Editors Desk

Welcome to the November 2012 edition of Freefall. This edition has prize-winners, prizes to be won as well as prize-winning commentaries on educational matters. John Davidson’s verse “Between the Bells” has won the inaugural ‘Quick Write’ Competition this year designed to celebrate Literacy and Numeracy Week and Adult Literacy Week. This is a clever piece of writing with John subtly juxtaposing the view of the long day from both the student and teacher’s view. Well done John, and well done Michael Aldenhoven at CDU’s Bookshop for the generous prize.

Seamus O’Keeffe’s review of Sir Ken Robinson thoughts on the change of educational delivery and practice is tantalising. Is technology supporting learning, or, distracting students from learning. There are two valuable links for you to open and judge Robinson’s critique for yourself.

Vanessa Gibbett has present a very insightful contribution reflecting on her own experience in Indigenous Studies and how her knowledge has grown and shaped her since those first early student days.

B. Haines’ graduation speech is humourous, interesting and tracks one student’s journey to becoming a teacher. Is your story similar? It is, then why not send it in for the next edition.

Congratulations to the students from Wadeye who have successfully completed their teaching degrees through the “Growing Our Own” program. If you want to know more about “Growing Our Own” contact the program coordinator Therese Kersten at CDU.

This newsletter ends with another prize offer. Debbie Prescott’s “Environmental Corner” has information about a really worthwhile prize. Hurry, the competition closes soon.

Where’s Wally?

Find all four Wally’s and you could win a book from Education’s book collection. Email the page numbers along with your name and phone number to Amander for your chance to win.

Amander.dimmock@cdu.edu.au

2 book prizes to give away

Writers Wanted

FREEfall is looking for talented student writers, who can stimulate thought and inspires action, by providing news, opinions, funny stories and case studies. If you are interested in contributing to FREEfall, please contact Amander.

Get involved now!
Great prizes to give away.

Next issue deadline is 4 March 2013
The inaugural ‘Quick Write’ Competition this year was run to celebrate Literacy and Numeracy Week and Adult Literacy Week and to encourage SOE students to put their creative writing skills to the fore. The competition was open to anyone in School of Education courses. The quality of writing was high amongst all participants as you can see.

The winner
John Davidson’s *Between the Bells*
John wins a $65 book voucher from CDU Bookshop.

**Between Bells**

*By John Davidson*

The bell rings
A new school day
Students unpack their things
The teacher guides them in the way
A new school day
“Same old, same old”
The teacher guides them in the way
A story endlessly retold
“Same old, same old”
Radically different too
A story endlessly retold
And timelessly new
Radically different too
The students, each unique
And timelessly new
The dreams they learn to seek
The students each unique
Subjects still the same
The dreams they learn to seek
Some they come to disdain
Subjects still the same
Similar reactions as well
Some they come to disdain
But lunch is always swell
Similar reactions as well
When home time comes around
But lunch is always swell
How loved, how dreaded the sound?
When home time comes around
Students pack up their things
How loved, how dreaded the sound?
The bell rings

**Ragman Fire**

*By Matt Young*

The choice was laid out before me to step out or continue in
and I knew that there would be some kind of reckoning for
either choice, but I could not yet say what that would be. Did
the planet shift around me or was I the one adrift? Creatures
and the people, dark eyed and brooding, filled with stand-off
malice and on their guard against my new face or did I blend
right in.

Down amongst the changing shapes as the streets became
the ancient past I sought the light of the rag man fire which the
others had ignored. Pensive and peculiar the frozen shape
was set and my question rose before I knew and I had asked
the way back home having never even gone.

The hand glowed red and showed me to sit and not to speak, the creatures writhed and people passed.

As the speech took shape the trees leaned in and the ground
softened to hear as the words halted the sun and the path that
I had come by was lost. The sea now spread before me
offering its infinite depth and its total darkness and I knew that
when I entered the journey would commence.

This choice was offered to no other though millions before had
been and held the light of that crumbling sea tower as a far
off beacon leads. I asked again and the hammer cracked its
anvil ring reply and the moon snapped sharp and the rag man
watched and I was standing by the fire.

Nothing had changed around me and his eyes looked down to
my feet which pooled the water of the sea reflecting the stars
and the shrinking fire…..
Cultural sensitivity and educational outcomes
By Peter Hansford

The profession of teaching has always been challenged in effectively imparting skills and knowledge to those that do not share the same language or culture as the local mainstream.

In Australia arguably the greatest failure is how we fare in the teaching of Indigenous students. Whilst there is considerable good will and an ever increasing number of programs that seek to accommodate special needs and support for Indigenous students (e.g. Follow the Dream) the outcomes measured in terms of school retention rates, attendance and academic performance suggest that there is a growing disparity between Indigenous students and others.

Marcia Langton is a Melbourne University based academic who, whilst embroiled in current deliberations over the constitution, is also a champion of Indigenous education. She sees the lack of education as the primary cause of the social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people.

In corporate Australia there is now an increasing number of employers seeking to employ Indigenous people but there seems to be a shortage of people that are able to step up. Professor Langton believes that this is due to the fact that they are under-educated and therefore find the recruitment process humiliating.

Langton is critical of teachers that attempt to accommodate cultural sensitivity into their lesson plans. Christian Sarra, through his Stronger Smarter program, seeks to build resilience in Aboriginal students.

Whilst these leading academics are not necessarily at odds it seems that programs which DO cater for Indigenous "differences" may not be doing this cohort a favour.

Some may be more visual learners, some may feel that assessments bring shame, some may have problems with non-related white role models; at school they need to be accountable for their own leanings.

Teachers need to be aware of the social and emotional impacts on adolescent development and ensure that students are appropriately supported, that cultural taboos are avoided and that racism is not tolerated but wholesale adjustment of curricula and lessons denies the facts that they need to collect life skills that will enable them to participate fully in society, whether that be mainstream or elsewhere.

Book Review Competition
CDU’s School of Education (SOE) is pleased to announce a new competition, The SOE Set Text book review where Education students are invited to write a review about their set text from one of the Education units. Entries will be judged by SOE Academics.

What are the entry criteria?
Entries must not exceed 300 words in length. Students will be judged on their capacity to present a useful and original review
Send you entries to Amander Dimmock
Amander.dimmock@cdu.edu.au
Here are some of the books you can win.
“Child-like.”

By S Purcell

I’m only three and it’s only me.
I go to school every day and I always got to do things their way
Sometimes I can’t even say what I want to say.
I don’t like sleep time because they tell me to sleep

But I can’t help but move my feet
They say stop that so I just to do it behind their back
And I just have to lay there while they have a big chat
Sometimes I don’t feel hungry but we have to sit down on the chair
Sometimes I am hungry and they won’t let me eat, so not fair
I get angry if my friends take my things, they just tell me what not to bring
I don’t understand why they get angry and use a loud voice
I would like to be happy, if that was my choice
And they even tell me not to make that kind of noise
And they call me and my friends the naughty boys
I try hard to make them proud, and try not to do what I’m not allowed
But they just don’t care; maybe I don’t belong there or even no where
I tell my mummy I don’t want to go to school no more
But she still brings me here just like a chore
What does she do that for?
Why is this happening, what did I do?
Can’t somebody be my friend, can’t it be you?
I don’t want to play much because I might cause a fuss
Whenever they’re near I get a bit of fear
I think they don’t like me that is what I see
They never play with me or be my friend
Except when mummy comes they just pretend
I just want this all to end
They make me feel sad when they tell me off
And I hate it when they get angry and rough
I’m just a kid, I’m not very tough
I told someone but I guess that wasn’t enough
I wish mummy didn’t have to work anymore
We could be together just like before

Why do they ignore, what am I here for?
I wish I could just have fun
And not be scared of no one
It would be nice to have friends and play
And not be worried about what they might say
I wish they could say hello to me each day
I wish they could play in a friendly way
And teach me new things to say
I wish everything could be okay

These are common situations in child care
That may occur every day
The industry need to be aware
And hear what these children have to say
Educators need to be strong advocates
If you see something done in the wrong way
Do something about it for goodness sakes
Don’t make the same mistakes
There is no reason to be so fake,
We need to speak up on their behalf
We need to improve education of staff
If there is no passion for teaching and learning
Get out of the industry; it’s the children you are ruining
Bosses who favour certain employees
Grow up, please!
Let’s get in motion, lets create this potion lets show the right emotion
Let’s get the right notion
Learn the framework follow its guide
Let the children come to you to confide.
For this is a serious issue
Imagine if that was you
Where someone mistreated you and told you what to do
What if you were ignored and felt left out
Wouldn’t that make you want to scream and shout
This is just one aspect
And let’s not forget
There are those who are educators but the others need to improve or leave, there simply just mental cases!
Who would have no time for such magnificent beings?
Who would not be kind and have no reasoning’s
Children are our future, the past and the present
We should all realise children are heaven sent
Let’s make this happen!
Celebration of Teaching, Awards Ceremony - Excellence in, Teaching and Learning

All Graduating Pre-service Teachers and Mentor Teachers of 2012 are invited to attend this special night. Award Nominations are sought from Academic Staff, Teaching Schools and Pre-service Teachers.

CASUARINA

Wednesday the 21st of November @ 5.30pm
The Gallery ACIKE Building Charles Darwin University Casuarina Campus
RSVP by the 7th November 2012
To mailto:Kathryn.Odonnell@cdu.edu.au ,
T 08 8946 6156

‘The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.”

— C.S. Lewis

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

— Nelson Mandela
Competition closes December 7th 2012

To enter, students need to complete the following:

- Choose either an Early Childhood, Primary or Secondary setting
- Now choose either an inner city, outer urban fringe or a rural community in context
- Your task is to develop a multi-modal, interdisciplinary science and literacy text that will engage your students.
- Describe and reflect upon how your text engages students positively in the community in which they live.
- This reflective essay can be up to 1500 words.

Criteria

This prize will be given to the student whose work best demonstrates ...

- An innovative approach
- Application of best teaching practice
- Learning processes through experimentation and experience
- Critical moments in teaching and learning
- Highly reflective learning outcomes
- Effective communication skills

Prizes

A judging panel of Teacher Education academics from across Australia will select the winners of each category:

Secondary: $750.00
Primary: $750.00
Early Childhood: $750.00

The Changing Paradigm of Education: A review of Ken Robinson’s thoughts on schooling

By Seamus O’Keeffe

Changing Education Paradigms is a narrative from Sir Ken Robinson that provides an inspirational insight and overview of the current worldwide education structure, the effects that it is having on our school kids and society, and an invitation to consider what it would take to shift the current industrial concept of schooling to a more sustainable one.

As we proceed through the 21st Century we are constantly being presented with a raft of radical advancements, learning curves and developments in our technological use and capability. This in turn has a similarly radical impact in terms of change to pedagogical practice and education. In our current technological society, normal is a forever expanding concept. As individuals we are constantly distracted in and by our everyday lives and the technology that we wrap around ourselves. Bombarded by text messages, meeting alerts, emails and advertising on a continuous basis, we are in a constant state of distraction and become more and more disinterested in certain things as the years progress. As adults we tend to have the coping mechanisms in place to deal with this and concentrate on what seems or what we deem as relevant to our lives. According to Ken Robinson when the same or similar disinterest and distraction manifests itself in a child, our society labels them as Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) sufferers.

ADHD is a neurobehavioral or developmental disorder and it mainly impacts school-aged children and can manifest as restlessness, impulsivity, and a lack of focus. This can impair children’s ability to learn. ADHD has been a controversial topic since the 1970’s with politicians, teachers, family and the media all having varying input and opinions on the topic. Sir Ken Robinson provides an interesting take on the topic of ADHD, claiming, “Our children are living in the most intensive stimulating period in the history of the earth. They’re being besieged with information and coerced for attention from every platform: computers, iPhones, advertising hoardings, and hundreds of television channels. And we’re penalizing them now for getting distracted. From what? Boring stuff. At school, for the most part. It seems to me not a coincidence, totally, that the instance of ADHD has risen in parallel with the growth of the standardized testing”. He reflects on the increase in technology and standardised testing, seeing these as factors that mirror the increasing trend in ADHD prevalence.

The current National Curriculum acknowledges the advances of technology and its increasing place in the education system. “In our current technological society, the normal concept of literacy is expanding to include all forms of the media and electronic text. This is in addition to the alphabetic and number systems traditionally taught in schools. Digital text is spreading throughout every aspect of our lives. Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view, interpret and evaluate spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts including newspapers, film and digital texts, junior and early adolescent novels, poetry, nonfiction and dramatic performances.

Students develop their understanding of how texts, including media texts, are influenced by context, purpose and audience. These abilities vary in different social and cultural contexts according to need and demand” (Australian National Curriculum, English 2012).

While it is noteworthy the acknowledgement and place technology now has, the overall archaic structure of education remains the same. As a first step this needs to be changed, technology needs to be integrated into the curriculum in the same ways that reading and writing have been integrated. It needs to attain the level of importance that teaching the classics has traditionally had. The current curriculum leads teachers into teaching the curriculum and then adding technology on top of that. To integrate technology and to partner the students, teachers can over time create an environment of divergent thinking within the
classroom environment. By creating divergent thinking we develop the skills and abilities to be more able to deal with the problems of our times. As Sir Ken Robinson illustrates, in the past, the accumulated knowledge held in the brain was sufficient. In today's modern world, it no longer is.

Robinson argues that we need our children and students to make sense of their world, a world very different from the one we experienced. And, if we do want our students to make sense of their world, we need to create opportunities for them to think at higher levels, to think outside the box. He gives the following example of such divergent thinking: Question: "How many uses can you think of for a paper clip?" Answer: "Well, could the paper clip be 200 foot tall and be made of foam rubber?" The range of technology that today's children have adopted and have adapted to has created a new environment that they actively engage in for social stimulation, as well as an environment that has become second nature for them. To reach these kids and engage with them in a teacher – student role, you must encourage them to be active, reflective, inquiring and investigating in their learning, taking time to explore ideas. We need to provide them with the learning activities that create those opportunities. We need to be constantly learning and developing what is required to better equip our students and ourselves for life and work in the 21st Century. For more on the work of Sir Ken Robinson go to this link as the one above.

scienceblogs.com/deanscorner/.../education-as-a-roadblock-to-cr/ -

Issues Teachers Face when Teaching Studies of Society and Environment

By Vanessa Gibbett

As teachers in Australia today, it is very important that we have an understanding of our history. The history of Australia is complex and is often debated and misunderstood. On Wednesday the 13th of February, 2008, the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, apologized to the Indigenous population in regard to the stolen generation. Unfortunately the education received by many adults in their schooling involved a quick overview of the stolen children, followed by some dot paintings and possibly a demonstration of a didgeridoo. This has created a false understanding of the Australian culture and through politics, a lack of compassion and understanding of how Australia's history really looked in the last couple of hundred years or so has developed.

My Arts Degree revolved around Indigenous Studies and I remember clearly my first day in a tutorial. Most of us had chosen the topic for, on reflection, ignorant reasons. We wanted to learn more about Aboriginals and their culture, but first off was a week of learning correct terminology when discussing the topic. Did you know the word Aboriginal is an adjective? So it is important to say Aboriginal (or Indigenous) people. Second, did you know that Aboriginal and Indigenous are western words used to describe someone belonging to the land? I live in Adelaide so the Indigenous population who were born here refer to themselves as the Kaurna people. One last stereotype from Australia's post invasion history is the term 'half caste' and the other words associated with this. You either identify as an Indigenous person or you don't. Let me give you another example, you either identify as a Christian or you don't, an American or not, an Australian or not. The term 'half caste' is a Eurocentric racist view.

Having learnt this (and much more) in my first workshop I realized the complexities of trying to teach Indigenous Studies in a Society and Environment classroom. I started to panic that everything I knew was false and it turned out I had reason to be concerned. But not to stress. I found that there is a lot of help out there from Indigenous organisations and Indigenous people. Many of these people want to help classroom teachers educate students on the complexities of Indigenous studies.

I also realised how important it is to educate students on the proper information, and not the glorified image which was portrayed to me and many of my peers when I was going through school.

One of the implications is for teachers to get their own understanding and views correct. I mentioned briefly about the difference in opinion in Australia's recent history. By this I am talking about the invasion of white people versus the settlement debate. It is clear to me that it was an invasion as rocking up on a boat and declaring the land Terra Nullius, (a Latin word meaning 'land that belongs to no one') when there were clearly people there is a strong argument for calling it an invasion. The white Europeans were able to class the land as Terra Nullius due to racist views when arriving in Australia. Indigenous people were classed as fauna under the Flora and Fauna Act until 1967. Most of my teachers would have been born...
before this date, so naturally some may have grown up being taught that Indigenous people were not even people at all! These two issues alone may create implications between staff members of schools or staff and parents. Even outside of the classroom there are implications; try bringing the topic up when you’re out at dinner. I guarantee there will be heated debates at the table.

Once you have a deeper understanding of Australia’s real history, also having an understanding of our current society is important. In my opinion we live in a white society, invisible to most that are a part of it, this is just the norm. Since many people are not aware of the dominance of the white society, it is hard to change or challenge. Let’s look, for example, at the latest Big Brother. (If you hate it or love it, just work with me here for a moment!) Most people would agree that this is a normal (ok, that's debatable) bunch of people. Remember the key word here is ‘normal’. So, if the Big Brother house was filled with a couple of Australian Indigenous people, some Native Americans, some boat people, some Amish people, and some people from Japan how would the majority of people living in Australia react? Even with an open and accepting attitude, I’m sure many people would make a comment along the lines of ‘wow, that’s different’. For many of us our white view is the view we put onto the world. It is what many of us accommodate for without even realizing it. If we had Indigenous students in our classroom is it best to treat them like all the other children who identify (consciously or unconsciously) as being white?

I have trouble convincing older generations than I am, that Indigenous people are people with rights. It can be a terribly hot topic. I can only imagine how some parents would react if people around me, who are well educated and generally very open, close their minds to this topic. So if you have a deep understanding of the history of Australia over the past couple of hundred years the big question is WHAT do you teach and to what year level? As a Non-Indigenous person teaching Indigenous culture my options are limited and the history in regard to the invasion and the treatment of the Indigenous people is not something you’d want to begin in a lower primary classroom. This is not to say that as a person who does not identify as an Indigenous person cannot teach an Indigenous Studies’ rich curriculum. I have provided some ideas below to get a discourse happening about this important topic.

First of all teach your local country’s welcome. If you have younger students you could create a song or chant to a well-known nursery rhyme as your classroom welcome. Get in contact with your local Aboriginal centre. If you are in Adelaide this would be Tandanya National Cultural Institute. Here you will find a range of resources including a map of Indigenous countries, perfect for the classroom. Tandanya’s programs cater for the South Australia Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework, so as a teacher you can tailor your lessons alongside Tandayna to ensure you are teaching this topic correctly. They have very funny, entertaining and informative performances and although the art gallery changes all the time the exhibits provoke thinking about the contemporary Indigenous person and culture.

For an even more hands-on holistic approach try Camp Coorong. This is situated at Meningie, South Australia. Here students are able to learn about Australia as Indigenous land, specifically the Ngarrindjeri peoples’, and its history from Aboriginal Elder’s perspectives. The Aboriginal Elders are very friendly people, passionate about their land and enthusiastic about creating reconciliation.

If you can’t go too far for an excursion, invite an Aboriginal Elder to speak to your class. You can get in contact with Aboriginal Elders through your local Aboriginal Cultural centre. It is important to teach about our histories, yet it is also important to teach that Non-Indigenous people should not be sitting back sorry for what has happened but should strive forward to create reconciliation and learn about the amazing culture of the Aboriginal people.

References:
Graduation Speech

By Bridget Haines

Chancellor, distinguished guests, graduates, ladies and gentlemen. Firstly I would like to thank Dr Jack Thompson for his address.

Unlike Dr Thompson I am not a very experienced public speaker however I am now a teacher so it’s a given that I enjoy the sound of my own voice.

I didn’t always know that I wanted to be a teacher. I thought I was going to be an architect designing interesting angular buildings and having a wardrobe of solid black. So following school I went off to Adelaide University to have a go at Architecture. I soon realised I had very little talent in the design area and was more of an appreciator than a maker.

I think the final straw was the practical difficulty of trying to put together a balsa wood model, while living in a share house with no tools and then getting the 600mm model on a bus into Uni.

So three casual jobs and a year later I undertook a little study of the sociological and geographical kind travelling for a year and living in Edinburgh. Now, Edinburgh gets awfully cold and dark in January for a Darwin kid so I woke up to myself and realised that after years of being told I might be good at it that I should begin studying teaching.

On return to Darwin in 2008 I was no sooner off the plane than I was sitting in my first lecture, only 48 hours later! A great example of the flexible ease of access at Charles Darwin University.

I enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching and Learning and was grateful to see that practicums are a part of the course from Semester 1. I learnt quickly that children are not only fun, but very interesting and complex individuals. Understanding how they learn continues to be a rewarding challenge for me. And understanding how to stop them rolling around on the floor? Even more of a challenge!

Once my brain settled into the rigours and routine of attending lectures, writing essays and using the library for purposes other than social I was keen to learn more and took on a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Indonesian and international studies. Through my arts degree I was lucky enough to study a semester in Jogjakarta, Indonesia where I attended education lectures in Indonesian and furthered my prac experiences. Apart from getting typhoid in my first week this was an invaluable part of my university experience and I highly recommend it, well, to those of you not already graduating of course.

Back in Darwin I worked and completed my degree in June this year and was quickly able to find work around the corner at Nakara Primary school. I’ve begun my working life with the skills and knowledge I need and that is a credit to the university. The Northern Territory is only a small place but we are lucky enough to be able to train at home in a wide variety of fields. Graduating today we have had the nurses who will deliver our children, the Engineers and designers who will create the childcare centers and schools, the builders, plumbers and electricians who will construct them, the staff who will care for and teach the children in them, the social workers who will help their parents get through the tricky years, the business and finance managers who will keep the money flowing and the scientists who will care for our environment so that generations to come can do it all over again.

The Northern Territory gives us opportunity and we give it a great future.
Students Graduate from Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Inservice)

Wadeye students as part of the joint Charles Darwin University and Catholic Education program, “Growing Our Own”, were enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Inservice). They passed 8 units in a one-year intensive course in their community. Debbie Prescott, their CDU lecturer, travelled to Wadeye every week for the school year to help them complete their course. The assessments were very closely aligned to their school context and they also had previous graduates and a school-based coordinator to support them throughout the year. This in-school support is a strong feature of the Growing Our Own program.
Airbus’ ‘Fly Your Ideas’ challenge brings innovation to campus

Prize winners will get a week of learning with top Airbus innovators and €30,000

Airbus’ Fly Your Ideas – a UNESCO-backed biennial competition – is challenging students worldwide to develop new ideas for a more sustainable aviation industry. This year, victory will mean not only a €30,000 cash prize; the successful team will also welcome experts from Airbus’ Innovation Cell onto their campus for a week of learning on what it takes to become a true aviation innovator.

Innovation is at the core of Airbus’ vision for the future of aviation. This competition enables Airbus to interact with universities across the globe and students of all disciplines, sharing insight on how the industry leader is developing new technologies for the more sustainable aviation that future travellers are looking for.

“We are looking to engage and interact with the next wave of talents who share our vision for a more sustainable future aviation industry,” said Charles Champion, Executive Vice President Engineering Airbus and Fly Your Ideas patron. “We hope to stimulate ideas and international exchange within the global student and academic community to inspire the next generation of innovators.”

This year all rights to designs and creations from the teams will belong to their developers, giving them the opportunity to decide what to do should they want to progress their ideas further.

Global enthusiasm for Fly Your Ideas continues to grow, with 111 teams from 55 countries already registered to participate in the 2013 edition – and over two months still to go until the deadline closes for entries.

Teams hoping to make the selection for the next stage must submit their idea through the competition website by 7 December 2012.

Fly Your Ideas is part of the aircraft manufacturer’s pioneering initiative ‘Future by Airbus’, a vision of sustainable air travel for 2050 and beyond.

This year the topics for the competition are: "Energy”; “Efficiency”; "Affordable Growth”; "Traffic Growth”; "Passenger Experience” and "Community Friendliness.” These have been identified by Airbus as the six key challenges of the 21st century for a sustainable aviation industry.