

Autumn 2004

Vol. 3, Issue 1

Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood C.E.I.E.C

<http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LED/CEIEC/>

CEIEC News

INSIDE:

PECERA Conference:
"Identities & Innovations"
p2

CEIEC Study Day p2

New CEIEC database
to support cultural
diversity p6

CEIEC training for
Shanghai staff p6

REGULAR FEATURES

"Research with a
difference" p3

"Training with a
difference" p4

New CEIEC papers
& publications p5

"Conference Call" p6

CEIEC HELPS GOVERNMENT TO HEAR CHILDREN'S VOICES

South Australia's Department of Education & Children's Services (DECS) has asked the CEIEC to discover young children's views about issues that affect them.

In March and April 2004, the CEIEC will assist DECS to enact an action learning strategy – "Including Young Children's Voices". This strategy asks children between three and four years old to talk about matters affecting them, such as their rights, responsibilities and aspirations; and it places a premium on doing so respectfully and ethically.

DECS anticipates participation by diverse settings, including kindergartens, child care centres and Child/Parent centres.

"Including Young Children's Voices" is part of the DECS response to the current national review and rewrite of *Gender Equity: a framework for Australian schools*.



In 2003, CEIEC researchers used an innovative action learning model to enable young children to contribute in real, concrete ways to a "Children's Plan" developed by the A.C.T. Government in Canberra. (CEIEC News 2.3)

South Australia's DECS believes that the CEIEC's model can build more democratic learning conditions that enable young children to develop the knowledge, understandings and capacities that enhance civil and ethical citizenship.

DECS wants to use "Including Young Children's Voices" to develop new gender policy. Shirley Dally (Gender Policy and Program Officer) has invited children to participate:

"I help to provide advice to the Australian Government on issues to do with the education of girls and the education of boys. ... I would like you to ... tell us what you would like to have in a gender policy to care for all girls and all boys and help them to learn and to enjoy being at kindy and later at school. A gender policy is a set of good rules and ideas that is good for all girls and boys and their learning together."

(Excerpts from Shirley's letter quoted with her permission.)

"IDENTITIES & INNOVATIONS"

PECERA Melbourne 2004

THEMES

1. Creating new images of children, new early childhood programs, new policy and new professional learning and development for a better world.

2. Researching for better worlds with children, families, communities and colleagues.

3. Using new and alternative research methods and strategies in early childhood education

LOCATION

The Sydney Myer Asia Centre, Swanston Street, Melbourne

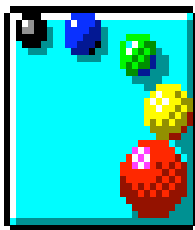
CONTACT

Janet Treweek

[education-
ceiec@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:education-ceiec@unimelb.edu.au)

INFORMATION

www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au
[/LED/CEIEC](#) then follow the links to "PECERA Conference"



CEIEC hosts the 5th international conference of the Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Assocn. (PECERA) in Melbourne, 16-19 July 2004.

The conference - *"Identities and innovations: shaping better worlds through early childhood education"* - explores innovative approaches to early childhood education in changing times. It pays particular attention to the roles that early childhood education can play in shaping peace and in creating respect for diversity.

The conference aims to enable and encourage participating researchers and practitioners to create networks around the conference themes. Keynote speakers include:

Dr. Julie Kaomea (U. of Hawaii)

Prof. Jiaxiong Xhu (East China Normal University)

Prof. Bud Spodek (PECERA President)

Ms Marcelle Townsend-Jones (Southern Cross University).

The conference program committee has received over 70 proposals for papers already. The proposals come from countries throughout the Pacific region, including Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia. They address topics as diverse as professional collaboration, children's science narratives and seeking the 'voices' of autistic children.

Many proposals come from teams of researchers who are trying to "shape better worlds" in their local context. They offer powerful insights into how global issues such as SARS, terrorism

and children's rights are affecting early childhood education in the region.

International early childhood reviewers are currently reviewing the proposals and authors will be notified of the results before Easter.

"Identities & Innovations" CEIEC Study Day

CEIEC will run a Study Day associated with the PECERA conference on 20 July. The Study Day is open to anyone, not just participants in the PECERA conference.

The Study Day - "Reshaping environments and rethinking practices" – draws on CEIEC's active program of collaborative research on innovation, social justice and children's rights.

In the morning, participants will tour innovative early childhood environments designed to create better worlds in and through early childhood education. They will take a 'virtual' tour of over a dozen such environments via the CEIEC's "INSPIRE" web site; and will tour an 'exemplar' local Children's Centre.

In the afternoon, participants will hear from researchers and practitioners who have re-shaped environments and re-thought their practices to create better worlds; and will reflect on how to create equivalent environments for themselves.

More information:

education-ceiec@unimelb.edu.au

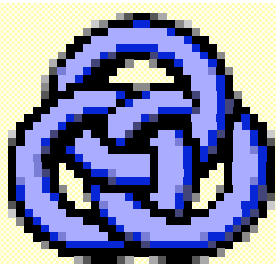
Research with a difference to make a difference



“Creating multicultural educational settings has been part of the broader struggle for human dignity”

CEIEC News readers met Merlyne in issue 2.1, which introduced her as CEIEC’s administrator. Subsequently, Merlyne became the Editorial Assistant to the Centre’s journal (The International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood) and enrolled in a PhD program.

CEIEC News 2.4 surveyed the range and diversity of postgraduate research at the Centre. That edition is available (as are all back issues) via the CEIEC website: www.edfac.unimelb/LED/CEIEC



Each edition of **CEIEC News** introduces the work of one of the Centre’s postgraduate students. This edition’s research student is **Merlyne Cruz**.

My PhD research draws on philosophical, ethical, moral and religious inquiry to ask: “Do early childhood professionals’ world views link with their commitment to creating culturally diverse societies? If so, how do they link their worldviews with their ‘diversity pedagogies?’”

Participants in the research are early childhood professionals who have been committed to teaching for diversity for at least three years and have expressed their commitment in public (e.g., presenting at conferences).

In present times of great social and technological change, teachers need worldviews that

unify our experiences, embody our vision of ‘the greatest good’ and express our judgments of good and bad behaviour.

We create our worldviews by asking age-old metaphysical questions: Who am I? What does my life mean? What can I hope for? What do I value? How should I live? Educational contexts pose similar questions: Why educate children? Who benefits from educating children? What values should guide our teaching?

Culturally responsive teaching and critical pedagogy addresses social oppression and challenges the political and economic structures that create injustices. In this way, creating multicultural educational settings has been part of the broader struggle for human dignity and it embodies teaching’s ideal – to maximise each person’s potential.

.... and then taking the research to the public

CEIEC Research Fellow Dr. Kylie Smith (a former CEIEC postgraduate student) addressed a public meeting on 19 March at Lakemba Children’s Centre, organized by the Canterbury City Council in New South Wales.

Kylie’s presentation drew on her doctoral research and was titled, “Throwing the baby out with the bath water or pulling the plug on early childhood’s taken-for-granted ‘truths’: rethinking child observation for equity and social justice.” Kylie works part-time at the Centre on the ARC-funded Research project, “Children’s understandings of race and diversity.” (CEIEC News 2.4)

Ms Sumalee Kumchaiskul, a CEIEC postgraduate student, will present a paper to a SEAMEO*-UNESCO Education Congress in Bangkok, Thailand in May.

Sumalee’s paper draws on her doctoral research and is titled, “Deconstructing teaching to reconstruct learning: a struggle in need.”.

Sumalee will appear in the next CEIEC News (3.2) as our featured CEIEC postgraduate student.

(* South-East Asian Ministers of Education)

Training with a difference ... to make a difference

KPACS and CEIEC look forward to continuing collaboration.

KPACS members attended CEIEC's 2003 conference; the CEIEC's Ms Heather Lawrence was a keynote speaker at the 2003 KPACS conference.

In July 2004, the CEIEC will assist the Kimberley and Pilbara Children's Services Association (KAPCS) in Western Australia to develop a 5 year Strategic Plan.

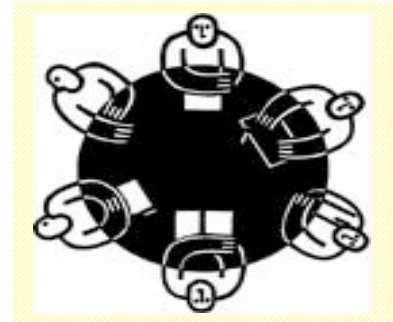
The CEIEC team will consult extensively with the KAPCS committee, run a planning day with the KAPCS committee and other KAPCS stakeholders; then compile the outcomes into a draft KAPCS Strategic Plan.

The CEIEC team will include A/Prof. Glenda Mac Naughton and Ms Heather Lawrence.

KAPCS initiated this development process to strengthen its ability to operate as an innovative organization that enables remote Aboriginal communities to develop culturally appropriate services for young children.

KAPCS wants a Strategic Plan that recognises and builds on its past successes, defines its current and future role and identifies its current and future challenges.

Specifically, KAPCS wants to strengthen its committee's current management and communication; to identify potential funding sources; to develop strategies to promote its activities (including its annual conference) to government and children's services; to explore partnerships with various organizations such as government departments and other peak bodies and agencies across Australia. Finally, KAPCS wants to achieve all this while promoting co-operation between regional services. No small task!



In early January 2004, CEIEC Director A/Prof. Glenda MacNaughton ran a day's professional learning for junior primary and kindergarten staff from the Pennington Primary School in Adelaide South Australia.

The day - *Critical reflection: what difference does the 'critical' make?* - was part of Glenda's ongoing involvement in the South Australian Department of Education's Learning to Learn project. As a Project Colleague, Glenda facilitates specialist learning for the Department.



In late January, 2004, the CEIEC's A/Prof. Glenda MacNaughton and Ms Heather Lawrence ran a professional learning session for staff from the Winkie Primary School in South Australia,

The CEIEC day - *Story telling: on the road to equity* - explored how staff can use persona dolls to develop the School's continuing respect for diversity in all aspects of its operations.

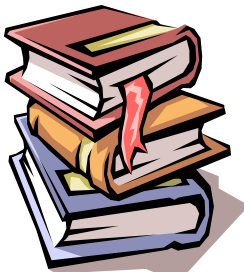


The CEIEC's Ms Jane Page has been appointed as the Chair of the Equal Opportunity in Education Advisory Committee in the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne.

Congratulations, Jane!

"I just finished reading CEIEC News and I realized that I never told you how impressed I am with this publication, with the Centre and your work. I see now that you are about to launch an international journal. Hooray! Congratulations!"

Janet Gonzalez-Mina (USA early childhood scholar)



CEIEC online supports teaching/learning about Cultural Diversity

The CEIEC's A/Prof. Glenda MacNaughton and Ms Jane Page have received a grant to develop a database supporting teaching and learning about cultural diversity in early childhood.

The database samples Australian and international best practice, integrating text, photos, video, audio and web links.

Initially, it will consist of 8 – 10 case studies linking theory and practice to support teaching and learning in the University of Melbourne's Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies (BECS).

The database will complement CEIEC's "INSPIRE" online database of virtual environments that promote equity. (See *CEIEC News* 2.2.)

NEW CEIEC PUBLICATIONS

- "Shaping early childhood: learners, curriculum and contexts" Open University Press.

CEIEC Director A/Prof. Glenda MacNaughton's latest book (previewed in *CEIEC News* 2.4) was published in February 2004. Several chapters were co-written with CEIEC staff, Associates and Research Fellows.

- "CEIEC Issues Papers." Vol. 1. 2003 (December)

This collects the first nine "CEIEC Members Briefings" and the first two "CEIEC Equity Issues" papers. ("Members' Briefings" accompany CEIEC members' copies of CEIEC News.) More information:

education-ceiec@unimelb.edu.au

CEIEC training for visitors from Shanghai

The CEIEC will run a two-day lecture and field trip program in April 2004 for seventeen early childhood professionals from the China Welfare Institute and the Xuhui Education of Public Organization in Shanghai.

Participants in the program - *Creativity in Early Childhood Curriculum* - will assess leading-edge thinking in the international early childhood field through a mixture of lectures, visits to early childhood centers and primary schools and meetings with Government officials.

The lectures address a range of topics in management, administration, research and curriculum in early childhood services. Participants explore creativity and innovation via the CEIEC's on-line teaching resource, INSPIRE (Inspiring New Strategies, Practices and Institutions for Rethinking Early education).



The CEIEC's innovative and energizing training meets the early childhood field's diverse requirements and demands. Its customized programs enable and encourage participants to link theory and practice, meet innovatory practitioners and reflect critically on how to apply what they learn in their own contexts and practices.



CONFERENCE CALL 4/1

“Pushing the Boundaries for Change” (Honouring the child, honouring equity 4)

“Conference Call” appears in each edition of CEIEC News. It keeps you up-to-date with outcomes & developments from the last CEIEC conference and the planning for the next one.

In a “Conference Call”, conference participants – past and future – can exchange views about issues linked with the conference. For example:

- If the last CEIEC conference inspired you to act – from reading a book to changing a regime – tell us.
- If the next CEIEC conference can help your work, tell us.

A “Conference Call” can:

- continue discussions from the last conference
- call for action on issues raised at the last conference
- suggest Special Interest Groups & Learning Circles for the next one.

A “Conference Call” puts you in touch with CEIEC’s constituency.

Contact Patrick Hughes:
patrickh@deakin.edu.au

CEIEC will run its fourth annual conference between Thursday 11 and Sunday 14 November 2004 at the Sydney Myer Asia Center in Melbourne. The conference title is “**Pushing the Boundaries for Change**”.

The conference continues the theme, “Honouring the child, honouring equity” that underpins each CEIEC annual conference. It features CEIEC’s orientation to grass-roots change and its characteristic diversity of events, including speeches, seminars, posters, media screenings, stalls, workshops, entertainment.

“Pushing the Boundaries” includes early childhood staff, managers, trainers, parents, teachers, researchers, policy-maker, academics and resource and advisory staff from across Australia and from overseas.

CEIEC Conference Organiser, Ms Heather Lawrence, told CEIEC News, “At the 2003 conference, 2/3 of the sessions featured practitioners in collaboration with researchers, policy-makers or academics. In 2004, we want to encourage even more diversity!”



Heather Lawrence



Richard Franklin opening CEIEC’s 2003 conference

We’re on the WWW!

“Pushing the Boundaries” has its own page on CEIEC’s website:
www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LED/CEIEC/conf04

Look here for the first “Call for Papers”, which invites proposals for papers, posters, workshops, etc. CEIEC would also like to hear from anyone wishing to run a stall at the conference and/or to launch books, videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs, etc. of direct relevance to the conference theme and aims.

Keynote & featured speakers

Confirmed so far:

- **Dr. Cairo Arafat**
- **Prof. Gunilla Dahlberg** **Ms Moira Rayner**
- **Ms Rita Swannen** (Bernard Van Leer Foundation, the Netherlands)

More keynote and featured speakers will be announced soon on the conference website.