

AUSTRALASIAN DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION COMMUNITY

ADEC

NEWSLETTER No 17

12th December 2012

We need a LOGO for ADEC
Forward suggestions and designs to ADEC WEBSITE COMMITTEE
via
president@adec.edu.au

COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION and what makes a healthy & vibrant community were the central ideas at the recent ADEC conference hosted by Pine Community school in Brisbane from Friday 5th-Sunday 7th Oct 2012.

Keynote Speakers: Students and Staff of Pine Community School
Dr Marcus Bussey (USC),
Dr Sue Walker (QUT)

Visit the website: <http://www.pinecommunityschool.org/ADEC> to see some photos of the conference and for access to Dr Marcus Bussey's papers and to share your comments about the conference.

Dr Marcus Bussey currently teaches World History at the University of Sunshine Coast and recently completed his PhD, "Where Next for Pedagogy: Critical agency in educational futures". He has had wide experience in Australia with significant time at a yoga- based neohumanist school, at Pine Community School, and Montessori primary and high schools as well as presenting widely internationally.

Marcus's keynote speech was "Growing new stories for schools and their communities: Reclaiming our right to be learning communities".

Some key ideas that struck me were we need to take back our connections; tell new stories; all schooling works in Culture which is alive and we are doing it every day; creating culture is the core work of the human. Culture is in the walls, in the language, in the memory and imagination. Culture enables our identity telling us who we are and builds people and helps us co-evolve. It

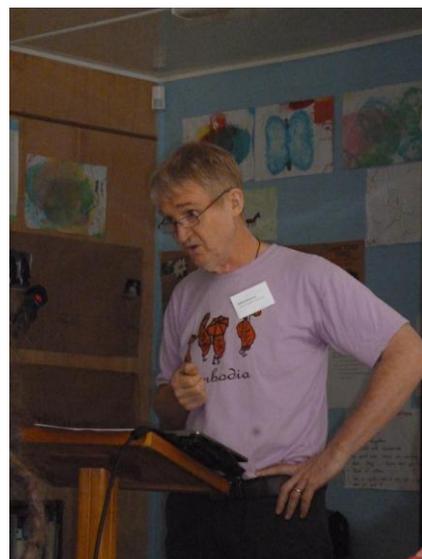


Photo by Cec

is dynamic and a work of negotiation.

Schools teach culture and can choose whether they are egalitarian - where creativity, self discipline, equity, collaboration, knowledge and active citizenship are valued, or authoritarian - where external discipline, teaching to tests, conformity, ranking, competition and passive acquiescence is promoted.

We need to change the “walls” in our own heads and develop the pedagogy of possibilities. Marcus would like to redefine ‘teaching’ as Relational Teaching which leads the imaginative charge to possibilities, which allows enough authority to hold the centre so that kids can be safe, involves listening, following, not leading, taking the pulse – if necessary responding, scaffolding risk as learning involves risk and builds culture. He said that a lot of teaching is about showing up. He wants to move from faster, higher, stronger to slower, deeper, wiser.

Dr Susan Walker is the Associate Professor at School of Early Education at Queensland University of Technology. Susan’s keynote was "Practices for Teaching Moral Values in the Early Years: A call for Pedagogy of Participation".

Susan’s talk was about her research project with teachers and students, including some Pine Community School participants, which looked at the social and moral values and active citizenship education in early years at school.

It looked at the personal belief systems of teachers and children, putting them in three main categories of absolutism, subjectivism and evaluativism, the differences between conventional moral pedagogy that flows from absolutism and the contextual moral pedagogy where children construct their own moral values and participate in informed reflection leading to action.

I think this research has important implications as it shows that while teachers’ stated beliefs are that children are capable of informed reflection for action, problem solving, taking ownership, and are also competent, responsible and capable of complex evaluativism, teachers’ actual practice in classrooms reflects more absolutist pedagogy. Children are receivers of rules rather than active participants, there is a strong focus on conventions, there is a transmissive style and minimum shared responsibility.

We hope that there will be follow up work on why there is this disconnect between what teachers believe and their practice.

Susan’s papers are available in full and I think they provide important studies and research evidence for our schools.

For so long education has been expressed as the Three Rs, with occasionally a recognition of a C or two but I think Pine Community, as expressed by Maris Element, Principal of Pine Community School, has given us the Three Hs –

HANDS, HEART and HEAD!

Our gathering was a wonderful mixture of them all and enabled us to have so much interaction, active learning and fun. True to their promise they once again showed us by example how the children and students, through introducing us to life on PLANET ENIP, can be co-learners with the adults and leaders in the learning process. They led us in a wonderful experience of story and play as the Mountain People, Rainforest People, Island People and Orange People of the Plains.



Photo from Pine website

As a member of the Plains People I found it wonderful to work with our group managing all the essential tasks for living such as hunting, gathering, making shelters, preparing food, learning the 'history' of the lands and passing on the stories.

We had to contend with the lightning beasts and other mythical beasts of the Plains as well as the Soul Sucker. Being a healer became an important role in reviving and dealing with wounds and life threatening forces!

Finally the Oracle awoke and gathered all the peoples and we told each other the stories of our experiences and feelings and integrated this with discussion about how the children fared when they had lived on Planet Enip.



Photos by Chris P



Photos by Chris P

We also made various creations and then shared a feast together and capped off the day and evening with a unique soundscape experience initiated by Luke Jaaniste who is a parent at the school, and a sonic and visual artist, writer and researcher. Once darkness fell over 'the Plains', Luke set up a lighted walkway. While he set up various electronic drones sounding across the field, all the participants chose a bell and walked/danced the lighted way and sounded their bells at each light. Luke had some minimal instructions such as if two or three people were at a light together they would each ring their bell two or three times.

A most ethereal, beautiful, reflective, sometimes amusing, way to bring to a close a fulfilling day.



Photos by Chris P

Sunday was packed with various participants sharing their expertise and skills of life and learning.

Patrick Vale is Head of Learning Technology at Pine Rivers State High School and volunteer network manager at Pine Community School.

With wry humour he shared with us the process and benefits of using Open Software in Education in the practical context of having initiated Pine Community School into that world. He introduced 'cyberilliterates' and others to new vocabulary such as Ubuntu, Edubuntu and Linux, phpBB, Moodle etc. He told us it was good to use, was relatively cheap and worked on a variety of computers.

Edubuntu is an operating system and software package which is the best free software in education easy to install and maintain. Ubuntu with its philosophy of 'Humanity to Others – I am what I am because of who we all are' rang some bells for democratic education.

Patrick also spoke of the practical role in creating digital portfolios, the use of student computers and online content, internet filtering etc. It will be interesting to follow Pine's process of using the open source and continuing to talk about how it could serve the digital needs of democratic schools. I am sure that many of us felt that Patrick's expertise and whimsical and understandable approach is a resource to be treasured.

Tina Beh, a Pine Parent and teacher led us in a session about how Community is central to the life of the school and encouraged everyone to share their personal experiences with Community.

Some of the ideas that were expressed included respect, love, growth, sharing, diversity, connections, 'the having of wonderful ideas' mess, how we support each other, belonging and authenticity in relationships. She encouraged consideration of unfamiliarity provoking thought and action, comfortable ideas become inadequate and that often community is untidy, complex and full of diverse values- a place where everyone is a learner and everyone a teacher.

She spoke of the value and place of the Talking Circle where parents come together to converse, examine and learn. The Choir which opened our first evening at the gathering, is another practical place where this also happens and contributes so much to the participants and the community.

As some of us were preparing the ADEC AGM I was sorry that I personally did not attend **Miriam Torzillo's** dance and movement workshop or **Brett Rolf's** session on "Parents in the Classroom". Miriam is a sessional lecturer and tutor in Arts Education and General Teacher Education at James Cook University. She explores how children, teachers and all in the community engage with and learn

through creative dance. The movement and laughter that came from the group was a sign that much was happening and being enjoyed. Brett is a recent Master graduate in Teaching from Sydney University and is interested in developing progressive education initiatives. Brett wrote up a summary of his session and it is available.

A very special thank you to the students, Maris, Nerida and everyone at Pine Community School, and especially all the people who provided such diverse and nourishing meals, and looked after all of us with such care and good humour.

I hope to have more photographs on our ADEC Website soon.

Special thanks to Bryn for all the work on the new site. I hope that you have all had a chance to have a look at it and we would love to hear your comments and thoughts and suggestions for making it work effectively for you. Here is the address www.adec.edu.au

There are also some photographs on the Pine Community website so take a look. <http://www.pinecommunityschool.org/ADEC>

ADEC AGM

Committee for 2012/2013

Cecelia Bradley – President

Sue Goode – Secretary

Keith Goode – Treasurer

Committee Members - Adrienne Huber, Chris Price, Juli Gassner, Maris Element, Blake Michel, Di Scullin, Wendy Pettit

Juli Gassner's proposed process for sponsoring an ADEC representative to attend IDEC was discussed and passed. Details for this will be put on the ausschools list if we are in the financial position to support someone this year. It has been looking unlikely for this year but if that changes I will let you know.

At the 2011 AAPAE Conference there was a suggestion that each school might take responsibility for an issue of the newsletter, We asked again at the conference if anyone would take up this challenge but no one felt able to do this. There was a suggestion that it would be possible to write an article or contribute something so if anyone feels the creative urge please get writing, drawing or photographing and send it to Cec before the end of Term 1 2013.

WE ALSO DO NOT HAVE AN OFFER YET FOR A HOST SCHOOL FOR THE 2013 CONFERENCE SO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE LET CEC OR SUE KNOW ASAP. BLACKHALL RANGE IN QLD ARE CONSIDERING HOSTING 2014 BUT ARE NOT ABLE TO DO IT NEXT YEAR.

Please consider becoming a member of ADEC.
For details visit our website www.adec.edu.au or contact us

Secretary

Sue Goode

c/- Currambena

205 Longueville Rd

02 94270644

secretary@adec.edu.au

President

Cecelia Bradley

president@adec.edu.au