationally.

Stemming from an eight-year ethnographic study at a civic-themed public high school, the volume highlights the process of creating a school governance structure which produces active and informed citizens. Made up of executive, legislative and judicial branches, the program gives students the power to make, implement and review school policies and practices—a model that has found to effectively distribute leadership and trigger organisational learning, and is thus at the forefront of civic education.

brasofm@arcadia.edu

We’ve been posting some news and links there since June 2013, to complement and extend what you see in the online version of Connect. It would be great if you could go there and ‘like’ us, and also watch there for news of each Connect’s availability on-line - for FREE.
5th Student Voice Seminar
Looking Back, Looking Forward

- Academics, practitioners, students, activists ...
- Keynote addresses and presentations;
- Explorations of research and practice in diverse settings;
- Students as (co-) researchers: reports and discussion;
- Discussions: an un-conference;
- Practical approaches: Sharing resources and tool-box development;
- Planning: How to have an impact; future directions

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, England
Monday 22nd – Wednesday 24th June 2015

Further Information:
https://cambridgestudentvoiceseminars.wordpress.com/2015-seminar/

Learner Voice Conference
Trinity College Dublin
Friday 26th - Saturday 27th June 2015

‘Nothing about us without us’: Listening to the voices of students!

A student/learner voice conference will be held in Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin on 26th-27th June 2015. Keynote speaker will be Dr Alison Cook-Sather, Mary Katharine Woodworth Professor of Education at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, USA and Jean Rudduck Visiting Scholar, Homerton College, University of Cambridge, UK. More details are available at: http://ow.ly/L6ugL

Dr Paula Flynn
This infographic is a summary of findings from the February 2015 report *How Young People’s Participation in School Supports Achievement and Attainment*. The full report is at: [www.sccyp.org.uk/ufiles/achievement-and-attainment.pdf](http://www.sccyp.org.uk/ufiles/achievement-and-attainment.pdf)
We asked:
7 = 130 = 50
SECONDARY SCHOOLS YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWS

Participation in school life is important
Participation in school life happens in different places like:
- Classes
- Clubs and trips
- Pupil councils and committees
- Social places

You told us

Relationships are key
Teachers and pupils respecting each other and listening to each other

The good relationship with the teacher makes you feel comfortable asking for extra help. Because sometimes it can seem a wee bit daunting, especially when you’re in a classroom environment. You don’t always want to put your hand up in front of your peer group and say ‘I don’t get this’.

Find out more about the report at: www.sccyp.org.uk/news/in-the-news/research-participation-in-school-helps-pupils-do-well
In your own words

What do you think would be the benefits of the pupils having more say in the school?

We’re more aware of the problems in the school than the teachers. They can’t see it from a pupil point of view. The same as we can’t see it from a teacher point of view.

I feel there’s a really high level of mutual respect, that pupils listen to the teachers, but the teachers listen — and value — the pupils’ points of view and things to say, so it makes you more confident and you’re open with your ideas.

you
told us

Participation in school life and in decisions is still sometimes limited

You want to be more involved

Last year actually we focused on why and how some teachers are more effective teachers than others. So we got to have quite a big say in that: how teachers could improve the learning experience. The funniest thing was they approached us about it.

Being listened to, actively included in school life and decision making and feeling respected is a key foundation that can help young people do well at school.

Schools should be places where education is based on the values of human rights.

This information is based on a report by researchers from University of Stirling for Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Scotland’s Commissioner for Children & Young People

Read a text summary of the report at: www.sccyp.org.uk/publications/young-people/participation-in-schools/read

**Connect Publications: Order Form**

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**To:**  Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote VIC 3070 Australia  
**e-mail:**  r.holdsworth@unimelb.edu.au

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Simply supply your e-mail address (below or by e-mail) and name and phone number (in case of bounces).

There is no cost; however donations to support Connect's work are appreciated and acknowledged.

☐ I enclose a donation to support the work of Connect.

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Asprinworld: the Connect website!

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at ASPRINworld:

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).

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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

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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 on:

Australian:

‘I wouldn’t get that feedback from anywhere else’: learning partnerships and the use of high school students as simulated patients to enhance medical students’ communication skills (Helen Cahill, Julia Coffey, Lena Sanci) in BMC Medical Education; 2015 15:35

Research Developments (ACER, Camberwell, Vic) February, April 2015

Yikes (YACVic, Melbourne, Vic) March 2015

International:

CPR: Collaborative Peer Review: Reflection Through Youth-Adult Observation and Dialogue (UP for Learning, Vermont, USA)

Rethinking Schools (Milwaukee, WI, USA) Vol 29 No 3; Spring 2015

Writing a School Constitution: Representative Democracy in Action (Lorraine S McGarry, Donnan M Stoicovy) in Social Studies and the Young Learner 27 (1): 5-7; 2014

‘Student Councils and Beyond’

On-Line! FREE!

We’ve almost run out of print copies of the first Connect publication: Student Councils and Beyond (from 2005). And many of the ideas have subsequently been reflected in the Represent! kit from the VicSRC (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent).

So we have made all of Student Councils and Beyond (a compilation of articles and resources from many earlier issues of Connect) available on-line for FREE. It can be downloaded (as one document or in sections) as PDFs from the Connect website. Find it at:

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Articles from Connect are now discoverable through EBSCOhost research databases.
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The left-hand menu provides a pull-down menu for you to select the issue number > browse; the front cover of the issue is displayed, and you can simply click on the link in the main body of the page to download a PDF of the issue. Recent issues are also searchable by key words.

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There may be some gaps or improvements necessary. As you use this resource, let us know what you find. (If an issue of Connect seems to be missing, check the issues either side, as double issues show up only as one issue number.) If you have any ideas for improving this resource, please let us know.

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