

Sustainable Development

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Project Title	Education for Sustainable Development in SW Victoria
Project Team	Dr Kathryn Choules (SiMERR Victoria), Mr Damien Lyons (Deakin University, School of Education)
Period	February 07 – December 07
Funding Agency	SiMERR
Organisational Base	SiMERR Victoria

Description

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Day 1 of the initiative was a Sustainability Excursion in which over 200 primary school students came onto campus and engaged in five primarily science-based lessons facilitated by pre-service teachers. Day 2 was a conference entitled Education for Sustainable Development: Local and Global Issues and Action attended by over 100 teachers, pre-service teachers, community members, industry and government. The framework underpinning the conference identified the need for all groups concerned about sustainable development to come together and develop strong understandings about each other and about the complex issues involved in seeking a sustainable future. It is understood that education for sustainable development requires an approach which combines knowledge (primarily science based and humanities), with skills (e.g., scientific skills, pedagogical skills, negotiation skills), values and finally the disposition to act.

The research component investigated and will develop further a framework for Education for Sustainable Development relevant to the regional context. This will include how the initiative relates to teaching and learning science and professional development for teachers. Interviews were carried out with five primary students, three primary teachers, two conference attendees, six pre-service teachers, two conference presenters and three academic collaborators from Faculty of Science and Technology.

Participants

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DAY 1 – Sustainability Excursion

- 7 teachers and 1 principal (Woodford PS, Koroit & District PS, Hawkesdale College, Panmure PS, Port Fairy Consolidated, Woolsthorpe PS, Cudgee PS)
- Approx 80 Deakin University pre-service teachers
- Approx 240 primary school students
- 6 Deakin University academics

DAY 2 – Sustainability Conference

- Approx 30 teachers/lecturers, from schools including: Camperdown P-12 College, Hawkesdale P-12, Cobden Technical College, Brauer College, Hamilton PS, Terang College, Emmanuel College, Monivae College (Hamilton), St Pats PS (Koroit), Koroit & District PS, SW TAFE - Warrnambool, Hamilton, Portland campus
- Approx 30 Deakin University pre-service teachers
- Approx 60 others (government, industry, agriculture, community)
- 100 participants from various sectors – government, community, agriculture, industry, educators, senior secondary science students

Findings

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- The interest in Sustainability makes it an attractive way for primary school students and pre-service teachers to engage with science (although note: many primary school students don't classify biological and environmental sciences as 'science'). Intensive, focused, authentic, supported learning experiences are effective approaches to help to overcome the anxiety many pre-service teachers have towards teaching science.
- A regional university is seen as an important resource by the education community (teachers, principals) but experience from the project showed that the initiative to create ongoing relationships needs to come from the university as teachers either do not have the time or feel that they do not have the power to initiate such a relationship.
- In order to engage students and pre-service teachers to live more sustainably it is vital to explore the values and ethics embedded in the knowledge production.

Outcomes

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- Poster presentation at the SiMERR National Summit – November 2007.
- Presentation Networking and Communication: Education for Sustainable Development in South West Victoria at the SiMERR Victoria Forum, March 2008.
- Seed funding obtained to explore ways to develop ongoing PD in Education for Sustainable Development involving Deakin pre-service teachers and in-service teachers in rural and regional areas. Preliminary contact with key teachers/principals has been enthusiastically received. Initial work on a possible ASISTM application was undertaken by Bec Clarke in liaison with Dr Coral Campbell.
- A DVD set of the two days was produced for use in both teacher education and schools.
- Two papers are currently being written with the working titles:
 - Involving local schools in science and sustainable living at a regional university: the lessons learned
 - Education for Sustainable Development: A critical theory perspective

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- Development of a new unit at Deakin — Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).
- Some pre-service teachers developing closer relationship with Faculty of Science and Technology staff and bringing their practicum class onto campus for a science day.
- Ongoing relationship between some pre-service teachers and the classes they worked with on Day 1 – development of a shared project with classroom teacher for ESD.
- Closer cross-discipline relationship with staff from Faculty of Science and Technology.
- Increased profile of science and sustainability in the SW of Victoria.
- Increased collaboration between the regional campus of the university and the educational sector and broader community.
- Re-energised teachers – with renewed commitment to educating on sustainability.
- Further development of local (regional) networks.

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