

Lets talk about it – The role of stories in reflecting, learning and on going action for sustainability

Leone Wheeler, Britt Gow, Jodi-Anne Smith & Julie Harris.

Structure of workshop 11:00-12:15pm (75 mins) - Leone

- Welcome to workshop, who we are, what we will talk about - Leone (5 mins)
- Introduction to SCLPfS & MSC – Jodi-Anne (5 mins)
- Conversation between researcher & case study participant - Leone & Britt (20 mins)
- Examples of outcomes from other VIC case studies – Jodi-Anne (5 mins)
- Overview of MSC questions used in SCLPfS – Jodi-Anne (5 mins)
- Discussion & sharing on stories – Leone, Britt & Jodi-Anne (20 mins)
- Sustainability Victoria's use of stories – Julie (10 mins)
- Question & Answer & Close – Leone (5 mins)

Who are we? Our use of stories – Leone

Leone Wheeler, SCLPfS researcher / Manager RMIT Uni,
research, writing & analysis of stories

Britt Gow, Teacher, Hawkesdale P-12 College, participant in
case study, writing stories & reflecting on their usefulness

Jodi-Anne Smith, SCLPfS researcher / project manager
RMIT Uni, research, writing & analysis of stories

Julie Harris, Sustainability Victoria, Sustainability Education
Manager, SV's use of the stories methodology in evaluation
of SV programs

Introduction to SCLPfs – Jodi-Anne

- 3 yr ARC Project 'School-Community Learning Partnerships for Sustainability'
- Documenting 16 VIC case studies of leading schools as nominated by our partner investigators (SV, CERES, SECCCA, SYR, ISV, FYA)
- Quantitative data already exists documenting outcomes in reduction of resource use (water, energy, waste).
- We wanted a qualitative method to capture stories of what they've done, how it went, what helped and hindered, what they'd recommend to others starting SCLPfs



Overview of how we used MSC Technique – Jodi-Anne

- Stage 1: Focus group interviews to generate data for 3 different stories
 - Encourages individual reflection
 - Discovery of insights
 - Ideas for next steps
 - Advice for others
- Stage 2: Sharing of stories between the groups involved & development of a combined story
 - Helps see each other's perspectives
 - Highlights discrepancies or false assumptions
 - Enables clarification of purpose
 - Planning of next steps
 - Deciding on ways to overcome obstacles & meet needs of all involved
- Stage 3: Sharing of stories between case study personnel to facilitate learning & insight.
 - Celebration of achievements
 - Enables others to learn from the experience of & advice from others
 - If others use the approach & share the wisdom gained it creates a cycle of continuous learning & improvement.

Hawkesdale P-12

– People Power Together We Achieve Sustainability

- **Activities include**
 - Tree planting (a few to 444,000!); Improvement of local parks and reserves (Apex Park, The Recreation Reserve, The Commons); Waste management, pest control and conservation of endangered species, conferences (Kids Teaching Kids)....
- **Partners invited**
 - Parents (also member of HADDAC); Moyne Shire Council (Youth Development Officer; Hawkesdale and District Development Action Committee (HADDAC) and others such as Landcare, DHS, GHCMA....
- All agree - education, communication and partnerships drive sustainability
- **Most significant change** was the development of the skills and abilities that students learn as a result of being involved in a number of environmental projects during their school years.



Hawkesdale P-12 Case Study – conversation Leone/Britt

- Insights generated for school-community from story process
- Insights Leone had on effectiveness of MSC & how to use it
- Outcomes of partnership with RMIT
 - Britt and students made a video
 - Leadership in Focus Journal Article
 - Joint presentation at 2011 Toolbox for environmental change
 - Joint presentation at WEEC
 - Presentation at CUEXPO2011 in Waterloo, Canada using video
- Show video



Examples of outcomes from story process at other VIC case studies – Jodi-Anne

1. Altona & Altona Nth Child Care Centres
2. Balnarring Primary
3. Doveton Nth Primary
4. Emerald Primary
5. Hawkesdale P-12 College
6. Mill Park Secondary College
7. Montrose Primary
8. Port Fairy Consolidated Primary
9. St Francis of the Fields Primary
10. St Judes Primary
11. St Monicas Secondary College
12. Strathfieldsaye Primary
13. The Patch Primary
14. Tooradin Primary
15. Western Port Secondary College
16. Woodleigh Secondary



Western Port Secondary College

- Activities: AuSSI Vic, Concrete Couches Project
- Partners invited were Mark Smith (Planet Savers) & Bruce Rowse (Carbonetix)
- School benefits from advice they can trust & support/maintenance of equipment.
- Partners benefit from gathering data for marketing (eg SETS), ability to test programs & products & get feedback. Reputation benefits from doing joint presentations.
- Reinspired from reflecting on what achieved & benefits, on values/what is important, helped to reduce burnout, helped to reconfirm commitment to partnership. Helped to consider/remind next steps.
- They didn't invite the primary schools who they had worked with. Why?



Hannah Lewis A/P looking at Solar SETS



Jean Sheridan, Principal & students

The Patch Primary School

- Activities: Specialist full-time EE Teacher Michelle Rayner, Eco-Centre, wetlands & garden, kids teaching kids, student-led projects, Garden Festival
- Partners invited: Garden Team members
- Learnt more on what each group valued & wanted from the projects – inspired by Michelle, appreciate joint management
- Surprised to see what students remembered (once off rewards / incorrect plumbing)
- Satisfying to see what students learnt & hear their pro-env attitudes/expectations ie: consultation/student-led activities
- Reflect & realise how much achieved



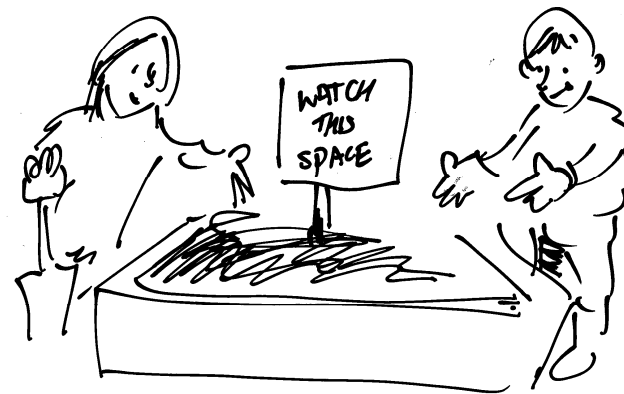
Tooradin Primary School

- Activities: HPV, Go for your life, SAKGP, AuSSI
- Partners invited: family & community members
- Reflect on why do it – help all kids, get community change eg: Wind Turbine, Shower Head Exchange
- Reflect on what makes it work – can-do attitude eg: no kitchen / salt Water Watch; continuous improvement focus eg: waterless urinals
- Chance to celebrate & socialise – feel good about it all & inspired to do more, community building / pride, a way to summarise it all & share with others



Doveton North Primary School and Myuna Farm

- Activities: two student-run edible gardens – one at the local Myuna Farm and one at the school
- Partners invited: Myuna Farm staff, family & community members and volunteers
- Key finding: that it is the strength of the partnership and the collective and collaborative efforts of all the stakeholders that has made the gardens possible
- Strong feedback from all attendees about the value of the MSC model and the opportunity to hear one another's stories and perspectives



The questions we used in the story gathering process

PART A: Background of partnership

- Tell us about yourself and your involvement with the SCLPfs?
- How long has the partnership been in existence?
- Who are the key players in your SCLPfs?
- What roles did they play in initiating and sustaining the SCLPfs?



The questions we used in the story gathering process

PART B: Most Significant Change

- KEY QUESTION: Looking back over the lifetime of the partnership, what have been the most important social and environmental changes you have observed that have resulted from the SCLPfS?
- FROM YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW select the MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE from all the changes you have identified above. Try to describe this change in a story. Describe what happened? Identify factors that contributed to this significant change.
- Why did you choose this particular change? Why is this most significant for you?
- What evidence do you have to show others that this significant change has taken place? How do you know that this has made a difference?
- POSSIBLE Title of the MSC Story:

Questions asked continued:

PART C: Reflecting on partnership

- Why do you think this is considered to be a successful partnership? What factors have led to the partnership being successful?
- What could have made the partnership stronger, more successful?
- What do you see as the next steps in the partnership?

PART D: Reflecting on story collection process

- Ask the story-teller to reflect on the story-collection process for them
- Write down notes as the story-collector about the experience of collecting/documenting this story?

Discussion – Leone, Britt, Jodi-Anne

- Have you used stories to evaluate activities before?
- Did you find it valuable?
- Can you see potential to use the story approach?
- Do you have any questions that you'd like us to answer?



Sustainability Victoria's use of MSC approach - Victorian Solar in Schools Initiative

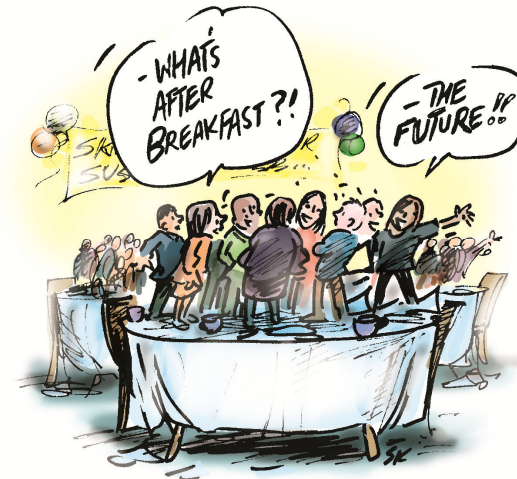
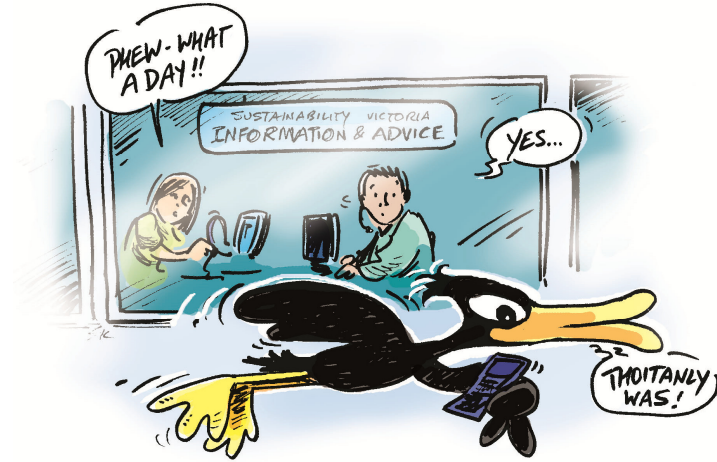
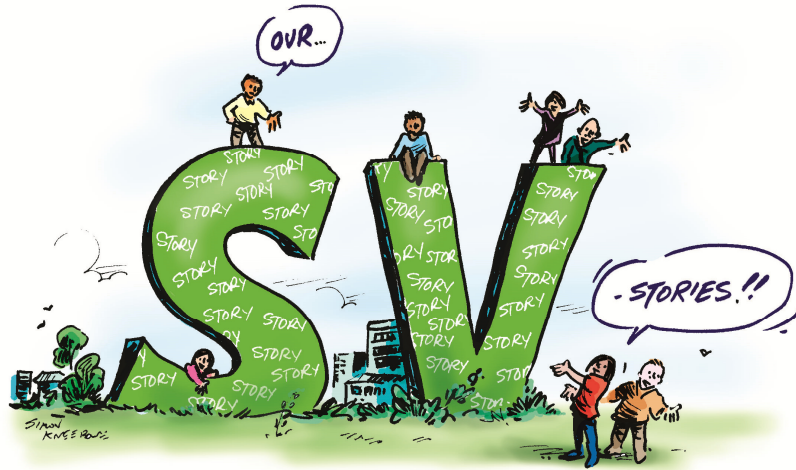


- How do schools contribute to increased awareness about renewable energy and influence community behaviour?
- What do relationships between schools and their communities look like?
- How can the relationship work for mutual benefit for schools and communities? There's more to it than just being a conduit for information.

Sustainability Victoria's use of MSC approach – ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Evaluation



Sustainability Victoria's use of MSC approach – Organisational Evaluation and Reporting Processes



Thank you and close

For more information on MSC see:

- Davies R & Dart J, 2005, *The 'Most Significant Change' Technique: a guide to its use*, available at:
www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm

For more information on SV's use of stories see:

- Resource Smart AuSSI Vic Stories available at:
www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators_2439.html

For more information on our SCLPfS project see:

- <http://www.rmit.edu.au/northernpartnerships>
- SCLPfS Guidebook to be produced
- SCLPfS Ningsite to be opened up