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My Art Autobiography

My earliest memory of art is in elementary school when periodically there were book jacket competitions. Students would arrive to school with elaborate, colorful book jackets, which they would excitedly add to a display to be judged. I would labor over the book jacket for weeks, but sadly never even gained a “most improved”. In my formative years, Interestingly, at school I cannot remember finger painting or having the opportunity to experiment with pottery, or getting messy (this was reserved for home). I am sure that we had opportunities, but it has been many years since I have been in elementary school.

I grew up in a middle class suburb approximately 10 minutes from the Sydney Central Business District, many mothers were stay at home mum’s, and the majority were very practical and creative. My mother sewed all our school uniforms, and school jumpers were knitted as too. She patiently taught us all knitting, embroidery, sewing and cooking. Without the fast food and prepared meals and large supermarkets that are commonplace today, all meals were baked and created from scratch. From children’s birthday parties to school gala’s the community would plan collaborate and present a feast.

Dance, singing and piano lessons were the norm, and it is only now as an adult that I wish that I had recognized what an asset these skills would be in adult life as getting up on stage is something that I dread.

When my peers and sisters were playing with dolls, I loved tinkering, building and reading the Guinness Book or World Records collecting random facts. Each year at Christmas and Birthdays I would get additions to my ever growing Meccanno collection and the latest Guinness Book. I would literally spend hours building and reading. So I am sure my formative years led to my passions; technology and teaching.

After high school, I choose to follow a path, which at that time was booming; computing. College gave me the background to move into Money Market computing, an exciting, and fast paced working environment. After 10 years, the financial institution that I was working for ending up being taken over by a larger conglomerate. I had the choice, move to the new company or take a payout. I chose the later. Doing this afforded me the opportunity to reassess goals and career paths. As you might say the rest is history. I have been a teacher now for 20 years. From one year in elementary school to nineteen years in middle school. Teaching across all three-grade levels; a myriad of technology classes, humanities and even science.

This year I moved full time to the Middle School Technology Co-Coordinator's position. I have stepped in to the shoes of a colleague that was in the position for 10 years; this has been reassuring and frustrating. I enjoy pushing boundaries and offering students the opportunity to explore and follow passions. Moving to this position has afforded me the opportunity to explore a variety of electives and examine curriculum where STEM may be embedded. Our school is in the midst of joining two campuses as well as relocating to a new

campus. This trimester, administration allowed me to pilot a STEM class. As we are in limbo in classrooms, I asked an art colleague if we could share a space. This space is located in buildings away from the main school classrooms and I hadn't spent too much time there over the years. Working in this space has honestly been such an amazing experience.

The school purchased additional 3d printers, laser cutters etc., however, in the STEM classes we have been working on challenges, prototyping, designing and problem solving. My art colleagues have been amazing mentors, guides and creators. I am in awe of their creativity and flexibility.

In our new campus, STEM, Design Technology, Food Technology and Art are all located in a purpose built collaborative space. The very nature of this area will bring to the fore that Art plays an integral role in one's life.