ACHPER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 13th-15th APRIL 2015 – B de Hoghton

This conference was the best professional learning experience of my career. I left the conference knowing I had heard from accredited professionals. Their ideas and pedagogy could readily be shared with the teachers in my network.¹ Also, programmes were accessed that I might not otherwise learn about. These were corporatized programmes under the focus of well-being.

Sharing with my network

The highlight for me was the overview of the research by keynote speakers who shared their enthusiasm for the topics to a forum of all attendees - everybody heard those important facts and insights.² These sessions extended my knowledge of the research and included some noteworthy facts such that, children spend less time outdoors than the mandated 2 hours for prison inmates! Another memorable graphic showed a local map in England and the shrinking area any child of a certain family from successive generations was allowed to play in unsupervised. There was a drastic reduction from many hectares for the eight year-old in 1919 to only several meters to the street corner for the fourth generation eight year-old in the present time. These illustrations are also good for starting conversation about the reduced opportunity for and engagement with human movement. Sharing this whenever appropriate creates conversation and raises the concern of parents and teachers for today’s school children. Extending these conversations with staff ³to report on the research reviewed by the presenters is my way as a TRT to share my professional development experience.

Having given the current need for movement an historical perspective Griffin Longley showed sport is not enough; physical activity is needed throughout the school day. This gives credit to what many would like to have happening in their day and I learnt that the benefits are not just for the kinaesthetic learners. This was the focus of Dr Graham Dodd’s presentation at the Fritz Duras Memorial Lecture on Tuesday. He displayed research pointing to the neurological, physiological and learning consequences of even a minor movement such as standing and applied the findings by having the assembled stand for a minute in front of their chairs. This was an example of incorporating activity into our programmes for improved learning. An elective I chose, “The Transform-Us! Programme – beyond physical education:

¹ Standard 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities.
² Standard 6.2 Engage in Professional Learning and Improve Practice.
³ Standard 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice.
Integrating opportunities for children to move throughout the school day” with Prof. Jo Salmon introduced further ways to apply this research.

I’ll be suggesting this new pedagogy to the teachers in my family and extended family, including a final year P.E. teacher and sharing the statistics that support this pedagogy. I am impressed with the on-line availability of the presentations that came through yesterday, 7th May to attendees. As well as the occasional PP screen shots I took with my camera and notes, these digital copies help me consolidate my learning. Where the useful information is public access, I will be sharing this with my network of teachers and encouraging them to attend conferences.

The wellbeing aspects of movement are used by teachers to manage their own health but I am keen to enthuse staff of the benefits of standing lessons and 30 minute activity breaks and site the research done in Australia and direct them to C-PAN on-line. It is encouraging to be in the position to introduce new findings and pedagogy. I will incorporate it in the classes I teach and furthermore I will teach the children the reasons we do it. The digital copies of the graphics that are public access I plan to use in maths lessons for graph reading exercises and will be the basis of health lessons about their bodies. Being a TRT, a primary way to share my professional learning is via conversations around the lessons I have taught.

One elective showed an Adelaide school that had made use of Transcendental Meditation under the focus of well-being. This was a part of a PERMA programme used by the top public school. I googled TM and in my assessment I do not think it is suitable for a school to implement However the chance to critique with others around schools' wellbeing models that I take from the conference is beneficial.

The corporate sponsors’ stands provided conversation around implementing a range of wellbeing and health programmes which I viewed: one I will take up.

As a generalist teacher I chose mostly practical sessions with ideas to take away and try out. I thought this would be the main benefit from attending the conference. They are a valuable resource to enliven my programme. The surprising benefit so far has been the feeling of shared endeavour and exploration among the teachers and presenters and the social /professional connections I made. I wish I had engaged with professional bodies earlier in my career as this experience has reconnected me with the importance of what we do as teachers.

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4 Standard 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice.
5 Standard 3.3 Use Teaching Strategies
6 Standard 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning
7 Standard 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice,
8 Standard 3.6 Evaluate teaching programmes.
9 Standard 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities.
10 Standard 3.6 Evaluate teaching programmes.