

Sessions will include...

TRUTH

Across all curriculum areas the question of the nature of truth is central. Do human beings discover the rules of mathematics? Is there such a thing as beauty in art? Is history about seeking truth or does everything depend on perspective? Is Science no more than an explanation of a current framework that has not yet been falsified? This session will explore the nature of truth claims. In



a world in which relativism and post-modernism seem to dominate, alternative perspectives are often ignored or young people are not willing to explore these. This session will provide the intellectual tools to help students engage at a deeper level with all areas of the curriculum as well as seeking to ignite a passion for broader questioning and appraisal of culturally accepted norms.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Is the world entering another ice age? Is global warming simply part of the dynamic changes in the environment which have happened over the millennia? What is the evidence for and against concern about the environment and is this likely to benefit or harm human beings? What are the strengths and weaknesses of shallow and deep ecology and are alternative approaches needed to these traditional categories?

These issues will be considered in the context of evolution and the trend by human beings to reduce genetic diversity in plants, animals and, perhaps increasingly, in human beings. How may this reduction to diversity handicap the human ability to survive the forthcoming changes? This session will stand back from what is regarded as 'prevailing orthodoxy' regarding global warming and consider alternative approaches to the problem which are often not considered. It will also consider the impact of industry and capitalism on the environment drawing on insights from recent studies.



BUSINESS ETHICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Was the global banking crisis of 2008/9 a regulatory failure or a moral failure? Are there ethical issues lying behind the way business is conducted which have gone unexamined?

This session will help young people to engage with some of the ethical problems in the adult world that they will face when they leave school. Dr. Peter Vardy was a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a director of listed and unlisted companies before becoming a leading University of London philosopher and will bring together developments in the philosophy of accounting with the current and future impact of corporate practice on human rights. Child labour, environmental damage resulting from the pursuit of greed and corporate success will be contrasted with new approaches to business stemming from innovations in accounting and new regulatory demands. The insights of Peter Singer and the Jesuit philosopher of accounting, Keith MacMillan, will be explained and the outlook for the future evaluated.



SEXUAL ETHICS

Sex is a Puzzle. It is the means that plants, animals and humans use to reproduce but prevailing attitudes to sexual ethics have changed dramatically in the last forty years. The prevailing outlook amongst many young people is that sex is primarily about pleasure and this is influenced by the increased dominance of a form of utilitarianism stemming from the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. The impact of this approach will be considered and evaluated and compared to the Aristotelian and Natural Law approach to ethics which sees sex as part of a much broader understanding of what it means to live a fulfilled human life. Much sex today is seen as transactional and the idea of commitment is increasingly derided as society becomes increasingly atomised and dominated by the search for personal happiness. Ideas of community and family have been undermined. The effects of this new approach to sex will be considered in terms of the broader impact on society. Its relevance to the life of young adults will be explored to enable them to think the issues through for themselves. Peter Vardy's latest book, 'The Puzzle of Sex', was published in 2009.



Dr. Peter Vardy the vice-principal of Heythrop College of the University of London really needs no introduction. He has been the main speaker at the largest conferences for Gifted and Talented students and for students studying Philosophy and Ethics in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK, addressing more than 12,000 young people every year. Meanwhile, he has been one of the two founding editors of DIALOGUE AUSTRALASIA and has written some 14 books, many translated into multiple languages and used by schools and universities from Indonesia to Poland. This year he is running a major, international series of conferences training teachers in teaching the Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma. **Teachers bring their students to his conferences year after year for a reason.**

Dr. Vardy has a passion for engaging young people with the big questions that affect them. He has long thought that the encouragement to think about them should not be limited to those classed as 'Gifted' in the conventional sense. As Howard Gardner of Harvard University points out, there are multiple types of intelligence and, given the right opportunities, **fires can and should be ignited in most people.** He has a gift for making complex topics clear and understandable and for inspiring his audiences.

In this conference Dr. Vardy will draw on his immense experience as a **qualified Chartered Accountant** to consider some of the dilemmas that businesses must face. He will draw on his **new book 'The Puzzle of Sex'** to highlight some of the key questions young people must consider in their relationships and in deciding how to live their lives. He will draw on **current research for the new edition of the 'Puzzle of Ethics'** in highlighting how environmental matters are being reported and handled by politicians.

The topics of sexual ethics, environmental concerns and how we treat other people in business may be covered in the SOSE, Personal Development or RE classroom, but these conferences will extend the curriculum, introduce young people to the rigour of **university-style learning** and will inspire them to find out more, to question what they believe and are told and to make a difference in the future.

Every school will be given an **exclusive pack of notes**, developed by Dr Vardy in conjunction with experienced teachers, containing reading lists, guided **web-based extension activities** and the opportunity to find out more from other young people's video documentaries and to create their own – maybe even enter it for a major international competition.

BOOKINGS

Must be made by email or by telephone through:

Wendy Rowe, Wombat Education,
PO Box 100, Binalong NSW 2584 Telephone:
02 6227 4570 Mobile: 0420 381 191
ABN 31 699 068 585
Email: mail@wombateducation.com
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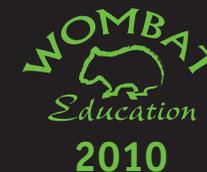
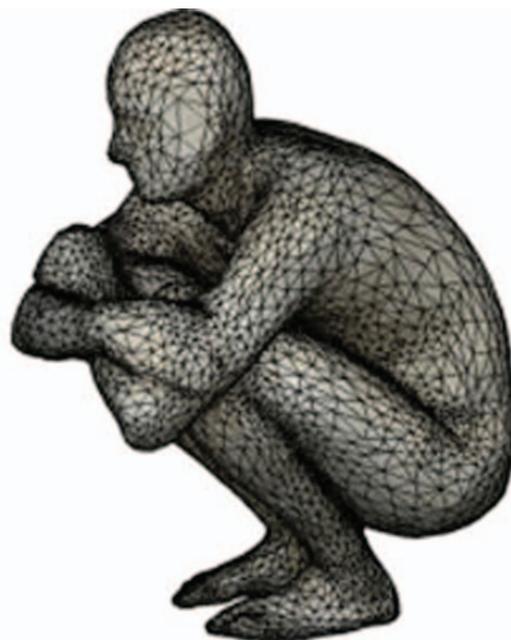
Payment can be made by cheque to Wombat Education or by direct deposit.

BSB 062 553 Account No. 10060767

New Zealand – payment details will be available on the website

Amendments and cancellations will be accepted until two weeks before the conference. 75% of the fee will be refunded for cancellations more than two weeks before the conference. The fee for students is \$15 which includes juice and biscuits at break time. One free staff place is available for every 12 students. Teachers unaccompanied may have a place for \$75.

Registration will take place at 9am for a 9.30am start. It will finish at 1pm.



Student Conference to Extend and Enthuse Tomorrow's World

Thinking Through Issues in Truth, Sexual and
Business Ethics and the Environment

Dr. Peter Vardy
University of London



DATES 2010

Perth 14th June
Adelaide 15th June
Melbourne 16th June
Hobart 17th June
Brisbane 18th June
Canberra 21st June
Albury 22nd June
Sydney 23rd June
Auckland 18th August
Christchurch 19th August