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SAME TIME NEXT YEAR

Avril Rose, preschool teacher at Emmanuel Catholic Primary School in Mackay, shares her roller-coaster discovery learning tour at QIEU's Conference 2000.

Having reflected on Bernie Fraser's keynote address "Australia: A competent and compassionate country?" I felt compelled to attend workshops, which would assist me to really “make a difference” to those young people entrusted in my care. Young people who, in turn, will go out and take their place in the future equipped with the values which parents and educators instil now.

As a teacher, I am committed to providing learning environments which foster creative autonomous learning. Like many of my professional colleagues I strive to find new ways to challenge children.

As a result, I particularly enjoyed Ralph Pirozzo's workshop “Stimulating and nurturing academic, social and emotional growth: Is it assessable?”

Ralph was a dynamic presenter. His “hands on” approach to enhancing learning soon had us on a roller-coaster discovery learning tour. His boundless enthusiasm was so contagious that within a short time groups of people were working together to solve the ‘scientific’ problem of how to make a functioning hot air balloon with garbage bags, styro foam cups, string and a hair dryer.

While the experimentation and collective results were quite humorous the cooperation and learning which occurred were very real. Ralph demonstrated how all of the activities undertaken in the workshop could be assessed using Multiple Intelligences checklists and Blooms Taxonomy: Six Thinking Levels.

Further equipped with Ralph's infectious enthusiasm and briefed on diverse teaching strategies such as SWOT Analysis, Scamper and Concept Mapping, to name a few, we tackled our next challenge - generating a mathematical equation by stacking oranges, in this case styro foam balls, in five layers to create a square pyramid.

A helpful handout “Unlocking and Nurturing Your Students' Learning Potential” was given to all workshop participants to take away and share with others.

QIEU Conference 2000 was well organised and the participants were spoilt for choice when it came to selecting from the smorgasbord of workshops and quality presentations. Working in Mackay, I travelled a considerable distance to attend the conference and came back to work informed and revitalised.

Same time next year?