

The AGECS Fellowship Programme for Leadership and Change was launched at the AGM in 2014. The Fellowship Programme is open to AGECS members. This is the report from **Josette Nunn** which was first published in *AUDAX* 92, 2016

**The “Art” of Dreaming and the “Praxis” of Imagining through the interface of Positive Psychology, human systems and early childhood environments - Josette Nunn**



**The Journey into Positive Education**



**Can the bubble keep growing – is it resilient enough – what are the climatic conditions**

Positive psychology is a relative new branch of psychology that supports individuals, communities and organisations to thrive and build on their strengths and virtues. *the Focus is placed on wellbeing, flourishing character, meaning and virtue.* (Gable & Haidt, 2005)

*The indicators from early brain science research, the social sciences, educational fields and economics highlights how crucial the early years are for the long term development of children – responsive warm nurturing environments, secure relationships, attachments and the building of “rich varied learning opportunities all of which lay the strong social, emotional foundations and develop the dispositions for positive long term resilience”.*

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2006, p.7) states that teaching for wellbeing is the key aspect of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. We are aware of the broad range of social issues in our lives both locally and globally that have enormous repercussions on the lives of children and families. However the effects of everyday life - the juggles of families, work and life where these complexities also cause “moments in time” (struggles) for both children families as well as educational practitioners.

So how do we find the essence of direction to support mechanism for the human systems with in our lives.

Whether the complexities are small or large, new paths are required to point our directions. As Martin Seligman reported (2011), *Elizabeth Lesser (a wellness writer) suggests – so how do we resolve our most divisive conflicts and solve our most difficult problems? “Our world’s nations wellbeing and the earth’s wellbeing is at the heart of this”*

Every day within any early childhood setting and other fields of society there will be conversations involving how to navigate the human systems within the organisation where the interface of our ontology, perspectives, values, principles and practices evoke the spheres of questioning and the dissecting of information in order to understand them.



### ***“ The ontology of the bubble“***

We all encounter these thresholds where the complexities within our work as educational practitioners needs contemplation and confrontation to meet the optimum legacy for the children, families and the staff within our centres.

However in addressing our navigation of the existential interfaces that occur within our days there is still the tendency to view the woven fabric of our organisations with the linear lens of functionality and causes even with the use of strengthening approaches . We now need the interface of our complexities to be reflected from other perspectives, “as if we keep trying to do things the same as we have always done hoping the results will be different then we are not facing reality” (Stephen Covey).

As Albert Einstein suggests *“The significant problems we face cannot be solve at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them”*. (Positive Education Lecture 18/2/15).

What then are the dreams and wonderings of children whose lives are at the interface of the complexities that are in their everyday lives. How does the essence of the bubble(their well being) stay resilient and flourishing after it has popped – do the children try and grow another bigger bubble, give up, or wait and come back to grow another bubble.

The coming back to grow another bubble with “hope” was why I enrolled in the Positive Education course within the new Centre for Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne, so that I could strengthen my knowledge of how to teach the process and skills that build the world to thrive.

What I found from the course was much more than I anticipated. The group consisted of 20 passionate participants who came from all over Australia and overseas with a wide range of professional sectors - business, medical, health, social welfare organisations, education and early intervention. Our weekend sessions were ignited by Dr Peggy Kern who welded the group through the lens to flourish and inspire the light of positivity with in our work and own lives.



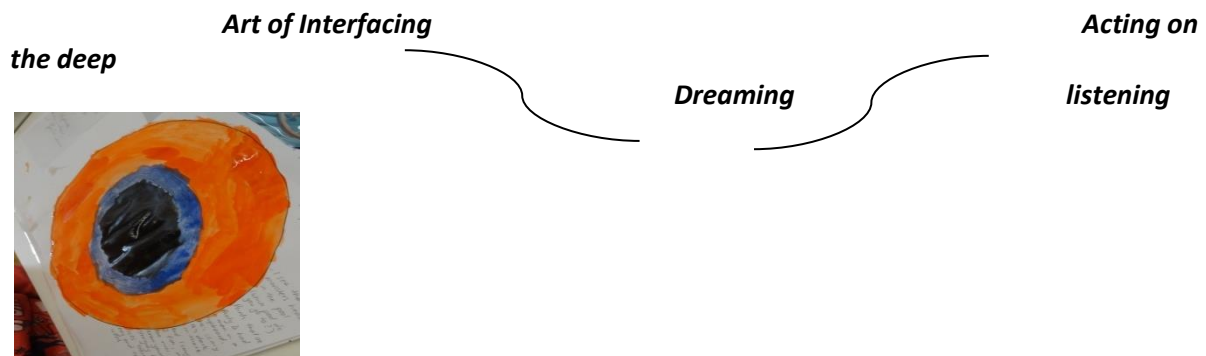
***“Knowing your navigational directions through standing firm whilst the earth is moving under your feet”***

Within the course there are two subjects –

*Introduction to Positive Education* which focused on the empirical science of positive psychology – the brain science that underpins learning and development. A **range of well-being frameworks** and the important factors associated with well-being such as **resilience, hope and gratitude**. Along with **what hinders healthy life trajectories**.

The second subject *Building Positive Education Communities* constructed the **groundedness** ( like **building the best compost in the world** )and the evidenced based systems ( **the nutrients to bring alive** ( **the flourishing**) for growing frameworks of positive education into your curriculum and pedagogy.

I am now designing into my pedagogical practices and daily program the praxis of “Positive Organisational Science” through the



***To ask the question:***

*“What can happen when we stand firm on the tight rope of positivity and use the questions of ‘the bubbles’ of our successes; to dream and imagine a compass that navigates only with the shining lights of what is working well and then use this as a ‘tool kit’ of our imagination for the desired changes at our interfaces?”*

*In asking a group of kindergarten children the meaning of Hope / Dream – this meaning wraps ‘the art of a child acting from the deep listening around him.’*

*Hope is “So I won’t let go”*

*“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass or only knowing how to dance in the rain” for many children it is about as Ann Pelo writes “coming to know the goodness of the rain “*

This is just a small snippet of the learnings from the Positive Education Course at Melbourne University and gratitude goes to the dedication of past and present early childhood professionals who have paved a path for the opportunities that are available through The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies and I look forward to sharing more of the learnings with many practitioners. Thankyou for the opportunity and to the many other early childhood practitioners who's conversational learnings continue to inspire the sector.

As a dear friend and colleague highlights" You take the best of the past to imagine the dance of the future."

Rachel Carson writes from a 'Sense of Wonder' "The sharing includes nature in the storm as we as the calm, by night as well as day.. it is not so important to know as to feel"