

School of Education

Updat**ED**



Edition 2 2025

Research Highlights

- **Why AERO Must Return to the Evidence on Writing**
- **Building Students' Confidence Begins at Kindergarten**
- **National Reading Survey Sheds Light on What's Really Happening in Australian Classrooms**

Feature Articles

- **Bridging the Gap: On Country Study Tour Strengthens Rural Partnerships and Inspires Future Educators**
- **ECU, Atlantis and Tall Tree Join Forces to Meet the Growing need for Early Childhood Teachers**
- **Educators Warn of Risks in Low Senior Maths Participation**



From the Executive Dean

Professor Caroline Mansfield, Executive Dean, School of Education.

Welcome to our second edition of UpdatED for 2025. In this edition we share with you a thoughtfully curated set of research insights and feature articles that reflect the evolving landscape of education, and where confidence, capability, and connection are nurtured from the earliest years and across diverse contexts. We invite you to explore how early childhood education can be a powerful foundation for building confidence, and how intentional approaches to class ability groupings, classroom design and inclusive learning environments can support all students to thrive. This issue also shines a light on wellbeing and communities, from women in remote locations sharing self-care practices, and the vital role music education can play in flourishing lives.

This collection also features research on student writing, extending the conversation beyond the recent AERO Framework and prompting us to reflect on what counts as evidence in education. Findings from the National Reading Survey further emphasise the importance of teacher knowledge and professional decision-making in shaping effective literacy practices. We are delighted to report the success of our 2025 immersive On Country Study Tour to the Kimberley, reminding us of the deep learning that emerges when education is grounded in place, culture, and authentic relationships. Our Alumni Spotlight feature with Susan Archdall illustrates how remote experiences can ignite a passion for equity and underpin a career that has transformed lives and schools. Together, these contributions offer inspiration and practical insight for educators, leaders, and communities committed to creating learning environments where everyone can grow, connect and succeed.



August - September

WELCOME TO DJILBA

The Noongar Season 'Djilba' is represented by the colour pink as it symbolises growth of wildflowers and plants. This is the start of the massive flowering explosion that happens in the South West. Beginning with the yellow flowering plants such as the acacias. Djilba is a transitional time of the year, with some very cold and clear days combining with warmer, rainy and windy days mixing with the occasional sunny day or two.

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

Building students' confidence begins at kindergarten



Professor Lennie Barblett; Dr Fiona Boylan, Senior Lecturer; and Dr Amelia Ruscoe, Lecturer, School of Education.

A new report from ECU's School of Education reveals that a child's first experiences in school significantly shape their long-term engagement, confidence, and learning success. The first day of kindergarten is often marked by anxious goodbyes, uncertain smiles, and the hope that young learners will settle into their new routine quickly. But new research from Edith Cowan University's (ECU) School of Education suggests that schools can do much more than just help children simply 'survive' this critical transition to learning, but instead, help them thrive.

The recently-published Transforming Transitions II report from ECU reveals that a child's first experiences in school significantly shape their long-term engagement, confidence, and learning success. The study, conducted with the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, provides a fresh perspective on how schools can improve transition processes to foster meaningful relationships, ease anxieties, and support both children and their families. Lead researcher and Professor of Early Childhood Education at ECU, Professor Lennie Barblett AM, said for too long transition processes have been designed for efficiency rather than engagement.

"Our research shows that small, thoughtful changes, such as prioritising relationship-building and recognising a child's existing 'funds of knowledge', can make a profound difference in their sense of belonging and success at school," Professor Barblett said. "This study identifies engagement of not only children, but also families, as the missing ingredient in traditional school transition strategies. "While schools often focus on logistics such as enrolments, orientation days, and schedules, our findings show that deeper engagement ensures children feel secure and ready to learn."

Dr Fiona Boylan, co-author of the study and Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at ECU, said that a child's first day at school should feel like a natural continuation of their learning and personal development. "Children don't enter school as blank slates," Dr Boylan said. "They bring knowledge, culture, and experiences from their home lives that should be acknowledged and integrated. A child's first day should feel like a continuation of their learning journey, not a sudden break.

The research strongly suggests that schools adopt a more personalised and flexible approach to transitions, tailoring experiences to the needs of children and their families. Research co-author Dr Amelia Ruscoe from ECU's School of Education emphasised the importance of leadership in transition planning. "Schools that embrace transition strategies at a leadership level set the foundation for long-term educational success," Dr Ruscoe said. "When children feel valued from day one, they are more likely to engage positively with learning and build lasting relationships." Instead of simply preparing students for school, Dr Ruscoe said successful transitions depend on fostering emotional security, social connections, and family involvement. "When schools create environments where children feel safe, seen, and supported, they're not just easing a difficult transition—they're setting children up for lifelong learning success," she said.

Barblett, L., Boylan, F., Ruscoe, A. (2025). Transforming transitions II: A summary report. Children, Families and Communities Research Group. Edith Cowan University. <https://doi.org/10.25958/zp9r-ep23>.



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

Why AERO must return to the evidence on writing

Dr Anabela Malpique, Senior Lecturer, School of Education.



As writing researchers, we are filled with excitement and hope whenever writing appears on the agenda. Last week, Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) released its newly developed School Writing Instruction Framework (SWIF). This is a resource developed to support “school leaders and teachers to deliver evidence-based writing instruction across all subject areas”. While there are a number of positives in this model and its accompanying practice resources, we argue here that these are based largely on a subset of evidence. It dismisses significant bodies of work with demonstrated impact on student writing achievement. Paradoxically, these were at the core of AERO’s previous documentation.

The evidence that got lost

In its 2022 review of instructional approaches to writing AERO rightly claimed, “no single pedagogy adequately addresses all aspects of the knowledge, skills and strategies required for skilled writing”. The major pitfall of SWIF is its overwhelming focus on one of these approaches, applied linguistics. There is a total disregard for the most recent and compelling writing instruction recommendations based on meta-analyses of nearly one thousand studies in writing instruction. Fundamentally, the SWIF is not well-aligned with the wealth of research showing that teachers should follow an integrative approach to teach writing. What does that mean?

Writing is one of the most complex learning processes. An integrative approach to teaching writing incorporates the explicit teaching and practice of foundational writing skills, such as handwriting, spelling and keyboarding. It also includes the teaching and modelling of higher-order skills such as planning what to write and revising the quality of texts. These are all part of the same instructional protocol.

Handwriting, Spelling and Keyboarding

By focusing on the teaching of language, genre and sentence structure, the framework wrongly assumes students reach the senior years of primary education and start secondary with basic transcription skills. Evidence-based recommendations coming from robust national and international research show teachers need to continue supporting students towards developing transcription skills, including keyboarding. Transcription skills predict the quality and length of students’ texts, especially in the primary years, across languages and educational contexts, including in Australia.

A recent review of 36 meta-analyses of writing instruction led by Professor Steve Graham, a leading US writing researcher, showed that teaching handwriting improved students’ writing performance (K-Year 9). It was just as good – or even better – than teaching sentence construction. Disappointingly, in the development of the SWIF, AERO has disregarded its own previous recommendations to “ensure adequate foundational instruction in handwriting and spelling” and to “teach typing skills and provide students with opportunities to compose using digital writing tools”.

Strategic approaches to writing

Another drawback of the proposed framework is the lack of emphasis on teaching students how to plan and revise their texts. Graham’s research (based on reviews of hundreds of studies) reveals that cognitive strategy instruction improves student writing performance from kindergarten to year 12 for students who had literacy difficulties – and those who did not. Graham offers compelling evidence-based research showing that teaching students to become more strategic writers enhances their writing. More specifically, teaching students how to plan, conceptualise, generate, and revise their written work is critical.

Again, AERO’s released framework and resources for writing and writing instruction fails to place much needed attention on how to teach students to become strategic writers. It also fails to recognise the importance of teachers modelling planning and revising strategies to compose different texts.

Where is differentiation?

While AERO’s framework promotes effective writing assessment to capture the writing needs of students at a school level, it falls short in addressing the degree of individual variation in writing performance that teachers likely encounter in their classrooms. Our decade-long research on writing in Australian schools has shown repeatedly that students in the same grade exhibit dramatic differences in their handwriting and keyboarding accuracy and speed (also called automaticity). Our studies have also shown systematic differences between male and female students. Girls do better. Lastly, our recent study on reported instruction for struggling writers showed that teachers tend to use (at least on a monthly basis) 11 of the 14 practices recommended for struggling writers. The data also shows that the more confident teachers are in their teaching of writing, the more varied strategies they use.



Credit: Lithiumphoto/shutterstock.com

This evidence calls for a nuanced understanding of writing instruction and of specific strategies for differentiation, much of which remains silent in the AERO framework.

What SWIF gets right

1. The model highlights the need to explicitly teach writing and recognises that writing research and instruction have historically received much less attention compared to the teaching of reading.
2. It stresses the need for continuous assessment (formative and summative) and feedback to support students in understanding their strengths and the issues they need to improve to write different texts, for different audiences.
3. It reinforces reading and writing connections and the need to teach writing across all subject areas.
4. The model proposes a whole-school implementation approach, recognises the role of school leaders in supporting teachers, and promotes contextualisation of practice.

Looking at evidence from a critical lens

In 2020, AERO released the Standards of Evidence to “help teachers, educators, leaders and policymakers make consistent and transparent judgements when assessing evidence about the effectiveness of a particular education policy, practice or program”. AERO says that meta-analyses represent high quality evidence (are “Level 4 Evidence: Very High Confidence”).

This is because meta-analyses combine the results of multiple studies to derive a more robust and generalizable conclusion than any single study could provide on its own. Yet only two examples of such studies are cited in the entirety of SWIF.

Academic researchers and organisations responsible for research translation both have a joint responsibility to present evidence in a complete, nuanced and transparent way to inform educator professional decision making. This piece aims to contribute to a critical appraisal of AERO’s recent efforts, furthering a critical stance towards claims of evidence-based practice.



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

National Reading Survey Sheds Light on What's Really Happening in Australian Classrooms

Associate Professor Helen Adam, School of Education.



Credit: Przemek Klotz/shutterstock.com

New data from the Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) reveals that Australian teachers are highly knowledgeable, confident in their practice, and evidence-aligned in the way they teach reading – but they overwhelmingly call for stronger and more consistent system-level support. In PETAA's inaugural National Teaching of Reading Survey 2024, 500 Australian teachers shared how they teach reading in the primary years, providing new insight into instructional practices, materials, and professional learning from classrooms across the country. The report confirms that most teachers are explicitly implementing the five key components of reading instruction (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), on a daily basis. But the findings also expose systemic gaps. Only half of all teachers report working within a coherent whole-school approach to reading, and most prefer teacher-created or third-party materials to department-provided resources.

However, respondents also indicate a strong desire for system level support targeted at professional learning and provision of time for planning and collaboration with peers and mentors. "This report puts teacher voice back at the heart of the national education conversation and their message is clear: Australian teachers are teaching reading well – but they are doing it under pressure," said Associate Professor Helen Adam, PETAA Board President and Associate Professor and Researcher at Edith Cowan University. "It's time to move the conversation from questioning teacher knowledge about the teaching of reading, towards providing the system level supports they are calling for and need to ensure high-quality, consistent reading instruction in every classroom at every school across Australia."

Key findings include:

- Teachers effectively adjust instructional focus according to developmental needs, transitioning from largely code-based emphases in early years to greater comprehension focus in middle and upper primary
- 98% of early-years teachers cover the five key pillars of reading instruction on a daily basis
- Differentiation remains the biggest challenge, with time, resources and wide ability ranges as key barriers facing teachers
- Teachers want greater system level support for professional learning with many reporting they currently turn to online blogs and social media for support
- Only 2.6% of teachers report daily professional dialogue with colleagues about reading instruction, and only 35% believe their school has a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading

The survey captures teacher voice amid national debates about reading reform which place professional expertise at the centre of the conversation. "This research highlights that teachers are confidently combining explicit instruction with professional judgement and differentiated practice," said Megan Edwards, PETAA CEO. "But they need support. As primary educators' national membership association for English and literacy instruction, PETAA's ongoing relationship with educators allows for vital, and consistent, whole-school upskilling through access to evidence-backed resources and training that connect research to practice. In 2025, this is more important than ever."

PETAA is calling on education departments, systems and governments to:

- Support schools to implement consistent, evidence-informed whole-school approaches to reading through access to quality professional learning – and the time in which to complete it
- Invest in time and resources for teachers to collaborate, differentiate and plan
- Fund diverse classroom libraries and resources to meet the needs of all learners

The full report and a downloadable briefing summary are now available at: https://petaa.edu.au/w/About/reading_survey.aspx

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

WA Government extends funding for remote workshops amplifying women's wellbeing



Professor Narelle Lemon, Vice Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellow, School of Education.

Women in regional and remote parts of Western Australia will be able to attend women's wellbeing workshops thanks to State Government funding for the She Speaks movement created by Edith Cowan University (ECU) researchers. ECU researchers responsible for the SheSpeaks project have received an additional \$50,000 funding over two years from the Western Australian Government's Department of Communities Women's Grants for a Stronger Future program to enable the expansion of workshops promoting women's wellbeing from Esperance to Broome. "This additional funding validates the importance of our work and allows the project to support women in regions where wellbeing resources are more limited," ECU Professor and SheSpeaks Founder Narelle Lemon said.

The SheSpeaks project, which has already operated in Perth with State Government funding for a year, has created a transformative space for Western Australian women to redefine their relationship with self-care and develop a practical wellbeing literacy that extends beyond conventional approaches. This innovative initiative has demonstrated significant impact in changing how women perceive, articulate, and implement self-care practices in their everyday lives. Western Australian statistics show concerning trends with 1 in 5 women diagnosed with mental health conditions, 8 out of 10 women do not do enough physical activity, and 1 in 4 have unpaid caring responsibilities that often take precedence over personal wellbeing. "We're particularly excited to adapt our approach to meet the unique needs of women in these communities, extending our reach and supporting women with how they approach their self-care and wellbeing in the everyday," Professor Lemon said.

The expansion to these regions represents an important evolution in the project's mission to make wellbeing literacy accessible to all Western Australian women, regardless of geographic location or circumstance. "We're not offering a one-size-fits-all approach, we're providing women with a diverse set of tools and the knowledge to select the right tools for different situations. This flexibility ensures that the impact continues long after the formal project concludes," Professor Lemon said. "The SheSpeaks project has successfully challenged prevailing narratives that position self-care as selfish, additional work, or impossible for women who prioritise caring for others. By providing women with a language to articulate their wellbeing needs and practical strategies to address them, the project has empowered participants to take proactive steps toward flourishing."

"What we're seeing is women becoming wellbeing advocates within their families, workplaces, and communities. They're not just implementing self-care practices themselves; they're actively changing conversations about wellbeing in their spheres of influences," ECU Professor Julie Ann Pooley explained. The workshop environment has become a crucial element in fostering genuine change.

"The relationships that we're forming with participants is really exciting. And that also brings joy to all of us. Of course, we hear about many challenges, and they can be very challenging stories, but we're trying to have that safe space to discuss them and provide participants with opportunities and options to feel safe and to address some of the challenges that they might be experiencing," ECU Professor Verena Thomas said.

Season two of the SheSpeaks podcast is now available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and all major podcast platforms.

To learn more about registering for the workshops head to the [SheSpeaks website](#).



Professor Narelle Lemon hosts the workshops.

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

Learning music helps young people flourish



Dr Jason Goopy, Lecturer, School of Education.

New research from ECU's School of Education calls for schools to treat learning music as essential for mental health, not just a nice-to-have activity. Experts say schools that fail to provide music education are missing a key opportunity to enhance student wellbeing and engagement. A new study from ECU's School of Education has found that learning music plays a critical yet often overlooked role in enhancing the wellbeing of children and adolescents, calling for a stronger focus on music education in schools and communities.

Led by experts from Edith Cowan University (ECU), the research systematically reviewed existing studies on music learning and its impact on wellbeing, revealing that learning music offers significant social, emotional and educational benefits for young people.

Not just extracurricular

While music listening and participation have long been recognised for their positive effects on wellbeing, the study suggests that learning music amplifies these benefits. Lead author of the research, Dr Jason Goopy, said learning music can bring multiple benefits to children and adolescents. "Music education in schools goes beyond music appreciation and learning an instrument," Dr Goopy said. "It can strengthen self-confidence, social connections and engagement in education.

We found that music education can foster a sense of belonging, improve emotional awareness and encourage perseverance, all of which contribute to a young person's overall wellbeing. The review examined 30 international academic sources and found that almost all reported positive wellbeing outcomes associated with learning music.

Dr Goopy argues that these findings require us to rethink the place and purpose of music in schools. "Our findings highlight the need for music education to be recognised as a needed wellbeing strategy in schools to support young people", he said. "Music classes should not be viewed as an 'extracurricular option'. They are essential for supporting whole child development."

The study identified three core wellbeing outcomes of music learning: individual, social and educational. On an individual level, students reported improvements in self-confidence, emotional regulation and personal fulfillment. Dr Goopy found music helped students build relationships, develop communication skills and foster a sense of belonging, as well as enhancing engagement and motivation to learn. "Music learning creates opportunities for self-expression, collaboration and achievement, all of which contribute to students living well and healthy," Dr Goopy said.

Building student wellbeing

The study identified effective approaches in promoting student wellbeing, including shared and active music making, creating musical products, context-specific artistic excellence and empowerment, and a secure and fun environment. At a time when mental health concerns for young people are increasing, it is crucial that schools take advantage of the powerful benefits that music education provides.

Despite these findings, the study noted that large-scale investigations into the impact of music learning on wellbeing remain scarce, with most existing studies small in scale. Dr Goopy also called for further interdisciplinary research to develop standardised methods of measuring wellbeing outcomes in music education. "This research sends a clear message: learning music is more than just an artistic indulgence," he said. "It actively contributes to young people's ability to thrive.

"Every child needs access to quality, sequential and ongoing school music education delivered by confident and capable teachers. "The opportunity to enhance wellbeing from learning music should be available to every child regardless of what school they attend."

Goopy, J., MacArthur, S. L. R. (2025). Music learning and school-aged children's and adolescents' wellbeing: A scoping review. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X251323562>



Music education is emerging as a wellbeing strategy to boost young people's confidence and strengthen relationships. Image credit: Unsplash.

This article is republished from the **ECU Newsroom**.
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Lending education expertise to support spirituality in children

Associate Professor Christine Robinson, School of Education.



Three experts in early childhood education and spirituality have published a practical guide to help educators nurture spirituality in the early years. A trio of experts including Associate Professor Christine Robinson from Edith Cowan University's (ECU) School of Education have published a book aimed to equip early childhood professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to foster children's spirituality.

"Spirituality is a proven, yet often overlooked, foundation for children's lifelong growth and mental health," Associate Professor Robinson said. "Having a strong sense of identity, belonging, connection and meaning are the core elements of spirituality."

Titled: *A Framework for Young Children's Spiritual Capabilities*, the practical guide is an Australian first, encompassing age-appropriate strategies designed specifically for children aged 0-8 years old.

The result of 20 years of groundbreaking research, the framework has been developed by three experts in early childhood education and spirituality: Associate Professor Christine Robinson (ECU), Dr Brendan Hyde (Deakin University and Chair of the International Association for Children's Spirituality), and Dr Megan Best (University of Notre Dame Australia). Speaking at a recent launch event hosted by leading early learning provider, MercyCare, Associate Professor Robinson said by nurturing children's spiritual capabilities, educators can build their inner strength and set them up to thrive from the very beginning.

"The research is clear: when educators actively support children's spiritual development, they're helping to strengthen resilience, boost self-esteem, and promote positive mental health – all critical outcomes in today's world. "The Early Years Learning Framework already calls on us to nurture the whole child – including their spiritual wellbeing and our new spiritual capabilities framework offers educators practical tools to meet that obligation."

Associate Professor Robinson said it was important to understand that spirituality is different from religion and lives in every child, regardless of religious background. "It's about wonder, connection, identity and meaning – and it deserves a place in every early learning environment," Associate Professor Robinson explained.

Our hope is that the early learning sector recognise spirituality beyond religion, to understand the connection between spirituality as a part of being human. "If this can happen, we really can attend to the whole child."

Vicky Gonzalez Burrows, Executive Director Mission and Ethos at MercyCare said the organisation will support its early childhood educators to embrace the framework across its 12 early learning centres.

"Each of our early learning centres will receive tailored guidance to bring the capability framework to life in their daily practice," Ms Gonzalez Burrows said.



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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 select the links or scan the QR codes to view these journal articles which are all freely available. For more information about our research at ECU, visit our [website](#) or scan the QR Code.



Co-Designing a Children's Transition Charter for the Transition to School: Opening Participatory Spaces to Hear Children's Voices.



Barblett, L., Lavina, L., Boylan, F., & Ruscoe, A. (2025)

<https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12964>

Starting school is a significant time for young children, and this project looked at how we can better support children by involving them in the process. Over a year, seven early years teachers and 52 children (aged 3–5) from Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) schools worked together to create a “transition to school” charter. Teachers took part in training to learn fun, child-friendly ways to hear what children think about starting school. The children shared their

ideas through drawings and conversations. What mattered most to them was making friends, knowing the routines, getting to play and learn, staying connected to their families, and having things around them that made them feel they belonged. These ideas helped shape transition charters that reflected what children want and need when starting school. Young children have a lot to say and when we listen, they can help shape more welcoming school experiences for everyone.

Note: This project was one of three projects conducted with AISWA schools in Transforming Transitions.

Full report: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks2022-2026/5615/>

Abridged version: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks2022-2026/5616/>

Drawing on international pre-service teachers' funds of knowledge to enhance professional experience.



Boylan, F., Nociti, K., & Kirk, G. (2025).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-025-00837-1>

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in international students studying to become teachers in Australia. While these students bring rich, diverse perspectives to the classroom, many face challenges during school placements, especially around language, culture, and communication with mentor teachers. This pilot study explored a creative approach using digital comic-making as a way for international pre-service teachers to express and reflect on their experiences during professional experience.

In the first phase, students created comics based on a real challenge they faced during their first placement and discussed it in an interview. In the second phase, they used their comics to start conversations with mentor teachers during their next placement. Three key themes emerged: developing a teacher identity, navigating different cultures, and alleviating the mental effort of switching between languages. Overall, making and sharing comics gave international students a powerful way to express their voices, reflect on growth, and improve placement experiences.





Music learning and school-aged children's and adolescents' wellbeing: A scoping review.

Goopy, J., & MacArthur, S. (2025).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X251323562>

There is compelling evidence that music can support young people's wellbeing, particularly through music listening and making. In this article we report a systematic review of music learning and wellbeing literature to offer a new perspective on learning music as a wellbeing strategy. We investigated (a) what definitions and theories of wellbeing have been used; (b) what methodologies have been employed, particularly measurement tools; (c) what learning contexts and participant demographics have been examined; and (d) what is known about music learning and the wellbeing of school-aged children and adolescents. Findings identified that most sources did not adopt a clear definition or theory of wellbeing. Qualitative methods overwhelmingly inform existing knowledge. All but one source reported that music learning supported wellbeing. Wellbeing outcomes were summarised into three themes (individual, social, and educational) and characteristics of these music programs and approaches were also identified. The review concludes with clear recommendations to direct future research.



Where's my tweed jacket with leather elbow patches? The challenges of aging gracefully in higher education.



O'Rourke, J. A., & Gray, C. (2025).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2025.2490781>

This paper examines the experiences of a veteran academic navigating the evolving landscape of higher education. Drawing on reflections from a two-decade career, it explores the shifting nature of academic work, the challenges to sustaining motivation and joy, and the impact of institutional change on wellbeing. Veteran academics have witnessed significant

transformations in the sector, and this paper aligns their lived experiences with contemporary research on academic stress, ageing, and professional identity. In response, it argues for a dual responsibility: universities must better value the accumulated expertise of senior staff, while veteran academics must actively prioritise self-care to sustain purpose and wellbeing. Suggested strategies—while not novel—include maintaining regular exercise, journaling, cultivating joy in daily routines, connecting with wellbeing-minded colleagues, and prioritising family and friends. The paper features excerpts from John's positivity journal, offering sensory-rich insights into the author's cold-water immersion routine in the Swan River. These moments of reflection serve as metaphors for resilience, renewal, and intentional presence in later academic life. Ultimately, this research invites educators to reflect on the question: How do I maintain my energy as I approach the finish line? And when the time comes, how will I look back on this chapter of my career?



If, and how, to group by 'ability' – Considerations about class group formation.

Johnston, O., Macqueen, S., Zhang, W., Spina, N. & Spooner-Lane, R. (2025).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2025.2511914>

This research focuses on how students are sorted into ability grouped classes and how schools decide whether or not to group students into classes by ability, which is often called 'streaming' in Australia. The OECD advises that class ability grouping (streaming) be minimised and delayed in secondary school because it does not improve overall academic outcomes is socially inequitable. This study draws on findings from a survey that was completed by 147 participant schools (15%) in WA and QLD. Follow up interviews were conducted at 12 schools. Findings show that schools made decisions about class ability grouping (streaming) based on factors including NAPLAN results, parent pressure, teacher recommendations, behavioural concerns, student effort, and achievement data. The discussion encourages schools to consider how students' backgrounds can influence data and how data is used to inform decisions that result in students from minoritised backgrounds being segregated and over-representation in low-'ability' classes. Please feel free to contact Dr Olivia Johnston directly via o.johnston@ecu.edu.au for further information or if you would like to discuss this research with her.



ECU, Atlantis and Tall Tree join forces to meet the growing need for early childhood teachers



Professor Caroline Mansfield, Executive Dean, School of Education and Dr Julie Boston, Director, Partnerships and Engagement, School of Education.

Edith Cowan University (ECU), The Atlantis Group and Tall Tree Early Learning have bolstered their partnership to help answer the call for more Bachelor-qualified early childhood educators in Western Australia. Data from Jobs and Skills Australia shows there are currently 73,700 degree-qualified early childhood teachers employed in Australia, a staggering 10% increase from the year prior. If trends continue, over the next five years another 34,000 jobs will be needed to fill the sector.

Today, there is an estimated shortage of approximately 1,500 early childhood teachers nation-wide. A scholarship initiative between ECU and leading early learning provider The Atlantis Group is set to help meet that growing demand. Starting Semester 2, 2025, the new scholarship will enable four early learning educators to undertake a fast-tracked and fee-free Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Studies) at ECU.

The opportunity is available to Diploma Qualified Educators currently employed by Atlantis Early Learning or Tall Tree Early Learning who meet ECU's recognition of prior learning requirements. The two early childhood education services form part of The Atlantis Group and support more than 2,200 families across Perth, WA.

Elevating early childhood education

Professor Caroline Mansfield, Executive Dean of Education at ECU said the collaboration was an integral move to get more highly qualified early childhood educators teaching in WA. "We are thrilled to partner with The Atlantis Group, a leading WA provider of early learning education, to offer full-fee paid scholarships for Pre-Service Teachers, with a focus on early childhood education," Professor Mansfield said.

The initiative builds on an existing partnership that provides placements and internships for ECU's Pre-Service Teachers. "This new chapter of our partnership exemplifies ECU's broader effort to enhance quality in the early childhood sector by increasing the number of qualified teachers, particularly those trained to work with children from birth to eight years. This exciting pathway will allow early childhood educators who haven't completed a Bachelor's degree an opportunity to do so, while still earning an income.

Successful applicants will reduce their study length by up to 12 months, while continuing their paid employment. With two intakes per year, the program is designed to be flexible, achievable and transformational. Dr Julie Boston, Director, Partnerships and Engagement from ECU's School of Education said thanks to the support of The Atlantis Group, the University can continue to help more experienced early childhood educators to follow their dream of becoming a teacher.

"At ECU, we are proud to work alongside progressive organisations like The Atlantis Group and Tall Tree Early Learning, who recognise the value of professional learning pathways and are deeply committed to the development of their workforce," Dr Boston said. "This tailored fast-track model reflects ECU's commitment to flexible, practice-informed teacher education and we're excited to see the positive ripple effects this will have for educators, children and the wider early learning community."

"Now more than ever, we welcome experienced early childhood educators to consider growing their skills through a degree qualification at ECU."



Opportunities now open to educators:

- Course funding of up to three years (valued at approx. \$14,000)*
- Two additional unpaid leave days per unit to support your study time
- Support with resource fees
- Ongoing professional and academic mentorship
- Recognition of academic achievement through bonus payments to top-performing students each semester

Rory Hindle, Managing Director at The Atlantis Group said:

"This is more than a scholarship, it's a long-term, strategic partnership between our organisation and higher education to invest in the growth of qualified early childhood teachers in our centres and in our sector. Through this initiative, we're contributing to the ongoing development of our highly skilled educators, investing directly in our team and children's futures."

Elaine Whelan, Head of People & Culture at The Atlantis Group said:

"We know that access to higher education can be a barrier for many educators who are balancing work, life and financial commitments. This partnership removes those barriers and empowers our team to advance their careers, further their qualifications and make a deeper impact on the lives of children and families."

It's a bold investment, but one that's aligned with our vision to lead the sector and our commitment to growing futures."

Teacher Education at ECU

With a legacy of producing exceptional educators since 1902, ECU is committed to equipping aspiring and practicing teachers with the skills, knowledge, and experiences to positively impact the lives of students and communities. ECU is ranked in the top 250 universities in the world for Education according to the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, 2025. The Good Universities Guide 2025 has also named ECU the top university in WA for teaching quality and student support in undergraduate education.

Ready to follow your dream of becoming a teacher? **Find out more** about studying Teacher Education at ECU.



For more information on partnering with ECU's School of Education contact **Dr Julie Boston**, Director, Partnerships and Engagement via email; julie.boston@ecu.edu.au.

Watch The Atlantis Group's **"Growing Futures" video**.



*Terms and conditions apply.
Course value is an estimate only.



This article is republished from the **ECU Newsroom**.
Read the original article **here**.

Bridging the Gap: On Country Study Tour Strengthens Rural Partnerships and Inspires Future Educators



Mrs Marnie Harris, Lecturer, School of Education.

In June 2025, ten Edith Cowan University Pre-Service Teachers from early childhood, primary, and secondary undergraduate education programs embarked on a unique On Country Study Tour to Derby, Western Australia – a region rich in culture, community, and educational opportunity.

The immersive experience was designed to deepen participants' understanding of rural and remote education through direct engagement with schools, an early learning centre and the wider community. Central to this initiative is the goal of encouraging more Pre-Service Teachers to actively choose rural and remote placements for their professional experience and to consider future teaching careers in these dynamic and often under-served locations. Research indicates that exposure to rural and remote schools during teacher training increases the likelihood of graduates teaching in these communities.

The Rationale Behind the Tour

The On Country Study Tour was developed in response to the growing need for educators in rural and remote locations and reflects ECU's commitment to preparing graduates who are equipped to teach in diverse settings and who demonstrate cultural responsiveness in their practice. While traditional professional experience placements provide vital classroom skills, this tour offered something distinct; a low-pressure, high-impact learning opportunity that enabled participants to witness first-hand the lived realities of teaching and learning in remote settings.

"Pre-Service Teachers often hesitate to undertake a rural or remote placement due to the high-stakes nature of placement and at times, the fear of the unknown", says Marnie Harris, Study Tour Lead. "This tour certainly helped to demystify those pre-conceptions. The impact on participants' professional growth and cultural understanding has already exceeded our expectations. The incorporation of reflective practice throughout the tour has been a highly positive element, enabling Pre-Service Teachers to critically engage with their experiences, challenge their assumptions, and consolidate their learning in meaningful ways".

Transformational Learning Through Immersion

Over the course of the tour, participants visited several partner schools, engaged with local educators, and took part in community activities that highlighted the strength and diversity of rural and remote life. The in-school and in-community experiences enabled participants to reflect on the rewards and complexities of rural and remote teaching beyond what can be taught in lectures and tutorials.

Pre-Service Teachers were also exposed to the diverse educational delivery models that characterise rural and remote education, including observing lessons delivered by Kimberley School of the Air and seeing how secondary students at Derby District Highschool engage with vocational pathways through local TAFE programs. Such exposure broadened participants' perspectives on the varied pathways and learning environments that exist beyond metropolitan schooling.



Principal Melanie Resuggan from Holy Rosary Derby shared:

"Supporting Pre-Service Teachers to consider a rural or remote location to commence their teaching journey is crucial as students within these locations deserve highly qualified and passionate educators to be in front of them in our classrooms. This program offers an opportunity for Pre-Service Teachers to have a taste of a remote country experience prior to considering completing their final teaching placement and then again prior to applying for ongoing teacher roles."

One secondary Pre-Service Teacher described the tour as "life-changing," explaining "this tour has shifted my perspective in a way that I think will stay with me for the rest of my teaching journey", while another shared that the tour "has altered the course of my life, my heart and my teaching forever".

Industry Partnerships Paving the Way

The success of the On Country Study Tour would not have been possible without the support of valued industry partners and sponsors who helped offset costs for participants. "A huge thank you and my congratulations to you all on the completion of the successful study tour" said Dan Wood, CEWA Director – School Improvement and Wellbeing. "Our partnerships with ECU are a crucial engagement strategy and of significant benefit to our system. This latest initiative provides further to how we can continue to work in mutual partnership".

Contributing to the tour's success, Shire of Derby/West Kimberley CEO, Tamara Clarkson shared:

"Aligned to our Values and Vision to be a place where people want to live, invest, visit and return to, we support initiatives that encourage passionate and skilled individuals to our region. The insights gained by these Pre-Service Teachers, working alongside our dedicated local school staff and engaging with our students, are invaluable. It helps to shed light on the true strengths and vibrant spirit of remote communities, demystify any misconceptions and highlights the strong connections they can forge here."

Lasting Impact and Future Possibilities

The On Country Study Tour has already left a lasting impression on participants, with several expressing interest in returning to Derby for future professional experience placements and even considering long-term teaching roles in rural and remote contexts. Feedback from schools and community partners has been overwhelmingly positive, affirming the value of early, immersive exposure to rural and remote education.

The tour also reinforces the importance of collaborative, place-based initiatives that not only support development of future teachers but also strengthen enduring partnerships between universities and rural/remote communities. ECU's School of Education remains committed to continuing this work – supporting Pre-Service Teachers to explore, understand, and ultimately embrace the rewarding opportunities that rural and remote teaching can offer.

Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) Conference



The School of Education is privileged to host the 53rd Annual Conference of PESA. The aim of PESA is to elevate the discipline of philosophy of education and its transformative potential in universities, schools, and public settings throughout Australasia and globally. PESA was last in Perth in 2010, when it was hosted by Murdoch, and prior to that, it was held in Perth in 2001. It was at that time, held at Claremont Teachers' College, which by then had been incorporated into ECU, so it is somewhat fitting that not only did ECU host the event 24 years' ago, but one Bruce Haynes, who was the Conference Convenor at the time (and in 2010), is on the 2025 Planning Committee!

We have an exciting range of keynote speakers who are addressing the theme, Philosophy of Education and Global Challenges and the Committee members are delighted at the response, receiving over 220 abstracts for standard and full papers, panels, symposia and poster presentations. These abstracts reflect a widely varied international outlook and origin, including the USA, Europe, SE Asia and of course, Australia and New Zealand. There will be an attractive day rate on offer.



When

7 - 10 December 2025

Where

ECU Joondalup Campus,
270 Joondalup Drive,
Joondalup, WA 6027.



[Find out more](#)

Further Information

Register online by scanning the QR code, for further information, please contact conference@pesa.org.au.

ECU producing confident and capable educators via HAT@ECU



Professor Caroline Mansfield, Executive Dean, School of Education

ECU's High Achieving Teachers program (HAT@ECU) is well underway with 2026 applications now open. Be quick – places are limited for a late January 2026 start. Edith Cowan University (ECU)'s High Achieving Teachers (HAT) program is well underway, tackling Australia's teacher shortage. Launched in Semester 1, 2025, the Federal Government and ECU are providing an employment-based pathway where eligible students will be paid while attaining their tertiary teaching qualifications.

HAT@ECU is an accelerated 18-month pathway to a Master of Teaching qualification in Early Childhood, Primary or Secondary Education. It also includes \$18,000 in financial support. ECU School of Education, Executive Dean Professor Caroline Mansfield said that it is a privilege for ECU to be the sole provider of approximately 45-50% of the graduate teacher workforce in WA public schools and that addressing shortages is a priority for the School of Education.

"The School of Education adapts to industry needs and together with the Federal Government, HAT@ECU aims to alleviate shortages and simultaneously cater to the needs of our future educators," said Professor Mansfield. "The program is uniquely positioned to boost the number of people entering the profession and to support students in balancing their study and life commitments."

Earn-as-you-learn and flexibility

ECU welcomed its first cohort of HAT@ECU students in Semester 1, 2025. Carl Keogh who's studying a Master of Teaching (Secondary) via HAT@ECU, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science majoring in areas of need in the teaching workforce.



ECU Master of Teaching (Secondary) student via HAT@ECU, Carl Keogh.

"I previously studied a science degree, majoring in mathematics and with a minor in physics. I wanted to become a teacher but would not have been able to afford to do it without the scholarship and earning as you learn," said Carl. "So when I saw the opportunity to join the HAT@ECU program, it seemed to fit me well."

Similarly, Master of Teaching (Primary) student Wendy Fan was in a season of change and looking for a career where she could make a positive influence on the lives of children.

"My previous job was in the corporate world as a tax consultant for around seven years. When the HAT@ECU program popped up, I just could not ignore the opportunity to go deeper in being equipped to pursue a career in teaching," said Wendy. "There is flexibility in my online learning experience and the HAT@ECU team has been so supportive and responsive to feedback."



ECU Master of Teaching (Primary) student via HAT@ECU, Wendy Fan.

Applications now open

ECU is pleased to be the only university in WA to offer the HAT program for prospective Primary, Secondary and Early Years teachers. Previously, the HAT@ECU program focused on students with backgrounds in STEM, however, in light of current teaching workforce needs, the criteria has now expanded to a range of fields including English, Humanities and Social Sciences.

HAT@ECU's integrated approach ensures students graduate as confident and capable educators. Places for the next HAT@ECU program intake in late January 2026 are limited and will be filled as applications come in.

[Apply Here.](#)

HAT@ECU is delivered as part of the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program: Phase 2 Expansion Pilots with the support of the Australian Government Department of Education.

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

Educators warn of risks in low senior maths participation

Dr Vesife Hatisaru, Lecturer, School of Education



Mathematics education experts are raising the alarm over a steady decline in enrolments for senior-level mathematics subjects in Australia. In 2022, fewer than 20% of Year 12 students studied intermediate mathematics, while only one in 10 pursued higher mathematics and researchers warn this trend could undermine students' future career opportunities, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Dr Vesife Hatisaru, a mathematics education lecturer at Edith Cowan University, described mathematics as a "hierarchical" discipline, warning that students who lack foundational skills from earlier years are unlikely to succeed in advanced subjects. "It is therefore crucial that ALL students study Years 11 and 12 mathematics," she said. "There is not such a jump between lower secondary (Years 7 to 10) and senior secondary (Years 11 and 12) mathematics," she told the Media Centre For Education Research Australia.

Barriers to participation

Hatisaru noted that motivation among Australian students appears to be waning and that cultural and personal factors may also influence enrolment decisions. "Different student groups can have different motives to study intermediate or higher mathematics," she said. "Considering that schools in Australia can be highly multicultural, identifying motives of students who have different backgrounds ... can help to boost student mathematics enrolments."

She added that altruistic reasons often drive students in other countries—such as Turkey—to pursue mathematics-related careers in service to others, an attitude that may be less common among Australian youth.

Teacher competency also emerged as a concern. "Having competent mathematics teachers in schools is very important and matters greatly," Hatisaru said, pointing to the need for strong content knowledge and effective teaching beliefs.

Changing perceptions through early engagement

Dr Lorraine Gaunt, a lecturer in teacher education at Charles Sturt University, told MCERA early exposure to mathematics in a creative and inclusive way is key to reversing the trend. "Mathematics often carries the stigma of being a 'difficult' subject, perceived as accessible only to the academically gifted," Gaunt said. "However, this perception can be transformed if mathematics is taught in a way that is engaging, creative, and exploratory."

Gaunt emphasised the value of encouraging a "growth mindset" where students see mathematical challenges as opportunities to learn. She advocated for embedding problem-solving, reasoning, and communication into maths education to foster confidence and curiosity. "By prioritising creativity, critical thinking, and a growth-oriented approach, we can help students develop confidence and curiosity in mathematics," she said.

Both researchers agree that without strategic interventions, Australia risks falling further behind in preparing students for future academic and workforce demands.

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



The end of open-plan classrooms: how school design reflects changing ideas in education



Professor Leon Benade, School of Education.

The end of open-plan classrooms in New Zealand, recently announced by Education Minister Erica Stanford, marks yet another swing of the pendulum in school design. Depending on who you ask, these classrooms were an opportunity to foster collaboration and flexibility or an exercise in organised chaos. So-called “modern learning environments” – characterised by flexible layouts, fewer walls and sometimes multiple classes and teachers in one space – were vigorously pushed by the National government in 2011. The stated goal was to promote flexibility in the way students were taught, encourage collaboration and to accommodate new technology in classrooms. But a 2024 ministerial inquiry into school property found complex procurement, design and authorisation processes associated with bespoke designs caused delays, budget overruns and unrealised expectations in many school communities. Among the solutions offered by the inquiry was the development of simple but functional schools based on cookie-cutter designs constructed off-site. This recommendation was welcomed by the current National-led government.

Design influenced by ideology

The modern, bespoke designs of the past two decades represented a response to technological developments, such as the introduction of digital devices, that changed how students learned. This resulted in the steady replacement of traditional school designs from the industrial age with spaces designed for flexibility. Those industrial age schools were themselves products of changes in the second half of the 20th century. Since the first school opened in 1843, school architecture in New Zealand had evolved significantly. Early schools featured cramped six-metre by four-metre classrooms which could accommodate more than 30 students. By the 1920s, the “Taranaki” and “Canterbury” models included a more generous minimum classroom size of eight metres by seven metres. There was a greater emphasis on light and ventilation. Their larger spaces also recognised changes in teaching styles that encouraged more active and participatory learning. By the 1950s, classroom size had grown to ten metres by seven metres. The “Nelson” and “S68” blocks of the 1950s and 1960s provided small self-contained blocks of classrooms that reduced student movement and corridor noise. Changes to New Zealand school buildings also reflected global trends. Open-plan schools emerged in North America after 1960. At the same time, there were signs English schools would replace

their traditional Victorian-style buildings with classrooms considered more child-centred. The goal was to achieve flexible, connected designs to support evolving education philosophies. England’s 1966 Plowden Report on primary education significantly aided this evolution towards progressive styles of teaching and learning, leading to the creation of schools that featured flexibility, connectivity and external-internal flow. These schools were the forerunners of “innovative learning environments” and were considered cutting-edge at the time. In 2004, the ambitious Building Schools for the Future programme was launched in the United Kingdom. It was designed to replace outdated school facilities considered unfit for preparing students for the 21st century. But in 2011, the James Review of Education Capital highlighted a number of issues with the way schools were being built, putting an end to the infrastructure programme. That report, like the 2024 New Zealand report, suggested replacing government investment in bespoke school infrastructure with a focus on standardised designs.

A swing back

In New Zealand, “modern learning environments” became part of education policy with the Ministry of Education’s School Property Strategy 2011–2021, published in 2011. But the pendulum started to swing back after Labor came to power in 2017. Departing from the 2011 strategy, the language of “modern learning environments”, “innovative learning environments” and “flexible learning spaces” largely disappeared. It was replaced in policy documents with “quality learning environments”. This shift emphasised physical characteristics such as heating, lighting and acoustics, rather than innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Since coming to power, the current National-led coalition has focused on embedding a standardised approach to foundational skills in reading, writing, maths and science. While not directly scapegoating open-plan designs for educational underachievement, Erica Stanford said the reforms would ensure learning spaces were “designed to improve student outcomes”. But as New Zealand moves back to standardised designs, it is worth considering why modern learning environments were introduced in the first place – the flexibility for new technology and space for collaboration – and what students may lose by a swing back towards the separate classrooms of the past.



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Class ability grouping causes further disadvantage, study finds

Dr Olivia Johnston, Lecturer, School of Education.



Researchers say decisions to stream classes are based on misconceptions about the practice and its educational outcomes. Australian education experts have highlighted the inequities that exist in schools using 'class ability groupings' in a study led by researchers from Edith Cowan University (ECU).

The practice involves grouping students into separate classes according to their ability, which is known as 'streaming' in Australian schools and is also used in New Zealand, Canada, the United States, England, Ireland and Singapore. Lead author, Dr Olivia Johnston from ECU's School of Education, said the study found decisions to use class ability grouping are based on misconceptions about the practice.

Dr Johnston questioned why the practice still exists in a number of countries, despite the long history of research, which has emphasised consequential equity problems.

"Students placed in higher groups are often from privileged backgrounds, while students from lower groups are disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds," Dr Johnston said.

"More experienced teachers, often with more qualifications are likelier to teach the highest streamed classes, leaving less experienced and qualified teachers with the 'lower ability' classes.

"Students from marginalised and minority groups, including First Nations students, often find themselves in 'low ability' classes, where they make less progress than students in other class groups.

"Some education experts have also described 'between-class' ability groupings as 'racist', because of the way it segregates students and restricts their educational opportunities."

A national evaluation of indigenous education surveyed 825 teachers in 201 schools across Australia and found "a marked streaming of Aboriginal students, who tended to overpopulate the lower-level groupings with non-Aboriginal students dominating the high-level groupings."

Dr Johnston referred to a review of 'opportunity classes' designed to cater for gifted students in New South Wales, which found far fewer applications from First Nations students, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with a disability, and students from rural and remote areas.



"Some educators believe that 'between-class ability grouping' facilitates differentiation and assists in managing the intensification of teaching," she said.

"They are under increasing pressure for individualised teaching and learning for students from diverse backgrounds, which may be a contributing factor to teacher stress.

"Having different levels of class groups allows teachers to feel they can differentiate their teaching more easily because there is less range in ability within each class.

"But ironically, such perspectives can lead to a lack of differentiation, where teachers make whole-class generalisations about students."

"Teachers at one Australian school described their differentiation practice as more open-ended learning in higher streams, and more explicit instruction in lower streams, but this reflects misunderstandings about differentiation theory," she said.

Dr Johnston said differentiation, when it is not confused with 'between-class ability grouping' is a way of meeting the diverse needs that may exist in within a school classroom.

Dr Johnston said gifted and talented students in Australia have benefited from being grouped into "high ability" classes. "Advantages for 'higher ability' students can include improved access to curriculum extension and opportunities to work with like-minded peers."

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

Professional Learning

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.

New Course!

Face-to-Face

Sounds of Country: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Three-Day Short Course

This innovative, multifaceted course, Sounds of Country, focuses on culturally responsive pedagogy and practice, mainly within primary education, but also applies to early childhood and secondary education. The program will commence with an emergent On Country experience guided by Traditional Owner/s designed to connect participants' relational understanding of their local school's connection to place through the Boorn (tree) methodology. This pivotal juncture is an ideal starting point, encouraging participants to reflect on their personal and school context of place and country. The journey is guided by the protocols of Aboriginal knowledge and histories grounded in the Country.

Cost

- **\$2,187.00** incl GST (this covers catering, materials and online coaching sessions).
- A 10% discount is offered to ECU alumni and for multiple bookings from the same organisation.



Submit EOI



Fully Online

#1 - 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

- **\$199.00** 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

#2 - 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

- **\$199.00** 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

#3 - 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

- **\$199.00** 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

#4 - Trauma and Learning: Meeting complex support needs for educators

Early childhood learning environments and school environments can be a struggle for the child or young person living with trauma. Struggling to think, pay attention, remember, play with others, trust and form friendships with peers and adults, every day can be exhausting and overwhelming for these children who often struggle to cope. In this short course you will explore trauma-responsive pedagogy to promote positive interactions and assist children and young people affected by trauma to achieve better learning outcomes. Teaching troubled children and young people is difficult and can take its toll therefore attention to educator wellbeing and self-care is introduced.

Cost

- **\$199.00** 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

#5 - Trauma and Vulnerable Children: Helping them heal for educators

In this short course you will be introduced to children and young people living with family violence, refugee and asylum seeker experiences, children in out of home care, children living in poverty, and children impacted by the collective trauma histories of their families and communities. By the very nature of these specific experiences, it can be argued that these children and young people are vulnerable and are highly likely to be living with trauma. You will gain insight into the needs of these children and young people who have endured complex vulnerabilities, with the unique child, positive relationships, and a strengths-based approach at the heart of practice.

Cost

- **\$199.00** 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



Professional Learning Opportunity!

Face-to-Face

Teaching Writing in Primary Education

This whole-day professional learning will provide In-Service Teachers with up-to-date research recommendations for teaching writing in primary education, covering evidence-based practices and strategies for teaching text-composing skills, as well as key pedagogical practices to support the development of handwriting and keyboarding in primary education.

When: Wednesday 29 October 2025, 9.30am - 4.00pm

Cost: Free, registrations are essential (morning tea and lunch will be provided).

Where: ECU Mount Lawley Campus, Building 10, Room 10.308, 2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley, WA 6050.



Register Online



Seminar

Face-to-Face

ECU_AIESEP Specialist Seminar 2025: Body Politics in and through Movement

This specialist seminar features a three-day program of presentations, interactive workshop activities, networking and social events. A unique opportunity to extend professional knowledge, advance your practice and expand your networks. Join national and international delegates from varied educational, sport and health settings in which bodies and movement are at the centre of professional practices and participation.

When: Monday 8 December - Wednesday 10 December 2025

Where: ECU South West Campus, 585 Robertson Drive, East Bunbury, WA 6230.



Register Online



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If you're already in the education profession, ECU's one year Master of Education degree will help you progress your career. This course provides an opportunity for motivated professionals concerned with educational practice to undertake advanced coursework in a field of particular interest.

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Find out more about the Master of Education course on our website by scanning the QR code below, or reaching out to the Course Coordinator.



[Find out more](#)

Course Coordinator

Associate Professor Brad Gobby
b.gobby@ecu.edu.au

Some specialisations you can study in this course:

Wellbeing and Behaviour in Education

The specialisation offers an opportunity for teachers and those engaged in education, to further develop skills, knowledge and understanding of behaviour, trauma, resilience and positive psychology.



[Learn More](#)

Literacy Education

Provides an opportunity for motivated professionals concerned with evidence-based educational practice to undertake advanced coursework that will enable them to perform to a high standard in either a classroom, consulting or literacy leadership role.



[Learn More](#)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Designed to develop and support the careers of language teaching professionals and graduates working in language-related areas in both adult and child learning contexts in Australia and overseas.



[Learn More](#)

ECU Education Alumni Spotlight:

Susan Archdall

Bachelor of Arts in Education, Primary, 1990.

Bachelor of Education, 1997.

Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education (Social Science), 2014.



From her first posting as a graduate teacher in the Kimberley to Principal of Bannister Creek Primary School, it is easy to see the passion for education and equity that drives Susan Archdall. In a career spanning more than three decades since first graduating from ECU with a Bachelor of Arts in Education (Primary) in 1990, her stints in remote and culturally diverse locations such as Halls Creek and Christmas Island have helped shape her approach to cultural sensitivity. "I've always been passionate about equity across the board. My mum and dad raised me to know that everybody was equal, and you listen to everybody and learn from them," Susan explains. "That was just core within me."

"But when I went to the Kimberley and I got to sit and yarn with Aboriginal people, the spark in the students is like nothing else on Earth. I fell in love with them and the Aboriginal ways of being, doing, thinking and knowing. It just made sense to me. Prior to that, I had very little experience with Aboriginal people, and it just changed me as a human being and made me very, very passionate about Australia getting this right."

Susan's understanding and hard work in this field culminated in the Lynwood school winning the WA Education Award for Cultural Responsiveness in 2024, just two years after becoming principal. "To be part of this incredible team, doing transformative work every day is so motivating," Susan says. "I have incredible staff and a beautiful community that is incredibly rich and diverse with 51 languages. I love learning from them all and sharing in their life experiences." With the school formed when three former schools were amalgamated, Susan says her team carved a vision for their community and worked hard to put it into action. "We wanted first and foremost to make sure that we understood that Aboriginal people were here first. To make sure that our Aboriginal children had the chance every single day to be connected to Country and to be learning their culture through the school, and to see it reflected as they walked around."

"Then we wanted to reflect that we celebrate all people that are here now. All people in different cultures and languages are welcome and we celebrate them, and they add value to us every day. And thirdly, we wanted to show who we are now that we have all come together. This is who we are, Bannister Creek. This is what we stand for." With the major award up there as one of her greatest professional achievements, Susan says for her it is the student success stories that are the biggest highlight. "When I think back across my career, there's literally thousands of students in that time. But there's probably ten students whose stories are still so vested in my soul and they have gone on to do great things for themselves. That's it. That's why we do it."

Despite acting in Deputy Principal roles earlier in her career, it was only in more recent years that Susan wanted to move into leadership. "The passion of working with the students had always brought me back to the classroom," she says. "But I think once you get a taste of leadership in terms of being impactful with a wider sphere of influence, you realise that you are doing that core work for the kids, and you are affecting more kids. Once I had started to do that as a deputy, I wanted that as a principal, so that I could be making sure they had what they needed. What I wanted in a principal when I was a teacher, I wanted to be that principal for them and be truly invested in making sure that they were all aspiring to be their best."

Growth has been a driving factor throughout Susan's career, going on to complete a Bachelor of Education in 1997, followed by a Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education in 2014. "When I heard the decision had been made to move Year Sevens to high school, I thought, 'I'm going to go back and re-train and go with them and see if we can get some primary context and pastoral care into the high schools,' which we did. It ended up being a great decision for me." Susan became Executive Officer of the Bibbulman Network and Chair of the steering committee, working with seven primary schools and two high schools as they prepared to relocate Year Sevens to high school. Following that, Susan spent six years at Kalamunda Senior High School as the Head of Year Seven. "It was really important work. It was an incredible time of growth for me, because having access to all of the secondary teachers and the heads of learning, I just learned so much and it changed the way that I saw education."

Susan then moved back into primary schools, becoming Deputy Principal at Gooseberry Hill Primary, followed by two fixed-term Principal roles before landing her current position. Working across eight schools, seven networks and four regions, the mum of two is as inspired and enthusiastic as when her career began, a wonderful example for graduate teachers. "We need our passionate, ripe, fantastic graduates to go in with all guns blazing, because they make every difference to our school system," Susan says. "I say to them, if you can get out of the city and have a regional or remote experience, do it. You will never, ever look back from doing that. It will change you forever and it will be fantastic for you as a person, as well as your career."

Explore our Teacher Education Postgraduate courses [here](#).



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Read the original article [here](#)

School of Education Research Showcase



Dr Tetiana Bogachenko

Lecturer, School of Education.

Dr Tetiana Bogachenko is a scholar and practitioner in Education and Applied Linguistics. Born in the Soviet Union, she grew up in independent Ukraine and was the first generation in her family to receive education in her native language. As the Iron Curtain fell, English also started gaining prominence in the region. Tetiana taught English (and other subjects) in child and adult education settings, and worked as an interpreter, translator, social worker and cultural consultant upon graduation from Kyiv National Linguistic University.

Coming from a very low SES background and volunteering with marginalised groups throughout her adolescence made Tetiana deeply aware of social injustice and marginalisation, as well as the power of resilience, knowledge and collaboration. Interpreting for Curtin health sciences students during their professional placement with children with disabilities in Ukraine enabled her to observe a tangible impact of evidence-based practices on the lives of disadvantaged communities.

Australian students and their supervisors brought cutting-edge expertise to help these kids and train their carers, as neither Physio nor Occupational Therapy existed in Ukraine at that time. This inspired Tetiana to seek opportunities to facilitate experience exchange in her area of expertise, education. A research scholarship from Curtin University allowed her to bring evidence-based, internationally practised TESOL approaches for discussion with the Ukrainian teachers and educational leaders. She was specifically interested in how educational innovation can be made contextually appropriate and beneficial for all stakeholders, and how teachers can exercise their voice in a centralised and authoritarian system they inherited.

Through her work with Professor Laura Perry from Murdoch University, she also connected with the international research group in post-socialist education and co-published on the opportunities and complexities of post-Soviet education research.

During and upon completion of her doctoral degree, Tetiana was actively involved in a research-intensive environment with the world-leading scholars in Applied Linguistics. She has worked with migrant, refugee and Aboriginal communities, led and co-led community-based research projects, published in the leading national and international academic journals, co-supervised PhD students and co-produced government reports, community exhibitions and practical resources for students and educators. She has conceptualised and written successful ARC proposals, as well as seed grant and medium grant applications with her WA and interstate colleagues. Tetiana served on an editorial team of the Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, a Q1 journal, for five years and is currently an Editorial Board member. She is also a co-convenor of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) education Special Interest Group with the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), helping to shape the field in Australia and beyond.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Tetiana had to evacuate her family and has since collaborated with the community as well as government bodies, organisations and NGOs to facilitate better understanding of the experiences of displacement and help inform settlement support, refugee education practices and related policies. She has collaborated with Associate Professor Rachel Burke, Associate Professor Olga Oleinikova and Professor Jaya Dantas on interdisciplinary community projects. More recently, with an expert in inclusive education, Dr Jia White, she successfully applied for the DFAT-funded Australia Awards Fellowship programme that provided an opportunity to invite a professor from Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine, to visit Australia and exchange expertise in supporting displaced students with disabilities in higher education.

Since coming to ECU, Tetiana has been teaching into the postgraduate onshore and offshore programmes, including TESOL. She is actively pursuing opportunities and creative ways to channel expertise, technologies and funding into the areas of community needs to facilitate positive changes in educational access, quality and equity for all.

Find out more about ECU's School of Education research activity by visiting our [website](#).



Future Research & Career Pathway



Vicky Evans

PhD Candidate, School of Education.

Can you introduce yourself and tell us about your background and academic journey?

In 2022, I moved from Wales, UK, to Australia after being awarded an Edith Cowan University (ECU) Higher Degree by Research Scholarship. Before that, I graduated with a 1st class honours degree in (BSc) Sport and Physical Education, as well as a distinction in (MSc) Sports Coaching and Pedagogy at Cardiff Metropolitan University in Wales, my home country. In reflection, this is where my research interests in policy and curricula reform and people's experiences stem from, particularly how policy influences practice. Before starting my PhD, my research, work as a research assistant, and journal publications focused on Health and Physical Education (HPE) and Initial Teacher Education policy and curriculum reform in Wales. More specifically, people's experiences of these, including Physical Education Teacher Education professionals, Pre-Service Teachers, and teachers. Advancing the experiences of those within the fields of education, Teacher Education, and HPE more broadly are personal and passionate areas of commitment.

Why did you choose ECU to do your PhD degree?

During my MSc, my supervisor, Dr David Aldous, introduced me to Professor Dawn Penney, who was at ECU at the time and is now my principal supervisor. After completing my master's degree, I was eager to pursue a PhD to build on my master's research and continue working with Professor Dawn Penney and Dr David Aldous. Encouraged by Professor Dawn Penney, I applied for a scholarship at ECU, and here I am today.

What have you enjoyed the most?

My PhD journey has been a fantastic learning experience, both enriching and personally and professionally challenging. Moving from Wales to Western Australia (WA) alone, leaving my family, friends, and everything

I've known to live somewhere new and undertake a PhD was a huge decision. Admittedly, I didn't think I'd last one month. Now, almost three years later, I'm about to submit my PhD thesis and still loving life in WA. I have no regrets; the opportunity to live, explore, and study in WA has been eye-opening. I'm incredibly thankful for the scholarship and the unwavering support of my supervisors: Professor Dawn Penney, Dr David Aldous, and Dr Christine Cunningham. Learning from and working alongside my supervisory team has been a true privilege.

Throughout this journey, I have met some incredible people, including peers, colleagues, and fellow Higher Degree by research (HDR) students. I've been lucky enough to meet those whose work I've read since my undergraduate, leading to real "pinch me" moments. My PhD experience has challenged me, helped me step out of my comfort zone, and enabled me to achieve things I never thought possible, such as publishing academic papers, presenting at academic conferences, and working as a research assistant and academic casual at ECU. It has truly been a rollercoaster experience! Additionally, over the past year and a half, I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting HDR students and supervisors in the School of Education and other schools at ECU. If I could offer one piece of advice to current and future students, it would be to be kind to yourself and remember to take a breath. Reflect on how far you've come, celebrate your achievements, whether big or small, and accept that things may not always go as planned. The PhD journey is about personal growth and learning about yourself as much as it is about developing your research. Remember, you're not alone, your supervisors and the HDR community are there to support you.

What is the focus of your thesis?

My ethnographic study aimed to understand the corporeality of policy work and the importance of the body in Health and Physical Education Teacher Education (H/PETE). The research prompts reflection about what H/PETE professionals embody in their everyday practices, as well as why and how policy work unfolds as it does within institutional contexts. The study affirms the importance of policy work in H/PETE while directing attention to the complex interconnections between contexts and people's actions, and the potential meanings generated and ascribed to different forms of policy work and identities in situ.

What will you do after your PhD? And why?

Finishing my PhD marks the start of an exciting, yet unknown, journey. It serves as a foundation for future work with several future research directions I would love to explore. I plan to focus on developing and writing academic papers based on my thesis before and after my oral examination. Once I graduate, I intend to apply for a Temporary Graduate visa, which will enable me to stay and work in Australia. Additionally, I plan to enjoy more camping trips, explore and learn more about WA and Australia more broadly, and tick off more things on my never-ending to see/do list!

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Course Coordinator

Dr Tetiana Bogachenko
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Student

SHOWCASE

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



Alannah Chan
Ceramic Figurine



Charlie Shinnick
Ceramic Bust



Danae McMiles
Ceramic Vessel



Amal Soliman
Ceramic Vessels



Stevie Palibrk
Ceramic Bust



Isabel Morrison
Ceramic Figurine



Molly Azzalini
Ceramic Bust



Sofie Hjorth
Ceramic Teapot



Jorja Dickers
Ceramic Vessel



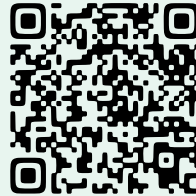
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ECU is committed to reconciliation and recognises the traditional custodians of the land upon which its campuses stand and their connection to this land. We acknowledge and offer our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people past, present and emerging.


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