

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Bringing the Web of Life to Life

Helene Fisher, The Work that Reconnects WA

Abstract

Your local nature reserve or wetland, a forest – or the school garden – can be the dynamic classroom through which students can learn first hand about interrelationships in nature.

As they build their knowledge of endemic and introduced species and discover their interrelatedness, students are building their systems thinking capacity. So when they then hear the interconnected ‘voices’ of an ecosystem ‘in council’, the emergent scenario acts as a powerful information base for devising motivated, collaborative action-based projects.

The “Council of All Beings” is an engaging process in which students speak as and on behalf of a local species which they have researched. It gives them an embodied experience of life from the perspective of a voiceless plant or animal, enabling them to see the often invisible effects of certain actions of humans.

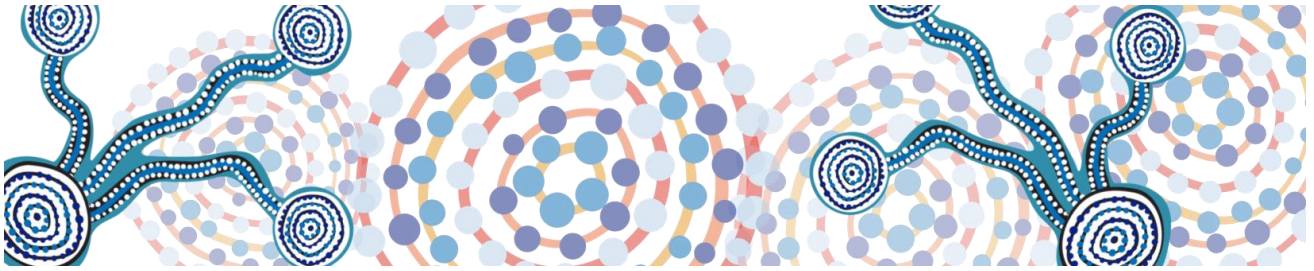
A “Council....” can form the pivotal point in a program which addresses curriculum requirements of STEM, English, Health Education, HASS and The Arts as well as the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability. Supporting materials for preparatory and follow up activities have been used by a number of schools to build an adaptable program into their curriculum. Such a program would cover materials for practicing skills of systems thinking and critical and creative thinking, with many possibilities for practice through forms of written and verbal expression. As well, the local world of nature, however small, can provide opportunities for observing, investigating, analysing and recording data. It’s as much about what students discover and identify as what aspects of nature are missing!

Helene will give an overview of past inspiring programs pivoting around a Council of All Beings at both primary (year 5 & 6) and secondary levels. Workshop participants will hear and engage with possibilities, strategies and activities for integrating it into and supporting the primary and lower secondary curricula.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pay respects to their Elders past and present.

<https://workthatreconnects.org>



Speaker Profile

Helene brings with her a lifetime's teaching experience, including 20 years in Environmental Education. As part of this, she has facilitated the Work that Reconnects, from which the Council of All Beings for students is drawn. For Helene, the "Council" provides a transformative educational experience bringing together the head, heart and hands within a holistic framework. Through it, participants develop a deeper sense of relationship with the natural world and understanding of their interconnectedness with it. She delights in seeing students motivated to engage in resulting projects through which they care for their corner of this planet which we share.

Website links

→ Earthwell.com.au

