



Curriculum Chatter

No. 4 2005

SCHOOLS FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

MAROONDAH NORTH CLUSTER

Conference

Tuesday, March 15 2005

On Tuesday, March 15, 280 teachers from across our cluster attended a conference at Box Hill Town Hall. The Maroondah North Cluster includes Croydon Hills PS, Kalinda PS, Mullum PS, Norwood SC, Park Orchards PS, Parkwood SC, Warranwood PS, Wonga Park PS and Yarra Road PS.

This conference was organised by our cluster in acknowledgement of the fact that teaching is itself a learning pursuit. We believe that by coming together as a professional community of educators to share and learn, we shall better equip ourselves to cater to the changing needs of Maroondah North students in the 21st century.

Our conference commenced with a keynote address by Dr. Michael Carr-Gregg, one of Australia's leading adolescent psychologists. Michael described some fascinating research which provides evidence of the dramatic decline in age of the onset of puberty. This has been attributed to many factors including nutrition, exposure to environmental chemicals (present in items such as some hair care products) that can mimic oestrogen and being raised in a blended family. "The implications of early-onset puberty are obvious: young children with mature bodies must cope with feelings, urges and differences from their peers that most children are not well-equipped to handle. For many children, early pubescence may be a significant burden to bear." Peter Montague.

He also spoke about risk-taking behaviours in adolescents and the specific needs of adolescent boys in schools.

Michael Carr-Gregg stressed the implications of these issues for educators, providing a very informative presentation and suggesting many useful strategies.

This was a very moving address and greatly enhanced our knowledge and understanding of the new breed of adolescent in our care.

Teachers then attended two workshops and or focus groups out of a selection of eleven. The workshops / focus groups included:

- "Mental Health Issues for Young people" Presenter: Michael Carr-Gregg
- Empowering students with a tool kit for a resilient life Presenter: Toni Noble
- Developing a Thoughtful Classroom Culture with Habits of Mind Presenter: James Anderson
- Assessment : What for? Presenter: Jenny Arnold
- Strategies for promoting Relational Learning Presenter: Tricia McCann
- Are your students socially competent? Presenter: Judy Haysom
- Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 Facilitator: Christine Horvath
- Integrating Curriculum - the holistic approach to teaching & learning Facilitator: Barb Nicoll
- Aligning assessment practices with VELs Facilitator: Karen Underwood
- Honing Habits of Mind Facilitator: Rajas Govender
- Mind Mapping applications Facilitator: Robyne Byron-Smith and Sally Morgan

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