

Shine

Every
child,
every
opportunity

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SPECIAL SCIENCE ISSUE

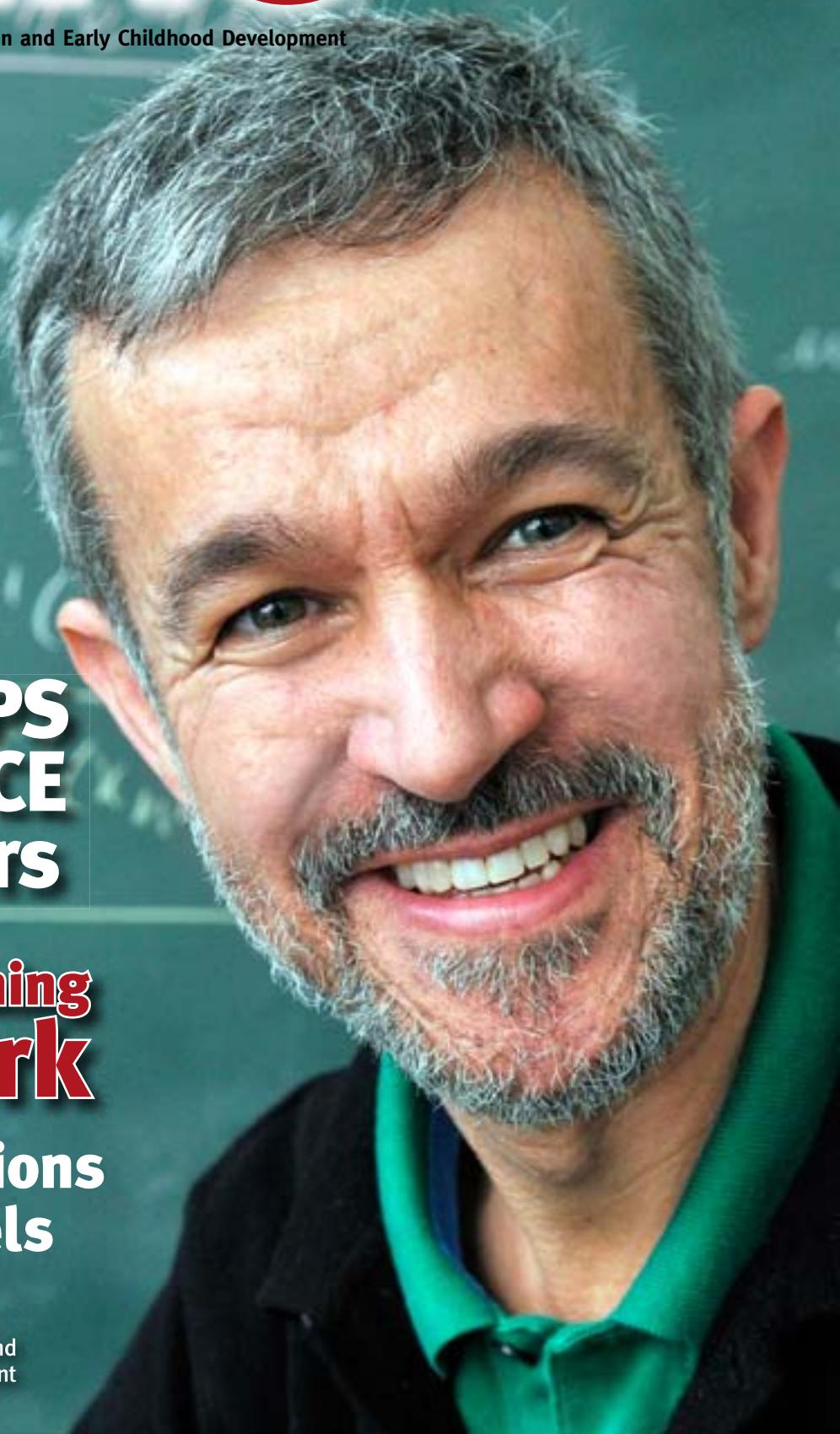
9 TOP TIPS
from VCE
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New early learning
framework

Wildlife excursions
for all year levels



Department of Education and
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Behind the screen with doco queen

Mitzi Goldman, the former of Head of Documentary at the Australian Film and Television School, is taking 25 years of filmmaking experience into the classroom, writes **Eamon Evans**

"I find television very educational," said history's second most famous Marx. "Every time someone turns it on, I go in the other room and read a book." Groucho, it seems, wasn't watching nearly enough documentaries. From the animal studies of David Attenborough to the agitprop of Michael Moore, documentaries have become a key source of learning and thinking – a medium that in rigour, sweep and educational value very often betters the book.



Making documentaries can be pretty useful too, says Mitzi Goldman, a 25-year veteran of the Australian film industry who is now offering workshops in the art form for students. "Learning how to create simple movies is an extremely powerful tool, educationally, socially and psychologically," she says. "Because children today have access to such a broad range of media, it is of educational benefit to know how to deconstruct, analyse and understand the information they encounter all around them. Once children learn to create media, they can view it in a more critical way."

And that's only the beginning, declares the former Head of Documentary at the Australian Film and Television School, who has more than 10 local and international co-productions to her credit. "Learning filmmaking teaches communication skills without the need to rely on words," Ms Goldman continues, something that is "very well-suited to students with learning difficulties."

Other skills gained include "researching, interviewing, listening, editing, storytelling, visual language, using sound and music in mapping emotional narratives, and engaging an audience." Most importantly, she says, documentary making also offers students the opportunity to engage with the world around

them. "Schools are at the forefront of new technology. Why not give them the tools to express their own view of the world?"

Though more common place in high schools, Ms Goldman says primary students can benefit just as much from this type of work. "Pre-teens are a special age to teach; they are at a stage of life where they ask wonderful questions."

In workshop session at Broadmeadows later this month, Ms Goldman will give 16 students from the local secondary school and three primary schools the opportunity to explain their vision of what schools will look like in 2025. They'll also learn the process of making and editing a documentary.

Ms Goldman says the workshops are either directly for the children, with teachers involved, or just for the teachers themselves. "This way the schools can continue the workshops that we start, calling us in for more advanced training if needed. Not all teachers and students need to become filmmakers ... but simple techniques are easy to learn. Once students have the tools, there is no limit to how they employ them." ■

For details, email Mitzi Goldman at mitzi@lookingglasspictures.com.au



Don't miss Mitzi Goldman's online session:

31 August 4pm – Student documentary makers

Hear about the deep learning that takes place when students become documentary makers. Make connections with other educators interested in using media for learning, and speak directly with Mitzi Goldman about how to use documentary making in your classroom.

Connecting Innovators

This month we continue our Connecting Innovators online series where you can meet some of Victoria's most innovative educators in the Department's virtual conference room. Just log on to participate, chat and interact with the presenters. Don't forget – if you miss the conference, you can listen to the recording at <http://knowledgebank.globalteacher.org.au>

The next session is:

20 August – Networked schools

The internet and Web 2.0 tools have redefined the concept of community. Social networking tools and online spaces are erasing traditional borders and immersing students in learning. Join Adrian Camm and Gary Schultz as they share their amazing stories about the new technologies they're using to connect and collaborate.

