

School of Education Updated

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From the Executive Dean

This edition of UpdatED has a focus on several key areas that are relevant to Education. As I engage with principals and teachers in a range of settings I continue to be impressed by the quality and commitment teachers provide and have in regard to the education of their students.



This year has presented all of us with challenges that test us in ways we never thought we would be tested. Although here in Western Australia we have been largely immune from what has occurred in eastern states of Australia regarding Covid and its impact on teachers, children, adolescents, parents and carers. I reach out to colleagues in the eastern states of Australia and to those in the United States of America, England, Vietnam, China, Europe and South Africa knowing it has been and continues to be a very demanding year.

However, there is growing sense of positiveness that "this too will pass" and we will return to managing this pandemic. In the last edition I wrote of the roll-out of the vaccination programs and it has accelerated in Western Australia and across Australia and the globe with vulnerable citizens, adults, and now children being vaccinated. I have noted that teachers are being vaccinated at much greater rates.

From a professional development perspective our short courses for micro-credentialing continue to grow in number and these will resonate particularly well with teachers and educators in Western Australia, Australia and the globe.

Quality bite-size courses delivered on-line as well as on campus will add to the opportunities for teachers and educators across the globe to undertake quality professional development that can be audited or assessed and lead to a post graduate qualification. There are already some courses up and operating and I encourage you all to take a look and try a course.

As educators you probably are aware that each organisation develops an Operational Plan and the School of Education is no different. The School of Education Operational Plan is available on our website and aligns to the four ECU Strategic Goals. These strategic goals are Enhancing Learning and Teaching, Advancing Research and Knowledge Transition, Growing Internationalisation and Ensuring Organisational Sustainability. As we are now two-thirds of the way through 2021 I am pleased to say that we are on track to meet the 13 objectives that underpin the Strategic Goals.

As you are aware teachers are acknowledged across the globe on World Teachers Day. In Australia we celebrate this day on October 29th. Across the globe Teachers Day is celebrated on different dates.

In the USA it is celebrated on the first Tuesday on the month in May and titled National Teacher Appreciation Day. In more than 100 countries Teachers Day is celebrated on October 5th.

We will be acknowledging and celebrating all teachers on October 29th. From those that teach in Early Learning Centres to our university lecturers, all teachers play a prominent role in the lives of the very young to those studying at the highest level.

Thank you to all teachers.

Professor Stephen Winn
Executive Dean
School of Education
Edith Cowan University



Scan the QR code to view
The School of Education
Operational Plan



How **sport** is keeping WA kids at school, boosting maths grades

The research led by Dr Eibhlish O'Hara explored how participation in Specialist Sports Programs (SSPs) affect the educational outcomes of lower secondary students in years 7 – 10 (12 – 15 years).

The research involved seven secondary schools from low SES areas in Western Australia and included quantitative data and in-depth interviews with students, their parents, teachers and graduates of the SSP.

An SSP is a secondary school sport program where students specialise in one sport in place of elective subjects. Enrolment into an SSP is open to students exhibiting a high level of sporting ability, a high level of coachability, a positive attitude towards sport and school, and good behaviour and attendance. It is also available to those outside a school's catchment area.

Keeping kids engaged and at school

The study found that specialist students remained engaged with the school throughout the year.

"For many students the SSP program was the reason they attended school each day, and the reason they applied effort to their education," Dr O'Hara said.

"Other studies have shown that engagement with school declines in early adolescence, so this was an important finding."

One teacher participating in the study explained:

"SSPs definitely increase the attendance of the kids ... if we have it (the SSP) Period 1 (at the start of the school day) and Period 5 (at the end of the school day), they're attending throughout the whole day."

Students participating said:

"I'm focused on not getting into trouble, so I won't miss any games."

And another student said their involvement in SSP made them make more of an effort with their academic studies so they could remain in the program:

"... it's made me think harder in maths and like ... English and stuff like that so I moved up from a C to a B in English from thinking about the program."

Maths grades improved

Dr O'Hara said SSPs had a positive influence on students' engagement with school, and that this engagement had a positive impact on their academic achievement.

"Analysis of SSP students' grades demonstrated that their mean grade for mathematics significantly improved over the period of the year," Dr O'Hara said.

However, Dr O'Hara said there was no significant difference regarding SSP students' grades in their other school subjects (English, Science and Society and Environment).

"The students remained stable in their other subjects, despite an increase in the difficulty level of the content being taught," she said.



Dr O'Hara said the study findings may help ease parents' concerns regarding the time spent in Physical Education classes detracting from students' academic achievement.

"I hope this research helps to show what the programs are achieving so far, so that the teachers implementing the programs can be supported to deliver the best quality program for the students involved."

The paper 'Educational Outcomes of Adolescents Participating in Specialist Sports Programs (SSPs) in Low SES Areas of Western Australia: A mixed methods study' is published in the journal Frontiers of Psychology.



ECU Pre-Service Teachers networking with employers

More than 320 of ECU's Pre-Service Teachers recently had the chance to meet face-to-face with a variety of different employers and organisations as part of the annual School of Education Careers Fair.

This year saw the introduction of a wonderful line-up of industry leaders from key employers in WA that answered questions about a career in teaching and how to make the most of it:

- Ron Gorman – Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia: Deputy Director
- Yusof Manaf-Hassan – Department of Education: Principal Consultant, Staff Recruitment and Employment Services
- Loretta Hackner – Catholic Education Western Australia: School Improvements Officer
- Wendy Harmon – Good Start Early Learning: Head of Practice
- Amando Giglia – Western Australian Secondary Schools Executive Association: President
- Graham Grossman – Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia: Manager of Teacher Registration.

Students who missed the 2021 Careers Fair can download the valuable resource **'My Guide to Education Applications'**, a teacher-focused resource about how to land your first job as a graduate teacher. Students can also visit the ECU CareerHub to browse current job opportunities.

School of Education Industry Engagement Coordinator Dr Julie Boston said the once-a-year event was a perfect opportunity for education students to speak directly to their future employers.



Pictured left to right: Amando Giglia, Graham Grossman, Wendy Harmon, Loretta Hackner, Stephen Winn, Ron Gorman and Yusof Manaf-Hassan.

"We know that many employers are so keen to recruit ECU students, and the demand for this event from both students and organisations is always high," she said.

"We were very pleased to this year welcome a record number of organisations to our campus to meet our brilliant students face-to-face and make connections that are often the beginning foundations of our teaching students' careers."

Attending organisations on the day included government employers, early learning centres, regulatory bodies, teacher associations, and teaching agencies as well as ECU's valued partner, Teacher's Mutual Bank.

The ECU School of Education Careers Fair will return in August 2022.

For more information

To enquire about industry collaboration with ECU's School of Education, contact Academic Coordinator, Industry Partnerships & Engagement Dr Julie Boston by email: julie.boston@ecu.edu.au



Scan the QR code to view the **My Guide to Education Applications**



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

What does inclusive children's literature look like?

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. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11010032>

I use technologies to save me time vs technologies are a waste of my time. Why is this?

Johnson, N. F. (2021). Digital labour and temporal priorities within a secondary school. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworkspost2013/10415>

Stories from children in secondary classrooms about their perceptions of teacher expectations.

Johnston, O., Wildy, H., & Shand, J. (2021). Student voices that resonate – Constructing composite narratives that represent students' classroom experiences. *Qualitative Research*. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworkspost2013/10396>

Mentoring and supervision of Pre-Service Teachers is so important. What do we know?

Griffiths, M., Shean, M. & Jackson, D. (2021). Supervision in initial teacher education: A scoping review. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(2), 476-494. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/griffiths-m.pdf>

Explore dancing, weather and environmental education – all in the early years!

Pollitt, J., Blaise, M. & Rooney, T. (2021). Weather bodies: Experimenting with dance improvisation in environmental education in the early years. *Environmental Education Research*. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworkspost2013/10411>

This article explores leadership within early childhood settings surrounding the implementation of the National Quality Standard.

Kirk, G. & Barblett, L. (2021). Implementing the National Quality Standard in schools: Leadership that motivates improvement initiatives through psychological ownership. *The Australian Educational Researcher*. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworkspost2013/10193>

Find out more at <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/research-activity>

Featured Journal – Australian Journal of Teacher Education (AJTE)

The purpose of the Australian Journal of Teacher Education (AJTE) is to enhance the quality of teacher education through the publication of research reports, learned points of view and commentaries. Contributions may address proposals for, or descriptions of, development in the purpose, structure and methodology of teacher education; curriculum issues; changes in schools; or general social, ideological or political issues relating to teacher education.

Have a look online – one of these papers may be useful for your own teaching: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/>





Yes, adult literacy should be improved. But governments can make their messages easier to read right now

Author: Dr Cath Ferguson, Senior Research Fellow, School of Education

A parliamentary inquiry is looking into how to improve adult literacy in Australia.

Having a low level of literacy is not the same thing as being illiterate. The definition of “illiterate” is the inability to read or write. A low level of literacy is more complex and relates to people’s abilities to read, write and understand a range of information that allows them to fully participation in society.

According to the OECD, 40–50% of adults in Australia have literacy levels below the international standard required for participation in work, education and society.

Together with literacy, the inquiry will also look at numeracy and problem-solving.

While it’s important the inquiry look at ways to improve literacy for those struggling with it, the government could start acting now to make its information and services more accessible. One way is to present information in plain English, and make services like Centrelink easier to navigate.

Why are we having this inquiry?

The inquiry will consider both economic and social aspects of literacy. But its focus is on increased labour market participation, and increased productivity.

It was initiated after a 2020 Productivity Commission report showed Australia’s falling rates of educational achievement, compared to other countries in the OECD, were related to our levels of productivity – particularly as compared to the United States.

The OECD numbers show our literacy rates are similar to New Zealand and actually better than in the United Kingdom and US.

In a survey of adult skills conducted by the OECD in Australia from October 2011 to March 2012, Australian adults scored fifth out of participating countries for literacy – after Japan, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden. The United Kingdom and the US scored at 15th and 17th respectively.

A low level of literacy isn’t the same as not being able to read. It is about accessing information in a way that allows a person to participate in society and the economy.

But for numeracy Australia ranked 14th, the UK 17th and the USA 21st.

Adults with low literacy come from different cultural or language backgrounds. Those born in Australia could have low literacy due to various circumstances including:

- learning difficulties
- alternative preferences for learning
- social circumstances that prevent school attendance or lead to many school changes
- health issues during childhood
- childhood trauma (including family/domestic violence)
- a lack of interest or motivation to learn.

What are we doing to improve the issue?

A number of programs are available to train adults in certain skills to increase labour market participation.

One example is the government’s Job Trainer Fund that provides free or low-cost courses as part of its economic response to COVID.

There are government programs too that focus on literacy and numeracy skills. They include

Skills for Education and Employment where eligible job seekers can improve their language, reading, writing and maths skills

Foundation Skills for Your Future which helps Australians who need flexible skills in Reading writing, maths, English language and digital skills

Remote Community Pilots which is a pilot of the above program for remote communities.

While these program are good to have, there is stigma attached to low literacy and this can inhibit help-seeking at all ages.

Schools are increasingly recognised as the best place to improve the educational outcomes for adults.

Early childhood education is especially important as the earlier in life issues are identified, the better the outcomes.

Still, people with learning difficulties are often experts at hiding their challenges and some people will slip through the school system without their issues being addressed.

Services can be more accessible

The inquiry has received around 100 submissions from a range of organisations and individuals.

A submission from Read Write Now (where I am a tutor) – a West Australian organisation that provides free one on one support for adults in areas such as filling out forms, or reading aloud to their children – notes new arrivals are more likely to seek literacy help than those born in Australia. This is not always a case of demand, but one of stigma around illiteracy.

Their submission also notes there is little consistency of such services across Australia.

Many of our clients, especially people from Indigenous backgrounds, live a transient lifestyle. We find that often when they move there is no literacy program to link them into at their new location, so they fall out of the system.

A few submissions highlighted the difficulty many adults have filling out forms and navigating government services such as Centrelink. A submission from the NSW Council of Social Service noted the “increased digitisation of government services is a compounding factor”. It points to the need for government agencies to adhere to requirements for plain English and easy access material.

In this, the government can start making changes now.

Our recent analysis of government information on COVID-19 found many documents were written

in a way that is inaccessible to struggling readers.

The problem lies in not only helping to improve adults’ literacy but in making services more accessible, as well as reducing unnecessary hurdles.

For instance, in one submission, a woman talks of her husband who is a recent migrant with dyslexia. Although he can speak English well, he struggles with complex writing tasks that prevent him from being able to get the kind of jobs he has the skills to do.

She writes:

“he could fulfil a handyman role offered recently by our local council – but only if the job were offered to him. He would not be able to provide a written CV and selection criteria responses during an online application process without significant assistance from me.”

Organisations need to be aware of such issues, to not prevent skilled people from doing a job due to the application process alone. We also need to encourage those who need support to access the available services.

The House Employment, Education and Training Committee is continuing to hold public hearings for the inquiry into adult literacy.

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STAWA FUTURE SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2021

Future Science is designed to stretch your mind with the latest science innovations and research while connecting you with activities that you can enhance your classroom practice. ECU is delighted to be hosting this conference at our Joondalup campus on Friday 3 December 2021.

This conference will showcase a range of experts across science, technology, engineering and mathematic disciplines who will share their cutting edge research.

Keynote will be provided by Professor Rob Newton, Western Australia Premier's Scientist of the Year (2019) and Vice-Chancellor Professorial Research Fellow in the Exercise Medicine Research Institute at Edith Cowan University.

A range of workshops and sessions will be available for you to select from. Come and explore the trade expo, discover a range of classroom resources and specialist equipment and visit ECU's Super Labs.

You may also wish to present a workshop or session to your fellow educators.



EVENT DETAILS

Friday 3 December 2021
8.00am to 4.30pm

Building 32, Room 32.101
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Dr, Joondalup WA 6027

CALL FOR PRESENTERS



Fostering high university and vocational expectations during adolescence

Authors: Emmy Thamakaison (Stanford University) with editorial input from Dr Lynette Vernon (ECU)

High expectations play a vital role in developing future success in students. For learners, frequent educational and vocational discussions with friends, family, and teachers during adolescence can be incredibly important in fostering their aspirations and transforming them into reality.

Lynette Vernon (Edith Cowan University) and Catherine Drane (Curtin University) share their retrospective, cross-sectional study examining the association between student characteristics (ie. socio-economic status (SES), gender) alongside discussions with influential figures (ie. family members, friends, teachers) and expectations to attend university, receive vocational/technical education, or go into full-time employment after secondary school.

SES's contributions to the development of future aspirations have long been debated, in particular, the suggested relationship between lower SES and lower educational and vocational aspirations. Vernon and Drane present their arguments against this as their results revealed that "career and educational aspirations for students, predominantly from low SES background were high" but found that often "the missing element is the knowledge of how to make these aspirations concrete and obtainable."

- Compared to students with higher SES, those with lower SES tend to engage more frequently in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) discussions and less frequently in university discussions.
- Students discuss their aspirations with their parents and peers more than their teachers and counsellors. Therefore, it is vital for these high-impact influencers to "have the necessary up-to-date knowledge and skills to provide the relevant information around educational opportunities."

However, parents of students of lower SES may lack the prerequisite knowledge as they may not have experience with university and/or TAFE/VET pathways. Thus, informative parental support and discussions

Apart from SES, other factors such as gender, academic year level, and first-in-family (to attend university) status are considered "important predictors" for students' vocational and higher education expectations.

- University discussions affected female students more significantly in terms of their expectations to receive higher education.

- Those with first-in-family statuses engaged in discussions about university more frequently than those whose family members have attended university, indicating "their capabilities of resilience, motivation, and tenacity to explore university pathways." However, first-in-family status was not associated with TAFE/VET expectations.

Vernon and Drane found that year level (grade level) indirectly contributed to the pathways between discussions on university, TAFE-VET, or full-time employment expectations.

Regardless of individual characteristics, frequent discussions about students' futures allows the maintenance of their aspirations and sets them on the path to reaching their potential.

As one of the main confidantes for a student, parents are encouraged to "provide the reality context for their children around their educational desires" in the discussions.

Teachers remain largely untapped for valuable aspirational discussions.

Prioritizing career education in a school setting and promoting teachers as a "positive, knowledgeable, and accessible resource" can therefore go a long way in "empowering [students] to pursue their desired education and career pathways".

Ultimately, this research encourages policy-makers, teachers, and influencers to recognize the importance of discussions around educational and vocational pathways. Adolescence is a critical transitional period as students decide what they will pursue beyond secondary school. While individual factors influence future expectations differently, increasing the frequency of quality discussions with influential figures can "provide the opportunity for all students to practice and develop their capacity to aspire and meet their career [and educational] expectations."

View summarized article

Summary by: Emmy Thamakaison – Emmy is a recent high school graduate attending Stanford University and is an enthusiastic advocate of MARIO Framework. Research author Dr Lynette Vernon, Ph.D., was involved in the final version of this summary.



Confused about which English subject to choose in year 11 and 12? **Here's what you need to know**

Author: Dr Kirsten Lambert, Unit Coordinator and Lecturer in Assessment and Education, School of Education



This article is part of a series providing school students with evidence-based advice for choosing subjects in their senior years.

English (or an equivalent literacy requirement) is a compulsory subject for all secondary students in Australia. In years 11 and 12 there are several types of English subjects to choose from.

There are different versions of "English" in different states, with various titles and levels of difficulty.

There's English, English studies, general English, foundation English, English standard, English advanced, English language, English and literature extension and literature. It is important to choose the right version of English to reach your desired destination.

Different types of English

The Australian Curriculum is the base for the development of state and territory senior secondary courses. It breaks English down into four broad categories: English, literature, EALD (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) and essential English.

Literature is known as the most challenging of the four and focuses on literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama. Literature explores the creative use of language through in-depth study of culturally important literary works.

For example, students may explore colonial representations of race in Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*, the beauty and unsettling nature of Shakespeare's sonnets, or Australian cultural identity in Jack Davis' play *No Sugar*.

Literature is more like philosophy or history than what we think of as English from NAPLAN (grammar and comprehension).

Literature used to be a popular subject in some states, but its popularity has been falling. Recent figures from Victoria show while literature was the 15th most commonly studied subject in 2015 in the senior years, it tumbled to 19th in 2019. In 2020, it fell off the top 20 list entirely.

In Western Australia, some schools have dropped literature because of low enrolments. A report in 2018 noted the percentage of year 12s studying literature fell from 26% in 1998 to 11% in 2017.

Theories about this fall include the fact literature is seen as an elitist subject, that you have to be someone who reads all the time to take it, and you have to love great 19th and 20th century literature.

These things aren't true. Anyone interested but willing to challenge themselves should and can take literature. And some examples of recent texts include *Breath* (Tim Winton), *The Handmaid's Tale* (Margaret Atwood) and *The Book Thief* (Marcus Zusak). There are many "fun" texts students can study and while literature is challenging it can also be enriching, and can cultivate a love of reading.

Also, my research showed some students found studying literary texts to be an empowering experience. One year 12 student said:

"I'm the black sheep in my household. I identified with Rose (a character from Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*) quite a bit as the strong girl who was being resilient and was trying to break out of where she was. I do performing and everyone else does engineering or chemistry."

English develops analytical and creative skills through studying a range of literary and non-literary

texts (including oral, multimedia and digital "texts" such as documentaries, graphic novels and feature articles).

If you're not in love with reading or writing but want to study subjects such as commerce or engineering at university, this may be the course for you.

Although it's seen as easier than literature, not everyone finds it that way. One Victorian student who had taken both literature and English wrote actually found the latter harder. This is because she felt she had more freedom in literature while English "wasn't really compatible with tangents". She found it harder to be more concise in her expression.

English as an additional language is designed for students with English is their second language. This is an ATAR subject in some states such as Western Australia and Victoria.

Essential English develops students' use of language, but it is not an ATAR subject. Essential English and general English are tailored to students who would like to graduate from high school but don't want to go to university.

How do I decide which to take?

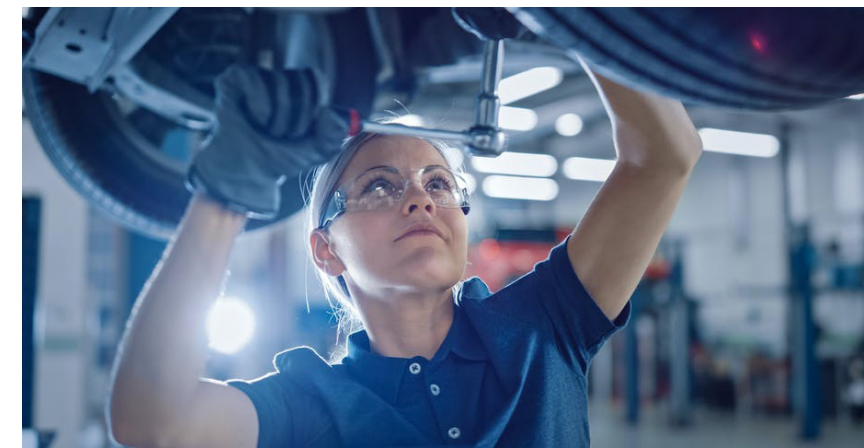
The first question you can ask is: "Do I want to go to university?". If the answer is "yes", you are likely to choose an English subject that will go towards your ATAR.

It's worth noting you can still get into university without an ATAR, or without a very high one, but it does give you more options.

ATAR subjects are traditionally seen as more difficult than non-ATAR ones, although for anyone who has ever studied non-ATAR subjects, this is debatable.

So, let's take an example student, Mia. She is tossing up between medicine, mechanics or music teaching.

If Mia wants to become a mechanic, she does not need an ATAR to get a school-based apprenticeship.



She may be better off studying general English, which focuses on the skills students need to become competent communicators in everyday life, or at work.

But if Mia wants to be a music teacher or doctor, she is better off choosing an English subject that contributes to an ATAR. If she would like to be a teacher, she could choose something like English standard or English advanced and will need an ATAR score over 70 (but more than likely around 85). If she would like to study medicine, she will need an ATAR closer to 99.

What about scaling?

Some English subjects are scaled higher, while others lower.

Scaling uses an algorithm to make subject scores more or less comparable to each other. This also makes sure if a student takes a difficult subject, they aren't disadvantaged. It's easier to get an A in an easier subject than a harder subject, so scaling generally adds more points to students doing harder subjects.

ATAR literature, a traditionally more difficult course, is usually scaled up. In Western Australia in 2020, for instance, English was scaled down about two points and literature was scaled up by nearly seven.

But students shouldn't just take a subject like literature because it's scaled up. Because it's harder, they may get a lower mark and the scaling won't make much difference.

You should do what interests you, and what you think will contribute best to your future while ensuring a good senior school experience.

What could I do with English?

English is compulsory because you need it for everything in life, from social communication to employment.

Studying literature, which isn't compulsory, can be useful for occupations that require an advanced command of language such as journalism, research, law, public relations, philosophy and politics.

View other articles in our series on choosing senior subjects.



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ECU Education Alumni Spotlight: Dr Mandie Shean



For Dr Mandie Shean, building a career that unites her dual interests in education and psychology has been a dream come true.

Now an accomplished scholar and expert in the field of resilience, the ECU lecturer and researcher has held a lifelong passion for helping others and making a difference.

"I believe every student is worthwhile and make sure I value every student, so getting to watch them blossom over the semester and knowing that I can indirectly have an influence on them is just fantastic."

As an academic, Mandie's day-to-day work varies from lecturing and teaching in the classroom, to conducting ground-breaking resilience research and applying for grants, to supervising the next generation of doctorate students.

She says being a part of Australia's research community is hard work – but a true privilege.

"I think it is really a gift in this world to have time to investigate the things you love and give back to the profession and the community," she explains.

An ECU graduate, Mandie discovered the university offered an exceptionally nurturing and supportive environment.

"I think learning is a very vulnerable thing, so to be in an environment where people make that a nice, safe place is far more important than people give it credit," she says.

After training as a primary school teacher, Mandie took on early roles in country WA.

"I graduated in 1991 and then I got a job in Newman, up north," she says.

"I said I was too immature to take that on – I was 20 years old, and the school was so far away from home – but Newman was a great chance to grow up."

After working in Newman, Mandie took up a range of other roles in metropolitan schools, including in Merriwa, before taking up an opportunity to teach in Canada in 1997.

While the experience was one of the highlights of her early career, Mandie returned to Australia with the realisation that she was ready to try something different.

"At the time, I worked with a church as their kids' pastor, and I really liked the idea of becoming a psychologist and trying to help people more directly," she elaborates.

Returning to ECU to complete her psychology degree was a natural choice for Mandie.

"When I first chose ECU [then WACAE] back in 1988, it definitely had the best reputation for education," she reflects.

"And when I considered coming back to study again, I went through the whole book, every single degree you could do, and then ended up with ECU's psychology degree."

With experience as both an education and psychology student, Mandie says ECU's unique approach to university education should not be undervalued.

"Mostly it was the practical nature of the ECU degree that I just loved," Mandie explains.

"The lecturers I had were doing real life stuff – they weren't just standing up there saying 'here is the theory' and then going back into their office to read more."

"They are truly involved in the community, which I love, because if you're going to teach and preach something, I think you should actually know that it works."

Mandie used her psychology degree to secure a role as a school psychologist: still working in the education environment but primarily as a helper rather than solely as an educator.

"I love teaching, I love kids, and I love helping families – and I love the helping part more, so I decided to become a helper," she elaborates.

Mandie's dual experience as both an educator and a psychologist eventually converged when she undertook and completed a PhD with ECU and began a career as an academic.

"I lecture and work at ECU full-time, but I am still registered [as a psychologist] and I do lots of pro bono work, such as speaking engagements," she says.

"For example, in the past three or four years, I've spoken to over 3000 people – including kids and parents – on resilience and how to be more resilient in schools, and that is all done for free."

Mandie's career continues to soar to new heights. Aside from winning several prestigious and high-profile research grants, and she frequently appears in the national print and radio media as an expert.

Her key piece of advice, naturally, ties back to her expertise in resilience.

"Learning is hard, and you should expect challenges," she says.

"Challenges are a part of growing, and I think we get used to saying 'oh, it's challenging, it's hard, I am stressed' – so I should stop doing it."

"I try to get my students to think that finding study a challenge just means you are doing something that is, ultimately, going to make you better."



Worse reading, and less of it, for kids at daycare in poorer areas

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

Children at daycare centres in more disadvantaged areas of Perth receive just half the time reading with educators than their counterparts in richer areas, according to new research from ECU.

ECU's School of Education researchers observed educators reading with 3 and 4-year-old children at four daycare centres in Perth. They found children at centres in lower socioeconomic areas spent 44 per cent less time reading with educators.

The study also found reading sessions were shorter, with less effective behaviour management and frequent negative interactions between children and educators.

Lead researcher Dr Helen Adam said these results were a real concern.

"We know centre educators faced huge demands on their time and resources, however it was clear from this research that centres in lower socioeconomic areas needed more support to ensure all children could receive the benefits of quality book sharing," she said.

Dr Adam said some centres also placed restrictions on children's access to books by using them as a reward or punishment for children.

"All of these practices are meaning kids at those centres in less advantaged areas, including many with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are missing out and potentially falling behind their peers," she said.

"That disadvantage only continues when these kids reach school age and we've seen, in anecdotal evidence, that similar disadvantage continues with educators in some classrooms spending little or no time reading to children."

Reading at all daycare centres less than recommended levels

With 87 per cent of Australian children attending some form of daycare centre, Dr Adam said it's important those children receive quality care and education anywhere in Australia.

"It is important for all children to have large amounts of quality reading time with educators to promote literacy and language skills as they enter school," she said.

"While there are real concerns at those centres identified in our study, we also found there were many children missing out on reading at each of the centres we visited."

"Even at the centres where educators spent the most time reading, most children were not getting the amount of book sharing which numerous studies have shown can significantly improve literacy outcomes."

Changes needed

Dr Adam is calling on the government to provide more equitable funding and support for early learning so that all children can access quality daycare with well trained and well supported educators.

Dr Adam outlined five key steps to improve book sharing practice based on her research:

- read frequently
- read to small groups rather than large
- spend time on the book
- encourage and model response and conversation around the story
- maintain a positive environment for reading.

However, she said parents can also help their children by reading often and engaging children with the books.

"For parents, it's about reading with kids and then talking about the books, how they relate to their everyday lives, what they think might happen next in a story and ensuring kids are engaged with the story," she said.

Book sharing with young children: A study of book sharing in four Australian long day care centres' was published in the Journal of Early Childhood Literacy.





ECU Alumnus Craig Aldridge (left), alongside colleague Nicky Carter.

Alumni spotlight – CrossFit program of benefit to all students



ECU graduate Craig Aldridge has successfully implemented the first CrossFit affiliated program in Western Australia at Eaton Community College.

Proving popular already, all classes are at capacity with additional sessions running at lunchtime. Results from the program show that all the students had improvements in either their physical or psychological health dependant on their goals.

The program and tests took place with a GP, School Psychologist and a registered Exercise Physiologist.

Craig and fellow ECU Alumni, Nicky Carter, also created a terrific additional program supporting kids with a range of needs through a targeted CrossFit program. They hope to use the findings from this for Nicky to crystalise for his future PhD research. Craig said of the program:

"A good thing to come out of [the program] is that our students with autism now have a class they feel comfortable participating in, as general PE classes are often too stimulating for their senses."

It's a fantastic way to teach our students about lifelong fitness, good exercise habits and as a way to promote self-esteem."

One parent praised the program for giving her son back to them:

"He went from suicidal and depressed, withdrawn and hating school to enjoying time with [you] at CrossFit, wanting to go on days he had it, then once he started losing weight, his whole outlook became more positive. His school work reflected that also. He would engage in class. All adults involved in Scott's life noticed the positive changes in him."

Craig completed studies in Exercise and Sports Science at ECU, as well as a Diploma of Education and Nicky recently completed a Master of Teaching at ECU.

For more information: <https://s.ecu.edu.au/3h0tQIB>

When Alumni drama practitioners come home....

Shane McMullan from Into the Mask Theatre came to work with our 4th year drama education students to begin the creative process for their final production. Shane specialises in physical theatre and Commedia dell'arte (Italian comedy). It is always a treat when our ex-students return to Theatre Sixteen – especially when they share with us such expertise and passion for the performing arts.

For information about the drama and dance education course, contact Christina Gray by email: c.gray@ecu.edu.au



2021 Inaugural School of Education Higher Degree by Research Colloquium

Date: Tuesday 28 September 2021

Time: 9am – 4pm

Venue: ECU Joondalup Campus, Building 7, Room 101 or join online

Come and hear from our HDR students about their research journey!

The colloquium provides the opportunity for our Masters and PhD students in Education to present their research-in-progress in a supportive, academic environment. Students at any stage of their research journey will be presenting. Sessions will be delivered face-to-face as well as offering concurrent online streams. Full day catering will be provided.

Programs of research: Teacher education; Equity and inclusion within education; Innovation in policy and practice; Education within social settings.

For further information, please contact Madlen Griffiths, m.griffiths@ecu.edu.au

To register for this event scan this QR code.



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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

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

School of
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Build a Bridge and Get Over It



On 15 July 2021, the School of Engineering hosted a bridge building workshop involving young girls and boys from ECU's Children's University Outreach Program.

Entitled: Build a Bridge and Get over It, the workshop had students becoming structural engineers for an afternoon as they investigated the design and construction of bridges through a number of fun hands-on activities. This culminated in the children building their own small-scale, performance-efficient wooden bridge, competing for the 'Best-Looking Bridge' and 'Most Cost-Efficient Bridge Design' Awards.

ECU's **Children's University** Outreach Program continues to seek out experiential learning that expose young girls to science. The School of Engineering's continued efforts in this space align with the University's commitment to redressing gender disparity in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) disciplines. There is an urgent need to boost gender diversity in engineering, with the number of girls studying physics and advanced mathematics at high school falling to just 6.5% (a pre-requisite for tertiary-level studies in engineering).

ECU are proud to be accredited with a Science in **Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Athena SWAN Bronze** Institutional Award. This Award recognises institutions who understand the current state of gender equity in STEMM disciplines and have developed a four-year action plan which targets structural and cultural barriers, driving diversity in higher education and research.

For more information about ECU's commitment to gender equality, visit the **ECU Gender Equality website** or contact athenaswanaustralia@ecu.edu.au.

Arts residency at Moorditj Noongar Community College in Midland



A Covid lockdown in Perth WA almost saw the cancellation of a program of work in dance and drama initially devised for students at Wiluna Remote Community School as part of a study tour. Forced to turn back to Perth after three days, it was doubtful that the original tour objectives could be met. However, Principal Peter Freeman, of Moorditj Noongar Community College generously agreed that the group could facilitate the arts program at the school during the first week of Term 3 2021.

During the week, ten Early Childhood Pre-Service Teachers, accompanied by lecturers Christine Lovering and Cameron Eglington taught dance and drama workshops to students from Kindy to Year 4 and they also had the opportunity to assist in the general classes.

One highlight was observing the Moorditj students learning cultural dance steps in preparation for their Naidoc Week celebration. On the last day, the Pre-Service Teachers presented their devised performance "Stories from the Sports Shed" to an excited audience of Moorditj students.

The feedback from the Moorditj staff and students was very positive about the program. Reflecting on the whole experience, the Pre-Service Teachers affirmed the personal and professional benefits they had gained as participants of the tour and arts residency. They stated that this had been a most enriching and rewarding opportunity, citing the founding of strong friendships and the development of dance and drama teaching skills as key aspects of the experience. Ultimately, involvement in the tour and residency had confirmed their aspirations to be Early Childhood educators.



For more information, contact Christine Lovering - Arts Lecturer: c.lovering@ecu.edu.au or Cameron Eglington - Secondary Education lecturer: c.eglington@ecu.edu.au

Applying STEM to the curriculum - Professional Learning

Dr Trish Collins recently delivered a successful STEM Professional Learning workshop for over 75 staff from four language development centre campuses. The workshop included a refresher on inquiry approaches that are relevant to STEM as well as:

- 'Hands-on' session on using Apps that are not only great for teaching STEM but helping busy teachers to document the children's learning and sharing their learning with families;
- An examination of the Aboriginal 8-way learning framework and an introduction to the 'no talk method' which is great for not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children but all children with English as a second language;
- Another 'hands-on' session using provocations (e.g., nests, shells, eggs, gumnuts), box construction and make-do kits, Lego construction, robots, mapping and big books (Bee bots, Cubeto) robots that work from apps (code a pillar, Rugged robot); Augmented reality apps with books (e.g., Dinosaurs, Space); story making using book creator and Lego figures. For this session, with the help of Jan Mitchell and Delyse Clayden, the teachers were given an overarching inquiry project to work from with the background knowledge of the children given to them;
- And lastly, mapping the learning they had done in the 'hands on' sessions to all of the curriculum areas related to STEM and then to other areas of interest (i.e, arts, literacy).



To find out more about the workshop, please contact Dr Trish Collins by email: trish.collins@ecu.edu.au

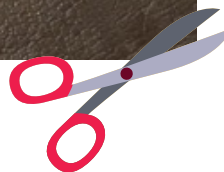
Textiles workshop

During Perth Modern School's week long Arts and Technology festival, ECU Design and Technology Course Co-ordinator, Carol Puddicombe shared her knowledge with students from years 7 – 12. During the workshop students explored the merging of traditional textile production techniques with conductive thread technology, integrating LED lighting and switches into wearable e-textiles.

It was an engaging learning experience where students gained valuable life skills like sewing and collaborative learning that saw Year 12 students assisting the Year 7's in the making of their project. Students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn a valuable life skill and create their e-textile garments.



To find out more about Arts and Technology, please contact Carol Puddicombe, Design and Technology Coordinator by email: c.puddicombe@ecu.edu.au



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Save the date

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