

A Climate of Change

Research-Informed Education for the Future

2019 Program

Saturday 3 August 2019
1.00 pm to 6.00 pm

Time	Activity
1.00 – 2.00	Opening: WAIER President, A/Prof Eva Dobozy A word from our sponsor: Teachers Mutual Bank Keynote address: Professor Mindy Blaise
2.10	Parallel sessions
2.35	Parallel sessions
3.00	Parallel sessions
3.25	Coffee break
3.50	Parallel sessions
4.15	Parallel sessions
4.40	Parallel sessions
5.10	Sundowner Presentation of WAIER Fellow Awards Postgraduate Awards, Early Career Award, and Research Grant

About WAIER

The Western Australian Institute for Educational Research was established in the 1980s for the purpose of promoting and disseminating new educational research generated, for the most part, here in Western Australia. To strengthen the collaboration among higher education institutions, government departments and their research staff, the Executive Committee of WAIER includes representation from various universities and educational offices.

A key activity of the Institute is the organisation of the annual WAIER Forum which provides opportunities for research students and educators to build networks and present their work. It is an important forum for education students, early career researchers and established researchers to receive feedback on their work in a friendly and collegial space and make connections across institutions.

The Institute also supports educational researchers through publication in the well-respected online journal, *Issues in Educational Research*.

Executive members of the WAIER Committee

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Presentations of Awards and Grants

Postgraduate Awards 2019

The Western Australian Institute for Educational Research presents a number of Postgraduate Awards annually. The aim of these Awards is to recognise excellence in postgraduate student research in the field of education. The faculty, school or department of education from each university in Western Australia selects an outstanding postgraduate student researcher to whom this prize will be awarded.

WAIER Postgraduate Awards 2019

This year's Postgraduate Awards will be presented as part of the Forum.

Dr Nick Eaves Curtin University	PhD thesis <i>Rising waves, breathless wind, Lacan, Zen and adolescence: Illuminating Sunyata in the dualism of education</i> https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11937/70506
Dr Hendrati Nastiti Edith Cowan University	PhD thesis <i>Comparative pairs judgements for high-stakes practical assessments</i> https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2068/
Benjamin Anders Nilsson Murdoch University	MEd thesis <i>English Teachers and the Asia Literacy Priority: Is it really a priority?</i> https://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/49644/
Dr Antonella Poncini The University of Notre Dame	PhD thesis <i>Perceptions of large-scale, standardised testing in religious education: How do religious educators perceive The Bishops' Religious Literacy Assessment?</i> https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/210/
Dr Jelena Rakovic The University of Western Australia	Best postgraduate publication <i>Leaders and leadership in Serbian primary schools: Perspectives across two worlds</i> https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03529-7

WAIER Early Career Award 2019

The Western Australian Institute for Educational Research has presented the Early Career Award annually since 1989.

The aim of the Award is to recognise excellence early in an academic/research career and to encourage continuing contributions to research of excellent quality. Nominations can be made by self or by colleagues. Applications are rigorously assessed. The award is presented at the annual WAIER Forum.

Early Career Award nominees 2019

Madeleine Dobson	Curtin University
Kirsten Hancock	Telethon Kids Institute, The University of WA
Jan Merewether	Edith Cowan University
Jelena Rakovic	The University of Western Australia
Pauline Roberts	Edith Cowan University
Christine Robinson	The University of Notre Dame

WAIER Research Grant 2019

In 2019 WAIER is proud to offer the Annual Research Grant of \$2000. The aim of the grant is to support early career and established researchers who do not have ready access to funds or resources; and/or require seeding funding for new projects for research directly relevant to early childhood, primary, secondary or tertiary education.

The winner of the WAIER Research Grant will be announced at the Forum.

WAIER Fellow Awards 2019

To be eligible for this award a person must demonstrate the following.

1. A minimum of 10 years' service to WAIER.
2. Leadership within WAIER showing active and sustained contribution to the aims and activities of WAIER.
3. Contribution to the field of educational research within Western Australia

WAIER Fellow Awards are not given every year, but this year we have three awardees.

Sonja Kuzich	Curtin University
Dr Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis	The University of Western Australia
Associate Professor Eva Dobozy	Curtin University

Keynote Address

Professor Mindy Blaise

Mindy is a Vice Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellow at Edith Cowan University.

Before becoming an academic, Mindy was a kindergarten and early years teacher in the USA. She has held university positions in the USA (University of Texas, Austin), Hong Kong (The Education University of Hong Kong), and Australia (RMIT, Monash University, Victoria University). She is a co-founder and principal researcher of the Common Worlds Research Collective and #FEAS Feminist Educators Against Sexism. She has recently co-founded *The Ediths*, an ECU group of feminist interdisciplinary researchers currently researching children's waste, water and weather relations. Their embodied, affect focused, and ecologically responsive research aims to carry on the legacy of Edith Cowan, by working for better more-than-human relations in times of climate crisis. *The Ediths* are interested in transforming how research cultures can be driven and thrive through a collective feminist ethic.



Becoming-with Merri Merri: Experimental multispecies storytelling as an ethical practice

Mindy Blaise

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Drawing from an ecologically responsive, multisensory, and affect-focused multispecies ethnography of children's water relations, I experiment with ways of listening to and telling nature-culture stories that are not just about the human. Instead of telling human exceptional and discovery stories that we already know, such as the child taking care of nature or learning all the facts about a creek, radically different kinds of stories are needed for transformation. Guided by feminist common worlding methods, the multispecies stories I share are experimental, embodied, situated, non-innocent, and imperfect. These nature-culture stories show how children's lives are always already folded into multiple entanglements with wind, water, possums, rocks, settler colonialism, and much more. I show how experimental multispecies storytelling can activate new understandings, relationships, and accountabilities that are needed in these times of climate crisis.

Program of parallel sessions

1.00 to 2.00	Plenary session, Room 101 Opening: President of WAIER, Associate Professor Eva Dobozy A word from our major sponsor: Teachers Mutual Bank Keynote address: Professor Mindy Blaise. Becoming-with Merri Merri: Experimental multispecies storytelling as an ethical practice				
	Room 201	Room 202	Computer Room 203	Room 301	Room 302
2.10	Jennifer Featch, Laura Perry & Susan Ledger The benefits and disadvantages of elite education: Was it worth it?	Alison Hilton “It hurt my heart and my wallet”. Student experiences of undertaking LANTITE	Round table presentations Susan Beltman Teacher resilience: Whose responsibility? Fiona Boylan What is mindset and why does it matter? Pauline Roberts The science of sustainability in early childhood: Engaging now for an informed future	Madeleine Dobson & Jenny Jay Instagram. Navigating process and intention in a parent’s representation of family life Samantha Owen & Sharon Davies Developing digital literacies and introducing digital technologies in Montessori early childhood education	Rebecca Saunders, Lee Lenyk & Emma Boyne Understanding participants’ journeys of meditative change – implications for course design Christine Robinson Accidentally spiritual
2.35	Brad Gobby Community empowerment or business as usual? Independent Public Schools and school boards	Liz O’Sullivan Initial teacher education students’ literacy: Factors that impact on literacy achievement of prospective teachers		John O’Rourke, Christina Holly & Christopher Kueh Co-designing a digital communication tool to support secondary students with autism	
3.00	Nina Ravis-Hermann How are upper secondary students navigating the meritocratic identity market underpinning public schooling	Lucie McCrory Perceptions of Year 12 Catholic school students towards teaching as a career choice			Antonella Poncini Perceptions of large-scale, testing in religious education: The Bishops’ Religious Literacy Assessment?
3.25	Coffee break				
3.50	Olivia Johnston Considering student voices about their teacher expectations: Insights and interrogations	Amelia Ruscoe Focus 19 – Issues of urgency in Western Australia: A discourse analysis	Susan Ledger, Sandi Fielder & Liz O’Sullivan Lesson plans: Tools for demonstrating effective teaching	Elaine Lewis Little Green Steps WA: Longitudinal case study of outcomes in education for sustainability in the early years	Jelena Rakovic, Tom O’Donoghue & Simon Clarke Leaders and leadership in Serbian primary schools: Perspectives across two worlds
4.15	Kirsten Hancock What happened to student absences when the transition year to secondary school was lowered from Y 8 to Y 7?	Kimberley Beasley Botanical literacies in early childhood	Beverley Webster & Melanie Brown Actionable feedback improving student learning	Jane Merewether Education and climate change: Matters of care	Ben Nilsson English teachers and the Asia Literacy priority: Is it really a priority?
4.40	Evalena Lowe, Paul Rycroft, Duncan Picknoll & Paola Chivers Teacher-directed violence by students in WA: An exploratory study	Madeleine Dobson & Jenny Jay “Pretty little squares”: An exploration and critique of the picturesque representation of children on Instagram	Henny Nastiti & Jeremy Pagram Comparative pairs judgements method: Design and Visual Arts	Katherine Gaschk & Catherine Baudains A climate for change? Challenges for household waste separation	Michael Down, B. Piggott & D. Picknoll Benefits of extended outdoor adventure education programs for adolescent well-being in WA
5.10	Sundowner: WAIER Fellow Awards, Early Career Award, Postgraduate Awards and Research Grant				

Notices

Presentations

Two styles of presentation are planned.

Conventional presentation (25 minutes)

This style of presentation normally consists of a researcher or group of researchers presenting their work, with the aid of PowerPoint slides, for about 15 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of interaction and discussion with the audience.

Round table discussion (12 minutes)

Round table sessions are shorter and less formal. The presenter or presenters, sit in a discussion circle with the audience. The presenter/s speaks for about five minutes on a question or topic of interest, and then opens up to the group for comment and discussion for another 7 minutes or so.

A Chairperson will be appointed for each session. The Chair's duties will be to open the session on time, to facilitate questions from the audience in the second half of the session, to ensure that the session finishes on time and to formally thank the presenter.

There is no change-over time between presentations. Presenters need to load their computer files before the sessions begins, ie, before 2.15pm or 3.55 pm.

Forum photographs

Please note that photos will be taken during the Forum and may be put on the WAIER website as part of the record of the 2019 Forum. If people have any objection to their photos being used in this way, they need to ensure that they contact a committee member at the Forum to make their wishes known.

Participants are requested not to take photos of *PowerPoint* slides during presentations. This can be disruptive to the presenter and participants, and could be a breach of copyright.

Abstracts

The abstracts of presentations are set out on pages 8 – 19. They are in alphabetical order according to the name of the first author. They can also be found on the WAIER web site at: <http://www.waier.org.au/events?c=abstracts-2019>

Abstracts

Botanical literacies in early childhood

Kimberley Beasley

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In many cultures and in past generations, it has been expected that knowledge about plants and flowers would be passed down to children from parents and grandparents. This has generally not been a role included in school education, but botanical literacies are now on the decline as this knowledge is not as often being passed down through families due societal changes in work and lifestyle.

This session will discuss what botanical literacies look like and the levels of botanical understandings for children as well as why it is important that children understand the names, behaviours and uses of local plants. I will discuss my research journey towards a model for integrating botanical literacies in the early childhood curriculum.

Round table discussion

Teacher resilience: Whose responsibility?

Susan Beltman

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There are concerns nationally and internationally regarding the impact on teachers of increasing administrative tasks, student behavioural issues and parental expectations. Although most teachers remain in the profession, many experience stress and burnout and this applies to early career teachers as well as experienced leaders. These sources of stress lie in the school community or employer policies yet interventions to support teachers are often at an individual level – e.g. mindfulness, emotional regulation or counselling. Some researchers regard resilience as a collective responsibility. How can we ensure this is the case in our contexts? Whose responsibility is it to build the capacity for resilience in the education community?

Round table discussion

What is mindset and why does it matter?

Fiona Boylan

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Educators have a responsibility to assist young learners to develop a mindset whereby they thrive on challenges, work towards goals and begin to recognise the power of effort and resilience in readiness for the 21st century in which they will live and work. A recent review of Australia's education system has acknowledged declining academic performance and a need for reform to ensure Australian schools prepare children for the 21st century (Department of Education and Training (Australia), 2018). A key recommendation in this report is to equip every child to be a creative, connected and engaged learner in a rapidly changing world. Developing a growth mindset is a natural complement to personalised learning and assists children to achieve greater agency of their own learning (op. cit). In decades of research on achievement and success psychologist Carol Dweck (2016) has shown that there is more to student success than cognitive ability, curriculum and

instruction. Dweck discovered students' mindsets can powerfully affect how they learn and grow throughout their formative years and beyond. Mindset is a valuable tool in promoting agency for learners as it empowers children to take responsibility for their learning. This session will discuss mindset theory and why it matters.

References

- Department of Education and Training (Australia), (2018). *Through growth to achievement: Report of the review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools*. Retrieved from: <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/through-growth-achievement-report-review-achieve-educational-excellence-australian-0>
- Dweck, C. S. (2016). *Mindset: The new psychology of success* (Updated edition). New York: Random House.
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“Instagram has well and truly got a hold of me”: Navigating process and intention in a parent’s representation of family life

Madeleine Dobson and Jenny Jay

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Images of children and family life are prevalent across social media contexts. In particular, Instagram is a very popular platform for sharing photographs and videos of children and their families. As trends and tropes emerge, the potential for norms to be established deserves examination. Our study explores the representation of children and family life, with an emphasis on the ‘image of the child’ that exists on Instagram. This presentation reports on our study’s first phase, which involved analysis of a parent’s Instagram posts for one month and an interview with the parent. We will explore the deep meaning that Instagram holds in her life, the processes she and her children engage in to take and share photos, and key issues and ideas for educators, researchers, and family members to consider. Focus will be drawn towards the image of the child as understood by early childhood educators, and how the image apparent in this parent’s Instagram posts compares/contrasts.

“Pretty little squares”: An exploration and critique of the picturesque representation of children on Instagram

Madeleine Dobson and Jenny Jay

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The representation of children is significant and worthy of examination. Children are represented in a variety of ways across a range of contexts – one of the most accessible and arguably influential contexts is Instagram. Instagram is visual and highly visible, and children are represented for a multitude of purposes (e.g. personal posts by parents vs. marketing posts by brands). Our study explores the representation of children and family life in a multi-dimensional way, by analysing Instagram posts from influencers, brands, and celebrity parents. This presentation reports on the second phase where major children’s brands’ posts were collected and analysed using a qualitative visual analysis framework built in NVivo12. We will explore how the selected brands represent children and construct childhood, with consideration towards the ‘image of the child’ and implications for educators, families, and children.

The path less travelled: Benefits of extended outdoor adventure education programs for adolescent well-being in Western Australia

Michael Down, Ben Piggott and Duncan Picknoll

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Outdoor adventure education (OAE) is an outdoor learning program that involves exposing students to elevated levels of perceived risk as a means of developing higher self-efficacy (SE), leadership skills, and interpersonal skills, as well as improving academic outcomes. It is an effective educational strategy that complements traditional schooling. Students of OAE programs typically undertake physical activities such as rock climbing or canoeing, and interpersonal development activities such as leadership or debriefing. A review of the literature revealed a gap between OAE program duration and benefits for adolescent students, with no apparent research existing for OAE duration in Western Australia (WA). This study aimed to investigate whether more extended OAE programs than is typically offered ($M = 5$ days) would result in increased benefits to students, particularly in the areas of SE, mental well-being, and connection to nature. Adolescent students enrolled in Year 9 in 2019 from two Perth-based all-male secondary schools were recruited for this study, with School 1 undertaking OAE for five days and School 2 undertaking OAE for 14 days. Pre- and post-OAE surveys assessed SE (General Self-Efficacy Scale), mental well-being (WEMWBS), and connection to nature (CNS). The findings from this study aim to inform curriculum development and resourcing for future OAE policies and procedures in WA.

The benefits and disadvantages of elite education: Was it worth it?

Jennifer Featch, Laura Perry and Susan Ledger

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No studies have examined the perspectives of elite school alumni about the value and disadvantages conferred upon them by an elite private education. This project sought to establish whether elite alumni's school experiences positively affected their post-school lives and what wider patterns or themes about elite education could be found. The study was guided by Bourdieu's concepts of cultural and social capital, used to understand the benefits, limitations and opportunities afforded by elite private schools. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight participants, three male and five female, then transcripts coded in *Nvivo*. Preliminary results showed the long-term value of social capital first acquired at school differed by gender. Some participants credited their elite schooling with steering them away from drug-taking and poor decisions about sexual behaviour, and towards university; they felt this would have been reversed had they attended a public school. The benefits of social capital that were found could easily be acquired at non-elite schools. Also, when compared with their parents, participants were either at about the same or of a slightly higher socio-economic status. Given these limited long-term benefits of elite schooling it could be timely to reconsider the utility of continued government subsidisation of private schools.

A climate for change? Challenges for household waste separation

Katherine Gaschk and Catherine Baudains

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While there has recently been clear acknowledgement in the public sphere that the way society deals with waste must change, there has not been a great deal of change in the way 'information' or 'education' about how to separate household waste is delivered. Current practice remains primarily entrenched in one-way communication strategies. This practice is driven by assumptions made by waste managers that if 'the information is available' people will correctly separate waste unless they do not care. This research explored the accuracy of this assumption by examining how participants separate 19 common household waste items, why they make their choices, and what barriers and motivators they believe influence their decisions. Survey data was collected from 299 residents of the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council in Perth. Results showed that despite positive attitudes ($\bar{x} 4/5$) there was low level knowledge ($\bar{x} 3.3/7$) and a range of accuracy in separation of household waste items, with 6 items being separated correctly by more than 95% of residents, 8 items correctly separated by less than 53% of residents. The most consistently used information source was the Council Recycling calendar, while uptake of online information sources was

poor. The most significant barriers identified by participants were limited knowledge and bin size/collection rates. Main motivators desired by participants were consistent with the barriers identified. Residents indicated a desire to correctly separate their waste and a need for change in the way information is provided. This has important implications for future education and engagement strategies, including the need for residents to more deeply understand waste management processes beyond a static list of ‘recycling rules’, requiring educators to engage in ongoing dialogue about the constantly evolving state of waste management.

Community empowerment or business as usual? Independent Public Schools and school boards

Brad Gobby

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Policymakers have argued that school autonomy helps to empower communities. This paper examines this claim in the context of the Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative in Western Australia and its use of school boards. Through the analysis of policy documents, public events and the interview responses of five IPS principals, the presentation exposes how some school boards of IP schools are thought about and operate. It finds that school boards are being used to support the administrative, corporate and accountability operations and objectives of schools, rather than leveraging the intellectual, social and cultural resources of their diverse communities around issues of school reform, curriculum and learner engagement. Given neoliberalism and its effects, it is argued that the latter better constitutes the empowerment of communities.

What happened to student absences when the transition year to secondary school was lowered from Year 8 to Year 7?

Kirsten Hancock

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The transition from primary to secondary school coincides with a substantial increase in average absence rates. However, it has been unclear if the increase predominantly reflects the transition to a new environment, or other developmental changes that coincide with the transition. For example, the onset of adolescence is often accompanied by increased rates of chronic illness and mental health disorders that may increase absences independently of the school setting. In 2015, the transition year to secondary school in Western Australia was lowered from Year 8 to Year 7, providing a natural experiment to assess these processes. The study uses administrative attendance data provided by the Western Australian Department of Education, covering all students enrolled in government schools between 2013 and 2016. The average absence rates of Year 7 students were higher in the years they were secondary students (2015 and 2016) than when they were primary students (2013 and 2014). The increase was larger for Semester 2 than Semester 1 absences, suggesting the transition effects were delayed until later in the school year. Most of the additional absences were coded as illness, as opposed to unauthorised absences.

“It hurt my heart and my wallet”. Student experiences of undertaking LANTITE

Alison Hilton

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As political debate dominates the discourse on improving the quality of initial teacher education (ITE), where is the voice of those who have the most at stake – the students? In

2016, a nationally standardised literacy and numeracy test for initial teacher education students, (LANTTTE), was introduced to ensure graduate teachers are in the top 30% of the adult population for literacy and numeracy. Given the recent introduction of this high-stakes test little is known about the views and experiences of stakeholders (practicing teachers and teacher educators) and those who undertake it - ITE students. In this presentation initial findings from a mixed methods study exploring student and stakeholder perceptions and experiences of LANTTTE will be shared. Specifically, this presentation will explore 218 ITE students' views and experiences of undertaking LANTTTE at different stages of the high-stakes journey. Findings reveal many students experienced challenges with key elements of the testing process and expressed concerns regarding the emotional and financial implications of taking the test.

Considering student voices about their teacher expectations: Insights and interrogations

Olivia Johnston

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Young people experience what their teachers expect of them through their classroom interactions, and historical research about teacher expectations has shown that teacher expectations can affect students' attainment of educational outcomes. My study seeks to generate a substantive theory about students' experiences of their teacher expectations using grounded theory methods. Twenty five Year 10 students across three Western Australian public secondary schools were recruited and shadow-studied over a week of their classes at school. After each observation, the students were interviewed about critical interactions with their teachers that occurred during the observations. The observations and interviews were focused on student-teacher interactions that communicated teacher expectations to students, such as the learning opportunities they were offered, grouping strategies in place, and motivational strategies used. I conducted over 100 interviews with year 10 students and while a few of the earlier interviews felt like interrogations, the students generally offered rich insights into their experiences of their teacher expectations. This presentation will focus on the advantages and difficulties of research that aims to channel the experiences of young people, while emphasising the potential for further research that considers secondary school students' voices. Some preliminary findings from the study will also be shared.

Lesson plans: Tools for demonstrating effective teaching

Susan Ledger and Sandi Fielder

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Liz O'Sullivan

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Lesson plans are used pervasively by pre-service teachers in Australia and globally. Individual initial teacher education (ITE) institutions, education sectors, schools and teachers create, use and adapt lesson planning tools to suit their own unique contexts. While there is a growing body of research into the role of lesson plans in the development of effective teaching, there is little universal agreement regarding the necessary elements and key terminology required to ensure these lesson plans are effective.

The introduction of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) and the current focus on teacher quality and standardisation in education make this research timely. These national and global contexts highlight the need to develop a clear understanding of what constitutes an effective lesson plan and how lesson plans can be utilised to support the demonstration of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. This research set out to investigate what recommendations have been made to date in the literature regarding the use and design of lesson plans, what key terminology is common across lesson planning tools, and what is

considered to constitute an effective lesson plan. It goes on to make recommendations regarding an appropriate universal design for lesson planning tools.

Little Green Steps WA: Longitudinal case study of outcomes in education for sustainability in the early years

Elaine Lewis

AAEE WA Chapter

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Sustainability education plays a critical role in shaping life-long attitudes, values and behaviours toward natural and built environments. Little Green Steps Western Australia (LGSWA) is a program that supports sustainability education from birth to eight years. This presentation will examine some of the early childhood experiences available to young children in Western Australia. These experiences are based on the implementation of two tools, the ecological footprint and social handprint. Childhood activities involving wastewise, waterwise and caring for biodiversity are some of aspects of the ecological footprint that will be considered. Likewise, activities involving wellbeing, developing a nurturing built environment and being respectful of other societies and cultures are some of the aspects of the social handprint. Research evaluating the impact of LGSWA over a ten-year period will be reviewed. Some of the key findings included the effectiveness of the program at promoting and leading to the implementation of sustainable behaviours in a variety of early childhood settings, engaging educators and developing high quality resources. Barriers were also identified, such as funding models for the program, and leader and staff approaches to implementing new sustainable behaviours. Future directions for research in sustainability education in the early years include examination of different delivery models, resource requirements and rural/urban expansion of LGSWA.

Teacher-directed violence by students in Western Australia: An exploratory study

Evalena Lowe, Paul Rycroft, Duncan Picknoll and Paola Chivers

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Teacher-directed violence (TDV) by students is a growing concern in Western Australia (WA) with 8,500 students suspended in 2017 for committing TDV. This study investigates the prevalence of TDV reported by WA primary and secondary teachers, as well as the association of TDV between gender, education sectors and Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) of school locations. Participants included 56 primary and secondary teachers in WA who completed an anonymous survey on their experiences with TDV over the past two years. The results revealed that 67.9% of participants had experienced TDV at least once in the past two years. Results also indicated that there was a significant relationship between TDV and gender, education sectors and SEIFA indexes. Combined this information should direct future research and have an implication school policy related to TDV.

Findings from the research study: Perceptions of Year 12 Catholic school students towards teaching as a career choice

Lucie McCrory

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Attracting talented and committed students to the teaching profession is crucial if schools are to continue to play a significant part in teaching and preparing future generations for society. Increasingly, schools are being challenged to revisit the role of the educator in today's rapidly changing educational, technological and societal landscape (Organisation for Economic

Development, 2016). Teachers are being called upon to respond with agility to new and complex classroom situations, which can create a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty for even the most experienced educators. Therefore, schools, policy makers and educational systems must adapt in order to meet the needs of the next generation of students. The success of educational change and student achievement of outcomes is largely reliant upon the quality and performance of teachers (Hattie, 2015). Research suggests that when it comes to student performance, the teacher is estimated to be the number one influence. Therefore, it is critical for the profession to attract and be appealing to high calibre applicants (Achterstraat, 2008). This research uncovered Year 12 student perceptions of teaching and revealed the reasons why students feel discouraged or encouraged to consider it as a career choice. The findings from this study add student voice to the literature surrounding teaching as a career, which have been lacking.

Education and climate change: Matters of care

Jane Merewether

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The unprecedented changes to Earth's ecological and geological processes are surely matters of care for education, yet, as feminist writers have pointed out, care is frequently undervalued and invisible. Care is loaded with tensions and complications and is messy, situated and never innocent or neutral. Moreover, caring for, with and about an increasingly damaged planet can seem overwhelming. In this presentation, I will explore notions of care as they relate to my current research investigating young children's relations with waste in their educational settings. Waste is a part of the everyday life of schools and early learning settings, yet it is frequently hidden from view. My research investigates what happens when we follow the entangled agencies and practices of waste and care and how they "come to matter" (Barad 2007). I explore how care includes an element of doing and thus offers a possible space of response-ability in a world that faces potentially catastrophic climate change.

Comparative pairs judgements method: Design and Visual Arts

Henny Nastiti and Jeremy Pagram

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This paper presents a study on the use of the Comparative Pairs judgements in high-stakes assessment. The Comparative Pairs judgements method is an alternative form of assessment in which assessors assess a pair of student works and judge one work to be more superior than the other, instead of assigning a mark to individual student works as in the more widely used Analytical marking process. With an aim to investigate the suitability of this assessment method in a digital environment, two secondary school subjects with different types of creative practical tasks, Design and Visual Arts, were investigated. By comparing the findings in these two tasks, the researchers expect to contribute to the understanding of the issues surrounding the use of the Comparative Pairs judgements in different types of practical tasks. Data gathered from 16 assessors who judged 157 student practical works were analysed by employing the pragmatic research paradigm using the mixed research method. Findings suggested that the Comparative Pairs judgements method could be an alternative scoring method that are suitable for these two types of task.

English teachers and the Asia Literacy priority: Is it really a priority?

Ben Nilsson

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The Australian Curriculum consists of eight Learning Areas, seven General Capabilities and three Cross Curricular Priorities. Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, one of the Cross Curricular Priorities, is expected to be delivered by teachers in all learning areas. However, in an environment where the numbers of students studying Asian languages is declining, it is often through the compulsory subject of English that students are exposed to Asian culture. This presentation highlights how policy is enacted by providing an insight into the lived experiences of four high school English teachers. Findings suggest that Asia Literacy becomes a personal choice for teachers and their voices reveal the complexity of its adoption in secondary schools. It also exposes how the intersection of Asia literacies and 'intercultural understanding' within the General Capabilities occurs. The findings also examine text choice, consider how teachers access professional development and reveal where the new curriculum and associated documentation can be conflicting. The voices of the teachers also act as a guide as to how educators can be supported to negotiate Asia Literacy. In this way, the stated aim of using policy to create a more prosperous nation that builds strong relationships with Asia can be better realised.

Come together! Co-designing a digital communication tool to support secondary students with autism

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Schools are increasingly faced with complex challenges requiring creative solutions. Active inclusion is challenging in secondary schooling for students with autism, due to struggles with social skills difficulties, initiating interactions and reciprocal conversations. Secondary schooling creates greater demands for social and academic independence, frequent movement between classes, different subject teachers, varied student compositions in classes, with increased unstructured periods of time throughout the day. Communication between home and school becomes increasingly important in navigating this increasingly complex system. Key issues documented in research cite inconsistent communication channels as a key difficulty experienced by parents, teachers and students. Yet, interestingly, little research has investigated solutions for this issue. In 2018, our research team explored the development of a digital communication tool for use in secondary schools to improve timely communication between stakeholders to benefit students with autism. The process from conceptualisation to prototype digital tool was facilitated by two co-design workshops with stakeholder representatives, inclusive of parents, teachers, educational assistants and health professionals. When provided with creative opportunity, invested stakeholders created a prototype digital communication tool, which appears to offer promise in providing a conduit to facilitate collaborative communication between stakeholders supporting secondary students with autism.

Initial teacher education students' literacy: Factors that impact on literacy achievement of prospective pre-service teachers

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Strong literacy skills are a prerequisite for teachers. There is much contention about a perceived erosion of literacy skills in new teachers and how initial teacher education providers can ensure graduate teachers possess the literacy skills required for their teaching careers. This research investigated the factors that impact on prospective pre-service teachers' literacy achievement. A mixed methods approach was used to examine the relationship between student entry pathway, Post Entrance Literacy Assessment (PELA) score, perceptions of self-efficacy, and previous literacy experiences in a first year literacy unit for prospective primary and early childhood initial teacher education students.

The findings of this research study are that: prospective pre-service teacher entry pathway into an ITE course is a moderate predictor of their literacy achievement within their course; on-entry assessment scores are not a predictor of prospective pre-service teachers' future literacy achievement in an ITE course; high levels of literacy self-efficacy are evident in prospective pre-service teachers that demonstrate literacy achievement in their ITE course; and prospective pre-service teachers that demonstrated literacy achievement had all experienced at least some positive previous literacy learning experiences.

Bridging communities: Developing digital literacies and introducing digital technologies in the Montessori early childhood education classroom

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In 2018 River Montessori School [1] commissioned a whole school Action Research Project to identify whether there were authentic methods responsive to Montessori pedagogy to develop digital literacies and introduce digital technologies into the Montessori classroom. Our research found that at the heart of the problem the school experienced with implementation of digital technologies was not only that there was no agreed approach for implementation in the ECE Montessori classroom but that there was a disconnect in the school community between the educators and the families who attended the school. Our suggested solution was to collaboratively define Digital Literacies in the context of the school and to ask the educators to begin to catalogue a shared language for digital literacies and digital technologies use which can be referred to and used by educators, children and parents and caregivers. The contention we make in this presentation is that a shared language resolved the internal contradiction in the school attitude to digital technologies use as educators were confident that the approach was consistent with Montessori pedagogy and the school's philosophy, which opened up a channel for communication between educators, children and caregivers.

[1] All School and Educator names have been changed.

Perceptions of large-scale, testing in religious education: How do religious educators perceive The Bishops' Religious Literacy Assessment?

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This research provides a Western Australian perspective of teaching and assessing Religious Education (RE) in Catholic schools. The perspective recognises RE as a learning area reserved for classroom instruction. A pragmatic approach to research was implemented to focus on religious educators' perceptions of a state-wide, standardised assessment in RE. The approach used mixed methods to survey 238 teachers and school leaders working in Catholic primary and secondary schools. Three aspects regarding the religious educators' perceptions were investigated: first, how the religious educators perceived the purpose and role of the assessment; second, how they responded to the different components that comprise the administration and implementation of the assessment; third, how their perceptions of the assessment influenced their teaching and assessment practices in RE. The research findings suggest that the religious educators' perceptions of the assessment were contrasting and complex - a product of an interplay between individual and collective experiences of teaching RE and using large-scale, standardised assessments. Furthermore, a connection is evident in how the religious educators interpreted their professional training and teaching experiences in RE and, in turn, prepared for and engaged with the administration of the assessment. These findings act as a stimulus for professional dialogue and collaboration between school and system educators who are willing to improve the quality of student learning.

Leaders and leadership in Serbian primary schools: Perspectives across two worlds

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The Serbian education system has undergone multiple changes in the attempt to align its education policies to those of the European Union. In the process, primary school principals in Serbia are located at the intersection of policy and practice. Given this context, the aim of the qualitative study reported was to generate theory on the perspectives of primary school principals in Serbia towards their work. Specifically, the results include school principals' perspectives on societal changes and accompanying changes in education, their perspectives on governance in the education system, and their perspectives on their own roles and on their professional learning.

The results are pertinent to the literature and future research on education leadership. They also have implications for policy and practice. In this regard, the results of the study are likely to be useful for researchers in the field of leadership in education, for school principals, for education policy makers, and for those in charge of preparing, developing, and implementing professional development programmes for school leaders in Serbia, as well as in other post-conflict and post-communist countries.

Round table discussion

The science of sustainability in early childhood: Engaging now for an informed future

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Sustainability is a cross-curriculum priority within the school curriculum in Australia for children from the age of five (SCSA). Similarly, the Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF] (DEEWR, 2009) that outlines learning prior to and during the early years of school asks that children be "connected with and contribute to their world" (Outcome 1). The ideals of sustainability neatly align with aspects of science learning including the natural world and living things; the properties of materials and the use of living, non-living and once living products; the impact of weather on daily lives; and the progressive changes to the Earth's surface and environment through natural and human factors. As an academic tasked with developing early childhood educators that can teach this content knowledge to children, the challenge is how to engage young learners in a debate that, at times, involves abstract concepts that children perhaps cannot directly experience in the learning setting. The purpose of this discussion is to provoke thinking around planning inquiries for young children that engage them with these concepts and involves both hands-on and heads-on learning that may stimulate sustainable, research-informed practices into the future.

Accidently spiritual

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An Australian early years' mandated document outlines the need for educators to attend to children's spiritual capacity as part of a holistic approach to the early years. However, how this can be achieved is not clearly articulated. This investigation examined educators' practices to promote children's spirituality within the context of faith-based childcare centres in Western Australia and with a specific focus on educators working with children aged 3 to 4 years of age. Through the use of the qualitative theoretical perspectives of interpretative

phenomenological analysis (IPA) and qualitative content analysis (QCA), this investigation yielded insight into educators' understandings of spirituality; their knowledge of children's spirituality; the practices educators' employed, both the planned and the incidental, to promote children's spirituality. It became evident that although educators did know something about promoting children's spirituality, both personal spiritual formation and information about children's spirituality is required to enable educators to intentionally, rather than accidentally, plan for children's spiritual opportunities.

Performativity, identity and ATAR: How are upper secondary students navigating the meritocratic identity market underpinning public schooling?

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This presentation advocates the value in drawing on poststructuralist notions of 'self' for critiquing the meritocratic ideology underpinning the current practices of schooling under neoliberal regimes. The Independent Public-School initiative that has taken hold in Western Australia in recent years will be discussed, with emphasis placed on the impact this initiative has had on the performative pressure now endured by Western Australian public-school students. Preliminary insights drawn from interviews and focus group discussions with ten ATAR students currently enrolled year 11 or 12 in an Independent Public School in the Perth Metropolitan area, will be presented to highlight some of the challenges confronting these students as they strive to achieve their academic goals. By considering these students' experiences against a critique of the normative practices of competitive schooling arrangements, my aim is to imagine a more hopeful and humanising kind of education for young people. My central argument is that young people are always in the process of becoming; they have an unfinished reality which makes learning possible. Viewed in this way, all students have a right to an empowering education that promotes and encourages the continued development of capabilities and skills that will help them achieve their imagined futures.

Focus 19 – Issues of urgency in Western Australia: A discourse analysis

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Curriculum and education policy hold particular power to influence the pedagogical practices and priorities of educators. Western Australia's *Directions for School, Focus 2019: An initiative of the director general's classroom first strategy [Focus 19]* (Department of Education, Government of Western Australia, 2018) provides evidence of the long-term influence of discourses embedded in federal education documents developed in response to the Labor government's 2009 'Education Revolution' (Rudd and Mackin, 2007). Part of this revolution was to 'reconceptualise children' (p.2) so that their economic contribution might be acknowledged, and has raised questions about how this might impact key participants in early childhood education. In this presentation, the emerging discourses of inclusion, achievement and play, induced from a discourse analysis of federal education documents relevant to the first year of compulsory school, will be considered within the context of contemporary early childhood education in Western Australia. The five most urgent recommendations of Focus 19 will be discussed, and their potential to affect the decision-making of educators will also be examined to bring light to what these decisions might afford young children as they transition into the Western Australian school system.

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Rudd, K., & Macklin, J. (2007). *New directions for early childhood education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Labor Party.

A still mind in a climate of change: Understanding participants' journeys of meditative change – implications for course design

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The popularity of meditation has grown significantly in the West over the past two decades. Research studies in this area fall broadly into two main categories: (a) those which explore the clinical effectiveness of meditation in terms of neural and physiological changes; and, (b) those which explore the cognitive and emotional aspects of meditative practice. Few studies examine the design and implementation of meditation courses and the individual and collective journeys of those who undertake them. Given the increasing popularity in meditation training and the number of courses being offered, we argue that there is a need for a research-base to inform the design and implementation of such programs; to help better understand and support the needs of participants.

This presentation shares initial findings from the first two phases (two of four) of a sequential mixed-methods study, designed to examine participant perceptions and experiences of an adult meditation training course (Mahat Meditation). Findings reveal participants have changed their perceptions of self, others, the world and sense of wellbeing as a result of the course and attribute these changes to aspects of the design and implementation of the training. Implications for meditation training course design and further research are discussed.

Actionable feedback improving student learning

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Universities consistently receive low student satisfaction around feedback. The missing piece in the design of assessment tasks includes how we want students to actually action the feedback. Students regularly do not get any actionable feedback until the second half of the semester or later. To provide feedback early and to improve students' actioning the feedback is a challenge.

An Australian university in Asia implemented an initiative where students could expect actionable feedback on an activity they engaged in by the end of Week Four in every subject. Survey data collected after the first implementation highlighted the disparity between academics and students perception of feedback. 92 percent of staff indicated they provided feedback on an activity in all of their subjects by Week Four. However, 52 percent of students indicated they received no feedback in any of their subjects by Week Four. After a series of targeted professional development activities, the percentage of students who said they had no feedback in any unit decreased to 11, 36 percent said they had feedback in all their units and 54 percent in some of their units. This presentation shares insights into the challenges and successes with implementing an Early Feedback initiative.

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