

The Big Picture of Education

August 2011

Child Side School is an intentionally small Reggio Emilia inspired community school located in Boyanup that has embraced the aligned philosophies of Big Picture Education (BPE) Australia. The BPE model of education is based on one student at a time, a community of learners and is small by design. BPE is all about personalised learning and ensuring that every student makes progress.

Attendance at a week long BPE Leadership course in Melbourne has reinforced for Leonie O'Connell (co-principal at Child Side) how the innovative approaches supported by BPE incorporates 21st century skills into the curriculum in a meaningful way for every student, engaging each of them passionately.

Leonie stated that 'meeting with a wide range of teachers from across Australia that are engaging with the BPE approach to make a significant difference was very exciting and engaging for me as a hands-on educator and co-principal'.

Leonie went on to discuss how 'both BPE and Reggio Emilia put the learner at the heart of the curriculum and engaging each learner is at the heart of our school and playgroup at Child Side. It is all about meaningful learning and working side by side with a range of interested and motivated adults. Each child matters at Child Side and because we are small by design we pay attention to the 'voices and choices' of the children'.

John Hogan, co-founder of BPEA and School Consultant explained how 'true learning takes place when each student is an active participant in their education, when their course of study is personalised by teachers, parents and mentors who know them well, and when school-based learning is blended with outside experiences that heighten the student's interest'.

Child Side is also part of the ANSN (Australian National Schools Network) which supports and encourages innovative practice.

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