504 eager science teachers and laboratory assistants from around Australia descended on Adelaide University for 3 days of sharing and learning. Presentations from excellent keynote speakers, experts in their field wowed us with the latest research happenings in science and technology. Dedicated teacher practitioners, passionate about sharing their ideas on making science more appealing and relevant to our clientele were the order of the conference. Not to mention the excellent food and wine, always a good measure of an excellent conference.

Highlights for me included lectures and workshops held in the new $100 million science and research building, The Braggs, named after two of Adelaide University’s greatest alumni, 1915 Nobel Laureates Sir William Henry Bragg and his son, Sir William Lawrence Bragg. Their research determining the molecular structure of crystals using x-rays continues to be used in medicine, chemistry, physics, mining and biology (Interestingly 2014 is International Year of Crystallography). This architecturally designed building based on the faces of a crystal houses award winning and a keynote speaker Professor of Physics Tanya Monro, a world expert in photonics who gained a $38 million grant for research in Photonics and Advanced Sensing. Her research was ground-breaking she was an inspiring speaker for study of all the sciences and encouragement of females in the field of science. The Decadal Plan for Chemistry workshop was enlightening, with interesting discussion on where to from here to lift the profile of chemistry from “it’s poisonous and when do we blow things up?’ The Stanhope Oration presented by Professor Chris Daniels was an excellent presentation on how to involve the community in scientific endeavours.

After the many excellent presentations I came away with renewed enthusiasm seeing young scientists making a difference with their love of science and realising that in a small way we (science teachers of Australia) had helped them get there.

I gained insight into many of the latest research techniques and knowledge to pass onto my students and colleagues. In particular one of the main ideas coming from presenters was the interdisciplinary nature of all the sciences and how they work alongside each other and as often as possible they should be taught this way and not in isolation.

The conference provided many different workshops to allow teachers to share ideas on better ways to deliver content, use technology more effectively and useful resources.
Forty Trade display stalls demonstrated resources available to teachers and schools, all designed to aid the delivery of content. All teachers came away with useful information and posters for display back at school.

The conference also showcased the concerns of all teachers across Australia, mirroring my concerns about lack of time to adequately prepare for classes and complete all the required content on time plus fulfill all the administrative and other duties increasingly expected of teachers. Lack of resources was also a big concern.

I will share my experiences and increased knowledge with colleagues via PD sessions in faculty meetings and wherever possible. Whilst at the conference I was able to share my knowledge, information and assessment tasks with a number of participants. This was reciprocated with some very useful resources.

I would like to thank ASTA and SASTA for all their efforts especially the supply of 3229 M&Ms I won in the calculating (guessing) competition.

I would like to thank the SA Teachers Registration Board for their generous sponsorship of me to attend CONASTA 63. It was a very valuable and interesting three days.

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