

School of Education

# Updated

Lighting up WA **to**  
**thank teachers**



**The importance of culturally diverse literature** in today's classrooms

**Preparing children** for the future of work





# From the Executive Dean

Another unique year draws to a close and we continue to live through interesting times. Despite the degrees of anxiety, stress, hope and positivity, it has been remarkable to reflect on the many achievements of our students, academics, professional staff and the teaching profession.



Teachers have an important and lasting impact on future generations. Wherever you are in the world, you will find schools and dedicated teachers committed to teaching young people in a diverse range of environments. As a community, we acknowledge and celebrate teachers for their resilience, dedication and professionalism. Teachers play an important part in the lives of young children, beyond teaching the set curriculum.

As you would be aware, in Australia we celebrated World Teachers' Day on 29 October. The School of Education is proud to have partnered with the Western Australian Department of Education, Association of Independent Schools of WA, Catholic Education Western Australia, the Teacher Registration Board of WA, and, with the support of all WA universities, produce a video celebrating teachers. If you have not already seen it, I would encourage you to watch the **World Teachers' Day video** that showcases Western Australian teachers.

As part of the celebrations, Perth landmarks were lit up in yellow and red to acknowledge the positive impact teachers make on children.

After a hiatus in 2020, the Western Australian Education awards will be held in late November. ECU School of Education is proud to continue its support of the awards, sponsoring the Western Australia Beginning Teacher of the Year Award. It was my pleasure to be a part of the judging panel and the calibre of applicants was outstanding. Celebrating WA's many outstanding teachers, leaders and schools is a wonderful way to end the year.

This latest edition of UpdatED showcases some of the School of Education's recent achievements, including our research highlights. It profiles our current academics including adjuncts which is a testament to the calibre of academics. We also profile some of the outstanding work produced by our students.

Whilst it has been a challenging year, we have recruited new academics in Primary and Secondary education, many of whom will commence in 2022. The new year will have its challenges but the School of Education will continue to enhance its research productivity, engagement with schools and early learning centres, and continue to lead in education through its impact and engagement.

I wish you a relaxing and safe summer break and hope you can connect with friends and loved ones. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with you in 2022.

**Professor Stephen Winn**  
Executive Dean  
School of Education  
Edith Cowan University



## Lighting up Perth for **World Teachers' Day 2021**



### WA landmarks lit up to recognise the contributions of educators as part of World Teachers' Day on October 29.

Perth's Matagarup Bridge, Optus Stadium, ECU's Chancellery Building, Yagan Square and Kings Park all turned yellow and red to acknowledge the positive impact teachers make to children around the world.

This initiative was a partnership between the key organisations involved in teaching and teacher education in Western Australia. It is led by ECU in collaboration with the Department of Education, Association of Independent Schools of WA, Catholic Education WA, the Teacher Registration Board of WA, and supported by all other WA universities.

The partners also showcased WA's teachers in a new video launched to coincide with World Teachers' Day, which can be viewed on YouTube.



ECU School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn encouraged Western Australians to share online both the video and how their life has changed thanks to an inspirational teacher.

"World Teachers' Day is the perfect opportunity to thank all those exceptional teachers who have, and are continuing to make, a positive impact on the lives of very young children, children, adolescents, young adults and adults – in all our communities," Professor Winn said.

ECU School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn said World Teachers' Day is the perfect opportunity to thank teachers who have made a positive impact.

"We thank them for their resilience, dedication and professionalism.

"Particularly in 2020 and into 2021, when the teaching profession has swiftly adapted to the enormous upheaval generated by the COVID pandemic and continued to shape the future generation."

Tom Norman is an ECU graduate and Year 6 Classroom Teacher from Mount Hawthorn Primary School who features in the video. He said he was most inspired by his Year 5 Teacher Mr Paunganwa, or Mr P.

"I always remember his big smile and loud laugh – Mr P. made learning enjoyable," Mr Norman said.



"He wasn't just a classroom teacher; he helped everywhere at school and supported his students so they felt they could achieve anything. He was enthusiastic, approachable and made you feel valued."

Mr Norman said he's proud to be a part of the education community that is committed to helping students succeed.

Mr Norman said teachers can make a real difference in students' lives.

"Often the learning journey involves trying many routes to achieve the desired outcome. But seeing a student achieve success, whether big or small, is a very special moment for a teacher.

"The level of professionalism and care everyone in teaching shows, including our valued educational assistants, is something I'm proud to be a part of."



# The Write Stuff: National award for ECU literacy project

A research project which has inspired Western Australian families to read with their children for nearly two decades has been recognised with a prestigious national research award. ECU's School of Education was awarded the Outstanding Engagement for Research impact in the Engagement Australia Excellence Awards 2021, for their longitudinal evaluation of the Better Beginnings Family Literacy program.

The project was established in 2005 and is a partnership between ECU, the State Library of WA (SLWA) and families around the State. Evaluation outcomes have led to the development of a suite of four Better Beginnings programs for different age groups and communities. The Better Beginnings reading packs and Baby Rhyme Time, Toddler Time and Story Time delivered by libraries around the State are well-known to parents and children around WA.

Since the start of the program more than 940,000 reading packs have been delivered to WA parents and carers aiming to support them as their child's first educator and connect families to their local library, schools and health services.

In 2020 Kindytxt – a literacy-based text-messaging program was developed to extend the Better Beginnings Kindergarten program. Kindytxt delivers bite-sized chunks of literacy activities via SMS to parents with young children, three times a week.

Project lead Professor Caroline Barratt-Pugh said her team were immensely proud to be recognised for their hard work.

"Given the calibre of other finalists in the award it is humbling to be recognised for our work on ways of supporting family literacy practices across diverse WA communities," she said.

"Our research partnership with SLWA, local librarians, teachers, community child health nurses, parents and children has provided a strong evidence base to inform ongoing and new literacy initiatives, that build on family knowledge, understanding and practice."

Professor Barratt-Pugh said the next stage was to analyse the findings from the Kindytxt data and extend it beyond the 800 families currently taking part, potentially rolling the program out nationally in 2022.

The research team also included Associate Professor Lennie Barblett, Associate Professor Nicola Johnson, Dr Susan Hill and Alia Parker from ECU's School of Education.



## SIGN UP NOW FOR KINDYTXT

### A FREE SMS PROGRAM TO HELP YOUR KINDERGARTEN CHILD LEARN TO READ!

Get 3 text messages a week about fun things to do at home with your child. Using Kindytxt activities with kids helps them learn at kindergarten!



### Total Kindytxt registrations

**847**  
parents and  
carers

**78**  
teachers and  
school staff

**82**  
librarians and  
library staff

**10**  
case study schools  
in 17 LGAs

**Activity:** Read a children's book out loud to your child.

**Info:** Sharing books every day helps your child become familiar with books.

**Extension:** Let your child choose a book and read it together.

**Contact us now! To register, text the word KINDY to 0480 002 040**

For more information, visit the project page – <https://ecu.edu.au/research/kindytxt>

The full list of Engagement Australia 2021 Excellence Awards finalists is available online: <https://engagementaustralia.org.au/2021-excellence-awards-finalists>



# ECU graduates again dominate WA Education Awards

Edith Cowan University teacher education graduates have won five of the 13 awards for top teachers and schools at the 2021 WA Education Awards.

ECU graduates won the Beginning Teacher of the Year award, Primary Principal and Primary Deputy Principal of the Year as well as Secondary Principal and Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year awards.

2021 was the fourth year in a row an ECU graduate was named Beginning Teacher of the Year.

School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn said the continued success of ECU graduates in the awards was outstanding.

"This highlights the quality of teacher education graduates from ECU who have and will continue to make a positive difference to the lives of young people in Western Australia," he said.

## The successful awardees from 2021 who are ECU alumni:

### WA Beginning Teacher of the Year, sponsored by Edith Cowan University

Anika Brown, Halls Creek District High School

Anika creates a safe and inviting learning environment for her students to enable them to develop their skills and confidence. She focuses on helping students increase their attendance and encourages them to actively participate in daily classroom routines and activities. Anika also has deep respect for the local Aboriginal culture and consistently provides opportunities to support educational success in remote WA.

### WA Primary Principal of the Year

Louise O'Donovan, Beeliar Primary School

Louise has exactly what it takes to be a strong school leader. She leads Beeliar Primary School with integrity, empathy, knowledge and skill to build a school culture focused on student learning, well-being and achievement. Her aim is to ensure each of her students and staff have a rewarding school experience. She cares deeply for each member of the school community and is a visible leader who successfully impacts student learning by setting a strong vision for her staff.

### WA Primary Deputy Principal of the Year

Niquolei Lyons, Harrisdale Primary School

As a foundation deputy principal at Harrisdale Primary School, Niquolei has been instrumental in building a school with a positive and caring culture. She enjoys working in an industry that allows her to make a difference in the lives of young people. Niquolei always strives to improve the quality of education and support for students, while also establishing fun and creative events for the school community to be involved in.

### A Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year

Rob Nail, Cape Naturaliste College

Rob is an exceptional leader and role model who has played a big part in Cape Naturaliste College's growth to become the successful school that it is today. Rob is trustworthy, empathetic, highly intelligent, resilient and a deep and reflective thinker. He ensures he gets to know students and their families, and works with individual students to develop their own pathway to success.

### WA Secondary Principal of the Year

Mitchell Mackay, John Curtin College of the Arts

Driven by his belief in the public school system and dedication to pursuing secondary school excellence, Mitchell leads John Curtin College of the Arts with talent and purpose. His career has spanned more than three decades during which he has inspired the next generation of young adults. Mitchell builds the capacity of his school's staff and leadership team to make sure they can lead students to achieve outstanding success.

## Other award winners include:

### 2021 WA Premier's Primary Teacher of the Year, sponsored by BHP

Kristyn Oldfield, Aspiri Primary School

### 2021 WA Premier's Secondary Teacher of the Year, sponsored by BHP

Charan Pabla, Girrawheen Senior High School

### 2021 WA Primary Principal of the Year, sponsored by Fotoworks School Photography

Louise O'Donovan, Beeliar Primary School

### 2021 WA Education Assistant of the Year, sponsored by oOH!Media

Michelle Barrett, Byford Secondary College

### 2021 WA Primary Deputy Principal of the Year, sponsored by Beilby Downing Teal

Niquolei Lyons, Harrisdale Primary School

### 2021 WA School Services Staff Member of the Year, sponsored by K2 Audiovisual

Madison Corsini, Western Australian College of Agriculture – Cunderdin

### 2021 WA Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer of the Year, sponsored by Kurongkurl Katitjin at Edith Cowan University

Basil Kickett, Narrogin Primary School

### 2021 WA Secondary Deputy Principal of the Year, sponsored by K2 Audiovisual

Rob Nail, Cape Naturaliste College

### 2021 WA Secondary Principal of the Year, sponsored by Teachers Mutual Bank

Mitchell Mackay, John Curtin College of the Arts

### 2021 WA Secondary School of the Year, sponsored by Perth Energy

Ashdale Secondary College

### 2021 WA Primary School of the Year, sponsored by Teachers Health

Joondalup Education Support Centre

### 2021 WA Premier's Excellence in Aboriginal Education Award, sponsored by BHP

Mount Lawley Senior High School



Pictured left to right: ECU's School of Education Executive Dean Professor Stephen Winn and winner of the 'WA Beginning Teacher of the Year' award Anika Brown.



# Preparing children for the future of work

Edith Cowan University Lecturers Dr Helen Adam and Dr Pauline Roberts discuss artificial intelligence and its role in early education.



As artificial intelligence (AI) and automation has continued its steady march across the professional landscape in recent years, it has given rise to much anxiety over the vanishing need for certain skills in our workforce.

This anxiety has proved far-reaching, permeating even those 'creative' industries, such as writing, once thought beyond the reach of a computer.

Spellcheck is certainly not a new phenomenon, however, grammar programs and apps such as Grammarly have taken writing automation to a new level where anyone can produce near-perfect writing.

Even predictive text functions on our smart devices are completing sentences, often times before we have even thought of them.

With writing technology growing in accessibility and accuracy, the question of which skills will be required in the workforce of the future has reached down the chain to the education sector.

A 2021 article published on The Conversation by Lucinda McKnight from Deakin University argued that growing AI writing tools would put less emphasis on basic writing rules and structure, and more on creativity, problem solving and social intelligence.

## Fundamental literacy skills

Edith Cowan University Senior Lecturer Dr Helen Adam specialises in children's literature and literacy education and said the issue was more complex, pointing to a need for children to also master writing fundamentals as the foundation for creative and

expressive writing down the track.

"Firstly, for very young children, reading, writing, spelling, word use/vocabulary and handwriting are intrinsically intertwined and inseparable," she said.

"For example, the broader and deeper a child's listening and spoken vocabulary is – the more they can recognise these words when they read them, use these words in their speech and writing and communicate effectively.



"These skills are foundational to being able to think, reflect, work and communicate creatively and critically – which are the skills needed for the 21st Century in order for them to become adults with the critical, creative problem solving capabilities McKnight refers to."

Dr Adam said regardless of how advanced AI and spell check became, young children still needed to grasp phonics and spelling skills to read, write and to grow their vocabulary.

"We don't want young children leaning on artificial intelligence because they need to. It may actually stop them learning to read in the first place," she said.

"Children's understanding of what we call the alphabetic principle, is really critical and is linked to their ability to spell, recognise words

when they hear them, use them in this speech and then to be able to use them in writing.

"So if people think it's not important to teach skills such as spelling, they are going to undermine children's ability to learn to read, write and put texts together."

## Writing skills and creative expression

Dr Adam said writing skills and creative expression must both be considered in teaching methods, regardless of advances in technology.

"The problems arise when the focus is one-sided," she said.

"Some like to think we can simplify this debate into 'back to basics' or 'forget the spelling and grammar, AI can do that' – these are two ends of a spectrum and being solely at either end is dangerous.

"At one end we see formulaic writing based on a set of rigid 'grammar rules' which result in inauthentic, almost mass-produced texts.

"Whereas at the other end, if writers don't make clever use of words and creative, clear expression it can result in good ideas lost in poor or incomprehensible writing."

Dr Adam emphasised how language was constantly evolving and that children needed to be encouraged to take risks and be creative.

"If you go back and read texts from 100 years ago, the way we use language, the way we spell and sometimes the vocabulary choices, has changed," she said.

"The way we use language continues to change especially if you look at poetry and literature – these don't follow rigid sets of rules.

"We still teach children, what is a simple sentence? What is a complex sentence? What is a compound sentence? How can we play with these and vary these to get our message across.

"It's encouraging children to risk-take with their writing and to play with grammar."

## Demands on teachers

Edith Cowan University Senior Lecturer Dr Pauline Roberts specialises in early childhood education and AI and said the teaching of these new technologies in the classroom faced its own obstacles.

"This is a difficult space for teachers to navigate," she said. "Often they are learning alongside the children about technology while balancing the opposing views of too much use and needing to prepare children for a tech future – while not really having the time to fully explore the options.

"Tech is another thing on top of the other demands that teachers need to understand and adapt to so they can use it effectively."

Dr Roberts said teaching advanced AI tools and programs in classrooms could also unfairly disadvantage students who did not have access to these technologies at home.

*"Current debates still remain about how much time young children should be spending using technology."*

"The conversation needs to be about how they are using it and what they might gain from it – especially if they are collaborating and communicating with others," she said.

"The other critical consideration here is the widening gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not. There is focus on the advances and the changes to the future workforce for Generation Alpha who use technology, but what happens to the large number of children who don't?"

## The future of AI in schools

However, Dr Roberts said the pandemic and rise of online learning could open the door to more AI technologies.

"Increased use of AI has not yet fully been explored in schools but recent moves to online learning through the pandemic may lead to some teachers exploring additional uses," she said.

Ultimately, Dr Adam expressed the need for children to regularly read and engage with texts regardless of what was happening with AI.

"The ability to think, including flexibility of thought and application of ideas, is developed through children's engagement with texts," she said.

"People who read show stronger empathy, theory of mind, stronger communication skills, emotional intelligence as well as better academic outcomes.

"If we want children to be critical and creative then we need to develop a love of reading and writing."



Kindly re-published from [www.aimwa.com/workplaceconversations](http://www.aimwa.com/workplaceconversations)



# The importance of culturally diverse literature in today's classrooms

Author: Dr Helen Adam, Senior Lecturer and Course Coordinator for the Master of Teaching (Primary), School of Education

Educators are passionate; educators want to make a difference, but many face challenges when it comes to inclusive and respectful practices and building intercultural understanding and respect through the sharing of diverse children's literature.

Dr Helen Adam found in her study of 21 early childhood educators across four diverse Western Australian early education and care centres, that educators struggled when selecting or using culturally diverse literature.

The educators in Dr Adam's study were hesitant and uncertain when describing how they respond to children's backgrounds. They expressed fears of not being "politically correct" and avoiding sharing diverse books because of not knowing how to select authentic books or how to pronounce minority group languages.

Instead, educators mostly focused on promoting stereotypes and exotic perspectives of people from minority groups – which often included the cultural groups of children in these centres. The outcomes of such practice was the 'othering' of those from minority groups – and research tells us this is where prejudice and misunderstanding has its roots. Further, this is also how white children can develop a sense of superiority. And, we don't have to look far in today's world to see how harmful this can be.

Other research Dr Adam has undertaken among Pre-Service Teachers suggests that they and their mentor teachers on professional experience often select books that they loved themselves as children or books they consider to be favourites. This, too, can be problematic as this means children are often repeatedly exposed to older stories in which the rich diversity of our society is invisible.

It is important for all children to see themselves reflected in books – that is have the opportunity to engage with multiple books that provide "mirrors" of their lives, families, cultures, and communities. It is equally important for all children to engage with books that act as "windows" into the lives, families, cultures, and communities of those how may be different to themselves.

The impact of children having access to diverse books extend to their educational outcomes, social outcomes and positive benefits to society.

These article about Dr Adam's research are available as open access and can support your own understandings and classroom practice:

**Adam, H. (2021).** When Authenticity Goes Missing: How Monocultural Children's Literature Is Silencing the Voices and Contributing to Invisibility of Children from Minority Backgrounds. *Education Sciences*, 11(1), 32. doi:10.3390/educsci11010032 <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/11/1/32/htm>

**Adam, H., Hays, A., & Urquhart, Y. (2021).** The Exclusive White World of Preservice Teachers' Book Selection for the Classroom: Influences and Implications for Practice. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(8). <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol46/iss8/4>

Dr Adam has also authored a book for the Primary English Teaching Association of Australia to support educators in selecting and using culturally diverse literature in the classroom.



Scan the QR code to view the publication 'Transforming Practice' By Dr Helen Adam.



## THE SCIENCE OF READING: TRANSLATING RESEARCH TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

### A NEW SHORT COURSE FOR EDUCATORS

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 1000's of year 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 AND INCLUSIONS

- \$825 incl. GST to undertake the course which includes all reading materials and case studies
- 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni, and for multiple bookings from the same organisation

### COURSE DETAILS

This short course will run on **Saturday 26 March, 7 May and 11 June 2022.**

### ABOUT THE PRESENTER

This course has been written and coordinated by Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM and aligns with the EDU6651 Science of Reading unit in the Master of Education course and the Graduate Certificate of Education course at ECU. Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond AM is acknowledged as a leader in the field of reading and received an Order of Australia (AM) in 2019 for her significant contribution to tertiary education and the community. She is currently providing professional learning and instructional coaching across a range of schools for the \$21 million dollar Kimberley Schools Project (2017-2022) in Western Australia. In 2021, Lorraine commenced work on a similar project supporting schools with Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

### REGISTER NOW

Please register online <https://www.ecu.edu.au/short-courses/education>  
If you have any questions, please contact Dr Julie Boston (+61 8) 6304 5702.







## Research in the School of Education

Written by School of Education academics, please find below a selection of recently published articles which are available to you without any subscriptions.

Associate Dean (Research), Associate Professor Nicola Johnson

**This research paper identifies and discusses the favourite books of Pre-Service Teachers when they were children.**

**Adam, H., Hays, A., & Urquhart, Y. (2021).** The Exclusive White World of Preservice Teachers' Book Selection for the Classroom: Influences and Implications for Practice. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(8). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2021v46n8.4>

**Have you ever wondered about ability grouping in physical education?**

**Wilkinson, S. & Penney, D. (2021).** Setting policy and student agent in physical education: Students as policy actors. *Sport, Education and Society*, 26(3), 267–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2020.1722625>.

**Need to unplug? Consider taking a Digital Sabbath!**

**Morris, J. & Paris, L. (2021).** Rethinking arts-based research methods in education: enhanced participant engagement processes to increase research credibility and knowledge translation. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2021.1926971>

**Read this if you are seeking to enhance your maths teaching!**

**Ormond, C. A. (2021).** Teaching Classroom Mathematics: Linking Two Pedagogical Models for Promoting Student Engagement and Conceptual Connections. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(4). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2021v46n4.3>

**How do we retain early career teachers?**

**Morris, J. E. & Imms, W. (2021).** 'A validation of my pedagogy': how subject discipline practice supports early career teachers' identities and perceptions of retention. *Teacher Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2021.1930126>

For more information, visit the ECU Research website at: <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/research-activity>



## CHILDHOOD TRAUMA: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS

### A NEW ONLINE SHORT COURSE 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\*. 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. By understanding the impact of trauma on children, you have a better chance of making a positive difference to their lives.

The course is entirely online and self-paced, taking approximately 9 hours to complete. The cost of the course is **\$161 inc GST**.

#### MORE INFORMATION

[www.ecu.edu.au/short-courses/education/childhood-trauma](http://www.ecu.edu.au/short-courses/education/childhood-trauma)

\*Creating Supportive Environments for Children Who have had Exposure to Traumatic Events. *J Child Fam Stud* 26, 2728–2741 (2017)



School of  
**Education**





# Future Research & Career Pathway

Become part of a team that leads, initiates and sustains high quality research that effectively addresses pertinent issues faced by learners and educators both within and beyond educational settings.



## Dr Julia Morris

Dr Julia Morris is the Coordinator for Visual Arts Education (Secondary) at the School of Education. Her research work is in the intersection of learning environments, teacher quality and student engagement. She is passionate about applied research – collecting data as evidence to improve practice and wants to know how we can support teachers to best utilise their pedagogical practice within their environment to make an impact on student learning.

She partners with industry, such as Wesfarmers, and schools in Australia and New Zealand. She is currently involved with a consortium of 19 partner organisations from education (including our own WA Department of Education), allied industries (such as architects, furniture manufacturers, acousticians) and academia (such as the University of Melbourne). She is currently undertaking several projects which include:



- The Innovative Learning Environments and Student Experience Scoping Study: A one-year project with 19 partner organisations located across 17 countries that is answering the question: 'What innovative learning environment research should be the next priority?'
- Plans to Pedagogy: A study with 13 primary and secondary schools across Australia and New Zealand, where academics partner with school leaders and teachers to co-design, implement and evaluate research targeting each school's unique learning environment topic, for example how space can be used as a pedagogic tool, enhancing teacher collaboration in flexible spaces, and how furniture influences student engagement and teacher pedagogies.
- Teacher as Practitioner, aiming to enhance early career teacher retention of visual arts teachers by engaging teachers in the discipline practice that brought them to teaching as a profession.
- Senior School Participation and Engagement: This is an important study centred on student voice, supporting data-driven school improvement on students' social connectedness and academic engagement, as well as engagement with specialist school-based programmes. It asks students about how prepared they feel for life after school, to identify challenges and successes within their learning journeys, and to give recommendations back to the school to improve experiences for future students.

Dr Morris reflects:

*"I have always been an applied researcher – a researcher who wants to solve problems or improve practice using data. Data can help us to step back from what we think might be happening, to explore issues from a different angle. As a mixed methods researcher I enjoy designing studies that strike the balance between understanding the 'bigger' picture with numbers and understanding the lived experiences of students and teachers through qualitative data, using these different types of data to examine issues in educational practice. I believe students have a right to enjoy their school experience, to be engaged and motivated in their learning. I aim to work with teachers and school leaders to set up (and evaluate) learning environments and teaching experiences that enhance students' engagement. In an increasingly connected global community of educators and researchers, we need to look at education across both local and global contexts to improve practice, as well as looking beyond academia. I'm really proud of the work I do with industry (both schools and allied ILE industries) to drive research, as each partner brings a unique perspective to collaborative research and their perspectives keep the research grounded within an applied context. I think it is important that teachers and students are core participants in educational research, and that the objectives and outcomes of research are designed with them and for them to support their practice."*

## Diem Thi Ngoc Hoang

PhD Student

### About yourself

I was a lecturer at the School of Foreign Languages, Thai Nguyen University (Vietnam) before I came to ECU to pursue my PhD. I earned a master's degree in English Language at Vietnam National University, and another in Instructional Technology at Lehigh University (USA) with the Fulbright scholarship for Vietnamese students. My research interests include technology-enhanced learning and teaching, English learning beyond classroom, and teacher training.

### Why did you choose ECU to do your PhD?

When I almost finished my master study at Lehigh University, I started my search for PhD programs in Australia. So lucky for me, I had a close colleague and some friends doing their doctoral research at ECU at that time. They gave me excellent reviews on the academic support and facility conditions at ECU. One also connected me to a technology expert at ECU and he found interest in my research topic in mobile learning. I was also very impressed to see Perth on the list of top ten most liveable cities in the world in 2016 on CNN Travel. I fell in love with the city and determined to make my choice come true. Finally, I was very honoured to receive the ECU HDR Scholarship for my PhD study. I am really grateful for everything that ECU has offered me. After more than three years being at ECU, I know it's always been the correct choice in my life.

### What have you enjoyed most?

Before I started my study, I had been 'warned' of the solitary life of PhD students. I was quite worried at that time. When I arrived at ECU, all the worries went away. What I have enjoyed most at ECU is the balance between solely individual research work and social interaction. Apart from the regular meetings with my supervision panel, I have participated in other academic and social events organised by ECU and the School of Education. I appreciate the 'WeChat' sections moderated by an HDR Communication adviser, Student Guild events, research seminars, the 'Writing Circle' with other PhD candidates and one of my supervisors, and most recently the HDR Colloquium. I also volunteered for an ECU Open Day and the Research Week in 2019. During the mandated lockdowns, I received a lot of encouragement and support from my empathetic supervisors. Even though the interaction was maintained via Zoom and Teams, it alleviated my feelings of isolation and anxiety in emergencies situations. In addition to their contribution to my academic growth, they have developed a sense of belonging and inclusion inside me. ECU has now become an important part in this period of my life. To me, this is a nourishing and embracing environment where I can find balance at any time. ECU has made my research journey a rewarding and merited one. Coming near the end of the journey, I start to feel nostalgic already. I will miss the lively discussions with "Oh, yes!" moments and my ECU walks after long hours in front of the screen.

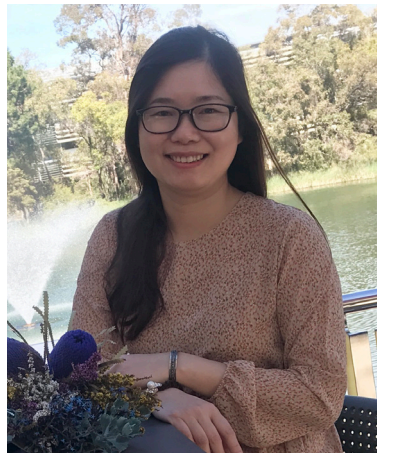
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### What will you do when you return to your home country?

I will continue my previous teaching job in my hometown where I was born and raised up. That is the immediate plan. I also have some plans for the near future. With the academic skills and research experience acquired at ECU, I have been working on some research project proposals in collaboration with other colleagues. I like collaborating with people with different research interests or in different disciplines to broaden my knowledge. I will continue to build up my academic profile and make more contributions in my research areas. I see researching as life-long learning. The ending of the PhD study opens to new opportunities to challenge my current knowledge. I treasure what I have learnt at ECU as it takes me to a new path that I find myself confident to see opportunity in any challenge.

### What is the focus of your current thesis?

My current thesis investigates the potential of virtual reality (VR) to facilitate English language learning for undergraduate students in Vietnam. I aim at friendly and low-cost VR tools that the majority of Vietnamese teachers and students can afford and use in their daily learning and teaching practice. It is a mixed methods study conducted at a public university in Vietnam. Apart from the quantitative findings, I am interested in students' insights and perceptions of the use of this emerging technology in language learning. I am currently working on two manuscripts co-authored with my supervisors to disseminate the findings of the study to a wider circle of researchers and educators who have similar interests in integrating VR in language education.





# Become a secondary school teacher in just 18 months

Mr Ryan Marlow made the switch to teaching high school Mathematics and has never looked back.

Western Australia is facing a mass skills shortage – and not even schools are immune.

High schools in particular need more qualified teachers.

The skills shortage is likely to get worse before it gets better. In coming years there is an expected exodus of retirement-aged teachers while Australia's student population will rise 21 per cent by 2030.

ECU is helping to answer the call by introducing a new fast-track version of the Master of Teaching (Secondary) that can be completed in just 18 months, commencing Semester One, 2022.

## Secondary teachers in high demand

Master of Teaching (Secondary) Course Coordinator Dr Helen Egeberg said the new fast-track course will provide more specialist secondary teachers in subjects they are most needed, including Science, Mathematics, Design and Technology and English.

"WA is currently facing a real shortage of qualified high school teachers across metro, regional and remote areas and ECU aims

to meet this growing demand," Dr Egeberg said.

An 18-month version of the standard two-year Master's degree will be available at ECU's campuses in Joondalup, Mount Lawley and Bunbury, and includes all major and minor subject areas.

"It's the same course – just delivered quicker," she said.

Units will be offered during semester breaks as well as the standard semester period.

"This is a particularly attractive option to those who want to obtain their teaching qualification in the shortest timeframe possible, whether you're switching careers or applying straight from an undergraduate degree.

"The course offers a fantastic opportunity for already-skilled professionals to become secondary teachers, and bring their unique wealth of skills and knowledge into the classroom."

## Make the switch to teaching

ECU graduate Ryan Marlow did exactly that.

"After seeing some wonderful teachers my children had, I knew

I wanted to be part of that," Mr Marlow said.

He switched from engineering to teaching high school Mathematics and Science, and has never looked back.

"Being able to use your industry experience to relate classroom learning to real-world situations is a huge benefit.

"The most rewarding aspect of teaching is that light-bulb moment, where a student who was struggling with a concept goes 'a-ha, I get it'."

## Accelerate your career

Within two years of graduating from ECU, Mr Marlow was promoted to Head of Year 11/12 at St James' Anglican School.

Mr Marlow has this advice for anyone considering a career in teaching:

"Do it sooner, rather than later. It is so rewarding," he said.

Say yes to every opportunity. Seek out leaders you respect and ask their advice whenever you can. Educators are always willing to support your aspirations.

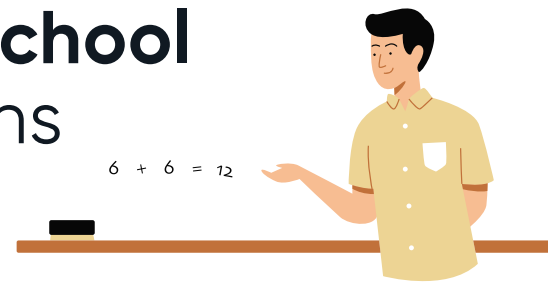
## Excellent student experience

ECU was rated 5-stars and the top WA university for overall educational experience for postgraduate Teacher Education in the Good Universities Guide 2022.

ECU has been ranked the top public university in WA for postgraduate Teacher Education for learning resources, quality of educational experience and teaching quality in the 2020 Quality Indicators for Learning and Teacher (QILT) survey results.

Become the high school teacher they will always remember.

Apply now: [ecuworldready.com.au/education](https://ecuworldready.com.au/education)



# The truth about Terra Nullius and why First Nations people say Tudge is wrong to say we need optimism

Authors: Dr Olivia Johnston, Dr Libby Jackson-Barrett and Dr Christine Cunningham, School of Education

Australia's federal Minister for Education, Alan Tudge, will not endorse the draft national curriculum for secondary teachers of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) because the changes are "overly negative" and could teach kids a hatred of their Country" (ABC 2021).

But from a First Nations perspective, the time has come to speak the truth about what has happened since the invasion of the sovereign lands and waterways, the act of Terra Nullius and the legacy of this mindset.

The draft national curriculum was publicly released for comments in early 2021. It revealed substantial changes to the Year 7-10 History curriculum and is to be finalised and given to all state Education Ministers for their consideration and endorsement by the end of this year.

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 2012, many secondary teachers of HASS have lamented the lack of Australian History taught in Years 7-10. Australian History which was previously covered in Year 8 was moved and watered-down into the primary school curriculum, leaving secondary HASS to cover a very broad scope without much Australian and Indigenous History until Year 10.

The new draft History curriculum proposes the inclusion of more Australian focused content earlier; including pre-colonisation First Nation histories in Year 7 and more detailed consideration of Australians' roles in both WWI and WWII in Years 9 and 10 respectively. Year 10 will still include the civil rights History of Australian and Indigenous peoples – the only Australian and Indigenous focuses to date.

Many of these inclusions will be welcomed and celebrated by Australian HASS teachers, but our purpose here is not to defend the draft curriculum but to question the minister.

Minister Tudge argues that contestability should not feature prominently as a historical concept in our curriculum, but that we "must give an optimistic view of our country." Do these values represent, "the vast majority of Australian people?" Do we not have a responsibility to teach about the pluralist backgrounds and perspectives of our diverse society? Isn't our role to equip secondary school students with critical thinking skills to make choices, based on well-informed and widely-considered ideas and beliefs? And most importantly, surely Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples will remain rhetorical unless we teach a true and accurate account of Australian history in order to develop future generations of Australians who are well-informed about Australia's rich, diverse and unsettled history?

The goals for education in Australia were formally confirmed again in the Alice Springs (Mpartwe)

Declaration in 2019. They included the creation of "active and informed citizens." Minister Tudge's agenda, to propagate patriotism and blindly optimistic views about Australia, are accompanied by his argument that History "should be about teaching accuracy" rather than contestability. It is ironic that contestability and debate is one of the key pillars of the liberal democracy that the Minister is arguing should be appreciated, while he is, at the same time, rejecting that History should be contested.

This is what is most concerning about Minister Tudge's rhetoric – he is poisoning the curriculum well by insisting on the unquestioning acceptance of an incorrect, or at least out-dated, version of Australian History. To come out in opposition now to curriculum change, after his government commissioned Marcia Langton A.O. to integrate and thus infuse Indigenous knowledges into curriculum material just last year, is disrespectful and 'winyarn' (sorrowful).

Returning to the Howard Era arguments for "accuracy" and teaching "what happened" as fact in History is contrary to the Australian educational goals of developing critical and creative thinkers. If we want a better way forward then we need to look no further than the Australian Coat of Arms with its 'waitj' (emu) and 'yonga' (kangaroo) standard bearers. Both animals cannot walk backwards and they symbolise forward thinking and national progress.

Australian students should be challenged to understand that there are different perspectives of our National history, it is not a single story. Critical thinkers, in History, ask questions about whose stories are being told, what perspectives are being represented, and whose versions of History are we reading? We do not accept just "his story," but we look for "her" stories, and "their" stories. It is essential to the process of reconciliation to know the true histories of Australia as it is a vital element in providing systemic change in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples which holds the power to Heal Country on both sides of history.

This article was originally published on [EduResearch Matters](#).



## ECU Education Alumni Chapter

### Nail that Dream Job in Education

ECU Education Alumni Chapter, Nail that Dream Job in Education was held on Thursday 21 October 2021. The highly informative and interactive workshop relevant to soon to be graduates and graduates/early career teachers, provided information and advice on how to submit your best job application.

The two presenters included Sharon Woodfield, ECU Careers & Employability Adviser and Peter Jones, Deputy Principal of Teaching and Learning at Servite College. Sharon Woodfield spoke about the application processes for recruitment across the three education sectors in Western Australia and demonstrated how to address the AITSL Professional Standards using the SAO technique of self-marketing.

Peter Jones shared his experience working in Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) schools and his involvement in recruitment panel for teaching positions, offering insight into what makes a candidate stand out on paper and in person.

It was wonderful to be joined by so many of our Teacher Education alumni. We hope to see you at the next ECU Education Alumni Chapter event.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/education-alumni-chapter>



Pictured left to right: Robyn Ekberg (Committee Member), Kevin Fraser (Committee Member), Sharon Woodfield, Peter Jones, Katie Thiveos (Committee Member), Al Martin (Committee Member), Wes Buzza (Committee Member).

## Duke of Edinburgh Pre-Service Teacher training

ECU's School of Education was once again proud to partner with Awards WA to offer an exciting professional development opportunity to all ECU Pre-Service Teachers.



The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is offered as a non-formal education framework across more than 132 countries, and within Western Australia alone, it is offered to young people through a wide range of 110 schools and education providers.

Through this partnership, ECU School of Education provided two opportunities this year for current Pre-Service Teachers to be Duke of Edinburgh-accredited trainers, meaning they will become qualified to deliver the program within the school system once accredited as teachers.

School of Education Industry Engagement Coordinator Dr Julie Boston said the initiative would help ECU's Pre-Service Teachers gain an edge in the job market.

"Completing this training enables teachers to achieve a nationally recognised training standard," she said.

"With more than 1200 schools across Australia now offering the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, helping our students become accredited in this program gives them an essential employability edge."

The Duke of Edinburgh program comprises four sections – including physical recreation, voluntary service, skills and adventurous journey – and is recognised and supported by WA's Principal Associations.

In partnership with Awards WA, ECU looks forward to offering further opportunities in 2022 – for further information please contact Dr Julie Boston by email: [julie.boston@ecu.edu.au](mailto:julie.boston@ecu.edu.au) or visit <https://dukeofed.com.au/>

## Tutorial Approach to Student Support

ECU's Tutorial Approach to Student Support (TASS) program has been running for several years as part of the 'Diversity in the Secondary Classroom' core unit in the Bachelor of Secondary Education course. All enrolled students complete at least 10 hours supporting students with additional needs.



The focus of the program is to assist ECU Pre-Service Teachers to better appreciate the diversity of students that exist in secondary schools in the Perth metro and regional areas and gain an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges that exist for these students in general or modified classroom situations. Additionally, they liaise with classroom practitioners and support personnel and gain from their experience and know-how. In doing so they address key graduate professional standards particularly around knowing students and how they learn. The majority of the ECU students completing EDU3104 are in their final semester of their Bachelor degree, and as a result completing TASS allows opportunities to connect with potential employers; it is not unusual for these final year students to gain work via these experiences.

A group of seven ECU Pre-Service Teachers recently assisted at the Durham Road School Athletics Carnival. Durham Road is the largest Special Education School in WA and provides for a variety of students – many of whom have complex needs, of the nature that many of the pre-service teachers have not encountered during their courses.

ECU Pre-Service Teachers consistently bring energy and enthusiasm to their experience. Durham Road Physical education teacher Ms Sarah Mondelly (a recent ECU graduate) was incredibly positive about the input of the ECU Pre-Service PE Teachers describing them as 'exceptional' and that their enthusiasm was 'truly appreciated'. Ms Rachel Chalada a final year PE Pre-Service Teacher (second from right) described her experience at Durham Road School 'as an incredibly humbling and positive learning experience on both a professional and personal level'. She felt that witnessing successful and positive inclusion of diverse learners in PE settings far exceeded her initial expectations and broke down any perceived barriers to participation.

## Scholar in Residence program receives VC award

It is with great pleasure to announce that the Scholar in Residence program has been recognised with the 2021 Vice Chancellor's Award for Staff Excellence in the category of 'Programs that Enhance Learning'.

Dr Christa Norris would like to acknowledge and thank all the secondary schools who have been involved in hosting our Scholar in Residence Pre-Service Teachers over the last 4 years.

If you are interested in being part of the Award winning program and hosting our Secondary scholars in residence (all learning areas) next year, then head to: <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/internships/scholar-in-residence-secondary-internship> or contact Dr Christa Norris by email: [c.norris@ecu.edu.au](mailto:c.norris@ecu.edu.au) for further information.





## Early Childhood Australia WA conference 2021



In October, 200 early childhood educators and suppliers were hosted by the School of Education on behalf of the Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) Western Australia Branch. The aim of the conference was to learn, discuss and debate matters of ways in which to amplify children's learning, development and wellbeing.

The day started with an acknowledgement and smoking ceremony led by Jayden Boundary of Ngalak Nidja and then a warm welcome by Executive Dean of the School of Education, Professor Stephen Winn.

Sessions in the day included the themes of creativity; pedagogy – play, inquiry and nature; movement; children – mindset, trauma and rights; and reconciliation with a Aboriginal Songs workshop from Kobi Morrison to finish. ECU early childhood students and alumni mingled with current practitioners who shared information about their current experiences and action research happening within their settings. The day concluded with a Sundowner and prize giving in The Bar of Ediths.

If you'd like to know more about ECA, please visit their website – <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au> or become a member to receive regular updates.

## Music ensemble hits the road

ECU's fourth year Music Education ensemble recently hit the road for a series of school concerts at Butler and Fremantle Colleges.

The road trip has become an annual event, with the fourth year students each year forming an ensemble, choosing the music, and then arranging and rehearsing it. Essentially, it's a student-led project.

"This year's ensemble was arguably the strongest yet" said Dr Geoffrey Lowe, Music Education Course Coordinator, "and the students at both schools really enjoyed the song selection and tight ensemble playing. Even better is that the music staff in both schools are former ECU Music Education graduates. We are really excited to be able to maintain these strong links and support our graduates in their schools."

The ensemble played to packed houses of appreciative students at both schools, with Butler students offering a standing ovation. The ensemble performances on the road represent the last formal coursework activities for these students, so it is a great way for them to reconnect with their roots and simply perform together one last time.

To find out more about ECU's Music Education specialisation, visit our course page – <https://www.ecu.edu.au/degrees/courses/master-of-teaching-secondary/unitset?id=SPAAQP&crsCd=191>



## 'Follow the Dream' visit to ECU's Bunbury campus

Students from Northam Senior High School's Follow the Dream and Mt Lawley Outreach recently attended a 3 day camp to ECU's South West campus.

Students, along with school staff, ECU staff, and University student mentors, helped to create an amazing educational, cultural, and aspirational experience for the whole group.

These programs are inspired by the Graham 'Polly' Farmer foundation, which helps support and encourage Indigenous young people to pursue their dreams. They are both partnered with the Department of Education WA.

The Northam Follow the Dream Coordinator is Joe Manning, a past Education student of ECU-SW from 20 years ago. The camp allowed him to reconnect with his former mentor and Senior Health & Physical Education Lecturer Joan Strikwerda-Brown. During the camp, Joan ran a sport/recreation session with the students, with the aim of fostering relationships between students and staff from the different schools.

For these students, the option to attend Bunbury's ECU campus offers a non-metropolitan university experience living in a nearby regional location.



Polly  
Farmer  
Foundation

For more information  
about the Polly Farmer  
Foundation Follow the  
Dream program





School of  
**Education**



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