

Lorraine Wilson worked with teachers and students at Moonee Ponds West for 30 years. She was an educator and innovator who always put students at the centre of her extensive work. In many of her professional publications, work from Moonee Ponds West classrooms was visible. In fact, it was due to Lorraine's work with teachers at Moonee Ponds West, that we had many visits from educators from all over Australia and around the world.

Lorraine researched in classrooms, with students and teachers. Her pedagogy was always tested many times before being written for other educators to read. She was practising inquiry before it was formally acknowledged, constantly gathering students' questions and understandings. Student voice was expected and pivotal when Lorraine worked in a classroom. Critical thinking was evident in all of Lorraine's work, as she modelled deeper levels of thinking, analysis and questioning about all types of texts, and because she modelled it, students and teachers followed her lead and practised it.

Those who had Lorraine come into their classroom learned so much from the softly spoken, gentle literacy expert, who would quietly beckon students to move closer to hear the words as she read a carefully selected text, whether one of her own, or from another author. A hush would descend on the classroom as children inched forward, leaning in to hear Lorraine read. She had them in a trance, wrapped in a cloak of language, taking even those who seemed reluctant into the world of texts.

Lorraine imparted her knowledge freely and willingly with all teachers who wanted to learn. We learned enthusiastically as she gently guided us with questions and observations, showing us what to look for as we went about day to day teaching. She demonstrated time and again, that ALL children can learn to read and write. That developing meaningful connections and relationships with children in our classroom, finding their interests and using this to choose texts would hook them into reading and build a love of reading.

Perhaps her most renowned and highly regarded work came in her work about Language Experience. Taking experiences and turning them into writing and reading with and by children. Her book 'Write Me a Sign' was reworked and rereleased by the Education Department in 2010 to shine a light on the practice that for some unknown reason, was not as well-known as it once was, (except for any who worked with Lorraine).

The Hall programme was initiated by Lorraine, as she saw the opportunity for children to learn through play, and yes, there is that link to language experience. If children participated, they could talk about it and then write about it, publish their writing and read it. Experiencing success and feeling wonderful as they read their writing to the class.

Lorraine's legacy at Moonee Ponds West is visible in our belief of our children, in our desire to build a love of reading, in the selection of rich books with layers of meaning, in our understanding that to create great writers children need to write, in our knowing that children deserve to be heard and what they have to say and show us is so very important.

Vale Lorraine.