

School of Education

Updat**ED**



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Learning to read is a human right, say top university educators
- Evidence-based teaching drives stronger reading outcomes
- Sport is great for our kids' minds and bodies, but what if you can't afford it?

FEATURED ARTICLES

- Children's University beckons WA's South West
- Altruism takes ECU Associate Professor into WA Women's Hall of Fame
- Surge in music teachers holds new promise for musicians of the future

From the Executive Dean

It is my pleasure to share the first edition of UpdatED 2024 with you.



Professor Caroline Mansfield
Executive Dean, School of Education.

Welcome to our first edition of UpdatED for 2024. In this issue, we bring you a blend of research findings, upcoming events and remarkable staff accomplishments. We are pleased to share our position paper on the Teaching of Reading. Drawing on the extensive research and expertise of our staff, this paper emphasises the evidence based key components for learning to read. This position paper is guiding our initial teacher education curriculum and the work ahead of us to meet the core curriculum requirements of the Teacher Education Expert Panel of 2023.

Professor Dawn Penney and her colleagues remind us of the multiple benefits of informal sport. As well as physical activity informal sport contributes to health, well-being and social enjoyment. This work is a good reminder to get outdoors as the weather is cooling and we have beautiful autumn days. We are thrilled to welcome our largest cohort of aspiring secondary music teachers in 2024! The introduction of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching, which is 'nested' in our two year nationally accredited Master of Teaching has provided an opportunity for those wishing to teach in WA to gain a one-year qualification and start that journey. Additionally, read about the PhD journey of Pippa Chapman who is investigating early childhood music education in homes.

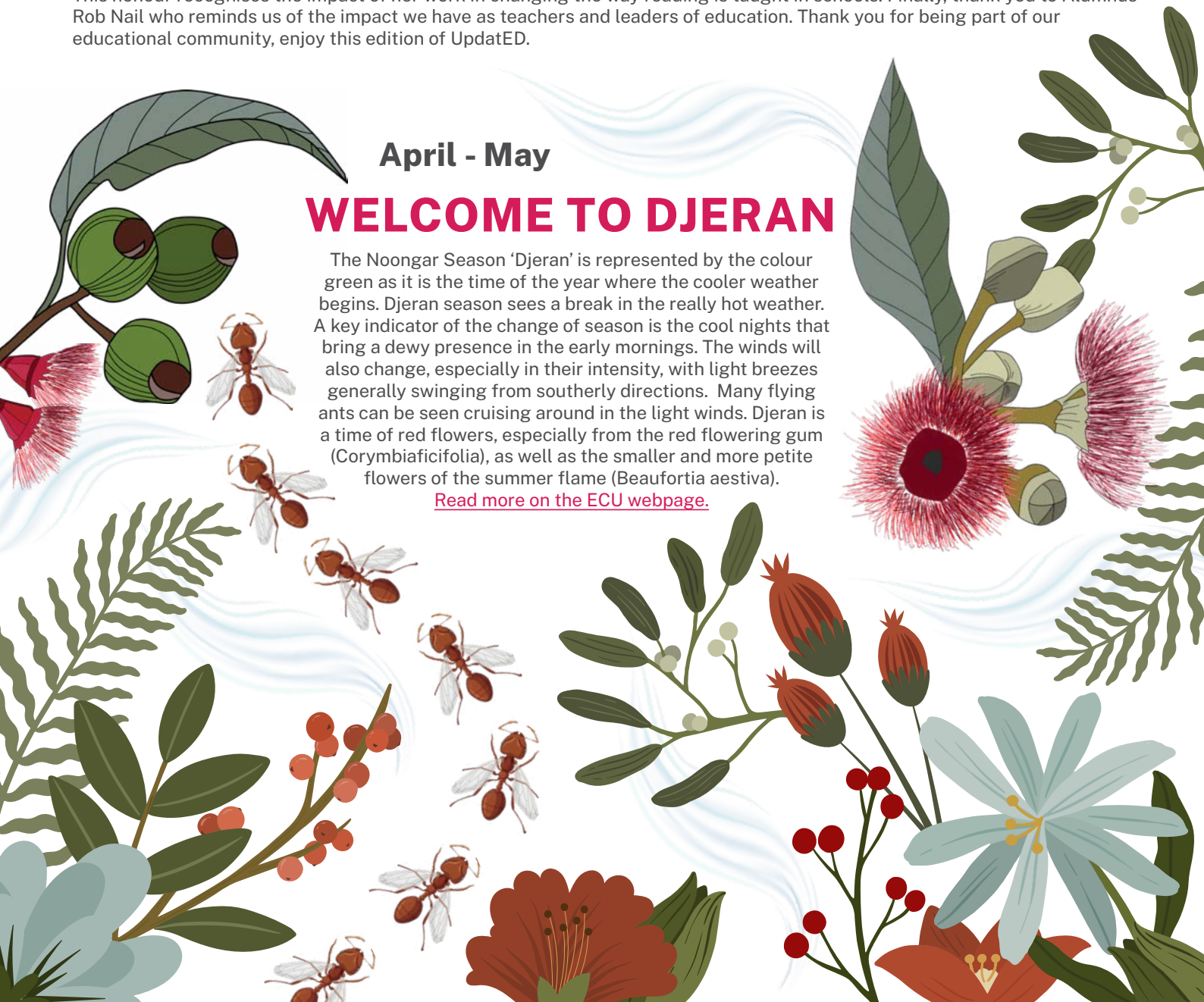
Join us in congratulating Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AO, who has been inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. This honour recognises the impact of her work in changing the way reading is taught in schools. Finally, thank you to Alumnus Rob Nail who reminds us of the impact we have as teachers and leaders of education. Thank you for being part of our educational community, enjoy this edition of UpdatED.

April - May

WELCOME TO DJERAN

The Noongar Season 'Djeran' is represented by the colour green as it is the time of the year where the cooler weather begins. Djeran season sees a break in the really hot weather. A key indicator of the change of season is the cool nights that bring a dewy presence in the early mornings. The winds will also change, especially in their intensity, with light breezes generally swinging from southerly directions. Many flying ants can be seen cruising around in the light winds. Djeran is a time of red flowers, especially from the red flowering gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*), as well as the smaller and more petite flowers of the summer flame (*Beaufortia aestiva*).

[Read more on the ECU webpage.](#)



Learning to read is a human right, say top university educators



Professor Caroline Mansfield, Executive Dean, School of Education.

ECU's School of Education has published its position paper for the Teaching of Reading, emphasising the critical importance of learning to read as a fundamental human right. It highlights the necessity for explicit instruction and a comprehensive understanding of the complex processes involved in reading acquisition.

Edith Cowan University's (ECU) School of Education has published its position paper for the Teaching of Reading, emphasising the critical importance of learning to read as a fundamental human right.

"This paper highlights the necessity for explicit instruction and a comprehensive understanding of the complex processes involved in reading acquisition," ECU School of Education Executive Dean Professor Caroline Mansfield said.

"Drawing upon international research, the paper advocates for a systematic, evidence-based approach that encompasses key components such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, within a rich and broad language curriculum while emphasising the need to provide support for a diverse range of learners and ongoing engagement with evolving research findings to inform effective teaching practices."

The paper states that learning to read is recognised as a fundamental human right by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

"Here at ECU, we firmly believe that instilling a love of reading as well as the capacity to understand complex texts is dependent on successfully teaching reading according to current research," Professor Mansfield said.

"A common misconception about reading, is that it is natural, and children will learn to read simply by being read to or looking at the pictures or first letter in words," Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond noted.

"Humans have evolved a special facility for talking, just try and stop a child when they start, but not reading. Children must learn how to convert the symbols of whatever language they are learning to read to the sounds of the language, and English is one of the most complex written systems."

This is why, according to Professor Mansfield, ECU graduates understand that "effective reading instruction is critical to children's educational success and future participation in society. Being able to read also contributes to knowledge acquisition and promotes a sense of wonder, awe, and empathy."

Research from around the world demonstrates that the most effective method of teaching skills and knowledge for word level reading is systematic, explicit, and cumulative.

"We believe and understand that when teaching reading, the emphasis on oral language,

phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, systematic decoding instruction, and fluency enables children to read words and supports comprehension of authentic texts" Professor Mansfield explained.

Associate Professor Helen Adam added that the paper also highlights that to become proficient readers children require abundant practice in reading text, and they need to be exposed to a rich and broad language curriculum which includes frequent opportunities for engagement with a diverse range of authentic texts, as well as the cognitive and social-emotional benefits of reading for pleasure.

Associate Professor Adam also noted that the paper draws attention to the importance of rich, diverse and playful contexts for oral language development in the early years.

"The way we prepare teachers at ECU is an iterative process that reflects well established research and contemporary research, and as new research is published, we continue to refine our practice."

Highly ranked for teacher education

Edith Cowan University is ranked in the top 300 universities in the world for Education according to the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2024.

ECU is also the top university in Australia for skills development and learning resources in undergraduate teacher education, and for overall educational experience in postgraduate education (Good Universities Guide 2024).

You can read ECU's full position paper "**School of Education Position Paper for the Teaching of Reading for the Early Years and Primary**" [here](#).

This article is republished from **The ECU Newsroom**. Read the original article [here](#).



Evidence-based teaching drives stronger reading outcomes



Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM, School of Education.

A recent report by the Grattan Institute found one third of Australian children cannot read proficiently, calling for an overhaul in reading instruction and the need for “a systematic, evidence-based curriculum”.

The authors of the report say the ‘whole-language’ approach – which became popular in the 1970s and is based on the idea that learning to read is an easy, natural, unconscious process – does not work for all students and that its remnants should be banished from Australian schools.

What’s needed, say the experts, is a curriculum that focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension. They argue that reading, a critical skill for lifelong learning and empathy, requires explicit teaching, challenging the belief that children learn to read naturally.

Edith Cowan University’s (ECU) School of Education recently published a position paper emphasising the critical importance of learning to read as “a fundamental human right” and agreeing that the whole-language approach needs to be overhauled in favour of evidence-based teaching practices.

“By far, the most significant factor holding back young Australians is how reading is taught to children,” Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond from ECU’s School of Education told *The Educator*.

“Teaching is the most altruistic of professions and teachers want the best for their students, but sometimes they haven’t been given the right tools.”

Associate Professor Hammond insists teachers are not to blame for the decline in students’ reading outcomes.

“For many years they have not had access to research on the most effective way to teach reading. Instead, approaches such as ‘whole language’, and its more recent iteration, ‘balanced literacy’ have been the dominant approaches taught at universities and advocated by systems,” she said.

“Unlike learning to talk, that is natural, learning how to read depends on how children are taught.”

Associate Professor Hammond says a “structured and systematic” approach to teaching the component skills of reading: phoneme awareness, letter-sound knowledge, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension is more effective than an approach that encourages children to look at the first letter and guess or look at the picture.

“A child that learns how the sounds of speech are represented by letters, can read any word. The more children practice, the better their brain gets at connecting the spoken language system in their brain to decoding print,” she said.

“Most people can’t remember learning how to read, they can just do it, and read virtually any word they see without any apparent effort at all. That’s not the case with unknown words – those you have to sound out.”

Associate Professor Hammond pointed to the remote communities in Western Australia, where children attending schools who are part of the Kimberley Schools Project are taught the precursors for reading explicitly and directly how to read.

“Our consistent approach means that children who may move between schools or have low attendance learn to read better than some of the peers in metropolitan areas because of how we teach,” she said. “This means a child who attends 60% of the time can still learn how to read.”

Associate Professor Hammond said this begs the question of how children with regular attendance are still failing.

“Of course, oral language difficulties and other factors such as working memory contribute to reading difficulties, but it is more than reasonable to expect that those children will learn how to read, perhaps not as quickly and efficiently as peers.”

Ending the ‘cycle of failure’

In 2020, the NSW Government made the phonics screening check – a five to seven-minute assessment that tells teachers how their students are progressing in phonics – compulsory for all Year 1 students.

It is hoped that the check, which consists of 40 words which are delivered through a mixture of 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words, will provide effective early intervention against reading issues so that young people don’t fall behind in this critical area later on in their learning journey.

“The Year 1 Phonics check measures how well children can read short words they have never seen before,” Associate Professor Hammond said.

“To do well in this test children must have been taught the precursor skills for decoding words, in particular phoneme awareness, letter-sound knowledge and how to systematically blend sounds together to read words.”

Associate Professor Hammond says that for some children who do not pass the Phonics Screener, attention to teaching these skills “is not only essential but urgent”.

“The longer students use inefficient strategies such as guessing or predicting words based on the context of the sentence or a picture, the more ingrained these strategies become,” she said.

“From this point the children who can read get better at it, and those who do not, and a cycle of failure can begin.”

Associate Professor Hammond said that for other children, who may read accurately, but not understand what they read, greater attention to those factors that impact on comprehension such as teaching background knowledge, unknown vocabulary and strategies to apply while reading to support comprehension, such as finding the main idea, are essential and can also be taught directly.

“There is an art to the science of reading, and that is knowing what children need to progress and providing it.”

This article is republished from **The Educator**.
Read the original article [here](#).

Sport is great for our kids' minds and bodies, but what if you can't afford it?



Professor Dawn Penney, Vice Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellow,
School of Education.

Club sport can be a fun and healthy way for kids to develop important life skills, but what happens when the cost is too high? The cost-of-living crisis means many families are struggling to cover essentials let alone extracurricular activities, and sport often isn't cheap.

The Australian Sports Commission's AusPlay survey data released last year showed families paid \$650 in 2022 compared to \$600 in 2020 to participate in sport or physical activity. And there's more to it than registration or entry fees.

A 2018 survey from Western Sydney University found Australians were paying more than \$1,100 on average to play a sport each season – for things such as equipment and uniforms – with an additional \$450 for transport.

Vaughan Cruickshank is the program director for health and physical education at the University of Tasmania. He says there are immediate impacts of kids missing out on the social and physical health benefits of sport, and they can be long-lasting.

"If kids withdraw from sport when they are young, they are less likely to re-engage in sport [or] physical activity later in life, which can affect their health and wellbeing as adults," he says. The good news is you can replicate the benefits kids get from club sport even when money is tight.

Why we want our kids to play sport

Parents mainly include their children in sports for their physical and character development, says Shane Pill, a professor of physical education studies and sport at Flinders University.

"They see people coming together to work towards a shared goal. They see people learning to persist in activity until they become skilful," Professor Pill says. "They learn resilience ... they develop a capacity to be a good teammate; collaborating and cooperating with others."

Parents also like to share the sports they enjoy with their kids. He says for young children, the motivation is simply to play, and that participation numbers begin to drop when children reach young adolescence and it becomes more about competition. When done well, Professor Pill says, sport helps with the "development of the whole person".

"Those sport environments that are optimal really focus on helping that person realise their potential as a complete person."

So what are the alternatives?

Dawn Penney from Edith Cowan University's health and physical education sector says sport is a great way for children to engage in physical activity and have fun with friends. And that can be achieved in a range of environments, not limited to club sport.

"We can reflect back on during COVID times when formal sports activities were typically closed ... We saw people getting very creative and using spaces and places to get

together with family and friends ... using whatever equipment was available to create a game that might not be formalised," she says. She says the research shows children stay in sport when it involves fun and friendship, so focusing on anything that helps children engage with that safely is helpful.

Professor Penney recommends using local council spaces that are freely accessible, such as playgrounds, parks and other green spaces. Joining your local community groups on Facebook can help connect you with other families looking to do the same, as well as different events your children can get involved with. And we don't need to leave the home to help our kids get active.

"Parents can facilitate young people's activity by doing catches in the backyard, paddle-back tennis in the driveway," Professor Pill says.

"If it's a rainy day and your kids are inside, you can be playing balloon volleyball across the couch."

The benefits of not being tied to one sport

Professor Penney says a lot of children may not want to be tied to one activity and will welcome the chance to play something different each week. And the benefit of using spaces like parks and beaches is that we broaden our children's perception of physical activity, Professor Pill says.

"[A sports club] has set times for training – if we only take our children for sport at those set times, we are socialising young people into thinking physical activity only happens when we go for training. "They need to see spaces and places as an opportunity to be physically active."

Dr Cruickshank says because children's time is more commonly spent inside on devices, and active transport such as bike rides to school has declined, role modelling from parents is key.

"Which I acknowledge can be challenging for some time-poor parents working long hours to provide for their family," he says. "[But] developing family habits that involve physical activity – walking the dog, going to the beach, riding bikes – are key."

This article is republished from **ABC News**.
Read the original article [here](#).



Doing the math on teaching teachers

Dr Vesife Hatisaru, Lecturer, School of Education.



No one knows better than a university that teaching is a complex task. It takes a special combination of professional knowledge, motivation, and productive beliefs to become a good teacher.

What we want to know is how our teaching methods can ultimately lead to better student learning outcomes, which is the focus of new ECU research. ECU researchers, mathematics educator Dr Vesife Hatisaru and mathematician Dr Julia Collins, have been conducting research into what are called '[teacher competencies](#)' and how they ultimately [impact on student learning outcomes in the field of mathematics](#).

Lecturer in Mathematics Education in ECU's School of Education, Dr Hatisaru, explains when it comes to a subject such as mathematics, we face even more unique challenges in terms of student engagement and student anxiety, because mathematics has a wide range of applications and there are societal or parent expectations.

"Our research looks at the perceptions secondary mathematics teachers have of the professional knowledge they need as a teacher, and where they can source that knowledge (e.g., university studies, peer learning, self-study, books, professional development workshops/conferences, research studies, and so on)," said Dr Hatisaru.

"These are the perceptions that influence what professional learning decisions teachers make."

Perceptions of current and future teachers

In two related studies led by Dr Hatisaru, the research investigated the perceptions of future teachers ([Hatisaru & Collins, 2023](#)) and practising teachers ([Hatisaru, 2023](#)), asking them the following series of questions:

- What type of professional knowledge should a teacher of mathematics have;
- How important is it for teachers to have this knowledge;
- How do teachers continue to enhance their professional knowledge; and
- How do they find out about their students' strategies and understanding of a particular mathematical content?

Findings show teachers in the classroom did place great emphasis on having professional knowledge to teach their subject, however, their perceptions of the knowledge they needed was relatively narrow – with little focus on extending their knowledge in the curriculum or materials or what was emerging on the mathematical horizon.

While future teachers mentioned postgraduate studies as a source of gaining professional knowledge, practising teachers made little reference to higher degree learning or educational research literature as a potential source of knowledge. "These teachers emphasised collaborative learning, indicating that they found interacting with and learning from their peers as a more useful source of knowledge," said Dr Hatisaru.

This article is republished from [The ECU Newsroom](#). Read the original article [here](#).

"We know that [Australian educational policy](#) emphasises collaboration, so it is no surprise that current teachers are influenced by their educational context and choose to learn by collaborating with their colleagues – but this strategy can hardly replace learning by doing [higher degree studies which is more common in some countries](#).

"In Finland, for example, current mathematics teachers must have at least a Masters' degree and this is considered one of the main contributory [factors behind students' high academic performance](#)."

Shifting perceptions

According to Dr Hatisaru, doing higher degree studies, such as a PhD degree, requires a significant commitment of time, money and support from your school principal, which not all teachers will have these resources.

"What's important is to look at how we shift those perceptions and then provide teachers with the support they need to engage in higher degree learning."

"If teachers do not view higher degree learning and research as sources of knowledge, or if they are less aware of the multi-dimensional aspect of teacher knowledge needed to teach mathematics effectively, then this will influence what professional development programs they will attend and what they will acquire from them."

Doctors Hatisaru and Collins explain this research highlights the importance of collaborations between a 'maths educator' and a 'mathematician' in terms of bringing diverse and commentary perspective in the field of mathematics education.

The heart of higher learning

"While collaborating with your peers is an incredibly important piece of the puzzle, it is not where you gain the most current scholarly knowledge produced in the mathematics education field," they believe.

"This key distinction goes to the heart of how we value higher learning in universities," said Dr Hatisaru.

"We would like to see a study done of the professional development opportunities available to mathematics teachers in Australia, to determine what gaps, if any, are there in professional development opportunities," said Dr Collins.

While this research looks at mathematics teaching, the findings give an interesting insight into how teachers' beliefs shape decisions about pursuing higher learning at university.



Two Schools: One Islam

Associate Professor Melanie Brooks, Associate Dean (Research), School of Education.



Two Schools: One Islam is a new documentary film directed by Associate Professor Melanie Brooks, who led a collaborative team from UIN Walisongo University, Curtin University, and Monash University.

The film was funded by a grant that the team won through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Having researched Islamic schooling for over a decade, Associate Professor Brooks was motivated to create a film to counter anti-Muslim discourses pervasive in Western societies. The documentary compares two Islamic schools — one in Semarang, Indonesia, and the other in Melbourne, Australia — and provides insight into the curricula, perspectives, and challenges of the students, teachers, and administrators in each school.

The film explores several key themes and highlights the diversity of perspectives and aspirations within Islamic communities. It shows how Islamic schools operate within their unique cultural contexts while sharing core values related to academic achievement, kindness, and civic engagement. Cultural identity came through as a strong theme, with students and staff sharing the ways they cultivate their identities within a framework of faith and society.

Central to the narrative is the portrayal of Islamic schools as vital community pillars. The film showcases how these institutions foster strong bonds between students, teachers, and the wider community, emphasising collective support and collaboration in nurturing young Muslims. Education emerges as a powerful tool for empowerment, with educators speaking passionately about their efforts

to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of the modern world while upholding their faith and values.

While primarily centred on Islamic schooling, the film also touches upon the importance of interfaith dialogue and understanding, highlighting instances where students and educators engage with individuals from diverse religious backgrounds.

Complementing the documentary is an accompanying website that serves as a resource for educators and individuals seeking deeper insights into Islam. Including curated content and lesson plans, the website is designed to foster reflection, meaningful dialogue and enhance cultural literacy.

Two Schools: One Islam is a poignant reminder of our shared humanity and the common threads uniting us as global citizens. It encourages audiences to embrace diversity, and to recognise the interconnectedness of our experiences and communities. Through its compelling storytelling and insightful exploration, the film champions the richness of Islamic schooling while advocating for empathy and mutual respect across cultures and continents.

View the documentary [here](#) or via scanning the QR code.



Teachers as Researchers in Innovative Learning Environments

Associate Professor Julia Morris, Higher Degree by Research Coordinator, School of Education.



Teachers as Researchers in Innovative Learning Environments documents how learning spaces influence and can be influenced by students, teachers, and leaders in schools. It draws on evidence from the Plans to Pedagogy project, which was implemented across 10 diverse Australian and New Zealand schools, each with a unique school context and specific learning environment issue. The project employed a participatory approach, where academic researchers partnered with school leaders and staff in each school to co-design, implement, and evaluate research targeting the school's chosen issue.

The case studies presented in this book cover a range of topics, including how space can be used as a pedagogic tool, determining the affordances of learning environments to engage students, how teacher collaboration can be enhanced in flexible spaces, and how furniture influences student engagement and teacher pedagogies. While the case studies findings add to the body of work around the design and inhabitation of flexible learning environments, the participatory methods used in this project provide school leaders with authentic examples of how research can be utilised to drive evidence-based discussions about teacher practices and student learning. It's a book from teachers to teachers, assisted by researchers who know learning environments and what its like to teach.

Purchase [here](#) or via scanning the QR code.



Open Access Research Articles in the School of Education



Associate Professor Melanie Brooks, Associate Dean (Research)

Written by School of Education academics, please find below a selection of recently published articles which are available to you without any subscriptions. Please click on the links to view these journal articles which are all freely available. Find out more about our research at ECU by following this link: <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/research-activity>



Unravelling the wellbeing needs of Australian teachers: a qualitative inquiry. Australian Educational Researcher.

Lemon, N., Turner, K. (2024).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00687-9>

This research asked Australian teachers the big beautiful questions about their wellbeing needs that are often unheard or evaded. By diving deep into teachers' perceptions, the study uncovered crucial insights.

We found that supportive, consultative school leadership that prioritises teacher wellbeing is highly effective. Ongoing professional development initiatives and collaboration with colleagues also emerged as successful strategies. In contrast, tokenistic leadership efforts and professional development viewed as “box-ticking” were seen as unsuccessful. Excessive workloads and poor work-life balance were identified as major barriers to teacher wellbeing.

Teachers expressed a strong desire for school leaders to drive continuous improvement and open dialogues around wellbeing. They also preferred professional development facilitated by experienced educators who could contextualise the content. Reducing stress and cultivating more positive emotions and meaning at work were highlighted as key priorities.

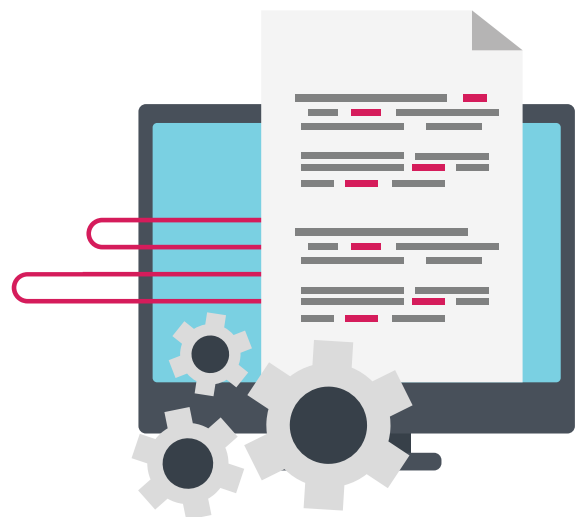
This research offers a roadmap for nurturing teacher wellbeing through evidence-based, teacher-centred approaches.

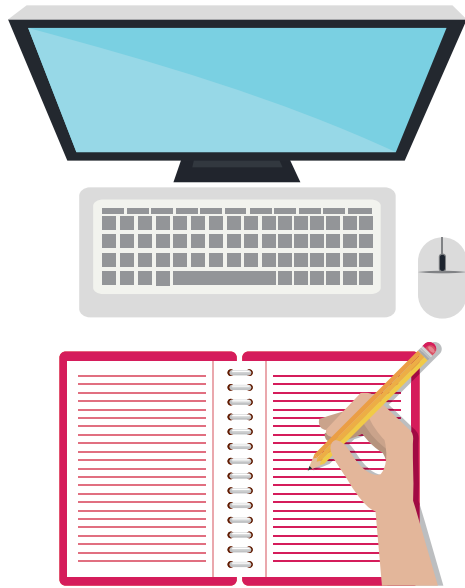
Primary school students' perceptions and developed artefacts and language from learning coding and computational thinking using the 3C model. Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 1–16.

Martin, D. A., Curtis, P., & Redmond, P. (2024).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12972>

This article provides school teachers a specific teaching sequence for integrating the Digital Technologies and Mathematics curricular. The 3C Model represents a transfer of the successful and familiar pedagogy for teaching mathematics to the teaching of coding and computational thinking skills, e.g. verbal and modelled support is gradually withdrawn as students learn to understand the relationship between acting out a mathematics operation, their developed language and the abstract number sentence. The 3C Model simulates this teaching approach using physical computing devices, digital coding platforms and staged language development as students learn to understand the relationships between the elements of movement, the coding language, and the abstract code.

The model was tested with Year 6 students. The students' perspectives reflected their learning progressions of acting out algorithms and computational thinking using movement and concrete materials, followed by engaging with visual representations and corresponding abstract language. The 3C Model was found to not only enhance students' engagement levels but also resulted in improved curriculum learning outcomes.





The contributions of executive functioning to handwritten and keyboarded compositions in Year 2. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*.

Valcan, D. S., Malpique, A, Pino-Pasternak, D., Asil, M., & Teo, T. (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2024.102272>

Skillful writing is a powerful means of communication and a key goal in educational contexts worldwide. In today's digital world, the need to prepare children to master paper and computer-based writing is of paramount importance, with national and international researchers and educators highlighting the need to understand factors explaining writing acquisition and development across writing modalities.

This publication shares findings from one research project included in the Writing for All research initiative currently being developed at the School of Education. One main goal of this research project supported by The Ian Potter Foundation and the State Library of WA was to investigate factors explaining children's text composing using paper and pencil

and using computers. Our study involved 544 Year 2 students enrolled in 47 classrooms from 17 primary schools in Western Australia. In this study, we examined the mediating role of executive functioning in explaining the quality of texts children produced using paper and pencil and using laptops.

To our knowledge, this was the first study comparing these mediation mechanisms across writing modalities. As a cognitively demanding process, writing requires the development of transcription skills such as handwriting, spelling and keyboarding, along with higher-order skills used for text composing, such as goal setting, planning, and revising.

Managing these multiple writing processes simultaneously is particularly difficult for children. So, researchers have hypothesised that skillful writing should rely on executive functioning (i.e., working memory capacity, inhibitory control, mental shifting). The findings from our study confirm the role of executive functioning in facilitating handwriting, keyboarding, and spelling skills. Children with higher executive functioning skills will manage these transcription skills better and will be able to produce longer and higher quality paper and computer-based texts.

Queering primary initial teacher education. *Continuum*.

Rhodes, D., Byrne, M., & Boron, J. (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2024.2336186>

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual/aromantic (LGBTIQ+) people are disclosing their sexuality and gender identities with unprecedented regularity, and they are doing so at a much younger age.

Many will 'come out' and others will have their first sexual experiences while they are still at secondary school. This research was designed to raise awareness, access, and understanding of LGBTIQ+ young people for Pre-Service educators.

One of the key issues in challenging the heteronormative status quo experienced by children during their primary schooling is the lack of knowledge, understanding, or confidence of teachers to introduce, discuss, or embed age-appropriate LGBTIQ+ inclusive material in the curriculum.

Without exposure to issues related to sexuality and gender diversity in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses, many Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) will graduate without being aware of and won't be equipped to support LGBTIQ+ students and young people and challenge heteronormativity in their classrooms and the schools where they teach in the future.



Altruism takes ECU Associate Professor into WA Women's Hall of Fame



Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM, School of Education.

ECU Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM has been inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. She joins the prestigious list with ECU Chancellor Denise Goldsworthy AO and ECU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) Professor Cobie Rudd.

Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM has served the WA community all her life, now the Edith Cowan University (ECU) Associate Professor and Member of the Order of Australia (AM) recipient has been inducted into the [WA Women's Hall of Fame](#). Recognised, once again, for her work in changing the way reading is taught in schools and universities.

"As a teacher my moral compass was piqued early when I met so many adolescents who could not read, I decided to return to study to complete a Master's and PhD, and that began my mission to change the trajectory for WA children," Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM said.

ECU Chancellor Denise Goldsworthy AO, who is also an honorary member of the WA Women's Hall of Fame, represented the university at a special awards ceremony held at Government House, where Associate Professor Hammond accepted her award.

"Learning to read is a right, not a privilege, and I share this award with the many teachers who have taken up explicit, structured literacy in their classrooms and have changed children's lives."

Service to literacy and learning

Associate Professor Hammond has worked and researched in early literacy, high impact instructional strategies, including explicit teaching and learning difficulties since 1990.

Recognised by the Federal Government with a University Teaching Award, Associate Professor Hammond was instrumental in changing the syllabus of Australian universities to ensure they prepare pre-service students to teach reading according to research. The first academic to offer a course in the science of reading, and hundreds of teachers from across Australia have completed it to align their instruction with current research.

"Since 2018 I have been leading the delivery of the Kimberley School Project, an initiative which supports evidence-based literacy instruction in 23 regional and remote schools," she said.

"Children living in remote communities, who may not attend school as regularly as their peers in Perth and who experience far greater levels of disadvantage, learn to read using our methodology, often better than children who attend schools in metropolitan areas in Australia. How you teach reading matters."

The success of the Kimberley School Project, Associate Professor Hammond has secured a further \$10 million in Closing the Gap funding from the Federal Government to expand the program.

"My greatest passion is and always has been to help others. To change the future for many children by giving them the lifelong gift that is learning and enjoying reading."

Evidence-based literacy

Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2002, an Australian Government National Teaching Award in 2016, and the Australian Council for Educational Leadership in 2017 for her work in schools promoting high impact instruction.

In 2019, she received an Order of Australia (AM) for her outstanding contribution to tertiary education and the community. Associate Professor Hammond's work is based upon explicit reading instruction, which is based upon research.

Its focus is in regional and remote WA communities, where children who might not have otherwise learned to read, can read.

"Unlike children who come from more socially advantaged backgrounds, children in the Kimberley of WA don't always attend as regularly as their peers and face greater barriers learning, but with the right instruction they can learn to read as well as any child in Australia," she said.

WA Women's Hall of Fame

The WA Women's Hall of Fame was established in 2011 in recognition of the Centenary of International Women's Day.

100 women were inducted at the centenary, across a range of sectors and celebrating a diverse set of achievements.

The initiative was bolstered by the creation of a Roll of Honour in 2012 to formally acknowledge women who were no longer with us but whose efforts were critical to the State's social and economic development.

Inspiring women from all regions in Western Australia, and from diverse educational, organisational, and cultural backgrounds who have left their mark in our communities have been inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame.

Their achievements have encompassed through business, growing industries, leading movements, mentoring, building communities, fund-raising, working in science and research, the arts, child-care, volunteering, and providing positive role-models and encouragement to the young women of our future have been recognised.

This article is republished from [The ECU Newsroom](#). Read the original article [here](#).



Surge in music teachers holds new promise for musicians of the future



Dr Jason Goopy, Lecturer and Coordinator of Secondary and Instrumental Music Education, School of Education.

Enrolments in postgraduate music teacher education at Edith Cowan University (ECU) have doubled, propelled by the introduction of a one-year Graduate Diploma in Teaching course.

ECU introduced the Graduate Diploma in Teaching in 2024 aiming to address the demand for Western Australian teachers by accelerating the number of teachers in the classroom. The one-year 'Grad Dip' is available to aspiring school teachers who have already completed a three-year degree in another field.

ECU Coordinator of Secondary and Instrumental Music Education Dr Jason Goopy said the surge in enrolments was a clear indication of the strong appeal of the 'Grad Dip' for musicians aspiring to be school music teachers. "This year the music education major and instrumental music education minor were the largest single subject areas in ECU's postgraduate teacher education courses," he said.

Dr Goopy said the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) with a major in music suited students with significant previous tertiary study in music.

"It is perfect for our Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) Bachelor of Music graduates, and we also welcome students from other institutions locally and interstate," he said.

"Our students range from graduates who have recently completed their bachelor degrees, to highly experienced instrumental tutors in schools now looking to gain a formal teaching qualification."

ECU's Executive Dean of Education Professor Caroline Mansfield said the number of new enrolments was good news for Western Australian schools.

"As the largest provider of graduates to public schools in WA, we are dedicated to ensuring that future teachers experience quality initial teacher education, developing knowledge and skills to support success in the future."

"It is exciting to see the appeal of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) for aspiring music teachers, and it doesn't stop there," she said.

"The number of students who have enrolled in postgraduate teacher education at ECU has increased across the board."

Magda Lisek is a new student for the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) with a major in music education, but she is no stranger to ECU.

"I completed my Bachelor of Music (Classical Performance) and Graduate Diploma (Opera) at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and know the strong reputation of ECU's School of Education," she said.

Magda currently works as a school music tutor and looks forward to gaining her formal teaching qualification. "I want to share my passion for the art form and make music and musical knowledge more accessible," she said.

ECU introduced the Graduate Diploma in Teaching in Semester One 2024, giving students the flexibility to graduate after one year and teach in Western Australia with provisional registration.

During that time, students can choose to complete a second year towards ECU's nationally accredited Master of Teaching through online self-paced study.

"ECU's School of Education is committed to supporting workforce needs through offering the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary/Secondary), which provides an employment pathway for students to work in WA while completing a further year of study to achieve a Nationally accredited Master of Teaching qualification," Professor Mansfield said. Aspiring teachers can learn more about the Graduate Diplomas in [Primary](#) and [Secondary](#) Teaching.

This article is republished from [The ECU Newsroom](#). Read the original article [here](#).

Asia-Pacific Symposium for Music Education Research 2025



When
9 - 11 July 2025

Location
Edith Cowan University
Mount Lawley Campus
2 Bradford Street,
Mount Lawley, 6050, WA.



The official regional conference of the International Society for Music Education.

Learn more [here](#) or via scanning the QR code.



The Perth Suburbs rejecting public high schools



Associate Professor Brad Gobby, School of Education.

West Australian parents are increasingly pulling their children out of the public education system at the end of year 6 and enrolling them in private high schools, raising fears this could drive inequity and further strain public school resources.

While there are still more students enrolled in the public system across the state, there has been a growing exodus to private schools. Data from the WA Department of Education showed between 2022 and 2023 the public school system lost just under 4000 students from year 6 in 2022 to year 7 in 2023.

The latest Census data also revealed the suburbs where parents were more likely to send their children to private high schools – most notably, and perhaps unsurprisingly, those in the western suburbs. While parents in these areas sent their children to public primary schools, many made the switch once their children started high school.

In Swanbourne, almost 300 children attended a public primary school, with 73 attending a public high school in 2021. In contrast, 103 attended an independent primary school and 379 attended an independent high school. Other neighbouring suburbs followed a similar trend.

But in suburbs close to the river, which fall under the catchments for sought-after public schools Rossmoyne, Willetton, Applecross and Melville, the majority still sent their children to public schools. In Riverton, 537 students were in public primary schools and 580 were at public high schools, compared to just 35 enrolled in an independent high school.

University of Western Australia school of social sciences head and demographer Amanda Davies said despite the best efforts of teachers, there was considerable inequity across the schooling system in terms of access to academic and training programs, facilities and overall schooling experience.

“Families moving to particular schooling catchments to access higher ranked schools or school with better facilities or reputations is not a new trend, but with the recent population growth, it is likely to be a growing trend,” she said.

“Population growth has resulted in more concentrated local demand for high-performing public high schools. This has meant catchment boundaries have been re-drawn, with the result being some households have found themselves no longer in their desired school catchment.

“For some, they are now opting to re-move to remain in the desired school catchment.

“Where people do move into areas with well-known high-performing schools, the overall impact on the population is a higher concentration of families with school-aged children, a higher concentration of families with a dual income, and a lower rate of out migration.”

Davies said parents also moved for reasons outside academic performance, including whether the school required students to have a laptop or iPad, if it had established training pathways to TAFE, the accessibility and quality of school facilities, and public transport links.

Edith Cowan University School of Education senior lecturer Brad Gobby said high school was a more competitive market for parents than primary school. He said many felt private schools would better set their children up for academic competition and future employment or a tertiary education, but the statistics on academic achievement and post-school destinations did not support that sentiment.

“Through their choices, parents are self-segregating and this is concentrating advantage in some high schools and disadvantage in other high schools,” Gobby said.

“This trend undermines the viability of many public high schools by depriving them of students, including middle class and academically capable students.

“It puts a strain on public schools’ resources and their ability to offer a comprehensive curriculum and a specialised curriculum in the senior secondary years.

“A limited curriculum exacerbates their challenge to retain and attract students. Private choices have public consequences. I worry that we’re heading into a situation of ‘choosers versus losers.’”

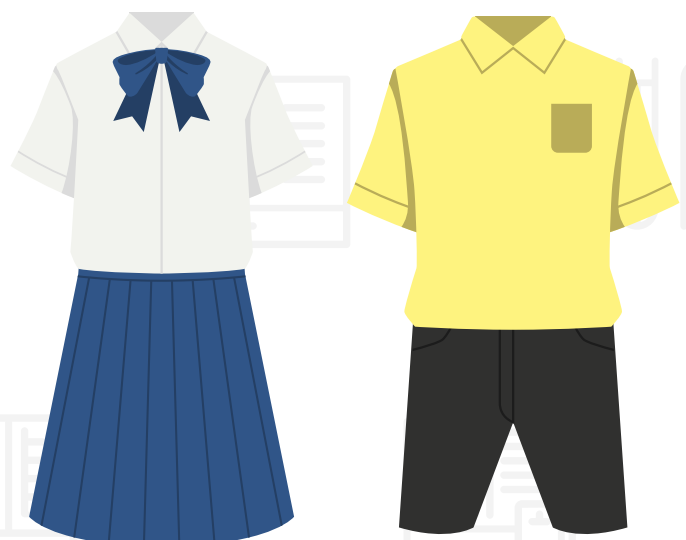
Department of Education strategy and policy executive director Raechelle Lee, said historically there had always been a gain for non-government school enrolments in the transition period between year 6 and 7.

“It is important to consider the overall cohort size each year which has been somewhat variable in recent years primarily due to the impact of COVID on migration,” she said.

“Reductions in net migration gain are considered to have a greater impact on public schools.

“Projections at the state, sector and individual school levels for first semester are considered in the Department’s short and longer-term planning.”

This article is republished from **The Sydney Morning Herald**. Read the original article [here](#).



Children's University beckons WA's South West

ECU's Children's University, proudly supported by the University Department of Rural Health – South West.

Designed for primary school children, specifically from disadvantaged backgrounds, ECU's Children's University is expanding into the South West inviting local primary schools to participate.

Kian Milner-Jutten was in grade 1 at Swan View Primary School when he commenced Children's University (CU). "Doing the activities in this program was very interesting, as it didn't matter what was being done or what place we were visiting, there was always something new that could be learnt," Kian explained.



Pictured: Kian Milner-Jutten, CU Member. Credit: Stephen Heath Photography.

"It was always interesting visiting new places because you could explore and investigate for as long as you wanted and not be limited by time, unlike when you are at school."

CU is a program that offers an out of school opportunity for children to take part in extracurricular learning, travel and to develop valuable life skills. "I've had lots of fun doing different things with my mum, especially cooking, I loved making and trying new foods". Kian, like the 1000 other WA graduates who've gone through Edith Cowan University's (ECU) Children's University, has explored exciting locations and landmarks, like Perth Zoo, Caversham Wildlife Park, Kings Park, museums, WA beaches, orchards, countless libraries, and the soon-to-be home of ECU's new campus – Perth CBD.

Kian even travelled abroad, to the UK. "One of my favourite places that I visited was England, that is where I was born, it was good to experience the differences between the two countries, weather, temperatures, beaches, everything."

ECU's CU is a program open to WA primary school children, specifically from disadvantaged or lower socio-economic backgrounds. Learning achievements are celebrated each year at special graduation ceremonies held at ECU's Joondalup campus.

Over 1000 graduates have emerged from ECU's Children's University since 2017. It has seen primary school aged children dedicate over 64,500 hours to extracurricular learning. "I personally will never forget the surprise on

Kian's face each year when he first hears the total amount of hours he has completed and how proud I am of him each year," Lucy Milner, Kian's mother said.

Vice Chancellor of the Children's University WA Partnership (CUWAP) and former Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People, Mr Colin Pettit, said the CU, which also operates in England, South Africa and the US, is a program that uses education at a young age to change lives for the future. "I believe the potential impact of the Children's University program is enormous. Facilitating educational opportunities is the best investment that any organisation can make," Mr Pettit said.

Student-led learning

CU's unique approach supports students to take the lead in their own learning. "The program is child-led, and we encourage students to choose activities and subjects they may never have thought of before," ECU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Regional Futures) Professor Cobie Rudd said.

Just like university, the learning opportunities are not limited to a classroom, it offers real world, hands-on experiences. "There's everything from museums and galleries right through to festivals, art studios, and even climbing centres," she explained.

While students are encouraged to have fun, the activities link in some way to a course that can be studied through higher education.

Changing young lives for a better future

Established in 2017 by ECU and further strengthened through CUWAP with the University of Western Australia since 2020, the program has reached over 2900 children from 40 Western Australian schools. The CUWAP collaborates with 99 community and cultural organisations, including zoos, museums, galleries, sports clubs, councils, and libraries, to provide a rich tapestry of extracurricular learning experiences.

Children's University expands in the South West

ECU's CU is inviting school students in the South West to embark on their transformative educational journey. "We want to see this program to children in our regional and remote areas in the future and that's why we are inviting students from the South West region to enrol for 2024 and beyond," Professor Cobie Rudd said. And from the parent of a CU graduate, a single message. "It is rewarding. It is enjoyable. You will have fun," Lucy Milner said.

"There are so many activities that you can do with your child that they can learn from, cooking, reading, arts and crafts, science experiments, after school clubs, sports, the portal, the list is endless."

This internationally acclaimed initiative, spearheaded by Children's University Australasia & Africa Indian Ocean (CUA), has been a beacon of inspiration in fostering learning excellence since its inception in 1993.

For more information, please visit the [ECU Children's University website](https://www.childrensuniversity.edu.au) or connect via email: childrensuniversity@ecu.edu.au.

This article is republished from **The ECU Newsroom**.
Read the original article [here](#).

Professor Timothy Shanahan: Science of Reading and Reading Comprehension Workshop



The Primary English Teaching Association of Australia (PETAA) and Edith Cowan University are delighted to announce an exclusive event with Professor Timothy Shanahan, visiting from the United States of America (USA) following his keynote presentation at PETAA's annual [Leading with Literacy conference](#).

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear from an international expert (and member of the National Reading Panel, 2000) Professor Timothy Shanahan in your home state of Western Australia!

Key talking points:

- **Unpacking the science of reading:** what do we actually mean by the science of reading? What does the evidence show?
- **Explicitly teaching** reading comprehension strategies
- **Assessing** for comprehension
- **Text fluency:** What do we really mean by fluency, and how do we teach and assess it?



When

Saturday 26 October 2024
9.00am - 12.30pm

Location

Edith Cowan University
Mount Lawley Campus
2 Bradford Street, Mount
Lawley, 6050, WA.

Cost

\$150.00
(PETAA Members)

\$250.00
(includes a 12 month
\$100 online individual
PETAA membership!)



[Register Online](#)

Twilight Seminar: How do personal values impact teacher wellbeing?



Dr Trish Collins, Lecturer, School of Education.

Have you ever wondered what motivates you? Do you know what drives your attitudes and behaviours in and out of the classroom?

In this interactive and informative session, Dr Trish Collins will help you identify the underlying personal values (i.e. motivational goals) that are most and least important to you, how they impact your daily life, and how they help/hinder you getting along with other people/children in and out of the classroom.

The Australian Curriculum, The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, and The Early Years Learning Framework discuss the importance of students understanding the role values play in their lives and educators being aware of how their beliefs and values impact children's learning and wellbeing.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance your teaching skills through an understanding of your own values and the values of the children you teach. It will enhance the relationships you struggle with as well as the ones you love!

Further Information

Registrations and light refreshments will be served in the building 17 foyer at 3.30pm. For any queries please contact educationengagement@ecu.edu.au.



When

Thursday 23 May 2024
4.00pm - 5.30pm

Location

Edith Cowan University
Mount Lawley Campus
Building 17 Room 17.103
2 Bradford Street, Mount
Lawley, 6050, WA.

Cost

\$10.00
Register online or via
scanning the QR Code



[Register Online](#)

Our professional learning programs have been designed with teachers in mind. The programs are delivered by qualified and experienced ECU educators with high level content and pedagogical knowledge and reflect adult learning principles. These courses are embedded in evidence-based teaching practices and are responsive to the cultural backgrounds and contextual circumstances of the participating teachers.

For more information and to register, view our current short courses [here](#) or scan the QR codes below.



Fully Online

Understanding Childhood Trauma: An introduction for educators

Trauma-affected children can be found in any classroom and any school. In fact, one in four children experience a traumatic event before they turn three years old (Child, J. 2017). Trauma impacts development, behaviour and learning.

This short course is an ideal introduction to childhood trauma for all educators including parents, carers and youth workers. Providing effective support for children and young people affected by trauma begins with educators who are trauma-informed. By building your understanding and knowledge you have a better chance of making a positive difference.

Cost

- **\$199** to undertake the course which includes all reading materials, case studies, and online activities.
- A 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni and for multiple bookings from the same organisation.



Register Online



Fully Online

Trauma and Development: Understanding the impact for educators

Children and adolescents who live in adverse circumstances where there is neglect, abuse, or violence live in a state of hypervigilance and with toxic stress from experiencing ongoing, traumatic events. Toxic stress sabotages development and wellbeing – the brain and the body struggle to function effectively, the consequences of which can be far reaching. This short course looks at the impact of adversity and toxic stress on development, focussing on the brain. Educators will build their knowledge and understanding of children and adolescents whose development has been interrupted by toxic stress and trauma.

Cost

- **\$199** to undertake the course which includes all reading materials, case studies, and online activities.
- A 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni and for multiple bookings from the same organisation.



Register Online



Fully Online

Trauma and Behaviour: Reflecting and responding for educators

Behaviour is communication. Behaviour for the child or young person living with trauma is often an expression of their struggle to cope. This may include struggling to cope with managing big emotions, struggling to cope with learning and struggling with being with others. Trauma means days are full of struggles and feelings of fear. This short course aims to build your understanding of children and young people's trauma-driven behaviour and your knowledge of evidence-based strategies so you can more confidently and effectively, guide and support their development of self-regulation and behaviour competencies.

Cost

- **\$199** to undertake the course which includes all reading materials, case studies, and online activities.
- A 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni and for multiple bookings from the same organisation.



Register Online



Semester Two 2024 Dates

Day 1: Saturday 17 August
Day 2: Saturday 7 September
Day 3: Saturday 2 November

Face-to-Face

The Science of Reading: Translating research to classroom practice

Have you ever wondered how the human brain translates these squiggles and dots on a page into sounds and spoken words? Part of what we know is that learning to read is a complex neurological process that humans have taken thousands of years to figure out. Despite this, we expect children to achieve this in the first few years of school. This three-day course is designed to bridge the gap between research and practice and make explicit how evidence-based models of reading have determined the essential components required for the human brain to efficiently build a reading circuit and for a brain to learn to automatically recognise words.

Cost

- **\$998** including GST (course includes all reading materials, case studies, morning tea and lunch).
- A 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni and for multiple bookings from the same organisation.



Register Online

Future Research & Career Pathway



Pippa Chapman

PhD Candidate

Can you introduce yourself and tell us about your background and the research you are currently pursuing?

My name is Pippa Chapman and I have, for as long as I can remember, always wanted to continue my learning journey into post graduate study within the area of music education. I come from a music education background, teaching in the early childhood, primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, and community sectors.

My research is a national doctoral mixed-methods study of the modes and frequencies of music activities in the homes of families with young children in Australia (birth to four years old) involving a survey (n=481) and 10 interviews.

What inspired you to pursue this specific research topic?

Since having my children, I have become increasingly interested in the field of early childhood music and its many facets and contexts within the home and beyond. I began in the Master of Education course at Edith Cowan University, and after receiving many responses from my survey, I applied for an upgrade to PhD and was successful.

I am passionate about music education for all and am enjoying exploring the roles and functions of music in the homes of families with young children.

What do you find most challenging and most rewarding about your research journey so far?

The most challenging is by far balancing study, work, and life. This has led to many moments of self doubt and questioning my abilities and knowledge. The mental energy it takes to read and write at a doctoral level is incredibly taxing at times too. However, my current supervisors (Dr Gillian Kirk and Dr Jason Goopy) have been excellent supports to me during these times. Since creating a more balanced and effective study schedule, I have found that I have less moments of self doubt. I have set places where I study, times that I know I'm most productive, and how to prioritise tasks with these in mind.

It has been rewarding to see how far I have come with regards to my earlier writings to now and the encouragement and feedback from my supervisors has been productive and extremely helpful. Recently, my paper was accepted for presentation at a round table at the International Society of Music Education's global conference and I will be heading to Helsinki, Finland in late July this year to attend the conference. It was great to be recognised as having something worth sharing on an international level.

What impact do you hope your research will have?

I hope it will add to current conversations surrounding music in the early years and its many facets, modalities, and contexts. There has recently been much written in this area, particularly in Australia, and I have been fuelled by these recent studies to have my thesis add to knowledge in this area.

What advice would you give to other HDR students?

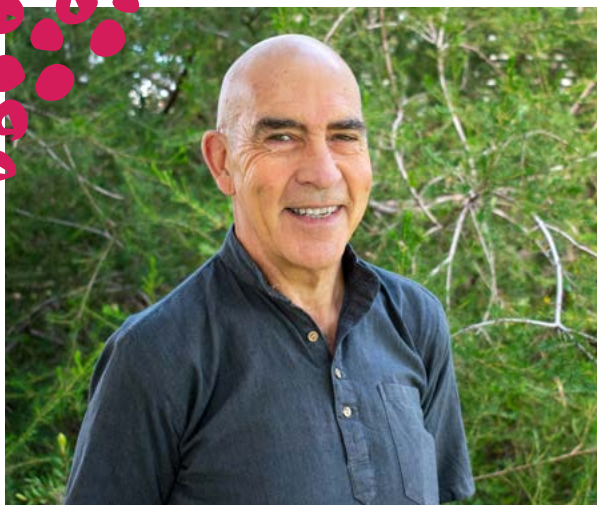
I have four things:

- Do not give up. Keep moving forward, no matter how slowly.
- Your journey will not be linear so try not to expect that. Try not to compare with others in this regard.
- It is better to write now and polish later than to wait until something is conceptualised "perfectly" in your mind before writing.
- Find a study schedule (including places that you enjoy studying in) that works best for you and stick to it as best you can.



Credit: Lordn/Shutterstock.

Professor Leon Benade joins ECU's School of Education



Professor Leon Benade

School of Education.

I have recently joined the School of Education as a Professor, having previously served as the Head of the School of Education at Auckland University of Technology in Auckland, New Zealand. My academic journey includes a Doctor of Education (EdD) degree from the University of Auckland, focusing on ethical teacher professionalism within the New Zealand Curriculum. I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Education (BA(Ed)) and Master of Education (M.Ed) degrees at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, and received a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in History (Cum Laude) from the University of South Africa.

My research trajectory builds upon my Doctorate, completed in 2012, which critically examined aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum, including Teaching as Inquiry, the status of knowledge, and the influence of educational reform on teachers' ethical contexts. I have explored critical thinking and reflective practices in relation to students and teachers, applying diverse philosophical, theoretical, and policy perspectives. Since 2013, I have shifted my focus to the discourse of '21st-century learning,' exploring new pedagogical approaches, digital integration, and flexible learning environments. My current research focus is Innovative Learning Environments (ILE), examining their impact on teachers and principals, shifts in teaching practices and pedagogy in these environments, and the role of parental and community input.

My work on a critical-theoretical assessment of Innovative Learning Environments, supported by extensive fieldwork, has garnered recognition in New Zealand, reflected in three significant publications in 2017; a sole-authored book, a co-edited volume (both published by Springer), and a Special Issue of ACCESS (published under the Educational Philosophy and Theory title).

I am dedicated to influencing educational theory and practice positively, aiming to influence educators to create impactful learning experiences. Recognitions

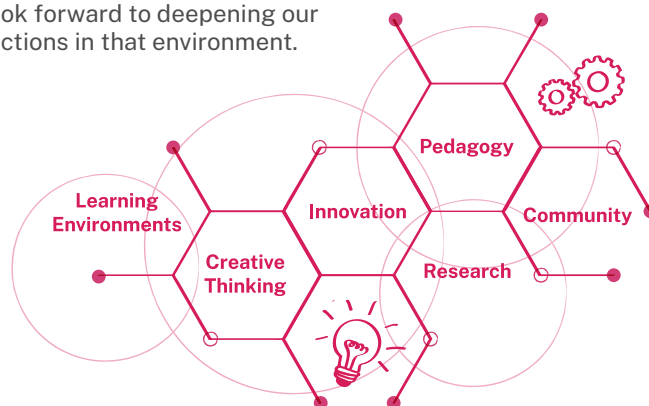
of my work include the 2016 AUT Faculty of Culture and Society Innovation in Teaching and Learning Award and the 2017 AUT Faculty of Culture and Society Emerging Researcher Award. In 2017, I was a finalist for the AUT Research Excellence Award.

In the next three years, I plan to further develop my research in learning environments. Currently, I am a co-investigator on a New Zealand Marsden project, 'Māori Flexible Learning Spaces (FLS) for supporting Mātauranga Māori and biculturalism in schools,' which will expand my work into issues within a kura (school) Māori context. I remain deeply interested in educational philosophy and theory, seeking to engage theoretically with teaching areas, conceptions of schooling and education, professional identity, and reflective practice. I am presently also working on the policy question of how educational facilities (notably public schools) are procured (with a particular emphasis on Public-Private Partnerships, or PPP) and am also interested in how questions of justice can be integrated into design, enabling schools to support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

My contributions to the research community have been through my service as an elected executive member of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA), Editorial Board member of the New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, co-editor of the New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work and New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, Associate Editor of Open Review of Educational Research, and as regular reviewer for Educational Philosophy and Theory and Australian Journal of Teacher Education, among others. I actively participate in conferences such as PESA, and the Education Research Conferences of the European and New Zealand associations.

I have supervised a wide range of research topics, including professional boundaries in health practice, modern learning environments, unfairness experiences in schools, moral perspectives of Kashmiri youth, and the relationship between primary schools and health services in New Zealand. Currently, I am supervising Doctoral students working on sustainability education, and education policy in rural Colombian communities.

Moving to Perth and WA has been a significant shift for me and my family, though it has meant that I and my wife, Gina, now a retired school principal, have most of our family together in one city and that we can see our grand children growing up in the flesh, rather than through a digital device! We have settled on 2HA in Gidgegannup and look forward to deepening our connections in that environment.



ECU Education Alumni Spotlight:

Rob Nail

Diploma of Teaching (Secondary), 1989.

Bachelor of Education, 1995.

WA Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year 2021.

It was a serendipitous moment that sealed the deal for ECU graduate Rob Nail and led him to a career in education.

“I’d enrolled in a university course but it wasn’t for me, so I left and began work as a roof tiler and during that time a sister’s friend passed comment that I explained things really well and should become a teacher,” says the recently awarded Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year, who attended Woodlands Primary School and Churchlands Senior High School in his early years.

“That really got me thinking about my future and, when I look back, her comment was the genesis of me embarking on my teaching career.”

As a consequence, Rob applied to ECU and began a diploma of teaching in secondary education which morphed into a Bachelor of Education after he completed his fourth year while working part-time at Churchlands Senior High School.

The rest, as they say, is history, and after various positions at regional schools including Mullewa District High School, Narrogin Senior High School and Merredin Senior High School, followed by a stint at Busselton Senior High School, Rob won a Deputy Principal position at Cape Naturaliste College in 2007, a role which he still holds today.

“When the school started in 2008 it was brand-new and there were only 80 kids, whilst today we have over 1000,” says Rob, who’s own two children were students at the school several years ago.

“I can honestly say that the last 15 years has been the most rewarding and remarkable period in my career. We truly have an amazing team and many significant staff members and teachers have remained at the school for many years, so it’s been an exciting, engaging and challenging journey for us all.

“What’s been most rewarding for me is seeing my beliefs and passions reflected in the school culture and embedded in its practices. I feel very lucky to have had such a wonderful opportunity to have had a very positive influence on the school, and to work with such fantastic colleagues and a principal who has given me great autonomy, which I have found very fulfilling.

“In the early days there was nowhere to hide and we all felt enormous responsibility for the school’s success, and now we (it is always ‘we’ because we’re very much a team) feel huge responsibility for upholding the strong, healthy, safe culture that we’ve established.”



Rob’s exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to Cape Naturaliste College saw him awarded the title of Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year in 2021. As part of the nomination, his key attributes of empathy, intelligence, resilience and deep, reflective thinking were cited as of particular relevance and value within the school environment.

“I’m not used to such public attention so in some ways gaining the award was a little uncomfortable, but what was really nice was hearing from people I’ve worked with over the years who acknowledged my contributions and were very happy to give me a pat on the back,” says Rob.

“At the ceremony a young teacher approached me who I’d actually taught years ago and she told me what a huge impact I’d had on her life when she was going through a tough time at school. That was hugely meaningful and very touching for me, it was a lovely moment and I’d do it all again just to know that I’ve had that impact during my lifetime.

“And even today, working with the kids at Cape Naturaliste College has not only been incredibly gratifying, it’s also been great fun.

“I’m a huge advocate for government education, which has provided the most wonderful education for the kids at our school. Indeed, the quality of education in the West Australian public system is remarkable, and I couldn’t be more thankful to be part of it.”

This article is republished from **Alumni News**.
Read the original article [here](#).

Explore our Education Postgraduate courses here

Student

SHOWCASE

A selection of some of the recent stunning creative works by Pre-Service Teachers in the fields of Technologies and Art Education.

Izabella Kitching
Ceramic Bust



Phoebe Hui Zeng
Ceramic Bowl



Master of Teaching Early Childhood and Primary
Collaged Murals using magazines



Gavin Scott
American Black Walnut (woodwork)



Emily Riley
Ceramic Cup



Abigail Blackburn-Carvajal
Ceramic Plate



Mel Costall
Mixed media (pine, acrylic and polymer paint)



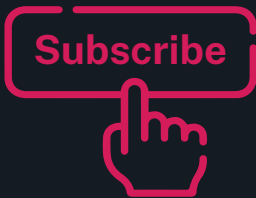
Tanielle Carlson
Ceramic Watering Cans





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