



# early childhood education council of nsw inc

Vol 23 no. 4 October 2005

*This is the fourth newsletter of 2005 for the Early Childhood Education Council of NSW. Please refer any comments to the Editor, c/- PO Box 418 Leichhardt NSW 2040 [editor@ecec.asn.au](mailto:editor@ecec.asn.au)*

## Our Vision

The Early Childhood Education Council of NSW Inc. is a professional association promoting child centred practices through advocacy and professional development, informing on current trends in early childhood education and ensuring a high profile for early childhood issues.



### From the Editor

I would like to thank Suzanne Ziems for taking over the editor's responsibilities for this newsletter. I am enjoying a short break and will be touring around coastal areas of South East Australia that I have not had an opportunity to visit thus far. As many of our readers would be aware ECEC endeavours to provide an exciting and useful conference annually. We recently held our 2005 conference and this newsletter intends to give you a sample of the ideas and exchanges that occurred during the day in the 9 workshops that were organised.

### The Writing Continuum.

This session was presented by Johanna Bruce and Narelle Callan who showed us the program they have developed to assist in providing schools with a scope and sequence of writing and teachers with the grammar and a set of explicit work sheets to support the students.

They have created a program that:

- provides a solid platform for student development in the area of Writing
- Works on a wide range of levels and stages of development
- Is consistent from teacher to teacher despite teaching techniques and classroom practices
- Is a program that encompasses all students and is a relevant teaching tool that meets individual abilities, ages and stages of development
- Supports the English Syllabus outcomes and the State Literacy Plan

- Is user friendly in that all teachers can use it confidently despite different teaching techniques and strengths or weaknesses in this area
- Is flexible and adaptable to individual needs while still maintaining its educational integrity.

The program is WRITE ON THE MARK and consists of 2 books and a CD that covers all the text types in guidance with the NSW English Syllabus. It provides pro-formas that can help a school to develop a continuum of writing from Early Stage 1 through to Stage 3.

When teaching focusses on specific language and text type criteria, it facilitates a greater depth of knowledge; one that is far beyond the simple structural integrity of a particular text type. The pro-formas in these books have been generically designed so that they can be used to teach and assess writing across all KLAs. Even if you have been confidently teaching writing in your class, you won't believe how much more effective your teaching practices will become by incorporating strategies outlined in these books.

### Mathematics Numeracy

**Laurinda Lomas** is a Mathematics consultant with the AIS. At the ECEC Conference Laurinda talked about Maths Numeracy in the early years of primary school. She guided each workshop through some practical 'hands-on' activities and assessment strategies that can be easily and confidently used in the classroom.

We looked at how to plan activities in the Patterns and Algebra strand. Laurinda focussed the participants thinking on getting students to thinking about thinking and the patterning that ‘goes’ with the problem. We had to think like our students would in the classroom and think about and use the strategies to solve the problem other than ‘trial and error.

One example was students work in a small group each with a card that has number shapes on it. Students need to work together to manipulate material and solve the problem.

$$\begin{array}{l} \square + \diamond = 3 \\ \diamond = \square \\ \square + \bullet = 6 \\ \bullet = 4 \end{array}$$

This was a start in students developing algebraic thinking.

We were given counters and asked to try and solve the problem. By exploring patterning we can provide practical examples for students by creating *ab* patterns, using 2 colours and then only one colour but still continuing the *ab* pattern.

Laurinda provided some refreshing ideas on how to use some of our K–2 resources such as the 10 frame and the balance arm and 10g washers.

### **K-6 Schools and Family Programs at the Art Gallery of NSW**

**Victoria Collings** introduced her audience to the Art Gallery as the state’s leading museum of art and one of Australia’s foremost cultural institutions. She discussed the permanent collections of Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, Asian, European, Contemporary, Photography and Prints, Drawings and Watercolours.

Victoria’s workshop explored ways the Gallery makes the collections and temporary exhibitions widely accessible and discussed the wide ranging, enjoyable and relevant student programs. She also discussed the vast range of valuable educational resources to assist with

classroom/school visits and for use in the classroom.

The K-6 Adventure Tours lasting 1 hour are free and are conducted by specially trained volunteer Children’s Guides.

She also enlightened us on the Gallery’s temporary exhibition program which focus on art appreciating and art making activities, cross-curricular links and ideas for classroom activities.

The workshop examined Fundays at the Gallery. These are free performances for all the family that highlight the Gallery’s artworks through drama, performance, story-telling, music and dance.

Character performance tours were discussed in detail with the enhancement of props to show us how professional actors take visitors through the art collections.

Victoria also discussed strategies for looking at artworks. We examined basic questions to consider when looking at artworks and the formal elements and qualities. We considered games to play and ideas for props when looking at artworks. We completed each of these strategies using a print of one of the largest exhibition works at the gallery.

Victoria discussed ways to use the free material provided by the Gallery ie little books that have follow-up activities in them. She also inspired us with her introduction to Art After hours. Each Wednesday evening until 9pm, visitors can view the latest exhibitions, enjoy the permanent collection, be entertained in the Artbar and enjoy free talks and concerts as well as a free film.

Victoria was most inspirational with her fresh ideas and enthusiasm to make the Gallery even more user friendly than it already is.

### **Science and Technology**

Robyn Wild presented a workshop on Science and Technology. She described *Investigating Technology*, a text that she, Sue Harriman and Julie Turner wrote in 1996. While the book is

long since out of print, the understandings and philosophy on which it's based continue to be relevant for today's Science and Technology syllabus. *Investigating Technology* contains a collection of problem solving activities that can be used as part of integrated units K-2.

Robyn reminded us that as all children learn to interact with their world they begin to make decisions about what to do, how to organise their space and how to create the effects they want. They are involved in decision-making, selecting and evaluating, and choosing appropriate resources during everyday play activities. Consequently, their play depends on their being able to make design decisions.

The distinction between devising (or idea generation) and producing (the actual making) is often blurred for young children. Frequently they will begin making their solution, then ideas will occur to them and be tested and refined, as their making progresses. As they develop in their ability to visualise ideas, record their thoughts in drawings or words, and plan ahead, the concept of designing first, and then making their product, emerges. Imposing a rigid method of working (i.e. plan first then make) may dampen students' enthusiasm and actually inhibit their creativity. (Harriman, Turner, Wild, 1996)

Participants in the workshop created design briefs, which are summarised below. These tasks aim to develop a range of active learning skills such as: planning, researching, questioning, analysing, synthesising, reflecting, testing, hypothesising, communicating, decision-making, evaluating, brainstorming and observing.

**Challenge 1:** Create a "habitat-in-a-shoe-box" for a wild animal, incorporating camouflage for the animal.  
**Purpose:** To discover what animals need to survive, how they protect and feed themselves and where they live.

**Challenge 2:** Make a musical instrument.

**Purpose:** To explore how different musical instrument create different sounds. To design and make instruments that can be shaken, hit, blown or plucked.

**Challenge 3:** Design a personal cooling device to keep us cool during our long, hot summers.

**Purpose:** To investigate cooling devices which are available to us today. To research how our grandparents kept themselves cool when they were young.

**Challenge 4:** Design and make a vessel that can move our class teddy bear across our water trough.

**Purpose:** To investigate materials that will float and the technologies which could propel the vessel along.

**Challenge 5:** Design an area in our playground that will be suitable for frogs to live in and breed.

**Purpose:** To investigate frogs' life cycles, habitats and needs, and to be aware of the dangers which may threaten them.

**Challenge 6:** Organise our own excursion to the zoo.

**Purpose:** To investigate the transport options, costs and safety issues related to a zoo excursion.

### **Movement Skill Essentials for Children**

Angelee Boyd is the Head of Studies and Course Director for the Bachelor of Physical and Health Education Degree at The Australian College of Physical Education. Angelee presented research that showed that children are more likely to participate in behaviours (such as physical activity) if they enjoy it, with enjoyment coming from several sources. These include actual competence (how good they are at the behaviour), social support (encouraging the behaviour) and perceived competence (how good they think they are at the behaviour). Actual Competence can be measured directly by

a child's development of fundamental movement skills.

Angelee's workshop provided teachers with a mix of theory, practical activities and advice to encourage them to revamp your own fundamental movement skills (FMS) program where fun and equipment variety should be a major factor. The group undertook with enthusiasm many activities based on a tabloid style used a wide range of readily available equipment.

The obstacle course with a staggered start included, leap frogs, cone zig zags, log rolls on carpet, jump over balance beam, ball tag, cricket stumps target throw, goal kicks, 2 handed strike, and games such as spin the teacher, corner spry, over the river, fill the bin and floor time using balls. Angelee also provided extensive lesson notes to encourage the teachers to try the ideas when they went back to their schools.

Angelee also left contact details if schools were interested in contacting the college to have students and lecturers assist in developing a fundamental movement skills program. ([aboyn@acpe.edu.au](mailto:aboyn@acpe.edu.au))



### Flow charts as a tool for programming

Cate Ryan is the Deputy Principal at Punchbowl Public School and began the professional learning day with a presentation about how the school is using flow charts for teachers programming and also in the classroom to provide students with a visual representation of their learning. They also allow the teachers to

continually make connections to prior learning for the students.

Cate explained that the focus of the programming tool is to build in the Quality Teaching\* dimensions and ensure student learning outcomes are improved, that learning is related to their lives. The planning begins by asking the questions

- What do you want the students to learn? - this question focuses on the Big Picture
- Why does the learning matter? – makes the link to the students' lives
- What are you going to get the students to do (or produce)? – provides the assessment focus
- How well do you expect them to do it?

Cate also present data the teachers had collected from the students about their thoughts on the use of the flow chart model. Their responses included comments such as *'gives me useful information', 'helps me to remember', 'I like it because I can do some research and prepare myself for the work ahead'*.

Cate believes the use of flow charts and the quality teaching materials provide an effective tool for teachers to ensure the learning for their students is effective and relevant.

The ECEC committee appreciates the donations of the publishers Litcon and Kangaroo Trading who donated prizes for our lucky draw.



Additional notes on workshops will be included in the next newsletter.