

st 21 Century Talking Stick & Tertiary Education for Sustainability



The task at the centre of this Action Research Project (assessment 3/EDU703) is a formative 5 minute oral presentation involving case studies/real world examples of environmental disasters, offering the opportunity to learn key concepts of sustainability & scientific principles within USC course COR111.

- A problem exists if this formative activity doesn't succeed in promoting students' generic skills development & therefore does not contribute towards desired graduate qualities. Problems with formative & oral exercises have been identified in my own practice & in the literature as:

Not inspired/general apathy Absence **Lack of confidence** Lack of understanding of 'science based' information & how to find it **Lack of understanding of the nature of the formative task**
Equity issues **Students not knowing how they feel** Uncomfortable with oral presenting

- **My project aims to promote success of these formative activities through the use of the Indigenous/Traditional Talking Stick and Talking Circle with the intention to:**
Develop confidence & empathy **Inspire students towards sufficient & successful research** Promote critical & creative thinking
- **Literature surrounding implementation of a Talking Stick and Talking Circle states:**
Gives holder authority Levels out playing field (time/space) **Can promote deeper understanding through tactile sensation & discovery** Shock of the new **Stimulating** Activity versus passivity of "just talking" **A talking circle itself is seen as sacred, representing the interconnectedness of all things.**
- **The spiral 'Deakin' model of Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) was utilized, cycling through 4 times over one week across 4 tutorials.**
- **Data evidence collection included; personal & peer reflections, student questionnaires, critical conversations with colleagues, critical referee as validator.**
- **Data analysis; quantitative, sociogram (Rapoport & Horrath 1961), and qualitative data reduction & simplification (Miles & Huberman, 1994), excerpts in boxes below:**

Q1. In general how do you normally feel about oral presenting?

General...nervous...fumble...messaging up...not a big worry...don't love it...loose train of thought...not too bad if I know the group
Practical...stand behind something...prefer to just do essays...depends on how many people & how well I know them
Extreme...experience anxiety...out of control...more I practice the worse it gets
Humorous...imagine everyone is naked

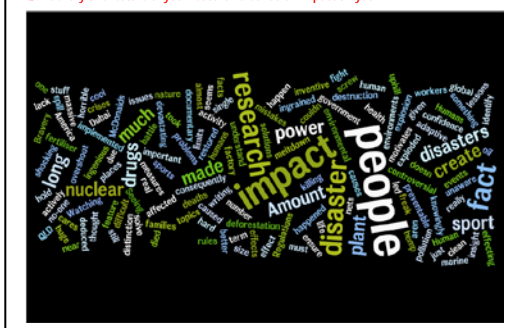
Q2. Did using the talking stick add to the quality of this presentation for you? If so, how?

Practical...if I was standing up [would have been better]...if some people may have interrupted you they didn't...less of a need to talk while someone else had the stick... something to do with my hands...took focus and formality out of it...good visual aid...
General Positive...feel like my opinion was worth the room's attention...interesting idea...security blanket effect...would have been even more disrespectful without the stick...added to the person who spoke...brilliant and reassuring to hold...very special...helped to define who is talking/who you should be listening to...feeling of special...makes me confident...quirky...casual & more comforting...more fun...more involving...more relaxed...comfortable...made me relax...unique stick...added humour...less daunting...sense of humour...focus on the individual...aesthetic purpose...gives you authority...
General Negative...might be annoying every time...got in the way...little distracting...
Humorous...feel like an ancient magi...talked like a wizard
Profound...gave you power...

Q3. Do you feel the traditional usage of the talking stick has any connection to our course?

Practical...natural thing...history...attention towards the presenter...encourages the sharing of information...natural tribal element...symbolises the sharing of information...allows each person to have their say...nature feel...feeling more with nature...sticks are natural/COR111 is about nature...keeping tradition from ages ago
General Positive...traditional icons really did do something for the feel of the course...reaffirm the messages trying to be conveyed...traditional & ethical...environmental connotations...relating to sustaining ancient things like the environment and cultures
General Negative...look backwards and have difficulty opening the door forwards
Humorous...felt more like the monkey of Lion King than a tribal elder
Profound...teaching us to honour the words of our peers, our environment, and our place in the world...symbolic of the relationship between man and earth...validating the role of nature in modern society...more we can remind ourselves of and reconnect with nature the better off we all will be...influential, because this method of discussion a topic has been used in history and in other cultures... reflecting on the way things used to be, ties in with how we might save the planet.

Q4. Identify one feature of your research that had an impact on you.



Q5. Any other comments?

...good session...the stick is really pretty...group's encouragement of each other. Energy and different perspective you bring to our tutorials is appreciated.
As a fellow tutor, it was very interesting to watch Phyllis's class. Those present were nice students and generally well behaved. I believe overall the talking stick calmed speaker's nerves, almost as a distraction...mature age students seemed more impassioned by it.

You have noticed that everything ... is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round...The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours...Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Black Elk (1863-1950) Oglala Sioux holy man (Aaron, 1994)

Special thanks to Dr. Richard White, Course Coordinator, COR111; Environment, Technology & Sustainability, the COR111 study participants and to Dr. Sue Simon, Course Coordinator, EDU703; Professional Learning Project.

You have downloaded this publication from the USC Research Bank.

21st Century Talking Stick and Tertiary Education for Sustainability

Please cite this publication as: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4227/39/59656420faf94>

Document Version:

Author accepted manuscript (postprint)

Citation for published version:

Araneo, P (2013) 21st Century Talking Stick and Tertiary Education for Sustainability. , 2013 University Research Conference: Communicate, Collaborate, Connect - Research on the Rise, Sunshine Coast, Australia, . Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4227/39/59656420faf94>

Copyright Statement:

Copyright © 2013 the author. Reproduced with permission of the author.

General Rights:

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the USC Research Bank is retained by the author(s) and / or the copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of the Sunshine Coast has made every reasonable effort to ensure that USC Research Bank content complies with copyright legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact research-repository@usc.edu.au providing details, and we will remove the work immediately and investigate your claim.