



What strategies can teachers use to foster participation and leadership skills?

The following strategies will provide opportunities for students to develop these student participation and leadership skills:

- active and reflective listening
- critical and creative thinking
- communication and negotiation in oral and written forms
- mediation and dispute resolution
- problem solving and decision making
- goal setting and action planning.

Strategies

- Provide a wide range of participation and leadership opportunities which cater for all students in the school.
- Maximise the number and range of students undertaking leadership roles.
- Ensure that opportunities for student leadership are rotated amongst students.
- Encourage the school community to participate in school life and to provide recognition of all student leadership roles to ensure that all students have opportunities to undertake such leadership roles.
- Encourage the development of student participation and leadership skills through classroom practice eg co-operative learning, problem solving and social skills across all key learning areas (KLAs).
- Encourage students to differentiate between student participation, student leadership and popularity.
- Develop student participation and leadership skills in all students through specific programs, for example:
 - student representative councils (SRCs) and school parliaments
 - school committee liaison
 - captaincy (such as class, house and/or school)
 - prefects
 - peer support
 - buddy systems
 - debating, public speaking
 - sport
 - visual, creative and performing arts
 - curriculum involvement/activities in the classroom
 - information technology
 - conflict resolution or peer mediation
 - CORT (Cognitive Research Trust) Thinking based upon constructive, critical and creative thinking, de Bono's 'Six Hats'.

Good Practice:

Student involvement

What are the benefits of school parliaments?

Some primary schools operate parliaments where students have ministerial roles and may express views and bring concerns about issues such as playground behaviour, school rules, ground improvements and lunchtime activities to this student forum. There is a government and an opposition that debates issues before taking a vote. Discovering democracy at work!

Good Practice:

Disseminating information

It is important that schools have all SRC meetings minuted. Councillors can then report back to students at class meetings using an accurate record of meeting outcomes. Action plans can then be developed.

Good Practice:

The school community working together by linking parents, teachers, and students

In some primary schools SRC members report students' views on specific issues to P&C sub-committees such as the school grounds or canteen committees. 'Working bees' of students, teachers, and parents can then act together on school community projects.



Good Practice:

Leadership responsibilities

Some primary schools list specific committee responsibilities such as environment, media, sport, transport, communication, playground safety, canteen, fundraising and school uniform. Student and teacher representatives are nominated to each committee. This encourages student leaders and teachers to work on specific projects that will improve the school.

Good Practice:

Gender equity

A rural primary school developed leadership skills through a K-6 Gender Equity Program focusing on issues including choice, anger management, gender identity, countering harassment, feelings, communication and peer influence.

Good Practice:

Leadership training

Several primary schools provide full day training courses for SRC members and members of school parliaments. Student leaders need specific skills in communication, negotiation, meeting procedure, decision making, brainstorming, goal setting and action planning.

- Plan participation and leadership programs for girls and boys with specific needs (eg Aboriginal, ethnic, religious, behaviour, special learning needs) which provide meaningful opportunities to develop skills required to undertake leadership roles.
- Develop ways to ensure gender equity. These could include:
 - leadership roles with both boys and girls as co-representatives
 - sports monitors evenly representing boys and girls
 - practices that challenge gender stereotypes
 - using gender inclusive language.
- Celebrate the achievements of all students in written and oral forms:
 - newsletter, written or oral
 - school assemblies
 - merit certificates
 - service awards
 - Department of Education and Training Website (student section).
- Nurture community partnerships through links between students, teachers and parents which incorporate forums, surveys, reports, joint meetings, written communication, school enhancement programs and school self-evaluation.
- Draw upon current documents such as:
 - *Strategies for Safer Schools*. NSW Department of School Education (1995) Australia
 - *Procedures for Resolving Complaints About Discrimination Against Students*. NSW Department of School Education (1995) Australia
 - *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*. Ministerial Statement NSW Department of School Education (1995) Australia
 - *Student Welfare Policy*. NSW Department of School Education (1996) Australia
 - *Resources for Teaching Against Violence*. NSW Department of School Education (1996) Australia
 - *Revised Code of Conduct*. Memorandum 97/230 (S.211) NSW Department of School Education (1997) Australia
 - *Procedures to be Followed in Response to Allegations of Improper Conduct of a Sexual Nature by a Staff Member Against a Student*. Memorandum 97/018 (S.017) NSW Department of School Education (1997) Australia
 - *Anti-racism Policy Statement*. NSW Department of School Education (1992) Australia
 - *Aboriginal Education Policy*. NSW Department of School Education (1996) Australia
 - *Girls and Boys at School: Gender Equity Strategy 1996-2001*. NSW Department of School Education (1996) Australia



- *Student Representative Councils: a practical guide for student leaders and teachers*. NSW Department of Education and Training (1998) Australia
- *Discovering Democracy*. School Materials for Primary Schools. Curriculum Corporation (1998). Melbourne, Australia
- *Discovering Democracy*. School Materials for Secondary Schools. Curriculum Corporation (1998) Melbourne, Australia

These strategies can assist in achieving the following results* for students:

- participate in decisions about their own learning
- pursue a program of learning relevant to their needs and aspirations
- contribute to decision making in the school
- participate in all aspects of school life as equals
- develop an understanding of themselves as well as skills for positive, socially responsible participation
- develop competencies which enhance the quality of their relationships with others
- know and understand their school's organisation and know about and appreciate student representative councils and other representative bodies such as the School Council.

Good Practice:

Publicising your student leaders

A rural primary school develops profiles of SRC members for publication in school newsletters. It is important that all students know their SRC members so that effective communication and action occurs.

Good Practice:

Communication and profile

A number of primary schools encourage the SRC to publish a regular column in the school newsletter and to conduct reporting sessions at school assemblies.

This encourages effective communication and develops a high profile for the SRC. It also enhances students' literacy and communication skills.

Good Practice:

Teacher adviser roles

All primary SRCs need a teacher to be a mentor and liaison officer to assist with administration, organisation and guidance. This role provides a link between student leaders, the school executive, teaching and office staff and parents.



*These results for students are taken from the Student Welfare Policy