

School of Education

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on the Rise



Digital Sabbath:
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From the Executive Dean

I acknowledge that many of you are concerned about the evolving COVID-19 situation and its impact not only on you and your family but also your schools and communities.



While these are challenging times for all organisations and the individuals within them, I want to reassure you that ECU is taking a very careful and measured response to COVID-19 that is always in the best interests of our staff, students, schools and community.

I have been part of the ongoing meetings between the Department of Education, Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRB WA) and the Western Australian Deans of Education examining how we can

ensure Pre-Service Teachers can undertake professional experience. We are very aware of student progression and the need for the requirements of our accredited programs to be maintained while assuring the public that graduates meet the national teaching graduate standards. I am confident through innovative approaches the contingency plans will minimise impact on student progression and professional experience placements. ECU understands the subsequent impact this will have on schools

and appreciate your assistance with mentoring our students and your future colleagues.

It was a pleasure that 411 Education graduands joined ECU to celebrate at the recent February Graduation ceremonies. As future teachers and community leaders, ECU looks forward to these graduands' contribution to the teaching profession.

ECU recognises the essential service you provide to our future generation during this time. I wish you a safe and happy break.

Twilight Teachers Weave Their Way to Sustainability

The School of Education's 2020 Twilight Seminar Series launched on Wednesday, 4 March with a professional development opportunity at the Joondalup Campus being so popular it sold out in just three days.

The seminar *Materials & Sustainability: Practical Ideas for the Technologies Classroom* was delivered by ECU School of Education Coordinator of Home Economics, Sandy Smith.

A full class of 25 educators from across the Perth metropolitan area attended the seminar, which was targeted at both Home Economics teachers and primary school teachers who specialise in Design and Technologies.

With a session split between theoretical and practical aspects, teachers had the opportunity to learn about linkages between materials and sustainability

and the Technologies curriculum, while taking part in a traditional weaving circle using upcycled products.

Ms Smith said the seminar helped teachers upskill and obtain practical ideas of how to best deliver content that aligns with the curriculum.

"The seminar was designed to increase teacher confidence in this subject area, especially as the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCASA) is conducting moderation activities for Year 6 and 7 in 2020, in the Design and Technologies subject," she said.



"The Twilight Seminar series is also a perfect opportunity for teachers to build their networks with local educators."

The Joondalup seminar follows a successful offering of the same seminar to educators in the South West region in late 2019.

Twilight Seminars are a popular series of professional development opportunities offered by the School of Education to practising WA teachers at no cost.

All attendees are provided with a Certificate of Participation for this professional learning.

Join the ECU Education Alumni Chapter

Late last year, ECU launched the Education Alumni Chapter, which is the initiative of the Executive Dean of Education, Professor Stephen Winn, and aims to make sure that the voice of our alumni community is heard.

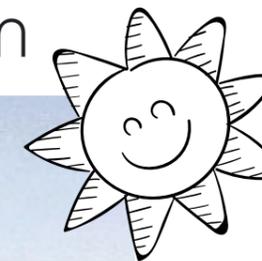
Through the Chapter, you will have the opportunity to share your thoughts on the issues and trends affecting Teacher Education today, benefit from key connections to others in the Education space, and receive special benefits such as early access to ECU Education alumni events and programs, and discounted Postgraduate study opportunities at ECU.

If you're a graduate from any of ECU's Education courses, or from any of our predecessor teaching colleges, you can sign-up to the chapter online.

[Find out more](#)



Positive Education Brings Wellbeing into the Classroom



The phenomenon of positive education has garnered the interest of ECU researcher Dr Donna Barwood, who visited a school in Victoria in late 2019 to learn more about the pedagogical approach.

Dr Barwood visited Geelong Grammar School, whose Timbertop Campus is known for having its Year 9 students board for one year without any digital technology – even requiring them to build fires to heat water.

Spending two days at the school's other campus at Corio, Dr Barwood learned about the connection between positive education and mindfulness.

Based on principles of positive psychology developed by American psychologist and educator Martin Seligman, positive education is focused on character strengths that support children and young people to flourish.

Dr Barwood said she had implemented some elements of positive education into her tertiary classrooms.

"At ECU I have enriched health education units with Positive Education's PERMA wellbeing model to facilitate a sense of belonging but also to celebrate others," Dr Barwood said.

Dr Barwood learned about the connection between positive education and mindfulness.

"Although this approach is enjoyed by ECU's students, it is important to note that positive education does not mean that negative emotions and/or negative times are not acknowledged."

More information on positive education is available at the Geelong Grammar School website.



Professor Stephen Winn, Lisa Rodgers Director General of Education, Caitlyn Fogarty, Hon Sue Ellery Minister of Education, Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond and Anika Blackmore Principal Balga PS.

Fogarty Scholarships Help *ECU Pre-Service Teachers EDvance*

A group of 10 ECU pre-service teachers recently had the rare opportunity to meet with senior government leaders in the WA education sector as part of a week-long intensive course in late January.

The students attended the EDvance Teaching Intensive offered at Balga Primary School in collaboration with the Fogarty Foundation, along with 55 other educators from across the sector.

The fourth day of the course gave students the chance to hear directly from WA Minister of Education, the Honorable Sue Ellery, as well as WA Director-

General of Education Lisa Rodgers and ECU School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn.

The program was led by School of Education Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond, who said the ECU students – who ranged from second-year students to new graduates – had received scholarships valued at \$4000 to attend the professional learning course.

"This is the third year I have lead this initiative and I am delighted that the Fogarty Foundation makes ten scholarships available to our pre-service teachers," Associate Professor Hammond said.

"The high-impact instructional strategies that participants learn during this course are highly regarded by schools, particularly those with an improvement agenda.

"This means ECU students who complete the professional learning are highly sought after and all secured jobs before the end of the start of the Term 1."

I am delighted that the Fogarty Foundation makes ten scholarships available to our pre-service teachers...

The program, which focused on explicit instruction around teaching literacy and numeracy, was provided by the Fogarty Foundation, with Associate Professor Hammond collaborating with ECU graduates and expert lead teachers Brooke Wardana, Sarah Fox and Anthony Chiappalone to conduct demonstration lessons and coaching.

Could a 'Digital Sabbath' help burnt out teachers to unplug?



With the education sector rapidly shifting into the digital space to adapt to the global pandemic crisis, the notion of taking deliberate breaks from technology will become ever more relevant to educators and students alike.

This concept is the focus of the recent 'Digital Sabbath' mixed media exhibition by artists, educators and researchers.

A collaboration between ECU School of Education's Dr Julia Morris and Curtin University's Dr Lisa Paris, the exhibition ran from 21 February through 8 March at the Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery in Fremantle.

The creative research project followed the journeys of nine individuals, including the two researchers and seven early career teachers, as they switched off from all technology for one day a week over a three month period.

Dr Morris said the results of the study were documented in a series of artworks shared with the public.

"With technology being so pervasive, and the ability for parents and schools to connect with teachers 24/7, we were worried about the potential risks of 'being plugged in' for early career teachers," she said.

"We know that teacher burnout is a common phenomenon, and we were keen to see if this digital sabbath intervention could support teachers to achieve better work-life balance in their early careers."

The research findings included individuals reporting feeling more rested as a result of unplugging, with most participants using the time to step outside and get back into nature.



However, the somewhat radical nature of the digital sabbath intervention also led to interpersonal conflict.

"Some participants' loved ones couldn't understand why you would put down technology for a day a week," Dr Morris explained.

In summary, the experience opened the door for deeper discussions about how and why technology is used, and the benefits and challenges created.

Dr Morris noted that participants often "failed miserably" at being offline for a full day a week, but smaller blocks of time proved more achievable and still highly beneficial for teachers' reported wellbeing.

More information about the Digital Sabbath project is available [here](#).



INFORMAL SPORT

Researchers Team Up with Industry Leaders

A group of School of Education researchers has convened a major forum for industry and community representatives to discuss the role of informal sport as part of a prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant Project.

More than 50 representatives attended the forum on 11 March, hosted by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, as part of the "Informal sport as health and social resource for young people" research project conducted by academics in both Victoria and WA.

Convened by ECU researchers Professor Dawn Penney, Dr May Carter and Eibhlish O'Hara, the forum examined challenges and opportunities around expanding participation in informal sport.

Informal sport refers to individuals and groups self-organising and often using social media to come together and participate in a wide range of activities, including informal cricket, soccer, football, roller hockey and many more.

The researchers have found that while participation in formal, club-based sport continues to see flat or declining participation trends, informal sport is on the rise in the community.

"Informal sport holds particular appeal for people who may be marginalised from other forms of sport," Professor Dawn Penney observed.

"Social connectedness and a sense of belonging are key appeals of informal sport."

The forum connected representatives from across local governments in WA, state sporting associations and community organisations.

Attendees discussed their experiences, debated issues associated with policies, logistics and resourcing, and shared their visions for future planning.

"We are very pleased with the success of this forum and with the positive connections and relationships fostered between a range of organisations," Professor Penney said.

"We look forward to further engagement with the local government and sport sectors and are excited about exploring some new possibilities in the future."

Led by Associate Professor Ruth Jeanes at Monash University, the research project is being undertaken in collaboration with ECU and Victoria University, with funding from the ARC and industry partners VicHealth, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (WA), the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and Cricket Victoria.

The **three-year research project** will support government, sport and health agencies to develop new policy guidance and resources to grow and sustain informal sport opportunities, particularly for diverse young people.

For more information about the forum or the project work in WA, please contact **Professor Dawn Penney**.

School of Education Surges in International Rankings

ECU's School of Education has received its highest ranking yet in the global QS World University Subject Rankings for 2020, released in March.

The School was ranked in the 151-200 bracket globally, cementing its reputation as one of the top teacher-training institutions in the world.

Although the School has been ranked every year since 2015, this year's result was a swift rise in the rankings after placing in the 251-300 bracket in 2019.

School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn said the result highlighted the excellent quality of work undertaken by the School's academics.



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Staff Awards / In The Media



Literacy Researcher Sparks Conversations

Literacy expert Dr Margaret Merga recently picked up not one but two awards for her media output in her research specialisation of children's literacy and reading engagement.

At an awards event for ECU contributors to academic-driven news website *The Conversation*, Dr Merga was presented with an award shared with Dr Stephen Bright (ECU School of Medical and Health Sciences) for the Most Prolific Author in 2019.

Dr Merga authored four articles for *The Conversation* between October 2018 and October 2019, which combined have been read an impressive 103,000 times.

Dr Merga also received the Outstanding Public Engagement Award 2019 in recognition of her exemplary, high-level media promotion of her ECU research, which has been promoted on many media outlets and has reached a total audience of more than 1.8 million people.

Opening of New High-Density School Showcases 'Amazing' Facilities

School of Education Bachelor of Secondary Education Course Coordinator Sarah Jefferson recently attended the opening of the brand new Bob Hawke College in Subiaco.

Located in Kitchener Park, the new school opened in January with a first cohort of 250 year 7 students and is Western Australia's first high-density public secondary school.

The opening was attended by a range of political and education sector leaders, including WA Premier Mark McGowan, WA Education Minister Sue Ellery and ECU Chancellor Kerry Sanderson AO.

Ms Jefferson sits on the advisory board of Bob Hawke College and said the opening of the new, innovative institution was a promising move.

"It was a wonderful experience to see the incoming year 7 students and their parents at the opening event – and these new facilities are absolutely amazing," she said.

The college's website boasts cutting edge technologies and world class facilities, including access to shared facilities like Subiaco Oval.

Award Shines Spotlight on Drama Leader



Photo: Christine Lovering Brooke van Aalen, President of DramaWest (left), Christine Lovering and Felicity Glendinning, Drama Australia Liaison Officer (right).

ECU academic Christine Lovering has been awarded an Honorary Life Membership to DramaWest at the organisation's recent state conference on 30 November last year.

The award was made in recognition of Ms Lovering's outstanding contribution to drama in education over the past 33 years, during which she has become a highly respected voice in her field.

During her career, Ms Lovering introduced a wide range of innovative initiatives in primary schools, serving as a long-term office bearer on the DramaWest committee and playing a pivotal role in establishing the position of Primary Arts Liaison Officer.

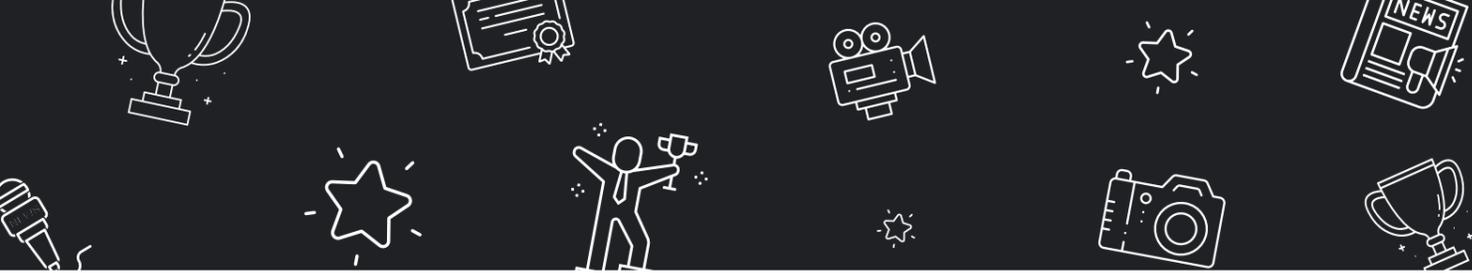
She said continuing to advocate for drama education in the tertiary sector was only a natural extension of her passion for the subject.

"I am honoured to receive this unexpected acknowledgement from my peers," Ms Lovering said.

"I have long held the belief that drama is an essential part of our children's education, and I have carried this conviction with me throughout my work with pre-service teachers at ECU."

DramaWest – also known as The Association of Drama Educators in WA – is the professional association for drama educators in Western Australia, and seeks to encourage the development of drama in the education sector.

The organisation's state conference was held at Edith Cowan University's Mount Lawley Campus in an industry collaboration with ECU's School of Education.



Health Education Pioneer

Recognised with National Award

School of Education academic Dr Donna Barwood has been honoured with a prestigious accolade at the Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) presentation night on 25 February.

Dr Barwood received a Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning, in recognition of her pioneering and championing of inclusive, strengths-based health education.

The AAUT awards recognise Australia's most outstanding university teachers, with Dr Barwood's work celebrated for empowering pre-service secondary teachers with transformative capacities to cultivate health-literate young Australians.

Dr Barwood said the award validated the hard work she put into nurturing the next generation of Health and Physical Education educators.

"This award means the world to me," she said.

"It affirms that my efforts to prepare teachers of HPE who are understanding, confident and compassionate with knowledge,



skills and resources to support young people to be agents for their health and wellbeing is valued nationally.

"I love working at ECU and feel blessed to be so intrinsically involved in developing the teachers of tomorrow to succeed."

Childcare Centre Books May Influence Early Biases

School of Education academic Dr Helen Adam has continued to ignite media interest in her research, with her February article in *The Conversation* establishing her as a powerful voice in the movement for more diversity in children's literature.

Dr Adam's article discussed the findings of her recently-published study in *The Australian Educational Researcher*, which found a prevalence of white, middle-class heroes in books in childcare centres which she believes may be early contributors to racial stereotypes and biases.

Dr Adam's study analysed more than 2,400 books in four West Australian childcare centres and found that only 18% included non-white characters.

"Children develop views towards others from a very young age," she explained.



"By the time children are four to six years old, they already show awareness of racial stereotyping or prejudice in different situations."

Dr Adam's full article is available to read [here](#).



Student Success SHOWCASE

These photographs depict some outstanding examples of the works completed by ECU's pre-service Design and Technology teachers.



Metalwork Rooster, by Toby Bryson



Metal/Plasma Cut Lamp, by Chris Laurino



Marri Coffee Table, by Michael Naughton

Contact

Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
Joondalup WA 6027
Australia

P: 134 328 (within Australia)

P: (61 8) 6304 0000 (outside Australia)

E admineducation@ecu.edu.au

W ecu.edu.au/education

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