

A Flowing Through
By David Esling

A Flowing Through is an apt name for David Esling's book.

There is a flow through of curriculum ideas, skills and techniques that ultimately lead to the students achieving a high quality finished outcome that is unique to each individual child.

The examples documented in David's book are fully described with extensive use of photographs to add meaning for the reader. All provide an excellent resource of ideas and way of teaching primary school students. With appropriate planning other topics could be explored in a similar manner.

What is exciting for me however, is David's preparedness to actively engage students in the learning process. By discussing the subject at hand with students, exploring ideas, and negotiating aspects of the lesson with kids, they inevitably begin to own the process. There is a shared commitment to negotiated outcomes. The risk for the teacher is minimal but the growth in students' self esteem and self confidence is immeasurable.

This is not something that can be adequately assessed by National Testing programs.

I would argue David's approach to teaching and learning equips children with life long skills such as; the capacity to work cooperatively with others, able to discuss ideas and how they might implement those, to work as team members, to take risks, to experience success and be valued for who and what they are.

Teaching is at its best when there is a high level of mutual trust developed between student and teacher. Relationships between them are important to enable the teacher to develop an understanding and appreciation of each child's world and the issues that confront them. Such an approach is evidenced by David and his class's exploration of 'Feelings' and the high level of empathy required.

The challenge to you, the teacher, is to have a go, to get started. Allow yourself to develop and grow as you go. Trust yourself and the kids and enjoy the journey. Every now and then stand on a hilltop, survey the world around you, evaluate your progress to date, then plan the next step of your journey with students.

Exploring and implementing ideas in David Esling's book **A Flowing Through** is an excellent first step.

Good luck.

Bill Edmunds

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