

A Learning Adventure

By

Brent Kerr

On August 15 Emily Keener and I began our journey to Australia. We flew out of Wichita, KS with a short stop in Denver and a few hours were spent in the San Francisco airport. Upon arrival we were greeted by Steve Sharp the Head Master of Monte Vista Christian School in Watsonville, CA. Steve took us to Monte Vista where we were given a quick tour that evening and we were off on our own to explore. The next morning, Emily and I returned to Monte Vista and shadowed several teachers around their beautiful campus. On their campus they have several collaborative classrooms where a large glass wall can be slid over to make one large classroom for teachers to team-teach or partitioned off to have individual rooms. These classrooms work well to integrate math and science, language arts, social studies and so on. Moving these walls also creates an environment where students are allowed to bring their ideas together from different subject areas. Monte Vista Christian school is cutting edge with excellent teachers and administration.

The next leg of our journey started with a 16-hour flight from San Francisco International airport to Sydney International airport. We left Tuesday night and arrived Thursday morning. When we landed we hit the ground running because we knew that would be our only day to do any sight-seeing. We chose to tag along with our new friends from Monte Vista whose purpose was to attend the same conference we were attending. We visited the Zoo in Sydney, toured the Sydney Opera House and climbed the Sydney Harbor Bridge.

The following day Emily and I split ways; Emily toured Northern Beaches Private School. Northern Beaches is one place Monte Vista Christian took some inspiration for their collaborative classrooms. Emily also got to spend the day with the keynote speakers of the conference (I was and still am a bit jealous of this). I was asked to help do a workshop with 90- 6th grade Australian students. This was interesting to say the least. I worked with Kevin Honeycutt and these students building scale models of their favorite Star Wars space craft using cardboard and duct tape. After an exhausting day we went to the motel to get some rest before the big day of the conference.

I started the day of the iOnTheFuture Conference by spilling coffee on my white shirt about an hour before I was up to present, luckily one of my Australian friends found me another conference shirt that fit, before I gave my presentation on USD 303 and the GODium. The rest of the day was spent listening to key note speakers such as Ron Berger the author of "An Ethic of Excellence" who speaks to having students do multiple drafts of the same product with their peers critiquing their work after each draft until it is "beautiful work". If you would like to see some of Ron's work, watch Austin's Butterfly on YouTube. We also watched Aaron Tait, and Dave Faulkner deliver a keynote about Edu-preneur. This is a book they have co-authored and is an inspirational book helping teachers dream, think, create, and share about highly practical skills that they can use in the classroom. I also went to Dave, and Aaron's afternoon session and listened to their talk about being change agents and helping those around us adapt and change. The last keynote I went to was Kevin Honeycutt. I have watched Kevin do several keynotes and none are ever

the same. His message is always up-beat, funny, and inspirational. Kevin's message was about doing what is right for all of our students. Kevin has been an inspiration to me, and he has had a very active role in helping me change the way I think about education as well as what I am doing in the classroom. I am very honored that I was allowed to take this trip and spread the word about what fantastic things we are doing at USD 303! If you would like to watch some of the keynotes they will be available on YouTube in a few weeks.



