Dr Jane Erricker

*Happiness (Keynote Address)*

I think it is interesting that we know from experience that happy children are healthier, learn better, display more emotional literacy and are better behaved. But to talk about happiness in education is somehow ‘soft’, and instead we talk about emotional intelligence, self esteem and anger management. The influence of religious ideas of original sin leads us to believe that we must suffer in order to live and to learn and that to expect happiness is unreasonable and we pass these ideas on to our children. However, in Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle (384-322BCE), proposes that the good life for ‘man’ is life of happiness and that happiness is an activity of the soul in accord with perfect virtue. A man is happy when he uses his reason and behaves moderately. Epicurus (341-270BCE), a hedonist, thought that "friends, freedom and thought" was the path to happiness. These philosophers had no problem with the concept. So I propose that we should seriously consider the happiness of our children in our institutions of education. In this talk I will investigate what happiness means now and how we should strive for a life of happiness. If happiness is what we aim for ourselves, and for our children, we can assume that the greatest happiness for the greatest number should therefore be the utilitarian aim of education, the health service and politics. These institutions of the state should thus explicitly address the happiness of citizens, including children. This talk will examine how the happiness of our children could and should be addressed within our societies, linking spirituality, happiness, education and health.

Prof Jack Miller

*Eros and Education (Keynote Address)*

This talk will explore the meaning of Eros and other forms of love and their relationship to education. The Greek categories of Eros, zenia, philia, storge, and agape will be used a framework for this discussion. Each form will be examined and their possibility meaning in an educational context. Up until the modern age Eros was seen as central human life. Hesiod suggested that Eros was the most ancient of the Gods and his function was to “coordinate the elements that constitute the universe”. Eros was the personification of the forces that bring harmony out of chaos in the universe. Later Eros was linked to human love through the myth of Eros and Psyche. Emerson used the term in the original sense as he believed that “Eros represents the essential cosmic force, the glue that holds the universe and humanity together”. Bringing Eros back into our discussions of education could help move the dialogue away from its limited focus on accountability to a more inclusive vision. Martin Luther King’s Jr vision of the Beloved Community is a powerful vision that links both love and justice. The talk explores how the Beloved
Community can also be an inspiration to educators. The final part of talk will focus on how teachers and schools can bring Eros and the Beloved Community into their practice. This can be done through caring, looping, loving kindness practice, and presence of the teacher.

**Associate Professor Louise Rowling**

*The Role of Spirituality in Health and Wellbeing for Children and Adolescents in Contemporary Society (Keynote Address)*

Young people in contemporary society as in ages past, are given labels such as the bubble wrap generation, the wired up generation and the instant generation. These reflect their perceived lifestyles, beliefs and values. Additionally, the context of their lives influenced by global events that have created personal, community and national insecurity, has resulted researchers paying greater attention to understanding the links between spiritual and mental health and wellbeing. A sense of meaning, purpose and coherence connected with goals in life are important for mental wellbeing. But research indicates that the degree of connectedness a young person experiences towards school and schooling is also an important determinant of their mental wellbeing. The whole school environment and all school community members can facilitate the development of young people’s wellbeing. This presentation will draw on these concepts and a decade of experience in MindMatters, the Australian Mental Health Promotion and Prevention program to explore the dimensions and practice that are required to support young people.

**Associate Professor David Tacey**

*Spirituality, Health and the Mystery of Healing*

The area of spirituality and health is beginning to develop as an academic field of enquiry, and this new perspective is beginning to be incorporated into training programs for medical doctors and health practitioners. Spirituality does not have a hugely positive reputation in therapeutic circles. A cloud of suspicion hovers over the issue of ‘spirituality’ in the health and therapy professions. Part of the problem arises from the fact that a lot of activities go on under the umbrella term *spirituality*, and some of these activities warrant a critical eye. However, as an offspring of the Intellectual Enlightenment, medicine itself has had a narrow and prejudiced view of the human being and physical reality, and has been systematically blind to the spiritual possibilities of our experience. With the challenge of postmodernity, and the breakdown of many assumptions that are part of our Enlightenment heritage, the spiritual has emerged with new force and new credibility. There is an air of receptivity today that was not evident even 10 or 15 years ago, and this is due to the change in the spirit of the time, and to the sense that ‘spirit’ can be understood apart from the hegemonic forms of the church that the Enlightenment opposed. Spirit can be claimed as part of the anthropology and psychology of human nature, and understood in its own terms, apart from
any institutional authority. In this paper, I review these problems and concerns, employing a perspective that derives from my professional background in Jungian depth psychology, spirituality studies and cultural studies.