

ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA



VOLUME **52**
NUMBER 2

The journal of the **Australian Association** for the **Teaching of English**

2017



English in Australia

2017

Editor: Anita Jetnikoff

Reviews Editor (Adolescent Fiction):

Deb McPherson

Production Editor:

Michael Deves

REVIEW BOARD

Jennifer Alford, *Queensland University of Technology*

Philip Allingham, *Lakehead University*

Richard Andrews, *University of London*

Roslyn Arnold, *University of Sydney*

David Baxter, *Australian College of Physical Education*

Tom Bean, *University of Nevada*

Catherine Beavis, *Griffith University*

Jory Brass, *University of Melbourne*

Sue Brindley, *Cambridge University*

Scott Bulfin, *Monash University*

David Cole, *University of Western Sydney*

Ronnie Davey, *University of Canterbury, Christchurch*

Patricia Dowsett, *St Hilda Anglican School for Girls*

Cal Durrant, *Murdoch University*

Julie Faulkner, *Monash University*

Susanne Gannon, *Western Sydney University*

Andrew Goodwyn, *University of Reading*

Bill Green, *Charles Sturt University*

Anita Jetnikoff, *Queensland University of Technology*

Joanne Jones, *Curtin University*

Terry Locke, *University of Waikato*

Jacqueline Manuel, *University of Sydney*

John Mayher, *New York University*

Larissa McLean Davies, *University of Melbourne*

Karen Moni, *University of Queensland*

Brian Moon, *Edith Cowan University*

Debra Myhill, *University of Exeter*

Graham Parr, *Monash University*

Tony Petrosky, *University of Pittsburgh*

Stewart Riddle, *University of Southern Queensland*

Paul Richardson, *Monash University*

Wayne Sawyer, *Western Sydney University*

Jen Scott Curwood, *Sydney University*

Ilana Snyder, *Monash University*

Angela Thomas, *University of Tasmania*

Ian Thompson, *Oxford University*

Mary Weaven, *Victoria University*

Claire Wyatt-Smith, *Australian Catholic University*

Guidelines for Contributors

English in Australia is the peer-reviewed national journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

We welcome high quality, teacher-oriented and scholarly submissions in any relevant field of English, language and literacy education.

Your submission should reflect dilemmas, debates and concerns facing current contemporary English educators in Australia and elsewhere. Your submission may report on empirical research conducted with or by English teachers and students in classrooms, it may discuss the effects of policy on English teaching or it may elaborate on changes in the practices of teachers. It should be explicitly linked to issues of English teaching, pedagogy or curriculum and should demonstrate familiarity with current and pertinent scholarly literature.

The name of the journal is in no way parochial. Articles will be considered from anywhere which professes English as mother tongue or second language. However, if your article relates closely to a specific national context please ensure that it is appropriately pitched to readers in other national contexts.

Contributors are encouraged to read previous issues of *English in Australia* to get a sense of what is required in terms of structure and style.

1. All manuscripts should be submitted to <https://english-in-australia.scholasticahq.com>
2. Please provide all the author information requested on the site; ensuring that your name does not appear on the manuscript itself (to keep the blind review process intact).
3. The article should begin with an abstract of 100–150 words.
4. All references should conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) style. Please consult the *APA Publication Manual*, 6th edition, or any guide to APA referencing available through university library websites.
5. Please ensure that you have carefully edited and proofread your manuscript. Accepted articles that have style problems or inaccurate/missing references will be returned to the author for revision.

6. Please avoid footnotes. Usually it is possible to incorporate them into the text. Where they cannot be avoided they should be numbered with a superscript and listed at the end of the article (endnotes).
7. All manuscripts should be typed with double spacing on A4 paper with a 2.5 cm margin on all sides.
8. It is your responsibility to seek copyright clearance for any materials quoted.
9. All manuscripts are subject to double blind peer review by at least two reviewers. This means that the identity of the author is not divulged to the reviewers, nor are the reviewers' names revealed to the author.
10. Recommended length of articles for publication is between 4000 and 6000 words (including references).
11. You retain copyright of materials published in the journal; *English in Australia* holds first publication rights only. Authors retain the right to self-archive the final draft of their articles in their institution's eprint repository.

You can expect feedback from the reviewers and editor to help you shape your work effectively. Please feel free to contact the Editor or members of the Editorial Board to discuss any contribution which you may be considering.

Although *English in Australia* is predominantly a curriculum research and practice journal, occasionally poems and short texts of other genres relevant to the themes and readership of the journal are also published. Please only send short non-academic texts submissions to the editor. All academic papers should be submitted to Scholastica.

Address for correspondence:

Dr Anita Jetnikoff

Editor

English in Australia

Faculty of Education

Queensland University of Technology

Victoria Park Road Kelvin Grove Campus

Kelvin Grove, Queensland 4059 AUSTRALIA

Phone: +61 7 3138 3300

Fax: +61 7 3138 3895

Email: a.jetnikoff@qut.edu.au

® *English in Australia* is a registered trade mark of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English

None of the opinions expressed in English in Australia reflects the views of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.

English in Australia aims to publish a diverse range of opinions on issues of concern to English teachers and literacy educators.

We welcome contributions from all people with an interest in English, language and literacy education.

All contributions will be blind peer reviewed to determine their suitability for publication.

English in Australia Terms of Use

© Australian Association for the Teaching of English 2016

English in Australia is copyright and editions made available online, either on the AATE website or on the website of an affiliated English teacher association, are intended for research, teaching and private study use only.

Individuals may browse, search, retrieve and view *English in Australia* online, and may store or print single copies of editions or individual articles, or portions of such articles, solely for the individual's research, teaching and private study use only.

Copying or distribution of *English in Australia* – either in whole or in part - is not permitted without prior written permission from the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.

Without prior written permission you may not:

- distribute a copy (electronic or otherwise) of the full edition, or any article or material from any edition, of *English in Australia*
- post a copy of any edition or any article or material from an edition of *English in Australia* on a website (internet or intranet)
- amend any part of any edition of *English in Australia*, or
- charge for a copy (electronic or otherwise) of any edition or any article from *English in Australia*.

To request permission to use any content from any edition of *English in Australia*, please email the Australian Association for the Teaching of English at aate@aate.org.au.

Authors

If you are the author of an article that appears in an edition of *English in Australia*, please note that you retain copyright of the material published in the journal. *English in Australia* holds first publication rights only. Authors retain the right to self-archive the final draft of their articles in their institution's repository. They may not self-archive the published version of their article, nor are they permitted to copy or distribute the published version of their article without prior written permission from the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.



English in Australia

English in Australia Volume 52 Number 2 • 2017

The Journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
<i>Anita Jetnikoff</i>	
National Perspectives	4
Reading as an Imaginative Act	9
<i>Amanda McGraw and Mary Mason</i>	
Digital Fiction: 'Unruly Object' or Literary Artefact?	21
<i>Cherie Allan</i>	
'Big fans', 'Experts', and those 'In need of a challenge': Teacher attitudes to 'manga and anime kids' in the Secondary English classroom.	28
<i>Kelly Cheung and Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan</i>	
The Writing Mind: A play	39
<i>Sara Shaw</i>	
Footy, Gangs and Love: Using Auto-ethnography to Problematised Practice on a Practicum	45
<i>Roz Bellamy</i>	
Poem – 'Grief'	53
<i>Rory Harris</i>	
English Syllabus interpretation: The relationship between literary theories and teacher beliefs	55
<i>Jill Ireland, Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan and Susan Duchesne</i>	
The Ambivalent Legacy of Dartmouth Five Decades on: What, Now, Should We Teach the English Teachers?	65
<i>Jo Jones</i>	
Exposing the Dynamic Nature and Potential Role of Student Attribution Processes on English for Academic Purposes Achievement in Higher Education	73
<i>Heejin Chang, Angela Windsor and Lindsay Helwig</i>	
Reading & Viewing	82
<i>Deb McPherson</i>	

Editorial

ANITA JETNIKOFF

This mid-year issue for 2017 offers approaches to reading, writing, literature, curriculum and learning across all sectors of English, as well as updating the exciting work going on in the individual states.

The first group of academic papers revolves around reading and writing. 'Reading as an imaginative act', by Amanda McGraw and Mary Mason presents a research project on reading which gathers data from students' voices within communities of practice in schools. The researchers, reflecting their subjects' experiences and perceptions of reading, argue for a secondary English curriculum that is less 'fenced in' by limited notions of quality (based on high-stakes testing scores on reading) and more open to genuine learning based on imagination and creative response. The next two papers explore ways of reading and responding to newer forms of fiction in digital texts. Cherie Allen's paper on digital literature offers some theoretical insights into the ways digital fiction work on us as readers and how these are approached and applied in tertiary Literature classrooms for pre-service teachers. The title "'Big fans", "Experts", and those "In need of a challenge": Teacher attitudes to "manga and anime kids" in the Secondary English classroom,' by Kelly Cheung and Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan is fairly self-descriptive, and is also practical in its approach to digital texts the classroom. Both of these articles offer new ways of reading, viewing, analysing and otherwise working with digital textual forms in English classrooms.

In this issue I am deliberately including papers by beginning teachers to encourage their contributions to the journal, since many of our young or new teachers are part of our readership and may enjoy the perspectives of others in their position. I can attest to the fact that young teachers are bringing excellent ideas to the classroom and watched proudly as many of my erstwhile pre-service teachers courageously presented their fresh ideas to more experienced teachers at state conferences and published their ideas in state journals. This inclusion fulfils the concept of learning exchange that I have always held dear as an educator. In this light recent Master's graduate, Sara Shaw, offers an unusual and fresh insight into thinking about writing, memory, literature and history from the perspective of a post graduate pre-service

teacher. As a prospective teacher of writing, she reflects imaginatively on who and what has influenced her own writing in the form of a play, 'The writing mind'. Another beginning teacher reflects on her experience as both a Master's student and an experienced writer. Roz Bellamy provides a highly detailed, auto-ethnographic account of teaching Shakespeare on practicum, including teaching strategies and assessment reflections. The insights shared in both these reflective pieces would certainly be of interest to new and beginning teachers.

The place and approaches to Literature within Curriculum matters are reflected in the next two papers. Literary theories and teacher beliefs are explored historically in relation to a previous New South Wales English syllabus, in a paper by Jill Ireland, Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan and Susan Duchesne. This discussion extends the content of some of the discussions in the two previous issues of this journal concerning Post-Dartmouth approaches to the teaching of literature, as does Joanne Jones's paper reflecting on a Masters Literature course

A final article reports on an action research project in a tertiary context focusing on attribution in English as an additional language (EAL). The paper explores EAL students' perceptions of their learning in English for Academic Purposes courses, which is a growing area in tertiary English contexts.

Deb McPherson's review section which may both inform and inspire teachers looking for new literature for the classroom completes this issue.

I am very much looking forward the 'Cutting edge' conference this July in Hobart. It is shaping up to being another excellent AATE conference with much to engage and inspire all teachers of English. If you present a research paper, I hope you will consider submitting your work as an academic paper for *English in Australia*. Even if you attend and enjoy others' excellent presentations at the Hobart conference perhaps you could or suggest that the presenter(s) might submit their ideas to the journal. You can check submission guidelines on the website or on the front cover of the journal. I hope to see many of you at the conference. It is always inspiring to see what is going on in other states and countries in the always creative field of English.

Anita Jetnikoff

2017 AATE/ALEA National Conference 06-09 July, Hobart

Australian Association
for the Teaching of English

AUSTRALIAN LITERACY
EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION

Cutting
margin to mainstream
edge

From the margin of our continent and the virtual edge of the world, this conference brings cutting edge thinking and practice to mainstream educational experience.

'Cutting Edge' will explore student engagement, creativity, critical and divergent thinking, innovation and collaboration as they relate to high quality English and literacy learning experiences.

International presenters



Reading, content comprehension and assessment
Author of *I Read It but I Don't Get It; Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* and *So, What Do They Really Know?*

Cris Tovani, USA



Disciplinary literacies
Adolescent learners; the intersection between the literacies youth learn in the disciplines and the literacies they experience outside school.

Elizabeth Birr Moje, USA



Dialogic practices
Fostering collaboration and dialogue in classrooms and professional practice. Author of *Better than Best Practice: Developing Teaching and Learning through Dialogue*.

Adam Lefstein, Israel



Digital technologies
New pedagogies for teaching and learning in the English classroom.
Author of *Crafting Digital Writing: Connected Reading and Create Compose Connect!*

Troy Hicks, USA



Engagement and nonfiction texts
Strategies to engage students in reading and writing nonfiction.
Author of many books, including *Revisit, Reflect, Retell; Make It Real*; and *Explorations in Nonfiction Writing*.

Linda Hoyt, USA



Building lifetime readers
Fostering a love of reading, engaging reluctant readers and developing lifelong readers.
Author of *Igniting a Passion for Reading and In Defense of Read-Aloud*.

Steven Layne, USA

National presenters



Engaging pedagogies, grammar, multimodal texts
Classroom contexts for teaching grammar.
Social justice and education.
Co-author of *Playing with Grammar in the Early Years* and *Exploring with Grammar in the Primary Years*.

Beryl Exley, QLD



Leading English and literacy research
Teacher education and professional learning, classroom interaction, educational disadvantage and research methodology.

Peter Freebody, NSW



Early writing acquisition
The teaching and learning of writing; the relationship between success with early writing and on-going literacy development.

Noella Mackenzie, NSW



Children's literacy development
Young children interacting with digital technology
Co-author of *Playing with Grammar in the Early Years* and *Exploring with Grammar in the Primary Years*.

Lisa Kervin, NSW



Teaching of film as text
Education Programmer,
Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI).
Published extensively on Australian television culture and screen comedy.

Susan Bye, VIC

CONNECTED EVENT
Sunday 2 – Thursday 6 July

CUTTING EDGE WRITERS' MASTER CLASS, LITFEST

Classes for students and the public featuring prominent Australian writers.
More info: philip.page@education.tas.gov.au

**Thursday 6 July –
Sunday 9 July 2017
West Point,
Hobart.**

COPYRIGHT AGENCY
**CULTURAL
FUND**



NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Northern Territory

ETANT has been very active over the past few months and I have listed some of the events that have kept our members very busy.

NT School Debating – Twenty-four teams participated in this year's middle and senior school competition which began in early term one. In the finals, held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT on 26 April, the middle school teams debated, 'That museums should offer to return historical objects to their country of origin'. It was a fantastic debate with both teams giving many examples from both local and international museums. The seniors argued 'That we should prioritise Shakespeare in the English curriculum' and it was very pleasing to see the depth of knowledge of both teams in relation to Shakespeare specifically and world literature in general. It was a great competition and we thank all of the students, teachers/coaches and adjudicators who participated so enthusiastically. Congratulations to Driptime Middle School and Darwin High School who won their debates.

A national team has now been selected and they are busily preparing for the national finals in Brisbane in late May. Thanks to Sam Schuman from Darwin high School for coaching the NT team this year.

Narrative Film Workshop – ETANT members were able to attend a two-day workshop on 29–30 April by documentary filmmaker and lecturer Sean Cousins from Melbourne. This was a follow-up to another two-day presentation on documentaries which Sean presented last year. The comments from those who attended were overwhelmingly favourable and all participants left the sessions with useful ideas for teaching and making films with their students.

EnglishcoNnect – We are very excited about our new publication and very thankful to Elizabeth Mountford who has taken on the editorship of our new-look journal. There have already been two editions and Elizabeth is currently working on a third, which will be about film as a follow-up to the workshops by Sean Cousins. The publication is aimed at middle and senior school teachers and includes lots of units and resources that all teachers will find very useful to adapt or adopt for their own classrooms.

We have also continued to produce a regular

newsletter which reflects upon our past activities and highlights all upcoming events.

Annual General Meeting – Our AGM will be held at the Darwin Sailing Club on 19 May. We are very appreciative to all of our executive members for the work they have done over the past twelve months. Membership has been quite healthy and we are confident of reaching our target of 100 members some time later this year. It may not sound like many members to larger associations, but given our population it would be the equivalent of 3,500 members in NSW and 2,500 members in Vic.

The Plain English Speaking Award – This annual event will be held on the weekend of 17 June to select our representative for the national finals. Senior students from all over the NT compete in the finals which will be held in Darwin.

Festival of Teaching – This is an NT conference involving about twelve professional associations and is being held on 26 August at Casuarina Senior College. Although it is many months away the expressions of interest to conduct a workshop had to be submitted last weekend. As usual there were lots of great proposals submitted by ETANT members and we easily reached our quota. It is a great opportunity for our members to share their expertise with others and I have never been disappointed by the calibre of the presentations. We may be a small system but the quality of teaching and the depth of expertise within the ETANT fraternity is exceptional.

John Oakman, ETANT Delegate

Tasmania

Despite the excitement and preparations that are well underway for co-convening the upcoming National Conference, the TATE executive has continued to work toward establishing meaningful partnerships with local English educators and pre-service teachers.

Continuing with our aims to connect English teachers, help foster professional relationships and provide generous and practical resources to teachers, TATE members have established a successful critical literacy network; providing teachers with a space, place and time to engage with theory and reflect on how this theory influences their teaching. At the launch meeting, titled 'situating classrooms in culture and history', we heard from Greg Lehman about his PhD research into colonial representations of Indigenous Tasmanians, with Yvette

Blackwood and Ellen Rees also presenting and reflecting on teaching feminism and how their feminist ideas influence their teaching. The organisers are hopeful that the group will meet once a term to host professional and collegial conversation, with the next meeting scheduled to hear about gender representation in Year 9 texts.

TATE is also in the early stages of a partnership with the Education Faculty at the University of Tasmania. TATE hopes to run regular masterclasses with second year pre-service English teachers, designed to provide an insight into the daily running of an English classroom and to help with some practical (and tested!) strategies for teaching the 'staples' of the English classroom, such as poetry, novel studies, Shakespeare, essay writing, analysis, inquiry based learning, spelling and more! Through our Early Career Representative, pre-service teachers have said that the practical teaching and learning strategies is what they need before they enter the classroom. TATE is hopeful that these workshops will help early career teachers feel more comfortable and equipped in the classroom, as well as inspire them to be courageous and collaborative English teachers.

Of course, the wheels are well and truly in motion as the TATE executive prepares to co-convene the National Conference from 7–9 July in picturesque Hobart. 300 speakers are scheduled to share their innovative, creative and divergent ideas and practices with 650 keen English and literacy educators from around the nation and the globe (with more registrations expected as our closing date approaches!). The full conference program is now available and can be downloaded from www.englishliteracyconference.com.au. Interest in our pre-conference institutes with Troy Hicks, Linda Hoyt, Cris Tovani and Steven Layne and literary breakfasts with Leigh Hobbs and Angela Meyer is stirring, with some of our social events nearly at capacity! Our Red Decker Bus tour is sold out and a third and final penitentiary ghost tour has been organised. Limited tickets are still available for the Night at the Museum cocktail to be held at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery with the central gallery and historic Bond Store open for exploring. Stay tuned for details of our Litfest, sponsored by Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund, to be held from 2–6 July featuring prominent Australian writers. Far from a 'usual' writers' festival, Litfest will feature a series of hands-on and active workshops for those brave enough to have their hand guided by some of the best writers in the country.

We look forward to seeing you in Hobart in July for *Cutting Edge: Margin to Mainstream!*

Emma Jenkins, TATE Delegate

South Australia

Term 2 is always a very full term for SAETA events. A team of us judged the hundreds of entries from Grades 1 to 12 students for the annual Young Writers Award, creating a short list for our chief judge, author Kylie Mansfield, who will present the prizes in August.

On June 3 we have our annual conference with the Keynote presented by Dr Kristin Alford, the Director of MOD. MOD is a futuristic museum of discovery at UniSA and Kristin's presentation on the vital roles English teachers can play in creating skills and resilience for a future rich in technologies promises to be fascinating. Following this will be four successive sessions offering a myriad of practical workshops presented by generous SA teachers willing to share their practice.

Finally, over the morning and afternoon of 22 June we will once again run our fabulous 'Meet the Writers Festival' for 2000 students and their teachers. Our two Keynotes are the highly popular and engaging Andy Griffith and Isobel Carmody, whilst another nine authors will join them in presenting two workshops where they get to share the craft of writing in more intimate sessions.

Over the holidays many SA teachers are also looking forward to attending the national conference in Hobart, which no doubt will be greatly successful, and I suspect Term 3 and beyond will be equally action packed ...

Alison Robertson, President SAETA

Queensland

What is it like having a full year to celebrate a birthday? Queensland's English teachers are certainly living in action-packed times.

The sunshine state faces a huge change to our senior assessment system as 2017 has seen four of the new syllabuses for English released ready for schools to begin planning our new courses. The biggest change for Queensland is the introduction of an externally set, externally marked assessment piece as well as a reduction to four only assessment items for each subject. Syllabuses for English, Essential English, English as an Additional Language and Literature have now been released and plans are in place for English teachers to attend familiarisation workshops beginning in July. The final subject in the English suite, English and Literature Extension, is due to be released within the next few months.

This momentous change leaves ETAQ with a critical role to play in supporting teachers. The management committee has organised a planning meeting to

navigate a path through the next few years. A subcommittee will take carriage of taking this forward, examining how our structures and processes can allow ETAQ to respond positively.

Teachers were keen to embrace the opportunity to attend Seminar 1 where Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith provided a keynote on the nature of assessment, outlining some of the challenges and opportunities facing Queensland students and teachers. Seminar 2 followed up by examining differentiation, led by a keynote from Dr Misty Adoniou. The other major event has been Beginning Teachers Day. The keynote for this was delivered by Melanie Wild, recipient in 2016 of the APTA Early Career Teachers Award. Melanie outlined the critical ways in which teachers maintain themselves as professionals, a very timely reminder.

Writer of ETAQ's history, Lenore Ferguson, continues apace gathering reflections from ETAQ members and past committee members across the state in order to appreciate how, whilst things change, what remains constant is that wonderful synergy of English teachers working together to make it all work.

The major birthday celebrations are coming up in August with the Annual State Conference, where Larissa McLean-Davies and Markus Zusak will address delegates. Two social events will include speakers from yesteryear, like Glynn Davies, joining Nick Earls and local journalist Frances Whiting to help us to cut our birthday cake. The conference will provide the space for past winners of ETAQ's Peter Botsman Award as well as past presidents and patrons to gather to remind ourselves of ETAQ's achievements over the past half century of working with and for English teachers.

The ink on the program for the conference is almost dry as I write. Having a birthday that lasts a year is exhausting but pretty exciting.

Fiona Laing, ETAQ Delegate

Correction: In the last issue (52-1) the reference to Lenore Taylor should have read Lenore Ferguson. Our apologies to Lenore for this error.

ACT

ACTATE members will have seen the changes over the last year with a more visible presence in the ACT teaching landscape. Our executive team has grown in numbers and has been active in planning engaging and relevant professional learning events. We have also been communicating with members more regularly through social media and the website where the metadata

shows a high viewing rate of our resources and blog.

In 2016, we have explored a new membership structure and in 2017 there has been a 35% growth in membership using a group/school membership structure. Attendance at ACTATE events has also increased. This is a result of more accredited events through our Teacher Quality Institute and the professionalism of our presenters. As well as highly regarded interstate presenters such as Lindsay Williams, Eva Gold and Phil Page, and authors, Anna Funder and Clare Atkins, we are very fortunate to have ACTATE members willing to share their expertise at professional learning events such as our recent *Sharing the Secrets of Success* conference.

In Term 3, we are trying something very new, with an online course over 8 weeks, 'Teaching Writing Digitally'. We invite members and even those further afield to join us as we try to take advantage of the new opportunities in professional learning afforded by technology.

Rita van Haren

New South Wales

ETANSW has a new website! It's been a long time coming, but very necessary as we have increased what we do and need to think more about how we do it so we achieve the best results.

The ETANSW has been very busy this year as we balance all the competing demands on teachers. Regular events have become buried in a busy calendar as we promote the rigour and challenge of the English Textual Concepts Program and Inquiry Approaches in the English classroom, as well as acknowledging high stakes testing in our sessions on NAPLAN, grammar, and Literacy across the Curriculum.

As well as all of this, the new senior syllabus has created a need for ETANSW to provide even more professional learning to support our teachers in the classroom. While the syllabus has attracted its share of criticism as having a 'literacy' agenda, ETANSW has chosen to focus on what we value in English and how this can still be conveyed by the new syllabus. Specific PD days on syllabus interpretation have included some discussion on the new modules Read to Write and the Craft of Writing. Rather than narrowing the way we see English, these modules can be seen as exciting opportunities to extend our students and to engage with a variety of texts in creative and original ways.

In response to this challenge we have created some different events for our teachers, focusing on creative writing and how our own writing informs what we do in the classroom. Kerri-Jane Burke who was recipient

of the ETANSW sponsored Premier's Award, has put her research on teachers as writers into action; running writing days across the state in different creative venues on Saturday mornings. Kerri-Jane has also been organising our first ever writers' retreat, run over two days at the Manly Quarantine Station. This was a very successful event with presenters Kerri-Jane Burke, Sharyn Stafford and Dr Susanne Gannon guiding teachers in their own writing. Kerri-Jane will be guest editor of a special edition of our state journal *Metaphor*, focused on teachers who write. For teachers who couldn't make it to these events we also had the Craft of Writing days at Castle Hill and Hornsby which were well received. These are exciting opportunities which we see as setting a new model for PD, proposed by members who are not necessarily on ETA committees but who would like their projects supported by the association. We have seen great enthusiasm from the most recent recipient of the Premier's Award Narcisa Nozica, whose study led her to the US where she saw the positive outcomes of Slam Poetry in classrooms; this has inspired her to propose Slam Poetry as a future emphasis for PD. We look forward to supporting Narcisa in the development of her project on introducing SLAM poetry into schools.

In order to keep up with the increasing demands for Professional Development, we have welcomed Mara Diana to the ETA office as our new Events Coordinator. We are already seeing the benefits as Mara introduces new ideas to streamline the processes.

Syllabus change will always create anxiety but it is an inevitable pathway as we negotiate our way further into the twenty-first century. It is a necessity that acknowledges the changing context of our students and the new literacies that have evolved. ETANSW has been proactive in the consultation phase, seeking to represent the views of our diverse membership. At this stage, as the syllabus comes into its final phase, we are supporting our teachers in the necessary preparation before implementation. As we do this we recall the essence of the words of Allan Luke so many years ago, delivering the opening plenary at the IFTE conference in Melbourne: 'no syllabus can be implemented without teachers'. Whatever the intent of a syllabus, whatever the political climate, whatever the public feelings on the matter, it is ultimately up to teachers to put a syllabus into action. The power of the syllabus is felt in our classrooms and it is up to us as associations representing our teachers, to support everyone in making the transition as positive as we can.

Mel Dixon, ETANSW

Victoria

Now in their second year of implementation, the new Study Designs for English/EAL and Literature have carried through to Year 12 classes in Victoria, giving the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English a lot of high-energy and inclusive professional development opportunities. This is always a great time, as it means that people from across the state come together and work together, sharing their ideas and teaching practices for the better learning and teaching in the classroom. In particular, the new aural component for English as an Additional Language (EAL) has engaged teachers to develop new pedagogies and ways of assessing students, and VATE has been able to wonderful minds together to tackle this new outcome and plan for and devise best practice ways of handling this. Needless to say, VATE's publications has also been a bustling and thriving cog in the wheel, as a score of new publications have been developed and published to support English teachers who may not be able to venture out for face-to-face PD.

VATE continues to enjoy some very rewarding partnerships with other educational organisations, including the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the Melbourne Theatre Company, Melbourne Writers Festival, and the National Gallery of Victoria. Through these partnerships VATE is able to offer enriching experiences for members in other areas of English such as technology, film, and theatre, and if such experiences translate into the classroom then we know we are onto a good thing!

It doesn't seem quite right that we are now into the latter half of the academic year, but here we are. And now that we are, it is only right to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the VATE office and of the tireless committees that support the overall work of the association behind the scenes. The Curriculum and Assessment, the Professional Learning, and the Publications and Communications committees are all wonderful opportunities for our members to be involved in the workings of VATE and contribute to the terrific support provided for members everywhere. This point in the year certainly marks significant achievement for all of these committees and as we move towards our exciting State Conference in November their work will only continue. We hope that our Conference theme, *Now, gods, stand up for bastards!* will poke, provoke, and prod our members into debate about the English language and all its wonder and controversy.

Thank you to everyone!

Tim Nolan, VATE Delegate



Sharing the expertise

NEW RELEASE

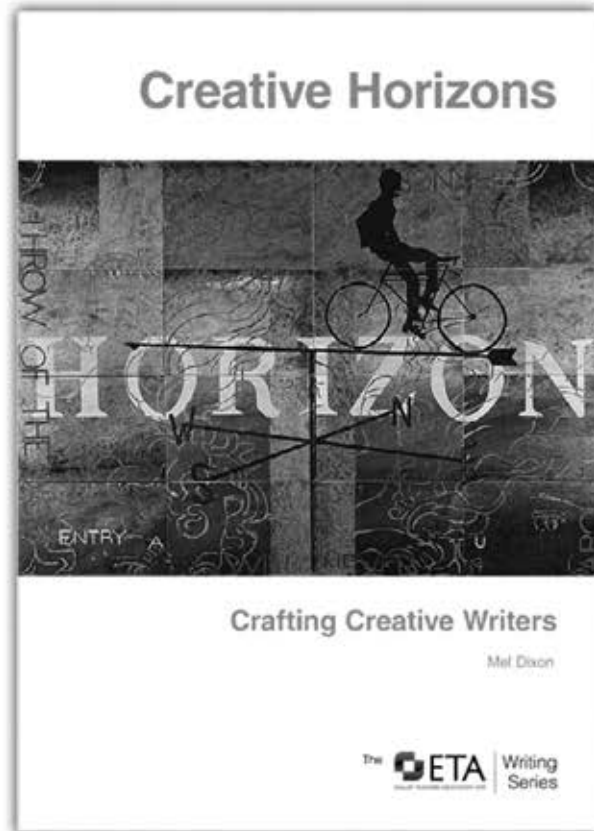
Creative Horizons: Crafting creative writers

A publication from the English Teachers Association NSW

Creative writing is an important avenue through which the individual becomes empowered as the act of self-expression validates their experiences, memories and life events. In this book on creative writing, the elements of stories are explained, making students aware of the relationship between responding and composing.

Chapters include:

- Programming for imaginative writing
- Writing for purpose and audience
- Seeking inspiration
- Good writers are also readers
- What is a short story?
(Theme, style, mood and tone, character, setting, plot)
- How to avoid recount
- Short-short stories
- The six step method to writing
- The MICE game



Each chapter is supported by activities and worksheets that can be used in the classroom. Links to ACARA learning areas, English Textual Concepts, sample programs and lists of useful websites complete this welcome addition to your classrooms.

COST: \$45.00 (plus postage and handling)

Order online or buy from ETA events –
www.englishteacher.com

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

5. Writing tags for stories

Tags have to attract an audience but they also have to anticipate what the audience wants. Write down ten tags for a story you have written or have read. Then explain which audience is targeted in the story and why you chose these tags.

Note: This activity on tags makes you more conscious of what and why you are writing. It is also one step to building an understanding of theme as it identifies ideas that are important.

Reading as an Imaginative Act

*Amanda McGraw, Education and Arts, Federation University Australia, and
Mary Mason, Education Consultant*

Abstract: The teaching of reading provokes heated discussion, particularly when the reputations of governments and institutions rest on what students do and achieve. This paper focuses on the first two years of a three year project where the researchers worked in communities of practice with secondary school English teachers in state, Catholic and independent schools in Victoria, Australia with a focus on examining and improving the teaching of reading. A starting point for practitioner inquiries was giving close attention to what students say about their reading experiences. Based on the students' insight and a return to key theorists, we suggest that the process of reading in English is largely an imaginative act. Like the students, we argue for curriculum that is less 'fenced in' by limited notions of quality and more open to genuine learning.

Introduction

Debates about the teaching of reading often focus on declining scores in high stakes tests. Concerns about students' achievement levels led to a national inquiry into the teaching of literacy, and particularly reading, over 10 years ago in Australia (Rowe, 2005). In alarmist tones the author argued that educational 'fences' needed to be built at the top of the 'cliff' rather than provide 'belated and costly "ambulance services" at the bottom' (p. 9). Assuming that the fences are to prevent young people from toppling tragically over the edge, it is implied that as a nation we are on the brink of a skills-based disaster and that teachers are largely to blame. This view was recently reinforced by Senator Birmingham who suggested that NAPLAN data released in 2016 indicated that schools were not meeting the 'high standards we should expect with the growth in investment we have had in our schools' (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-13/stalling-naplan-results-spark-calls-to-crack-the-whip-in-school/8113518>). A growing emphasis on testing basic skills and rigid accountability systems, are worryingly impacting on students' experience of reading in the classroom (Manuel, 2012b). When research studies show that there is a strong link between interest in reading and achievement in reading (Meiers, 2004) it is clear that students' experiences must be given close attention.

This inquiry focuses on the voices of secondary school students. Over a two-year period and with the support of English teachers, we interviewed close to 100 Victorian secondary school students in 10 secondary schools and also invited students to draw reading in an attempt to better understand the nature of reading, particularly as it is experienced in the school context. During the two years we worked as critical friends with teachers involved in a state government funded project where teams of secondary school English teachers worked in communities of practice to examine and improve the teaching of reading. The inquiry was led and supported by the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE), a state-based subject association for English teachers. This paper aims to shift attention away from policy makers, governments and the media who focus on broadcasting deficit views of young people and engaging in blame games largely aimed at teachers, to an authentic focus on those who are asked to read in classrooms: the students. From them we seek insight into the process of reading, what helps students to develop as readers, and the impact of classroom learning experiences. While the interviews focused generally on experiences of reading in English classrooms, it is clear in many of the students' comments that they are thinking about experiences with literary

texts, although this cannot always be assumed. What emerges from the interviews is a conception of reading as a dynamic, multi-faceted, cultural experience reliant on the making of imaginative connections provoked by visual, dialogic, emotional, embodied, metacognitive and social stimuli. Based on these understandings we examine the implications for English teaching and suggest that a continuing focus on technical, formulaic approaches that are disconnected from the experiences and lives of young people and that treat reading as a routine, procedural practice rather than an imaginative one, are negatively impacting on young people's desire to read for meaning. We suggest that a system focused on providing paramedic assistance to isolated problems rather than a focus on the person-centred nature of learning in classrooms (Fielding, 2001), is doing more harm than good. We concur with Gee (2017, in press) who suggests that language and experience bootstrap each other (p. 20) and that 'a dance between immersion and instruction' (p. 25) can lead more meaningfully to the enhancement of reading in classrooms.

Attending to the voices of students

In foregrounding the voices of students in schools, we aim to 'give voice to a people's experience' (Featherstone, 1989, p. 376) and to argue, in refreshing, authentic ways, that the person-centred nature of schooling (Fielding, 2006) demands that we take students' experiences seriously. The lived experiences of young people are often discounted in an 'impersonal ethos of competition and performativity' (Angus, 2006, p. 369), unless they are used as a managerial tool for school leaders in self evaluations (Duffield, Allan, Turner & Morris, 2000). Listening closely to students' voices demands a capacity to empathise and a willingness to hear perspectives that may not sit easily with dominant views (Smyth, 2012). It is argued here and elsewhere (McCallum, Hargreaves & Gipps, 2000) that student voice is an increasingly important element in understanding the nature of teaching and learning at school.

If we agree that attending to students' voices is important, then we need to take seriously what they say, do and refuse to take part in. More generally, students can powerfully decide not to learn. Kohol (1994) suggested that purposefully deciding not to learn 'involves closing off part of oneself and limiting one's experience. It can require actively refusing to pay attention, acting dumb, scrambling one's thoughts

and overriding curiosity' (p. 4). This should not be confused, Kohol (1994) argues, with failing and in fact refusing to take part is an important aspect of executing free will and choice and enables people to shape life directions and identity (p. 10). Kohl (1994, p. 11) suggests that authorities are stuck on a view that there is a single way to live and learn and that we are driven as teachers and policy makers, by what we think matters. More reductive views of knowledge, it is suggested, not only limit the agency of young people and ignore the subjectivities, lives, cultures and histories of learners (Yandell, 2013), but can lead to young people quietly or more boisterously (McGraw, 2011) refusing to take part. In the face of increasing pressure to improve results in high stakes tests, students can be exposed to uninspiring pedagogies and then made responsible for their failure (Bickerstaff, 2011; Clandinin, Steeves & Caine, 2013). Communities of practice shaped by reciprocal engagement in dialogue and mutual respect for what people experience are necessary ingredients for 'a lived and living commitment to education' (Fielding, 2001, p. 108).

What counts as reading?

Yandell (2012) argues that what increasingly counts as reading in English classrooms, influenced by more reductive, technical-rationalist views is, 'knowledge of the word, but not of the world' (p. 284). There is also a renewed assumption, Yandell (2012) suggests, that meaning is in the text and that the reader must simply understand it and respond. The idea that reading is a 'human experience' (Rosenblatt, 1938) and an 'imaginative encounter' (Dixon, 1979) signifies a more complex process that is at once personal and cultural, creative and logical, emotional and critical; something open to possibility and difficult to capture and measure. While reading texts in the English classroom invariably deals with examining the experiences of human beings in diverse contexts, times and situations, the sense we make and remake of texts as readers based on our own assumptions and life experiences, is also a fundamentally human experience. Rosenblatt (1938) suggests that the literary text 'exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text' (p. 24). Reading is a complex process, she suggests, emerging from the connections readers make, based on their personal histories. Reading is a transactional process of making meaning: a unique 'imaginative experience' (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 24) that is dynamically constructed and selective.

Also some time ago, Dixon (1979) wrote about reading literature and media texts as imaginative encounters with the stories people tell (p. 29). Interested in what happens in students' heads when they read, Dixon described a dynamic experience of being inside the text and finding language to *contemplate* it. Reading, in this sense, is being 'carried away' and also, in significant moments, 'turning away'. Being absorbed in the world of the text, in a world of imagination and feelings is what Rosenblatt (1978) refers to as an aesthetic stance. This isn't simply getting lost in a text, but includes 'a continuing awareness of the text' (p. 29) and how it functions, as well as a reflexive awareness of the reader's own shaping of meaning and what the 'words are stirring up' (p. 31). Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that any reading stance whether it be aesthetic or scientific, requires imagination (p. 32). Isn't any reader, Rosenblatt asks, required to 'conjure up the referents for the verbal symbols and to entertain new ideas?' (p. 32). The process of putting together verbal clues involves a complex interplay and synthesis of images, thoughts, voices, questions, emotions; what Rosenblatt (1978) would also suggest is a creative process (p. 52). The reader draws upon her/his internalised cultural understandings in a dynamic, often unconscious manner which implies that the broader and deeper a reader's relevant cultural store is, the richer the connections can be. Memory, Rosenblatt (1978) suggests, also serves an important function, not only in the sense of bringing life memories to the text. Recognition and memory of linguistic features during the reading process, allow readers to make complex links and juxtapositions that enable symbols, themes, ideas to be evoked and considered. The 'tentative creation of a framework' (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 62) of understanding, which is confirmed and challenged during the reading process is a subtle and uncertain process which demands attention to detail, confidence and trust. Being able to express and continue to extend and shape interpretations with others also involves an imaginative interplay of language and experience.

Iser (1972) suggests that in 'climbing aboard' a text, the reader sets it in motion (p. 282). Literary texts do not develop in a 'rigid' clear way; Iser argues, that they activate creative activity. In the process of gap filling, dynamism is created; a 'virtual dimension' that is neither the text nor the reader's imagination. It is the coming together of both (p. 284). In our urge to make meaning and see patterns and cohesion we actively group things together and create visual pictures and

mental maps. We also envisage future directions and formulate expectations. Iser (1972) suggests that the process of forming allusions is never completely satisfying or complete; we oscillate 'between consistency and 'alien associations', between involvement in and observation of the illusion' (p. 291). It is this process that creates wonder, curiosity and intrigue. As readers we engage in an ongoing generative process of considering possibilities, shifting perspectives, finding significance.

Recently, Gee (2017, in press) argued that thinking and understanding is developed when we 'use mentally stored data from experience to run simulations in our mind' (p. 3). Our mental representations 'meld images, sounds, feelings, words, and other human sensory information' (p. 3). These representations are flexible and can take on different perspectives. Our humanity, suggests Gee (2017, in press), is linked to our capacity to 'see' ourselves and others acting in the world in certain ways. These mental scenarios, he contends, are multimodal and involve every human sensation, much like a video game. Our ability to situate meaning is the core basis of learning (Gee 2017, in press, p. 17); language and experience he suggests, bootstrap each other (p. 20). While Gee is not writing explicitly about the process of reading, his theory of learning is relevant (2017, in press). He suggests that learners must know how to situate meaning in any new domain and that this requires experiences in specific contexts. When reading is an imaginative, dynamic process it has the potential to fuel learning through meaningful engagement in contexts that evolve in the mind and through the developing use of language to explain, examine and recreate those contexts. The role of the teacher as curriculum designer and pedagogue, Gee (2017, in press) argues, is paramount. The student learns through immersion in experiences they care about *and* through thoughtfully considered instruction and talk that helps learners to 'recruit language as a system to label, guide and organise their experiences' (2017, in press, p. 26). When we test or assess students who lack situated meanings, he argues, we treat them unfairly.

Communities of practice: practitioner inquiries into reading

This paper is based on a three-year project funded by the Victorian State Government and led by the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE) which aims to examine and improve the teaching of reading. The paper is based on themes emerging

from the first two years of the project. On behalf of VATE, the authors of this paper, as English educators and researchers, framed the project as a joint inquiry involving students, teachers and ourselves. Our role is to act as critical friends rather than instructional experts. In the first year of the project four teams of English teachers from four secondary schools took part and in the second year six teams of English teachers from six schools were involved. The schools include rural, regional and metropolitan schools and state, Catholic and independent schools. Each team includes between three to six teachers who teach English at junior, middle and senior levels. As critical friends we work with the teacher teams over the course of a year in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) focused on building shared knowledge through active inquiries into the teaching of reading. Once the teachers find a focus for their inquiry; they trial new approaches in their classrooms and meet together regularly to discuss actions, students' responses and personal discoveries. At the end of the year, teacher teams present their practitioner inquiries at the annual VATE state conference.

Each year the teams initiate their inquiries by examining the thoughts and experiences of students with the aim of pinpointing a focus for their inquiry based on a theme that emerges from the students' experiences. Permission was sought from students, parents and principals to invite selected students to participate in focus group discussions about their reading experiences. The students were selected by their teachers to ensure that a range of students with different abilities and attitudes were involved in the discussions. The interviews were open-ended, extended discussions based on prompt questions related to students' background experiences with reading, their personal reading interests, their feelings about reading, and their approaches to reading. A key question posed during the discussions was: *What happens in your head when you read?* All interviews conducted for the purposes of this study were conducted by the researchers who were also the critical friends. During the discussions, field notes were taken by researchers which included comments made by students. The researchers took care to capture the students' exact wording; however, such a process involves a degree of selection and interpretation that cannot be avoided. Clearly, not everything that was said was recorded; however, the researchers attempted to honour the students' voices through close listening, attentiveness, empathy and curiosity. In this sense the interviewers worked intuitively, drawing upon their

interest in reading and their interest in students' experience, to record what was 'interesting and important' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 11) to young people and to English educators. Field notes of this kind are inscriptions and 'such inscriptions inevitably reduce the welter and confusion of the social world to written words that can be reviewed, studied and thought about time and time again' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 8). Students' names were not recorded by the interviewers. The field notes comprise direct statements made by students as well as general observations related to the number of people in agreement, the level of ease students seemed to have when responding, and the manner in which the conversation seemed to build. This research project was approved by a university ethics committee and by the Victorian Department of Education.

Either during the interviews or in a whole class activity, students were also invited to 'draw' reading. It was explained to students that drawing can be an interesting way to capture authentic experiences. Drawings can depict general experiences, emotions and actions directly or metaphorically. Students were asked not to worry about their drawing skills and to capture their initial response in any way they felt comfortable. They could use stick figures for example and simple images or diagrams. Once the teachers saw how revealing the drawings were, many decided to run this activity in their English classrooms as an opportunity to further get to know their students as readers and as a way to gather feedback about students' perceptions of classroom reading activities.

In the following section, we present clusters of student statements and drawings related to key themes that emerged across the schools. The key themes are captured in a student quote written in bold text. We follow this section with a discussion related to the notion of reading as an imaginative act and begin to examine the implications for teaching. By including the student statements in a thematic cluster related to their reading experiences, we aim to capture diverse perspectives and pay respect to students' experience and insight. It is worth noting that in each school there was a small group of interviewees who had such negative experiences of reading that they avoided discussions about the process. These students could not explore the questions in any depth and were stuck in a view of reading as decoding rather than comprehending. While students' and schools' names are not identified in the paper, we include the year level of

students in order to provide contextual information. In Australia, students begin secondary school in Year 7 when they are 11 or 12 years of age. They complete secondary school in Year 12.

Students' statements and drawings

'We don't ever talk about what happens when you read, we just talk about the book.' (Year 7)

The vast majority of students interviewed agreed that the focus of learning in relation to reading in English is on the text rather than on their reading processes. Most students said that they had never been asked to talk about what happens in their heads when they read and that they had never thought about it explicitly. Without a metalanguage to discuss reading and a conscious metacognitive awareness of what they do as readers, they found it difficult to voice their experiences; however, it was noted that as they warmed into the discussion with their peers, one person prompted another's thinking and by comparing experiences, they came to understand their own. For many students discussing the nature of reading and one's own experiences in an open, non-threatening way with others, was an intriguing and revealing experience.

'I haven't talked about reading in these ways. It would help so that you could consciously do some of these things if you're not. At least it raises your awareness.' (Year 11)

'You're noticing what you're doing when you read, but you're not taking note.' (Year 10)

'I don't know what happens, you just do it.' (Year 11)

'I don't think about it much, whether I'm good at it or not. It doesn't matter. I just read. It's something I do on my own.' (Year 9)

'We don't talk about reading in English because we have other stuff to do. We have exams and we have to stay on that course.' (Year 8)

'It's so weird, I just don't think about it. We never talk about it – and it's really hard to find the words.' (Year 8)

'When you're into it, you're focused and you visualise it.' (Year 9)

A common way to capture visualisation in the drawings was in thought bubbles or in dream-like clouds floating above the head. Another key theme in the drawings was the lifting of words from the page to suggest that through reading, words are transformed by the reader into visual depictions. For the great majority



of students, the process of reading activates visual images in their minds; however, it was interesting to hear that the nature of the images can be different for different readers. Some students see moving images in sequence rather like a film; others see a series of still snapshots. Some intentionally generate the images while for others they emerge naturally. The reader's stance can also be different: some students participate in the narrative while others watch as an observer. While the reader's stance may change depending on the construction of the text; it is interesting to note that students often generalise their stance and suggest that they have a dominant way of perceiving what happens.

'I see different still images, that's what's happening in my head.' (Year 8)

'When I think about it, I'm on the set of a movie and it's like being the director.' (Year 8)

'I love reading. I'm obsessed with fictional worlds. I imagine what I'm reading. I picture it in my head. I see how it plays out. To really get into it, you have to see pictures. If I'm trying to get into a book, I make myself picture something.' (Year 10)

'It's important to see things at the beginning. It's like a stage that you add to over time.' (Year 10)

'I make it real in my head. When they speak, it's like I'm looking at them, not being them.' (Year 10)

'I try to relate the characters to people I know. I picture people I know.' (Year 9)

'I don't relate the characters to anyone I know. I just use the descriptions from the book to make them.' (Year 9)

'I couldn't draw a picture of what I see in my head. The pictures are real faint at the start and then become more detailed as you go along.' (Year 9)

'I start by picturing myself and then as I get more interested, the pictures become more developed.' (Year 9)

'If you don't see the pictures, you don't understand.' (Year 7)

'The pictures are still and silent.' (Year 9)

'I picture the words on a background. I visualise the words.' (Year 9)

'I try to picture what's going on. I'm not a reader so it's harder to picture things. I can get in the flow and then I get distracted and I muck up then I have to go back and it upsets the flow.' (Year 10)

'If you were always aware of visualising, it would be tiring.' (Year 9)

'I talk about it in my head to myself.' (Year 8)

When I read I can imagine it in my head like I am at the scene watching it. I can also hear a small voice in my head predicting and revising and stuff.



Students were less aware of hearing voices when they read than seeing pictures, although once the notion of hearing internalised voices was raised either by the interviewer or a fellow student, students agreed that voices and internal dialogic interactions were an integral part of the process of sense-making. Once again, students' experiences were diverse and the presence of 'voice' is not always apparent. Some students heard expressive voices; for others the voice was monotone. Some voices were interactions between characters and more authoritative narrative voices. Other students heard their own voices interjecting and sometimes, particularly when reading for school purposes, a personal voice labelled the process as boring or difficult



or irrelevant. For some internal dialogue enabled puzzling, reflection, decision-making and important connections to be made. A small number of students (as in the first drawing above) recognised the use of voice as a means of consciously calling upon reading strategies learned at school. For most, however the notion of voice was linked intuitively to engagement and immersion in the text (as suggested in the second drawing). Some older students, although not many, linked a critical voice to deeper levels of analysis and the questioning of views and values in texts. In some schools the notion of voice was not raised at all.

'You say things in your head, even when their voice is different. All the words I repeat in my head, but it's different for different characters. There are different voices for different characters.' (Year 11)

'No, why would you do that? You hear your personal voice when you're not into a book. When you're into a book you're removed from yourself.' (Year 11)

'I hear noises like background sounds. I don't hear the voices of characters. I say the words in my head.' (Year 9)

'When I question a book I like it because it means I'm invested in it. It makes me want to read more.' (Year 9)

'I hear the story. I hear the words. I hear the character's voices.' (Year 8)

'You can use voices to make different characters real. I'm aware of my own voice mixing with other voices. When you put yourself in the story and you use your own voice, you get more out of it.' (Year 9)

'It feels like a narrated movie. There are conversations happening in my head – first my voice, then their voices. You have a discussion with yourself about what's happening.' (Year 10)

'You've got to be a good reader in your head before you can read publicly.' (Year 10)

'We talk to ourselves more when it's hard.' (Year 7)

'I say to myself, try hard.' (Year 7)

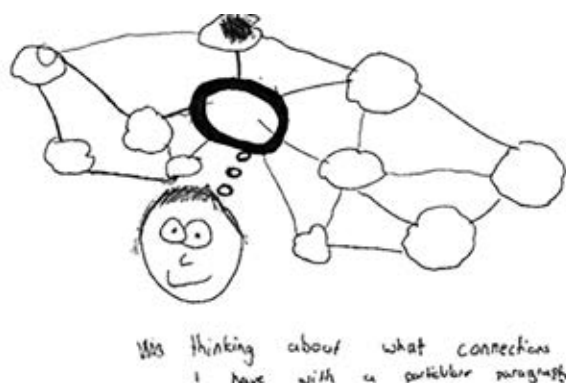
'I take things from the character's point of view. I take a position. If you don't like the character, you're less likely to believe them. I think about my opinions, if I'd do the same thing etc. I'm aware of my thoughts. I put the book down and think about it and ask questions of the text. That's when you start to formulate opinions. It happens naturally. Your thoughts pop up as questions. It happens without deliberate attention.' (Year 11)

'When I read I talk to myself about being dumb not getting into it; something's wrong with me.' (Year 9)

'When I'm enjoying reading, I'm thinking about what could happen next. I think about why they're going through that and why they're doing things.' (Year 7)



Many students, particularly those who are engaged regularly with reading, believe the process of reading involves actively making connections and reconnections between what has been read and what may occur next and building a complex mental maps over time (as depicted in the selected drawings). The reader is engaged in a complex, non-linear process of going along with things in good faith and then standing away to reflect, connect and question. Wonder, as depicted in many of the drawings, is central to thinking deeply about the text and means that when connections are made, the reader feels personal satisfaction and joy. The process of meaningful analysis is reliant on being interested in the text; intrigue occurs when personal connections are made and the reader wants to know



more. Experienced readers know that being confused as a reader is not something to fear; in fact they enjoy the challenge of having to work hard to solve puzzles over time. Students who described an experience of intrigue and wonder were more likely to talk about this in relation to texts they read independently outside of school.

'When I'm enjoying reading, I'm thinking about what could happen next. I think about why they're going through that and why they're doing things.' (Year 7)

'Some books are complicated and you have to read over things a few times to understand. I like it when it's complicated. It's like solving a puzzle, like on TV when you have a detective trying to figure it out.' (Year 7)

'I'm a logical person. I figure out pathways. I'm always guessing. One of the best parts of reading is the guessing.' (Year 10)

'I like being confused and then I keep reading and then BREAKTHROUGH!!' (Year 10)

'When you're engaged you understand and wonder. When you're not engaged your mind wanders. This happens for me most of the time in English.' (Year 8)

'Books I like take a while to get into. I can be confused and trying to work things out but it keeps me thinking and trying to make sense.' (Year 8)

'I like things to be open ended, not literal. It really gets me thinking.' (Year 8)

'You go along with a character even though it doesn't seem right – you suspend disbelief. You don't think about questioning until later. In the beginning you're empathising.' (Year 11)

'I can really get lost in a book. And I find myself. I relate and I find out about myself.' (Year 7)

The students, on the whole, believe that the process of reading is highly personalised and emotional. They enjoy the intimacy they have with texts that speak to them in the moment about things that are familiar as well as foreign. They are aware that their interpretations are their own and that through these thinking connections, they learn about themselves, others and the world. Many of the students understood that not all texts incite rich personal connections in all readers. Most students spoke about the importance of choosing their own text and of the difficulty of engaging in texts selected by others. They saw a difference between reading texts at home and reading texts at school.

'In my head I think about what reading is like for me, but I don't talk about this stuff with real people.' (Year 7)



'It's different for everyone. I think it's different because it seems to be different because it's so personal to me. Even reading aloud is different. People say things differently. I think, 'that's not how I would say that!'' (Year 7)

'Reading is intense if you're into the book.' (Year 7)

'If you read it makes a big difference in your life.' (Year 9)

'When you're into a book, you can be overcome with emotion. It can make me very happy.' (Year 8)

'If you're by yourself you get into it more.'

'When you're reading, you're creating who you are. It's unconscious. I identify with characters who are similar to me or who I want to be like. But if you didn't read there are other ways to find out who you are.' (Year 10)

'If you're not into it, you don't think or imagine yourself in it.' (Year 9)

'You've got to be personally interested ... then you'll read it, take it in and think about it.' (Year 10)

'There are no rules with reading. Everyone is different.' (Year 10)

'I can't read something I don't like.' (Year 7)

'I don't mind reading, it's relaxing. It calms me down if I get angry. It makes me calm. It takes me somewhere else.' (Year 7)



'If you're doing it in the classroom no one really cares because it's work. You feel like you're judged for your opinion. You feel odd. It feels like there's only one answer. You feel like you're alone in your opinion.' (Year 8)



*I find reading BORING
I get bored way too easily, I don't know exactly why though.*

Many students spoke about the disconnections they experience when reading texts in English. They spoke about the process of reading at school being 'boring' and while students had the ability to decode texts, the process for many was mind-numbing and formulaic rather than dynamic. They spoke about reading as 'work'; a less personal and more limiting experience than reading independently and choosing one's own texts. Some students felt disempowered during reading activities because the texts are selected by teachers and the ideas about texts seem to be already formulated. Some students suggested that when they are not actively involved in thinking about the text, it is difficult to respond in writing. One boy spoke angrily about being labelled as 'dumb' because he had nothing to say about a text he was not engaged in. There was a strong sense across all schools that students were actively deciding not to read entire texts because they didn't see the texts as worthy.

'It's not hard, it's just boring.' (Year 8)

'Reading in English is not the same as reading at home. There are distractions in class and some don't care.' (Year 8)

'It's not as fun because we can't develop our own point of view. When we do chapter questions it gets annoying. When we read aloud in class the voices aren't right. I have vivid voices in my head and it's monotone in class.' (Year 10)

'I haven't liked any of the books I've read in class. If you choose something yourself, it makes all the difference.' (Year 10)

'We don't want to be taught.' (Year 8)

'When a question is asked by a teacher, I always think, why that question?' (Year 8)

'In English you have to write it down and make it neat ... make it proper so that it makes sense. When you talk with others it's more exciting. You're exploring and finding out what someone else thinks.' (Year 8)

'If you're not interested, you think about other things. You get distracted. You turn the pages and you don't comprehend a thing.' (Year 11)

'When you have to answer questions students get confused because they don't know what the teacher wants. What the teacher wants dominates. There's always different ways you'd like to tackle things, we always go the teacher's way.' (Year 10)

'The stuff we read at school doesn't relate to me.' (Year 10)

'I felt so dumb in English because I didn't know what to say about the book we were reading because I couldn't connect to it. I couldn't write. I felt stupid. But I know I'm not. That's really frustrating!' (Year 10)

'It's hard when you haven't focused on the book, to write about what you like. You still learn new words but when you're not taking in the book, you don't remember what happened.' (Year 9)

'I get angry when I don't understand. It's too confusing trying to understand stuff.' (Year 7)



Reading as an imaginative act and the implications for teaching

We draw upon Rosenblatt's (1978) notion of reading as 'imaginative experience', Dixon's (1979) idea that reading is an 'imaginative encounter' and Iser's (1972) view that it is the reader's imagination that 'animates' the text to explain what it is the students are telling us about their experience of reading – and why they sometimes disconnect in English classes. We go beyond the idea that reading *builds* imagination to suggesting that the process of reading *is* imagination at work. Reading texts in English involves an imaginative interplay between prior experience and knowledge, internal and external dialogue, visual

images, emotions and embodied understandings. It is the readers' imaginative mind which enables deeper levels of meaning-making and imbues the text with personal significance. Questioning the text and one's own reading responses can take place in this dynamic encounter at any time and independent questioning is an important aspect of wondering, critical thinking, developing deep understanding and identity-making. Reading is not an easy experience to capture logically; in different moments the process of constructing personal meaning can involve fluid and disparate moves; it can be open to possibility and be resistant. It is the complicated, creative and empowering nature of the process that we find students are curious to know more about and so we suggest like Meek et al. (198) that 'those secret things' that readers do should become an explicit focus in classrooms.

Reid (1990) reminded us some time ago, that 'reading is shaped by the situation in which it occurs' (p. 49). The situatedness of reading influences our interpretive responses. The reading of texts is influenced by a range of interlinking frames like the way texts are presented through curriculum, talked about by influential others, the way texts interact with other texts, and the way they interact with dominant cultural perspectives. Reid (1990) argued that readers need to be alert to the way these frames contribute to the meanings we make. *Circumtextual* framing, Reid (1990) suggested can include the way official rubrics, curriculum policies, teachers' notes and textbooks influence understandings. Many of the students interviewed were acutely aware that certain pedagogical practices and approaches to curriculum were constraining influences which essentially pacified and dulled the reading experience. Other studies (Manuel, 2012a; Cope, 1997; Thomson, 1987) have also found that too many students do not enjoy the texts selected in English and that forcing students to read and persisting with activities they find boring and repetitive, turns students off reading, and importantly prevents the enhancement of skills and deep understandings. We suggest that the current focus on technical-rationalist approaches to teaching and learning reinforced by an increased focus on high-stakes testing and rigid accountability processes, is leading to a reversion to more teacher-oriented instruction that reinforces limited interpretations of texts and ways of responding. As suggested by others (Parr & Bulfin, 2015; Wyn, Turnbull and Grimshaw, 2014; Comber and McCormack, 2011) many teachers feel obliged to

teach to the tests despite feeling uncomfortable about doing so. Brock (2012) passionately argued that 'a child's education must not be screwed up by any rigid imposition of grid references from any particular ideological map.' (p. 45). Teachers of reading, he suggested 'must exorcise themselves from the curse of privileging form over meaning; of relying on the humdrum at the expense of the creative; of confusing the sum of atomised parts with the organic wholeness of experience' (p. 45). If reading is understood as an imaginative act: a dynamic, multi-faceted, cultural experience reliant on the making of imaginative connections provoked by visual, dialogic, emotional, embodied, metacognitive and social stimuli, what difference would it make to teaching?

While we will examine the implications for pedagogy elsewhere, it is clear that when teachers understand reading as an imaginative act, students and their teachers become more engaged in exploring texts in classrooms; the task of the teachers then is to 'bootstrap' (Gee, 2017) the more formal ways in which texts are making meaning to that emotional engagement. Teachers in this project have been inspired by their students to plan more socially-oriented activities that get students actively thinking, interpreting, talking and imagining. One team has focused on reading conferences and examined ways to develop authentic conversations with students about the process of reading. Another team has focused on the notion of voice and is placing an explicit focus on activating dialogic interactions which enhance and value students' interpretations of texts and build internal questioning. Other teams are focusing on creating embodied experiences which enable students to feel their way into characters and consider possibilities through action and visualisation. A number of teams are offering students more choice in their reading and are timetabling time for silent and sustained reading during the school day. Another team is improving attitudes to reading by inviting all teachers and school leaders to share personal stories about reading and texts that have moved them or shaped identity. At the heart of this project is the process of working in interconnecting communities of practices over the course of a year, where the opportunities to share practice and new understandings across schools and systems occur. At the end of the year, teachers share examples from practice, often in the form of film footage as well as their students' ongoing feedback at the VATE state conference. This experience is a meaningful, public opportunity to identify what has been

learned and the impact new approaches are having on students. It has also been an effective way to build interest in the project. In its first year we had 6 applications from schools; in its third year 23 schools applied to take part.

Conclusion

According to Manuel (2012b) the research consistently suggests that 'only a small minority of struggling adolescent readers have problems attributable to a learning disability' (p. 234). What seems more prevalent is the growing number of students who read in passive and disconnected ways at school and who appropriate meanings decided for them by others. Most of the students we interviewed had positive and insightful things to say about the process of reading when it is a dynamic, empowering and imaginative process. As Manuel (2012b) suggests 'mind numbing' pedagogies created by the high stakes testing environment potentially affect struggling readers as well as competent readers in worrying ways (p. 229). Of particular concern, is the way 'circumtextual' framing (Reid, 1990) is locking students into certain ways of reading and thinking about texts so that the process becomes less imaginative and more prescriptive and formulaic. We argue that a focus on what students say about their reading experiences can give us rich insight into what they know and are able to do and should guide us in where we go next in our teaching.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the funding provided by the Victorian Department of Education's Strategic Partnership Program which has enabled English teachers to take part in this project. We also acknowledge VATE Council and Kate Gillespie, VATE's Education Officer, who has managed the project on behalf of VATE. Finally we acknowledge the English teachers and their secondary schools who continue to thoughtfully examine their practice and pay attention to the experiences of their students.

References

- Angus, L. (2006). Educational leadership and the imperative of including student voices, student interests, and students' lives in the mainstream. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 9(4), 369–379.
- Bickerstaff, S.S. (2011). 'I felt untraditional': High school leavers negotiating dominant discourses on 'dropout'. *Journal of Education – Boston University School of Education*. 190(3), 37–46.

- Brock, P. (2012). Reading and secondary school English: Historical contexts for some contemporary English in education theory and practice. In J. Manuel & S. Brindley, (Eds.). *Teenagers and Reading: Literary heritages, cultural contexts and contemporary reading practices* (pp. 38–65). South Australia: Wakefield Press.
- Clandinin, J., Steeves, P. & Caine, V. (2013). (Eds.). *Composing lives in transition: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of early school leavers*. Bingley: Emerald.
- Comber, B. & McCormack, P. (2011). Education policy mediation: Principals' work with mandated literacy assessment. *English in Australia*, 46 (2), 77–86.
- Cope, J. (1997). Beyond voices of readers: Students on school's effects on reading, *English Journal*, 86 (3), 18–23.
- Dixon, J. (1979). Imaginative encounters with life. *English in Australia*, 47, 3–14.
- Duffield, J., Allan, J., Turner, E., & Morris, B. (2000). Pupil's voices on achievement: An alternative to the standards agenda. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30 (2), 263–274.
- Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. & Shaw, L.L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Featherstone, J. (1989). To make the wounded whole. *Harvard Education Review*, 59 (3), 367–378.
- Fielding, M. (2001). Beyond the rhetoric of student voice: New departures or new constraints in the transformation of 21st century schooling? *Forum*, 43 (2), 100–110.
- Fielding, M. (2006). Leadership, radical student engagement and the necessity of person-centred education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9 (4), 299–314.
- Gee, J.P. (2017, in press). A linguistically and educationally oriented theory of learning based on situated meaning. *Learning: Research and Practice*.
- Iser, W. (Winter, 1972). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. *New Literary History*, 3 (2), 279–299.
- Kohol, H. (1994). *'I won't learn from you' and other thoughts on creative maladjustment*. New York: The New Press.
- Manuel, J. (2012a). Reading lives: Teenagers' reading practices and preferences. *English in Australia*, 47 (2), 45–57.
- Manuel, J. (2012b). Teenagers and reading 1: Factors influencing reading (under)achievement. In J. Manuel & S. Brindley, (Eds.). *Teenagers and Reading: Literary heritages, cultural contexts and contemporary reading practices* (pp 272–284). South Australia: Wakefield Press.
- McCallum, B., Hargreaves, E. & Gipps, C. (2000). Learning: The pupil's voice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30 (2), 275–289.
- McGraw, A. (2011). Shoving our way into young peoples' lives. *Teacher Development*. 15 (1), 105–116.
- Meek, M., Armstrong, S. Austerfield, V., Graham, J. & Plackett, E. (1983). *Achieving literacy: Longitudinal studies of adolescents learning to read*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Meiers, M. (2004). *Reading for pleasure and literacy achievement*. ACER: Issue 12. Retrieved 6/8/2016: <http://research.acer.edu.au/resdev/vol12/iss12/5/>
- Parr, G. & Bulfin, S. (2015). Professional learning and the unfinalizable: English educators writing and telling stories together. *Changing English*, 22 (2), 157–175.
- Reid, I. (1990). Reading as framing, writing as reframing. In M. Hayhoe & S. Parker (Eds.). *Reading and Response*. (pp 49–61) Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1938). *Literature as exploration*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Rosenblatt, L.M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rowe, K. (2005). National inquiry into the teaching of literacy (Australia): Literature Review. Camberwell: ACER (Retrieved 24/07/2016 from http://research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/5)
- Smyth, J. (2012). Doing research on student voice in Australia. *Management in Education*. 26 (3), 153–154.
- Thomson, J. (1987). *Understanding teenager's reading: Reading processes and the teaching of literature*. Norwood: AATE.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wyn, J., Turnbull, M. & Grimshaw, L. (2014). *The experience of education: The impacts of high stakes testing on school students and their families: A qualitative study*. Sydney: The Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.
- Yandell, J. (2012). Different ways of reading, or just making the right noises? *Changing English*. 19 (3), 283–294.
- Yandell, J. (2013). *The social construction of meaning: Reading literature in urban English classrooms*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Amanda McGraw is a Senior Lecturer who coordinates the Master of Teaching (Secondary) program at Federation University Australia. Amanda taught English for 20 years in state and independent schools and worked as the Education/Executive Officer at VATE for three years. Her research interests include the teaching of reading in English, dispositions for teaching, and partnerships in teacher education.

Mary Mason is a life member of VATE. Her career has focused on change in Schools, particularly around increased agency for students. For the past two years she has been working with Dr Amanda McGraw on a reading literacy project for VATE with funding from the Victorian Department of Education.

New! Now available!

The Artful English Teacher

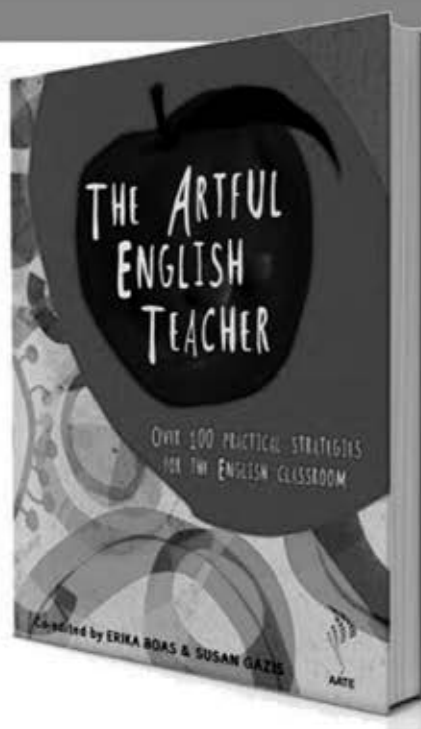
Edited by Erika Boas and Susan Gazis

This new title from AATE is filled with evidence-based practical approaches, tools and examples for the early career English teacher.

Not just restricted to the early career English teacher, this book also offers some fresh approaches to teaching English—approaches that are relevant to all classroom teachers and educators alike. English teachers from around Australia have contributed to this text, as key chapter authors and providers of illustrative snapshots of practice. Key content includes -

| English Concepts | Fostering Collaboration | Learner Engagement | Differentiation | Gradual Release of Responsibility | Inquiry Approaches | Formative Feedback | Culminating Projects | Powerful Pedagogies | ICT & Digital Tools | Know Your Setting & Context | Community Engagement | Mentoring | Tips for Casual Teachers | The Role of Professional Associations |

ISBN: 9780909955281



Order online or by phone, fax or email

Online: aate.org.au/products/online-store
or scan QR code

Phone: +61 8 8332 2845

Fax: + 61 8 8333 0394

Freephone: 1800 248 379 (Australia only)

Mail: AATE, PO Box 3203, Norwood, SA 5067

ABN: 80 009 808 468



www.aate.org.au

\$49.95 + \$8 postage



AATE Australian Association for the
Teaching of English

Digital Fiction: 'Unruly Object' or Literary Artefact?

Cherie Allan, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract: Is digital fiction worthy of serious consideration as a literary text and does it have a place in the English classroom, particularly in light of the establishment of a stand-alone Literature subject as part of the Years 11–12 English program in the Australian Curriculum? To answer these questions this paper briefly looks at the development and definitions of digital fiction, examines a number of current digital narrative formats, considers narratological analyses of two digital texts that accord with literary practice but also account for the affordances of the digital environment and finally provides a snapshot of the author's professional practice in this area.

Introduction

The literary landscape is currently experiencing a shift whereby print-based narratives are slowly giving way to one (eventually) of digital dominance. This transition requires teachers of literature to rethink their cultural assumptions about the nature of literary forms and to understand digital narratives in formal ways, including from a narratological perspective that can account for the contemporary forms of narrative (in this case digital narrative) for which the taxonomies and typologies of a classical narratology are no longer adequate. Digital narratives could be easily dismissed as 'games' and seen as unworthy of serious literary study. Yet, they are multi-modal texts that are constructed of complex networks of diverse narrative elements that do not readily lend themselves to a disciplined and streamlined analysis; rather, they need to be approached through multiple and flexible means. In an attempt to change this perception of non-literariness this paper seeks to situate digital fictions within a narrative ecology through a look at historical beginnings, a range of current formats, the textual analysis of two digital narratives and musings upon possible classroom applications. In doing so, it is most closely aligned with the Literature subject of the year 11–12 English Curriculum (ACARA, 2017) and its focus is on literary analysis rather than digital literacies and new media studies.

Defining digital fiction

Any attempt to arrive at a fixed definition of digital fiction is almost impossible given the ever-changing nature of the field. However, Bell and others provide a broad definition from which to proceed:

Digital Fiction is fiction written for and read on a computer screen that pursues its verbal, discursive, and/or conceptual complexity through the digital medium, and would lose something of its aesthetic and semiotic function if it were removed from the medium. (Bell, Ensslin, Ciccoricco, Rustad, Laccete and Pressman, 2010, n/p)

Predictably, while this definition was written as recently as 2010 the reference to 'computer' screen is already somewhat redundant given the proliferation of devices on which digital fiction is now typically read. This redundancy also flags the constant change within the field as a result of technological developments. Astrid Ensslin on the other hand, restricts her

definition of fiction under the 'digital fiction' umbrella to those that exhibit specific elements of readability which include the written and/or spoken word and particular aspects of textuality that require stylistic, narratological *and* ludic analysis (2014, p. 76). This debate will, no doubt, continue.

Despite digital fiction in one form or another now being available for almost four decades, academic discussion continues as to whether these texts can be considered literary texts or, as is more often, unruly objects (Rettberg & Rettberg, 2010). On the one hand, they *do* appear 'unruly' as they do not conform to the conventions of print texts yet, on the other hand, they can be seen as occupying a position along a continuum of literary texts. Electronic literature emerges both from a culture of networked computing and from contemporary literary and artistic practices (Rettberg & Rettberg, 2010) including postmodernism and post-structuralism. They tell a story, use literary devices and intertextual references; readers interact with them and make meaning from this interaction. A number of formats have clear antecedents such as hypertext novels which hark back to choose-your-own-adventure stories in print texts. Therefore, they should be viewed as another development in a long history of literary experimentation and innovation.

Another difficulty of working with digital fiction is the provisional nature of the literary terminology both in terms of the relevance or otherwise of conventional narratological terms such as author, narrator, illustrator and so on. Furthermore, the somewhat cavalier manner in which creators, publishers and distributors assign seemingly randomly-coined terms to new digital textual formats can cause added confusion. Nomenclatures for variations on the digital novel range from 'digitally augmented', through 'born digital', and 'transmedia' to 'networked' novels to name a few. Analysts not only struggle with finding an appropriate noun by which to describe a text but also have difficulty in settling on verbs wondering if a digital narrative is told, created or enacted and conversely, read, viewed or played. However, these complications are characteristic of periods of innovation and experimentation and as the field becomes more established its associated terminology will, hopefully, become more stable. Ensslin argues that despite this ambiguity the interface between digital writing, audio-visual art, and game programming has proven to be one of the most prolific breeding grounds for digital artists and writers in the twenty-first century thus far (2014, p. 75). For

this reason alone the field deserves serious consideration as a legitimate part of the literary landscape.

Examples of digital 'objects'

Some of the most popular digital formats of Children's and YA Literature are eBooks, apps and 'born digital' narratives. As many teachers will be aware, in most cases eBooks are typically print books that have been published in a digital format, sometimes labelled 'paper-under-glass' by some analysts (Ensslin, 2014, p. 76). They follow a linear progression determined by the author and/or the illustrator (depending on the format), generally have no or very little of the interactivity of apps for example but do have digital functionalities that are not available to print texts such as search and dictionary buttons. Narrative apps, on the other hand, are print narratives that have been remediated to interactive digital formats that range in degree of interactivity from low to very complex. They are navigated via hyperlinks and/or interactive games as well as other multimodal features. The *Alice for iPad* app (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gew68Qj5kxw> for a preview) is a remediation of the *Alice in Wonderland* tale in which, besides the traditional written text and illustrations, readers can tilt the iPad to make Alice grow and shrink and shake it to see the deck of cards scatter and fall upon Alice. It also includes touch screen functions to advance the narrative as well as other applications which centre on playfulness rather than purpose. It is typical of adaptations of canonical children's authors (Beatrix Potter, Dr Seuss) and more contemporary examples (Shaun Tan, Oliver Jeffers & Mo Willems to name but a few) which have been remediated as apps and are now available on a range of devices.

Many apps now come with additional paratextual materials and are referred to as 'enhanced apps'. Originally this term referred to enhanced software capabilities but it seems to have been taken over and used to indicate an app with many functionalities and modes. The print novel *War Horse* by Michael Morpugo (first published by Kaye and Ward in 1982) has found new life firstly adapted to stage and film, then published as an eBook and more recently remediated as an app. This 'enhanced app' would be suitable for upper primary and lower secondary students of both English and History. It includes the original written text and illustrations from the print text as well as an audio function of the author reading the text with the relevant sentence highlighted to aid word recognition. In addition, along the margin of the pages of the story,

readers can access a World War I timeline, a map of Europe as well as multiple hyperlinks to audio and video presentations that provide an historical framework for the novel. These paratextual features provide social and historical contexts but also may disrupt readers' immersion in the narrative. An analysis of the ways of reading such texts and the associated digital literacies involved is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Finally, 'born digital' narratives are multi-modal texts that have been conceived of, and created for, a digital environment as opposed to adapted and/or remediated print texts. A popular and freely available example is *Inanimate Alice* (<http://inanimatealice.com/>), an episodic story that follows a young girl, Alice, as she and her parents move around the globe, according to the dictates of her father's job as a geologist. In the first episode Alice is aged eight and being home-schooled by her mother in a remote part of China. Alice ages several years with each new episode and in the recently-released Episode 6 – *The Last Gas Station* she is 19, at college and working at a gas station. The *Inanimate Alice* website contains a lot of support material for teachers and students and currently many of the episodes are available in up to seven different languages. Interestingly, Kate Pullinger is described as the author and Chris Joseph as the illustrator but of course the creation of the series requires the collaboration of a whole team of people. This reliance on classical narratological terminology is an indication of the transitional phase in which digital fiction finds itself and is evident in the analysis below where Bell, in particular, refers to the 'reader' of 10:01 when 'player' might be more appropriate. These examples of digital fictions are only a small sample of the formats in which digital narratives are being published but provide a context for understanding the challenges of attempting to analyse such digital texts.

Textual analysis

While many different approaches to the analysis of digital texts exist, it is a narratological lens that is used here. In a broad response to debate on the textual analysis of digital fiction Bell et al. (2014, p. 7) caution against the unmediated application of print-based frameworks but at the same time argue that digital fiction should be seen as part of a continuum of narrative rather than an entirely new practice. For instance, digital fiction relies on the use of intertextual references and particular schemas that align it with a history of

narrative that dates back through the ages to oral storytelling. Bell et al. (2014) insist that commentators need to expand the core practices of literary studies to accommodate digital fiction. They acknowledge that this will depend on the particular characteristics of the text under discussion and *might* include such methods as visual semiotics, discourse analysis, and possible world theory. Ruth Page and Bronwen Thomas (2011) suggest that analysts of digital storytelling need to develop ways of understanding the ongoing, process-centred nature of storytelling within such online interactions while David Ciccoricco (2012) suggests that any analysis of digital fiction needs to draw productively on ideas from 'literary and narrative theory [...] semiotics and film studies [...] as well as game studies'. However, he immediately adds that digital fiction does not comfortably fit into any one of these critical frameworks. In addition to a nod to its narrative precursors, a digital ecology also calls for the need to consider media-specific attributes of a text such as interface design, software & hardware, hypertext links, images, sounds and so on (Punday, 2014; Rettberg, cited in Bell, 2014, p. 7) and how these features of a digital text impact upon the meaning-making processes. A social semiotic theory of multimodality for instance provides some analytical tools such as salience (tone, colour, foregrounding etc), compositional principles (L-R, Top to bottom, centre-margin etc) positioning of reader/viewer, modality, and framing (Bell et al., 2014, p. 9). The text under examination and the motivation of the analyst will often determine the methods chosen.

The particular interest of the analysis of digital fiction in this paper is in a narratological approach; that is, with a focus on *how* the story is told rather than *what* it is about. Just as classical narratology was adapted to accommodate narratives influenced by postmodernism and post-structuralism, so too the resultant post-classical narratology (see Herman and Vervaeck, 2005 & Heise, 1997 for instance) is currently in the process of being adapted to cater for fiction created for digital environments. It has to be said however, that despite quite extensive theoretical discussions around narratological approaches to digital fiction, there are very few systematic analyses of digital fiction published and even fewer in the field of Children's or Young Adult (YA) Literature. Therefore, in an attempt to draw some of the points raised so far towards a possible methodological approach, this next section examines how aspects of literary and narrative theory can be applied to digital texts, in the first instance, and how a number

of textual strategies may be adapted to accommodate the affordances of the digital environment.

Taming the 'Unruly Object'?

In the first analysis Alice Bell (2014) looks at what she calls *media-specific metalepsis*. She compares Lance Olsen's print novel *10:01* to Olsen & Tim Guthrie's web-based digital text of the same name, both of which are set in a movie cinema in the Mall of America and cover the 10 minutes and one second leading up to the start of the main feature at which point an explosion occurs. It could safely be expected that most readers of the print version would follow the linear, chronological flow of the novel as determined by the sequence of pages provided. Readers of the digital version however, have more opportunity to engage with the text through a variety of modes (characters' voices, photographic images, music, sound effects, and external links) which can lead to multiple, rather than a single, reading path(s). Potentially, each time a reader navigates the text a different path could be followed resulting in slightly different perspectives in the analysis.

Bell maintains that the cursor allows the reader, situated in the actual world, to reach into the fictional world. However, this is complicated by the fact that once play is underway the player/reader also occupies a space in the fictional world towards the back of the cinema from whence s/he can view the cinema audience as well as the curtained screen. As the reader moves the mouse to click on members of the cinema audience, the cursor on the screen moves, thus the reader is 'double-situated' in both the actual and fictional worlds (Bell, 2014 p. 29) and therefore exists in two ontological domains at the same time. While metalepsis *conventionally* refers to the transgression of logical and hierarchical relations between different levels of narration that disrupts the hierarchy of relations between character, narrator, and author (Genette 1980, pp. 234–235) the digital environment allows *apparent* disruption to this hierarchy by the reader/player as well. However, Bell also recognises that while the reader has some degree of agency through this media-specific metalepsis s/he has no ability to intercede. Conventionally, it is usually the narrator or a character who disrupts the story hierarchy however, in the case of digital fiction, because of its particular affordances, this can be achieved by the reader/player in what might be called 'real time'.

Audible metalepsis

Another form of metalepsis Bell identifies in digital texts is what she calls *audible metalepsis*. Here, the reader has access to sound effects from the fictional world including, in the case of *10:01*, buzzing of fireflies, a character's heartbeat, the spinning of a movie reel and so on (2014, p. 31) – all are audible representations of the fictional world which complement the third person narration. These sounds cross the ontological boundary to reach the reader in the actual world and potentially, influence her/his 'reading' of the text. In the first example above, the disruption to the ontological space flows from the actual world to that of the fictional world while, in the audible metalepsis, the disruption is created by the sound effects coming from the fictional world to the actual world.

Metaleptic links

A third instance of metalepsis identified by Bell is where the digital text provides a series of hyperlinks to the websites of the stores in the Mall where the cinema is located which provide contextual information that originates in the actual world and represents another form of ontological intrusion that is only made possible in a digital environment (2014, p. 33). In this latter example, the websites of the particular stores can also be regarded as paratextual features of the text which, according to Genette (1997) have the ability to create an 'implicit context' which defines or modifies its meaning and may affect the reception and consumption of the primary text through positioning of its readers. These examples of how Bell has adapted the notion of metalepsis (which was originally theorised around print texts) to the digital environment indicate a way forward for the modification of other narrative strategies to accommodate the affordances of a digital ecology.

The second analysis is of the digital text *The Path* (Auriea Harvey & Michaël Samyn, 2009) which is a remediation of the *Little Red Riding Hood* fairy tale. Six sisters live within an apartment and one by one they are sent on an errand by their mother (who remains otherwise absent from the game – unless she is the white figure in the forest) to their grandmother who lives in a house in the forest. The sisters all have a name which is a variation of the colour red, Rose, Ginger, Scarlet and so on. *The Path* is a third person, single player game that can be played on either Microsoft PC or Apple Mac computers. The only rule is not to stray from the path and keep away from the

forest but if players adhere to this rule no progress will be made. Players are forced to step off the path into the woods where they inevitably encounter a wolf in a variety of guises including a real wolf (Robin's story), a woodsman (Carmen's) and a musician (Scarlet's). The text is labelled a video game and requires game-like interactivity from viewer/players. However, Cobley (2001, p. 3) posits that 'narrative is a particular form of representation implementing signs; ... necessarily bound up with sequence, space and time' and *The Path* certainly seems to comply with these features. Additionally, Ensslin (2014) points out that it utilises a number of literary devices such as interior monologue and metalepsis that underscore its obligation to the literary canon as does its intertextual indebtedness to the original fairy tale. Furthermore, it is structured in three acts (a play on a play perhaps), and its architecture is more similar to a series of short stories or chapters in a novel than a video game. This hybridity reflects the ambiguity around such texts and requires, according to Ensslin (2014), a mixture of narratological, stylistic, semiotic and ludological methods in order to analyse it.

The text has been labelled as a video game of the horror genre although the authors/creators insist that it adheres to the conventions of neither but, in order to get the attention of the games industry, they needed to provide categories of both format and genre (Newheiser, 2009). There is no overt narration in the conventional sense but the sisters at times engage in a form of interior monologue as they wander through the forest. The viewer/player is able to choose the path the character follows, admittedly from predetermined options built into the game. It might be argued that the viewer/player's choices contribute to the construction of a narrative and can perhaps be seen as a form of narration, albeit under construction and subject to change each time the viewer/player 'reads' the text or another viewer/player does so. There is also a website associated with *The Path* (<http://tale-of-tales.com/ThePath/>) which contains a blog on which each of the sisters post and to which the other sisters and members of the community comment. These, and other aspects of the website, could be considered paratexts of the game as each post has the potential to create the sort of 'implicit context' mentioned earlier and thus affect subsequent readings of the text. It is also possible to construct the blog as a form of focalisation through which the viewer/player has access to the thoughts and feelings of the characters via their posts and comments.

Ensslin argues that the text is at the 'interface between digital writing, audio-visual art and game programming that places it on a continuum with other hybrid digital artefacts that combine ludic and literary characteristics (2014, 75). Nothing in the digital fiction world it seems is fixed and stable but rather constantly changing and challenging. In an interview soon after the game's release Mark Samyn explained: 'Our work is more about exploring the narrative potential of a situation. We create only the situation. And the actual story emerges from playing, partially in the game, partially in the player's mind.' This is the essence of a writerly text (after Barthes) and aligns with Rettberg & Rettberg's (2010) argument that digital narratives require new conceptualisations of the relationships between reader, writer, and media.

In the first part of Ensslin's chapter on *The Path* she provides a comprehensive discussion of the plot, characters and functionalities of the game (see Ensslin, 2014, pp. 79–83) and describes *The Path* as hybrid digital artefact that combines ludic and literary qualities (pp. 75–76). The second part of the chapter is devoted to a ludo-narratological reading in which she utilises narratological strategies and adapts them to a digital ecology. Ensslin points to three main techniques in relation to *The Path*: (i) *metalucidity* which she describes as aspects of a game designed to make players reflect on the gameplay (2014, pp. 84–85) and which seems to be similar to self-reflexivity in postmodern texts whereby authors (and illustrators) self-consciously draw attention to the narrative conventions of the text; (ii) *allusive fallacy* or 'purposeful deception' which interrogates the design features of the game that intentionally mislead players and finally (iii) *illusive agency* which examines the whole notion of seemingly enhanced player agency in digital texts whereas players are often led along predetermined paths (2014, p. 85). The disclosure of these strategies highlights the complexity of the digital environment and perhaps explains how players of *The Path* can become forever lost in the forest or, if they make it to Grandmother's house, be further confounded by a labyrinth of hallways, perhaps never reaching the elusive (illusory?) safety of Grandmother's bedroom. *The Path* is a post-modern text that provides a number of possible alternative storylines which playfully but purposefully creates uncertainty, fragmentation, and ambiguity at the same time that it interrogates the conventions of most commercially-produced games.

Professional practice

In my own professional practice as a lecturer in the field of Children's and Young Adult Literature I use a much broader definition of digital fiction than perhaps that of Ensslin discussed earlier. It is more in line with that of Daniel Punday (2014, p. 58) and incorporates a greater range of formats including, but not limited to, hypertext narratives, video games and mixed-media texts. This allows the flexibility to accommodate new formats as a result of constantly changing technological affordances along with continued creative experimentation with such platforms.

In my endeavours to raise awareness of digital fiction with my students (undergraduate and post-graduate) I deliver a lecture entitled *eBooks, apps and 'born digital' narratives* to each of my four units, varying it according to the year level and aims and learning outcomes of the particular unit. The work I do with digital narratives within the Masters of Education unit most closely aligns with the narratological lens used here. As current or becoming English teachers and teacher-librarians I feel it is important that they are able to engage with narratological analysis of conventional *and* digital texts as many of them will be engaging with aspects of literary discussion within the Australian Curriculum.

With the undergraduate classes in the YA Literature unit during the tutorial following the lecture, I also allow time for the students to play *Inanimate Alice* on their various devices. We then conduct a 'walk through' using the data projector (or interactive whiteboard depending on the room) and discuss game functionality and conventions as well as literary aspects such as narration, focalisation, character development and so on. As an inexperienced gamer I find it works best if a student operates the controls (mouse/keyboard in the case of *Inanimate Alice*). The ensuing discussions involve comparisons with many of their out-of-school digital texts (mostly video games) and encourages them to reflect on aspects of these texts (narration, focalisation, agency and so) that they had previously not considered.

The undergraduate Children's Literature class, which is made up of Early Childhood and Primary pre-service teachers, do a four-week 'Literature Circles' activity in the final weeks of the semester and one of the set texts is *Inanimate Alice*. Each student, as part of their prior preparation, is required to play episode 1 and make notes according to their particular role (Discussion Director, Literary Luminary, Classroom

Connector or Investigator/Researcher) that week. Then, in class in groups of four, they discuss the text according to both gaming and literary features as well as applications for the classroom. This activity always results in lively discussion with students occupying positions ranging from hate to love and all points in between. They all agree however that they can see that middle primary students (Alice is 8 in episode 1) would enjoy it much more. Immediately prior to this tutorial, I ask a colleague-friend who is a Year 4 teacher to play it with her students and I pass on any feedback to my group which is always much more positive.

Over the last two years in assessment tasks I have replaced terminology such as 'novel' (YA) and 'picture-book' (Children's) with 'text' to encourage my students to examine a range of texts that include short story collections, graphic novels, comics/manga and digital fictions such as apps, art games, web-based and video games. With regards to the digital fiction category a small number of students has taken up the challenge each semester after consultation with me. Apps, such as *Loose Strands* (2014) and *Don't Let the Pigeon run this App!* (2011), are the most popular option especially with students about to engage in Professional Experience. One student asked to use a first person, shooter game and, after some initial hesitation, I agreed. After discussions with me, he theorised his essay around discussion of narration and focalisation and constructions of identity. He produced a very good essay and commented that he now had a much better understanding of focalisation as a result.

This summary of my first tentative steps to introduce my students to a range of digital fictions aligns with the literature strand of the Australian Curriculum (F-10) as well as the Literature subject (Years 11–12) and reflects the literary nature of the units I teach. I recognise that teachers of English will include all three strands (Literature, Language and Literacy) in their classes and, no doubt, will call upon other methodologies and pedagogies beyond those discussed here.

Conclusion

Although it should not be cast as an either/or scenario, there is no doubt that digital texts will become a dominant form of fiction in the foreseeable future. As suggested in the introduction, digital narratives are complex, multi-modal texts that do not readily lend themselves to a disciplined and streamlined analysis. As well, literary analysis is in a period of transition where every aspect of it is undergoing constant change

and will no doubt continue to develop as further iterations are facilitated by new technologies. However, educators need to embrace digital texts as textual objects that have made a space for themselves in the literary landscape and deserve serious consideration as objects of textual analysis by both teachers and students.

References

- Australian Curriculum, *Senior Secondary English: Information Sheet*, ACARA. https://acaraweb.blob.core.windows.net/resources/Senior_Secondary_English.pdf
- Bell, A. (2014). Chapter 2: Media-Specific Metalepsis in *10:01*. In Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin and Hans Kristin Rustad (Eds). *Analyzing Digital Fiction*, New York & London: Routledge.
- Bell, A, Ensslin, A, and Rustad, H.K. (2014). Chapter 1: From Theorizing to Analyzing Digital Fiction. In Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin and Hans Kristin Rustad (Eds). *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (3–20). New York & London: Routledge.
- Bell, A., Ensslin, A., Ciccoricco, D., Rustad, H., Laccete, J. and Pressman, P. (2010). A [S]creed for Digital Fiction. *electronic book review*.
- Ciccoricco, D. (2012). Focalization and Digital Fiction. *Narrative*, 20 (3), 255–276.
- Ensslin, A. (2014). Chapter 5: Playing with Rather than by the Rules: Metaludicity, Allusive Fallacy, and Illusory Agency in *The Path*. In Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin and Hans Kristin Rustad (Eds). *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (75–93). New York & London: Routledge.
- Ensslin, A. (2012). I want to say I may have seen my son die this morning: Unintentional unreliable narration in digital fiction, *Language and Literature*, 21 (2), 136–149, DOI: 10.1177/0963947011435859
- Genette, Gerard (1997). *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Genette, Gerard (1980). *Narrative Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heise, Ursula (1997). *Chronoschisms: time, narrative, and postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herman, Luc & Vervaeck, Bart (2005). *Handbook of narrative analysis*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Mangen, A. (2008). Hypertext fiction reading: haptics and immersion. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 321 (4), 404–419. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467–9817-2008.00380.x
- Morpurgo, M. War Horse Interactive app. Touch Stone Press. Retrieved from: <http://warhorse.touchpress.com/>
- Moyes, M. and Frizzell, J. (2014). *Loose Strands*. Darned Sock Productions. Retrieved from <http://darnedsock.com/loose-strands/>
- Newheiser, Mark. (2009). Michael Samyn, Auriea Harvey: Tales of Tales. In *Adventure Classic Gaming*. <http://www.adventureclassicgaming.com/index.php/site/interviews/473/>
- Olsen, L. (2005). *10:01*. Milwaukie: Chiasmus Press.
- Olsen, L. & Guthrie, T. (2005). *10:01*. Electronic Literature Organization Collection, Vol1. http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/olsen_guthrie__10_01/1001.html
- Page, R. and Thomas, B. (2011). *New Narratives: Stories and Storytelling in the Digital Age*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Pullinger, Kate & Joseph, Chris (2005). Inanimate Alice. The Bradfield Company. <http://www.inanimatealice.com>.
- Punday, D. (2014). Chapter 4: Seeing into the Worlds of Digital Fiction. In Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin and Hans Kristin Rustad (Eds). *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (57–72). New York & London: Routledge.
- Rettberg, S. and Rettberg, J. (2010). Narrative and Digital Media. In David Herman, Brian McHale, and James Phelan (Eds). *Teaching Narrative Theory*. New York: MLA. https://elmcip.net/sites/default/files/files/attachments/criticalwriting/digital_narrative.pdf
- Samyn, M. & Harvey, A. (2009). *The Path*. Tale of Tales. <http://tale-of-tales.com/ThePath/index.html>
- Willems, M. (2011). *Don't let the Pigeon Run this App!* Common Sense Media. Retrieved from <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/dont-let-pigeon-run-this-app!/id459749670?mt=8>

Cherie Allan is a lecturer in the School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education within the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia. She teaches both graduate and undergraduate children's and young adult literature as well as units on language and youth popular culture. Her book, *Playing with Picturebooks: Postmodernism and the Postmodernesque* (2012) was awarded the International Research Society for Children's Literature's (IRSCL) Honor Book Award in 2013.



'Big fans', 'Experts', and those 'In need of a challenge':

Teacher attitudes to 'manga and anime kids' in the Secondary English classroom.

Kelly Cheung and Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, Macquarie University

Abstract: Manga and anime may no longer be the 'new kids' in wider media culture but they are relatively new texts for study in the secondary English classroom. Manga and anime support teachers in their work towards inclusive classroom practices and build multimodal literacies but the cartoony face of the medium belies a depth of analysis required and layers of sensitivity needed in navigating these texts with students. How do English teachers respond to the emergence of manga and anime texts, translated and dubbed in English, when these texts become part of their classroom curriculum and culture? This paper uses a case study of two metropolitan high schools to explore how unexpected text choices brought about deeper insights for these English teachers in the ways they perceived their students' identities, as readers and consumers of manga and anime texts, within a Quality Teaching and learning environment (NSW DET, 2003; Prumm & Patruno, 2016).

'I guess it's really about Quality Teaching stuff, developing quality relationships with students. That really makes a difference if they feel their teacher knows them enough to make a suggestion.'
'Lane', English Teacher

Introduction

When teachers respond positively to the reading and viewing choices of their students – even when those choices pose curriculum and pedagogical challenges to the teachers themselves, the knowledge shared can create deeper relationships and encourage reciprocity in reading and viewing cultures. This statement is more than sentiment. The necessity for teachers of secondary English to promote an inclusive classroom culture is embedded at policy and curriculum levels in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW). The NSW Quality Teaching Framework (NSW QTF) (DET NSW, 2003; Foley, 2008; Prumm & Patruno, 2016) is meant to be embedded in all teaching and learning programs for all curriculum areas in NSW government schools. This requirement has been given a recent awareness push through the publication of *The Elements of Learning and Achievement Manual* (Prumm & Patruno, 2016) also known as *The Elements Manual* (online). *The Elements Manual* provides written and visual guidance to explain to educational stakeholders how the different curriculum, reforms, focus areas and policy priorities of the New South Wales Department of Education (NSW DET) interweave. In its exploration of secondary English teachers about their rapport with their students through the prism of teacher responses to manga and anime texts, this article recognises the need to present clear exemplars to English teachers

and educational stakeholders of what teaching and learning within a NSW QTF environment can look and feel like to those inside.

English teachers are well prepared to traverse potential conflicts that arise from intergenerational and intercultural misunderstandings. Their very experiences as readers, absorbers, and thinkers of the weft and weave of literature's never-ending tapestry present a wealth of knowledge upon which to draw. However, it may be worth observing that contemporary English teachers in NSW schools are perhaps part of the last generation who have read under the auspices and dominance of the written word (Kress, 2003). In contrast, today's generation of young people are insiders to a culture of reading and viewing multimodal, transmedium texts (Kress, 2003; Jenkins, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2016). They are encouraged to be both consumptive and creative in relation to texts. They read, watch, write, draw, buy, create, and consume in a manner which seems far more accelerated and intensive than that of previous generations because the ways in which stories are told and sold has become much more 'participatory' (Kress, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2006; Black, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2014). Any potential estrangement between the reading patterns of teachers and their adolescent students can create distinctive learning experiences in the English classroom. Yet, when teachers teach with texts that pose challenges to their subject knowledge the dynamics of classroom interaction can become fluid and open to change (Schwarz, 2013).

Over the last twenty-five years graphic novels have gained legitimacy for their literary qualities and creative value. The awarding of a Pulitzer Prize to Art Spiegelman in 1992 for *Maus*, his autobiographical tale of Holocaust survival, is renowned for shifting the boundaries of literary culture. The inclusion of *Maus* within the folds of secondary English classrooms seems to have done much to assuage concerns over the literary merit of graphic texts in the study of English (Chun, 2009; Beavis, 2013a). Spiegelman's text has been a recommended related text for students studying secondary English in New South Wales (Bentley, 2006) and Victoria offers the text within the prescribed text list for their senior English courses (Beavis, 2013b). In a sign of these shifting times, Margaret Atwood and Ta-Nehisi Coates, writers more familiar for their works of prose, have collaborated to create graphic novels or 'graphic narratives' as Beavis (2013b) calls them, of their own (Orbesen, 2016). Yet some educators may still feel hesitant as to the place of graphic novels in

their English classroom (Cowie, 2007; Connors, 2011; Clark, 2013; Evans, 2013). This hesitancy can be felt even more so when graphic texts originate from Japan as in the case of manga, translated Japanese graphic serialisations, more commonly recognised by their cartoony imagery and dew-eyed characters (Cowie, 2007; Cheung, 2015).

Even as graphic novels and animation from Japan have become part of a consumptive media diet of many Australian adolescents, some English teachers may feel estranged from these types of texts and the stories that they tell because their own reading and viewing practices were, and are, quite different (Cheung, 2015). A tentativeness to a medium of storytelling appears to be a strange manifestation about a period that sees the appointment of cartoonist Gene Luen Yang, writer and illustrator of *American Born Chinese* and *Boxers and Saints*, as the Ambassador for Young People's Literature by the United States Library of Congress. But perhaps Yang's appointment is a sign that times are shifting again. Texts that previous generations would never have considered for their curriculum benefits (Wertham, 1954; Marsh & Millard, 2000) may now be recognised for their own unique and at times, challenging, properties (Pantaleo, 2014). The arrival of distinctive texts like manga and anime in the English classroom presents a distinctive challenge for teachers. How can a teacher respond when some students are more familiar with new texts than s/he is?

Defining manga and anime

Manga is the term used to identify comics from Japan. A single graphic novel for a manga series will contain a number of chapters that were originally serialised for Japanese readers. It is common for an individual title to be published in a number of serialised graphic novels where the story continues and readers are encouraged to read on over weeks, months and sometimes even years. Despite the recognisability of *Astro Boy* across television screens in the late 1960s and again in the early 1980s, readers in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom were unable to popularise the reading of manga through *Astro Boy* comics (McCarthy, 2009). In these territories, the privilege of reading manga was limited to those with Japanese literacy who could access the soft-papered books and magazines outside of regular bookselling channels (Schodt, 1983, 1997; McCarthy, 2014, p. 38). Children and adolescents of the 1960s and 1980s in the West were not able to follow *Astro Boy* from

his television adventures into the manga medium. Children and adolescents in those same territorial markets from the late 1990s to today have a different media world, with a deliberate interweaving of characters and story across manga, animation, merchandise and video game platforms (Oohagan, 2007, p. 244; Black, 2008, p. 591).

Anime is the term applied to animation from Japan. Some anime titles are cross-marketed with manga and merchandising properties. It has been observed that 60% of anime titles are associated with manga properties (Onouchi, 2006, p. 101 cited in Oohagan, 2007, p. 244). Other anime titles are standalone series or films. Many of the most well known anime films to audiences in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom come from the frequently Oscar nominated Studio Ghibli (Dargis, 2009; Hale, 2011; Hale, 2015.)

That manga and anime are relatively new texts for study in the English curriculum within Western traditions of education is evident both in their presence and absence in literature. Anthropology and cultural studies researchers laid the groundwork with their intensively researched publications which explained manga and anime to English readers outside of Japan (see: Schodt, 1983/1997; Schodt, 1996/1999; Napier, 1998; Napier, 2001; Poitras, 2001; Drazon, 2003; Patten, 2004; Richmond, 2009). These books often include still frame images and translated extracts capturing the fervour and enthusiasm these authors had in extending the reach of manga and anime to new audiences. However, there is limited exploration into the ways in which manga and anime have application in contemporary school contexts.

Different papers, written within the field of librarian scholarship, have grouped all forms of graphic novels and comic books together regardless of their cultural origin which means it is hard to track the growth of teen interest in manga and anime specifically (Hughes-Hassell & Hodge, 2007; Hughes, King, Perkins & Fuke, 2011; Sabeti, 2012). The few studies that do reference adolescent readers of manga and anime texts specifically (Snowball, 2008; Moeller, 2011) often do not intertwine their analysis of readers with any classroom pedagogy. Those studies that do address manga and anime pedagogically, offer more broad considerations for teachers as to what manga and anime are, defining their multimodal characteristics and didactic potential but lacking a consideration of the adolescent reader (Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006).

Anime and manga in the English classroom

The teaching of anime texts in English classrooms in Australia is not a new phenomenon. An awareness of manga and anime as potential texts for study for NSW classrooms has been shown through the inclusion of three texts with manga and anime links on the NSW *Suggested Texts for the English K–10 Syllabus* (BOSTES, 2012a). The three texts are Peter Carey's postmodern autobiographical traveller's tale *Wrong About Japan*, the anime film *Princess Mononoke*, and a graphic novel adaptation of Anthony Horowitz's *Stormbreaker*, categorised as manga for its 'manga-style illustrations' (BOSTES, 2012a, p. 228). In the Australian state of Victoria, the Studio Ghibli film *Grave of the Fireflies* has been included in the VCE Literature Text lists for a number of years (VCAA, 2006; VCAA, 2007; VCAA, 2008; VCAA, 2009) and sustains a position in the *VCE Literature Advice for Teachers 2016–2020* (VCAA, n.d.). For more than a decade a number of papers have supported the choice of films from the oeuvre of Japan's Studio Ghibli in English classrooms in Australia and beyond (Stranieri & Evelyn, 2004; Bye, 2004; Cotton, 2007; Ruble & Lysne, 2010).

The teaching of manga texts in English classrooms has been less reported. In some studies, teachers have responded to student interest in graphic novels by including them within learning activities (Frey & Fisher, 2004), literacy strategies (Smeaton, Maybee, Bryce and Hughes, 2016) and enrichment activities (Mahar, 2003). In these respective studies the authors purposefully identify student responses to manga as aspects within their research focus but manga texts are not the only priorities of their work. We gain brief insights into the transformative experiences of discovering manga through the activities of students from Frey and Fisher (2004) and Cowie, K. (2007) but these articles suggest individualised glimpses into pedagogical change.

Distinctive multimodal literacies in manga and anime

Manga and anime require teachers and students to engage with distinct multimodalities (McCloud, 1993/2000; Cohn, 2011) while developing some contextual awareness of the social and cultural milieu of Japan. McCloud's (1993/2000) seminal work on the semiotics of comics proposes that comic storytelling is 'unique' (p. 92). He writes, 'The comics creator asks us to join in a silent dance of the seen and the unseen. The **visible** and the **invisible** ... no other art form gives so

much to its audience while asking so much from them as well.' (p. 92, *bold in original text*). Visual linguist Neil Cohn (2011) goes further, proposing distinctive visual languages exist within and across cultures. He reports that American and Japanese comic artists present systemically different ways of 'telling' visual stories and that there are 'distinct systems' (p. 132) of visual storytelling in each respective culture. Cohn's study gives credence to arguments that manga texts require specific literacy skills (Allen & Ingulsrud, 2005) and that these skills may be different to those developed by reading graphic novels of Western origin or prose (McCloud, (1993/2000); Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Saito, 2011).

In other words, manga may require readers to develop and hone their visual grammar skills in ways which are unique to the Japanese way of graphic storytelling. Not everyone is as definitive as McCloud (1993/2000) and Cohn (2011) in establishing particular codes and modes of comic storytelling. In their work with high school students and an Australian-based 'manga artist' (p. 14) Smeaton et al., (2016) define manga art as a 'Japanese comic style' (p. 14) providing an encompassing definition that can include works by creators outside of Japan. It has been suggested that the mere look of a manga art style is enough to whet the interest of teens in manga-style adaptations of texts ranging from Shakespeare (Keener, 2015) to *Twilight* (Brienza, 2014). Others have observed that it is the artistic dynamism of manga-style Shakespeare adaptations that make them successful multimodal interpretations (Alexander & Lupton, 2009). (Yes, it is worth considering whether or not manga art style adaptations are manga given their origins in publication houses in the United States and United Kingdom. That however, is a debate for another paper, another time.) In the NSW 7–10 English classroom, being aware of the particular multimodalities of graphic storytelling in general and having some contextual knowledge of Japan may be enough for teachers to use manga and anime texts with their students.

Very few studies detail teaching experiences of manga texts as set texts within the studied English curriculum. There has not as yet, within our reading of the literature field, been a report on the teaching of manga and anime in New South Wales secondary English classrooms.

Theoretical grounding

The teaching of manga and anime texts in English

aligns with a broader understanding that literacy is an encompassing and ever-evolving communication phenomenon. As such, the appropriateness of including multimodal texts such as manga and anime within English aligns with syllabus priorities (Macken-Horarik, 2008; BOSTES, 2012b) and societal necessities (Dewey, 1916/2011) for individuals to become critical readers (and consumers) of texts (Kress, 2003; Gee, 2014).

Within subject English in New South Wales, the philosophical dimensions of the Quality Teaching Framework (NSW DET, 2003, Killen, 2005, Foley, 2008; Prumm & Patruno, 2016) provides guidance for teachers in their curriculum development work as they develop learning sequences in support of their students' acquisition of necessary literacies. The NSW Quality Teaching Framework has three dimensions; intellectual quality, quality learning environment, and significance (NSW DET, 2003, p. 5). The NSW Quality Teaching Framework can be read alongside the NSW English K–10 syllabus (BOSTES, 2012b). Both the NSW Quality Teaching Framework and the NSW English K–10 syllabus draw upon holistic epistemologies for student learning and development. These curriculum artefacts share qualities with John Dewey's (1916/2011) educational philosophies which focus on the student as a unique individual. Dewey proposes that students live in and across a number of communities, and that their depth of understanding may arise from the influence of significant relationships, and the cultivation of their own self-reflexivity.

In the normal process of becoming acquainted with subject matter already known to others, even young pupils react in unexpected ways. There is something fresh, something not capable of being fully anticipated by even the most experienced teacher, in the ways they go at the topic, and in the particular ways in which things strike them. (Dewey, 1916/2011, p. 166)

The NSW Quality Teaching Framework and the NSW K–10 English syllabus share these perceptions of the formation of the learner, encouraging NSW English teachers to do so as well.

Kress, and his New Literacies counterpart James P. Gee have developed separately similar epistemologies for including multimodal texts like manga and anime in subject English. There is a pragmatism argued by Kress (2003) and Gee (2014) that exhorts the necessity of perceiving communication as multilayered art, an art that can be unpicked, unpacked, and understood by students in order to be better communicators in

their own worlds. Gee advises, 'In the 21st century anyone who cannot handle multimodality is illiterate ... Language has always and ever been a multimodal performance' (Gee, 2014, p. xii). Kress and Gee's rationale for a breadth of literacy shares epistemological viewpoints with those expressed by other critical theorists and cultural studies philosophers. Breadth of literacy is understood as a way of responding to, and at times, countering, hegemonic literacy practices which benefit a minority at the expense of a majority (for example: Freire, 1970; Apple, 1986; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Bourdieu, 1986; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; Hutcheon, 1991; 1992; Hooks, 1994; Buckingham, 1998).

The NSW K–10 English syllabus supports the inclusion of manga and anime texts in order to help students meet particular learning outcomes. However, the inclusion of manga and anime texts within the English curriculum in NSW schools may be perceived under different theoretical lenses.

Methodology

The data for this article were drawn from a wider research study undertaken for a Master of Research on teacher attitudes to manga and anime texts. Participation was sought from English teachers with experience in teaching manga and/or anime texts in Stage 4 and 5 English. For this article, the data discussed comes from semi-structured interviews with seven English teachers from two single-sex government schools (Site A and Site B) based on their experiences with students studying anime, or manga and anime texts, within the set curriculum. The schools sought for the study were girls' high schools as there is an underdeveloped body of knowledge on the reading and viewing practices of girls despite strong anecdotal and media coverage suggesting that girls are almost on par with boys in regards to the popularity of the manga and anime media (Schenker, 2014; Cavna, 2015). Two de-identified participants have been named here in order to share their particular insights; there is 'Frank', a beginning teacher; and 'Lane', a mid-career teacher both working within Site A. We have named these particular teachers as they presented an interesting comparison within the one site. The other participants in this article remain unnamed.

This study was operationalised under a qualitative research lens using the methodological framing of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory. Qualitative research by teachers about aspects of education legitimises teacher authority in the construction

of knowledge and can be perceived as a vital element to make visible the deeper nuances of school life than can be revealed by quantitative approaches (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Klehr, 2012; Sallee & Flood, 2012). The qualitative research paradigm was especially suited to the exploration of teacher attitudes to manga and anime texts because it enabled the voices, views and experiences of teachers to be heard within their own situated contexts while also uncovering curriculum and pedagogical insights that others may find transferable to their own contexts.

The semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview form was selected as the most appropriate method because it provided a dialogic interplay between interviewer and participants offering flexibility to adapt fields of inquiry to the circumstances of individuals and to the data as they were revealed. Furthermore, to use the semi-structured interview form as a methodological choice validates the voice of the interview subject and the distinct knowledges they hold while allowing us to see into 'a manifold and controversial human world' (Kvale, 1996, p. 3). The order of the questions was specifically designed to explore participant attitudes to English texts within the secondary English curriculum and their view of students as readers before narrowing the research lens to their attitudes to manga and anime texts. Along the same lines as the use of grounded theory, this process provided opportunities for the researchers to implement constant comparisons of incidents and phenomena in order to integrate categories, test theories and develop a substantive theory (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003; Kolb, 2012; Lichtman, 2013).

Analysing the data

The data from the semi-structured interviews were coded under the influence of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2007; 2014), a weaving of traditional and more contemporary approaches to grounded theory. In merging Glaser and Strauss' recommendations with Charmaz (2007, 2014), the researchers engaged in active coding processes while also 'writing for discovery', an analytical process that 'engages writers in actions through which they learn what they are going to say ...[it is] active, emergent, and open-ended' (p. 83). Discovery pieces of writing were reviewed and refined through repeated checks within the interview transcripts to confirm developing theories were supported by evidence.

Results

The influence of the NSW Quality Teaching Framework

The English teachers in this study revealed a depth of knowledge in regards to their students' reading preferences and the enthusiasm of some students for manga and anime texts. This knowledge reflects implicit weaving of the NSW Quality Teaching Framework within the teachers' pedagogic practices. For one participant, Lane, the integration of the Quality Teaching Framework was something she was able to deliberately observe and reflect upon in her practice. Take note of the way she emphasises the noun 'Quality', and turns it into an adjective when describing the way she conceives of her practice.

I guess it's really about Quality Teaching stuff, developing quality relationships with students. That really makes a difference if they feel their teacher knows them enough to make a suggestion.

Also within Lane's account, observe the modality shift from 'stuff' – a colloquial turn of phrase that reveals how awkward at times bureaucratically applied models of excellence can be for those who navigate their metalanguage, to the way Lane uses high modality in her statement 'That really makes a difference ...'. The modality shift clearly defines that for Lane, it is relationships between teachers and students that matters, and she is able to draw upon an example in her practice – the sharing of texts, in a way that cements her beliefs for the listener.

Teacher perception of students as readers and viewers of manga and anime

In speaking of their experiences observing students and interacting with them within school spaces, participants provided insight into ways of perceiving students as readers and viewers of manga and anime.

'Big fans'

All participants discussed their awareness of student interest in manga and anime texts. Students were described as 'big fans' with a 'very very high ... level of enthusiasm.' In characterising the intensity of student interest one participant said, 'When you love it, you love it. It becomes almost a way of life'. Three participants used the term 'love' to describe student responses to manga and anime texts. One participant colloquially captured student enthusiasm as, 'a lot of them say if they're really into anime, *they're really into it* and they do watch and read'. The expression 'into it', like 'love' and

'a way of life', conveys a significant and emotive level of engagement, suggesting that students who enjoy reading manga and watching anime immerse themselves within the reading and viewing subculture. This behaviour is not something that students need to hide within classroom contexts – rather, they have been able to share their interest in manga and anime texts within the dialogical spaces of their English classroom.

Within participant reflection upon their student observations, differences arose in determining the depth that manga and anime interest had penetrated. Frank observed that while not all students in his two Year 8 classes were interested in learning about manga or were familiar with the textual medium, there were many who were. He noted, 'there were a large proportion of kids in both classes ... that were big fans of manga and anime already'. The phrasing 'large proportion' suggests that Frank perceives the number of interested students as quite high. His observation of student interest levels is offset by Lane's account that, 'I don't know that I'd go so far to say that it's a majority of students but it's certainly equivalent to the students reading any other text type ... there would at least be two or three in every classroom – in every English class, if not more'. With average class sizes of 30 students, Lane's attempt to quantify student interest suggests around ten percent of students within every class demonstrate interest in manga and anime texts. While Lane's suggestion of ten percent seems far lower than Frank's observation of a 'large proportion', Lane does suggest she might not have captured all interested students within her estimation through her hedging qualifier, 'if not more'. The extent of student interest at Site A may circulate around a subcultural group of student readers and viewers who really enjoy the medium. This may be the case at Site B too.

'Pop-Asian' kids

In exploring teacher perceptions of student readers and viewers of manga and anime, there was the suggestion that these texts appealed to students with heritage or ethnic links to the cultures or countries of Asia. Three participants pointed to the globalised spread of anime and the confluence of adolescents with links to Asia as a possible factor for student interest. That some teachers correlated student interest in manga and anime with their cultural heritage, ethnicity, or identity was evident in teacher reflections which used emphasis, distance and terminology to identify and locate students within cultural or identifiable groups.

'Particularly with our population, a lot of the girls are really into manga,' said one participant. Students could access anime content in their *'their own home language, their family's language,'* said another. *'It was interesting seeing just how engaged kids would be based on their previous experiences with it and their own personal background,'* said Frank. This focus on *'language'* or cultural specificity suggests that some teachers may view student interest in these texts as arising from desires for cultural familiarity and from viewing experiences shared within family, peer or cultural circles. Teacher awareness of external influences upon student reading and viewing behaviours reflects further integration of the dimension of *'Significance'* from the Quality Teaching Framework within their practice. However, it may be useful for these teachers to consider the proliferation of manga and anime influences within Australian adolescent pop culture rather than just perceiving said interest as nominally due to cultural heritage, ethnicity or identity.

'Experts' and Allies

There was recognition by four of the teachers that the way they approached teaching with manga and anime texts could encourage student affirmation and validation as specialised readers and viewers. These participants referred to students' knowledge and were willing to collaborate with these students to better their own understanding of the medium or to aid the understanding of other students in their own distinct ways. *'I think it's really empowering to say to students, 'You probably know more about this than I do. We can do this together. Let's explore this together,'* said one participant, revealing through the repetition of inclusive language *'we'* and the term *'together'* a willingness to share the learning space.

Lane also demonstrated a deep level of trust in students and their knowledge and understanding of manga and anime texts. She explained, *'there were kids in the classroom who knew manga and anime better than I would ever hope to know it and they were very happy to guide the lessons ... utilising their expertise seemed the right thing to do'.* Lane's identification of student knowledge and understanding through the term *'expertise'* in relation to curriculum content, rather than a term like *'enthusiasm'*, reveals a significant evaluative judgement of students and their knowledge and understanding. Her statement above, which ends in such a direct assessment of her pedagogical

choices, conveys a willingness to share the teaching platform and intellectual authority in regards to manga and anime texts, with her students.

Frank, whose knowledge of manga and anime might have positioned him as a greater authority within the classroom, also engaged students as learning allies. In reflecting on class discussions, he evoked memories of learning collaboration with students stating that *'we're able to engage in half a lesson on a discussion around different ways that Japan might represent things ... What are we starting to see as priority values or priority virtues ...'* His repetition of inclusive language, *'we're', 'we'* suggests his willingness to teach with, not just to, his students.

While not all teachers were willing to share the position of authority within the classroom environment, these participants revealed that acknowledging student knowledge and *'expertise'* can have benefits for the individual student, the teacher and the others in the class. Such an approach reflects *'Inclusivity'* and *'Connectedness'* from the domain of *'Significance'* within the Quality Teaching Framework.

'Insular', 'Resistant' and in need of a 'Challenge'

Despite teacher awareness of students who were very enthusiastic readers and viewers of manga and anime, educators were also aware of students who did not enjoy the medium and who were *'resistant'* to engaging with English activities that utilised these texts. They used the terms *'completely resistant', 'uncomfortable', 'out of their comfort zone',* and *'insular', 'weren't keen'* and commented on student *'reluctance'* to read or view these texts. The connotations of these terms suggest that teachers perceived students as unwilling to read or view manga and anime because of cultural, stylistic or technical impediments. However, all spoke to the importance of *'challenging'* students in their reading and viewing choices through the teaching of anime and/or manga texts.

While part of this priority of challenging students as readers and viewers had a focus on teaching visual literacy and film analysis skills (to be reported in a subsequent paper) there was also the intention of widening student knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Four out of five Site A participants saw this as a particular focus for their school because the student population was largely Anglo-Australian, with only 26 percent of students identifying as a language background other than English (ACARA a., 2014). These four participants commented on the

student population as being 'monocultural', 'frankly, Anglo ...', 'well ... very ... quite insular' and that 'the exposure to multiculturalism ... By comparison to the rest of Sydney we're not really ...' This awareness of culture and race, expressed through racial identifiers like 'Anglo' and 'monocultural', may suggest that these teachers are sensitive to wider issues of race and racism. These teachers may see the teaching of manga and anime texts as a way of helping students overcome their resistance to differences in cultural expression while dissolving some barriers of geographical insularity.

It is not enough that English teachers build rapport with students and cultivate inclusive classroom cultures. English teachers also need to sustain a rigorous intellectual engagement through higher-order and problematic thinking, and the development of metalanguage ('Intellectual Quality'). They must also hold and reveal high expectations for their students, model and explain explicit quality criteria for student learning, and encourage their students' self-regulation ('Quality Learning Environment'). The interpretation of students as 'insular', 'resistant' and in need of a 'challenge' came from two equally weighted perspectives. The first prioritised manga and anime texts for the reading and viewing challenges inherent to the medium. The second valued manga and anime texts for their ability to confront students and the ways they perceived the world around them. It is within these examples that teacher decision-making reflects the other key dimensions of the Quality Teaching Framework; that of 'Intellectual Quality' and 'Quality Learning Environment'. For teachers, knowing students is relational. Relationships are formed and nourished through teacher-student rapport. For these English teachers, reflecting on their observations of their students as readers and viewers of manga and anime texts, it was evident that sharing texts was part of their teaching and learning culture. The willingness of these teachers to share their observations helps us perceive how the teaching of English can thrive within environments influenced by the NSW Quality Teaching Framework.

Conclusion

In this study, these teachers of English perceived their students through interwoven professional lenses: they looked at students through the lens of the English syllabus and its academic requirements. They also looked through the lens of the NSW Quality Teaching

Framework, recognising that for some students, a knowledge of manga and anime texts was something that they brought into the English classroom from their out-of-school environment. These teachers also perceived their students relationally: as students in their class, and as individuals, who have views and insights of value as readers of texts in subject English. Manga and anime may not have been among the texts all of these teachers would choose for themselves when reading for pleasure. That these teachers chose to read, watch, and engage with manga and anime texts, reflects their work in cultivating a quality learning environment in order to enrich their students' experiences of subject English in the secondary 7–10 years.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded through a Macquarie University Research Training Program Scholarship.

References

- Allen, K. & Ingulsrud, J.E. (2005). Reading Manga: Patterns of Personal Literacies Among Adolescents. *Language and Education*, 19 (4), 265–280.
- Alexander, J. & Lupton, J. (2009). 'The play's the thing' – really: manga Shakespeare. (book review). *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 25 (1), 84–89.
- Apple, M.W. (1986). *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. (1991). *Postmodern education: Politics, Culture & Social Criticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Beavis, C. (2013a). Literary English and the challenge of multimodality. *Changing English*, 20 (3), 241–252. doi: 10.1080/1358684X.2013.816527
- Beavis, C. (2013b). Teaching graphic novels as literature: The complete Maus enters the curriculum. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/teaching-graphic-novels-as-literature-the-complete-maus-enters-the-curriculum-13852>.
- Bentley, M. (2006). Teaching the graphic novel. *Metaphor*, 3, 49–54.
- Board of Studies NSW. (2012a). *Suggested Texts for the English K–10 Syllabus*. Sydney: Board of Studies. Retrieved from: <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/assets/global/files/english-k10-suggested-texts.pdf>.
- Board of Studies NSW. (2012b). *English: K–10 Syllabus*. Sydney: Board of Studies. Retrieved from <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/english/english-k10/>. (Accessed: 08/06/2015).
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood. 241–258.

- Black, R. (2006). Access and affiliation: Adolescent English language learners learning to be writers in an online fanfiction space. The University of Wisconsin – Madison. (PhD Dissertation) *Proquest Dissertations and theses*.
- Black, R. (2008). Just don't call them cartoons: the new literary spaces of anime, manga and fanfiction. In J. Cairo., M. Knobel., C. Lankshear, & D. Leu (Eds.) *Handbook of research on new literacies*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Brienza, C. (2014). Did manga conquer America? Implications for the cultural policy of 'Cool Japan'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20 (4), 383–398. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2013.856893.
- Buckingham, D. (1998). Introduction: Fantasies of Empowerment? Radical Pedagogy & Popular Culture. In D. Buckingham (ed), *Teaching Popular Culture, Beyond Radical Pedagogy*. London: UCL Press.
- Bye, S. (2004). Connecting the pieces in *Howl's Moving Castle*. *Screen Education*, 74, 112–117. Atom Publishing.
- Cavna, M. (2015, July 7). Comic-con 2015 and gender parity: here's why the geek stereotype will soon be dead. *The Washington Post*. (online webpage). Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2015/07/07/comic-con-2015-and-gender-parity-heres-why-the-geek-stereotype-is-nearly-dead/?utm_term=.14a421d96bf6
- Charmaz, K. (2007). Tensions in Qualitative Research. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 44 (3), 76–85.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded Theory in Global Perspective: Reviews by International Researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20 (9), 1074–1084. doi: 10.1177/1077800414545235.
- Cheung, K. (2015). Learning past the pictures in the panels: Teacher attitudes to manga and anime texts. (Masters thesis, Macquarie University).
- Chiovitti, R. & Piran, N. (2003). Rigour and grounded theory research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 44 (4), 427–435.
- Chun, C.W. (2009). Critical literacies and graphic novels for English-language learners: teaching Maus. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53 (2), 144–153.
- Clark, J.S. (2013). 'Your credibility could be shot': Preservice teachers' thinking about nonfiction graphic novels, curriculum decision making, and professional acceptance. *The Social Studies*, 104 (1), 38–45. DOI: 10.1080/00377996.2012.665957.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S.L. (1993). *Inside/Outside Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College.
- Cohn, N. (2011). A different kind of cultural frame: An analysis of panels in American comics and Japanese manga. *Image & Narrative*, 12 (1), 120–134.
- Connors, S.P. (2011). Altering perspectives: how the implied reader invites us to rethink the difficulty of graphic novels. *The Clearinghouse: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 85 (1), 33–37. doi: 10.1080/00098655.2011.607476.
- Cotton, A. (2007). Anime your classroom with Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*. *Metaphor*, 1, 49–56.
- Cowie, K. (2007). Reflection of a graduate teacher. *Idiom*, 43 (2), 34–35.
- Dargis, M. (2009, August 13). Forces of Nature, Including Children. *The New York Times*. (webpage). Retrieved: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/14/movies/14ponyo.html>
- Department of Education and Training: New South Wales. (2003). Quality teaching in NSW public schools: Discussion paper. Retrieved from: http://www.darcymoore.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/qt_EPSColor.pdf
- Dewey, J. (1916/2011). *Democracy and Education*. United Kingdom: Simon & Brown.
- Drazen, P. (2003). *Anime Explosion. The What? Why? & Wow! Of Japanese Animation*. CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Evans, J. (2013). From comics, graphic novels and picture books to fusion texts: a new kid on the block. *Education 3–13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 41 (2), 233–248.
- Foley, F. (2008). Quality Teaching Framework in your program: what does it look like? Retrieved from: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/docs/pdf/qtinprog.pdf>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2004). Using Graphic Novels, Anime, and the Internet in an Urban High School, *The English Journal*, 93 (3), 19–25.
- Gee, J.P. (2014). Foreword. In Serafina, F. *Reading the Visual: An introduction to teaching multimodal literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gilbert, P. & Taylor, S. (1991). *Fashioning the Feminine: Girls, popular culture and schooling*. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick: AldineTransaction.
- Hale, M. (2011, December 15). Film Fables Spun in Japan. *The New York Times*. (webpage). Retrieved: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/16/movies/miyazaki-takahata-and-studio-ghibli-at-ifc-center.html>
- Hale, M. (2015, January 2). A Master of Childhood Dreams. *The New York Times*. (webpage). Retrieved: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/movies/awardsseason/miyazaki-wins-again-after-11-animated-features.html>
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Hughes-Hassell, S. & Hodge, P. (2007). The leisure reading habits of urban adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51 (1), 22–33.
- Hughes, J., King, A., Perkins, P., & Fuke, V. (2011). Adolescents and 'autographics': reading and writing

- coming-of-age graphic novels: reading and writing graphic novels can be motivating for struggling students and reluctant readers, and can also support development of the multimodal literacy skills needed for school and workplace success in the 21st century. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54 (8), 601–612.
- Hutcheon, L. (1991). Discourse, Power, Ideology: Humanism and Postmodernism. Retrieved: <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/4354/4/discourse,%20power,%20ideology.pdf> Accessed: 15/05/2015.
- Hutcheon, L. (1992). Introduction: Situating Knowledge. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 61 (4), 415–421. doi: 10.1353/utq.1992.0022.
- Jenkins, H., Clinton, K., Purushotma, R., Alice J. Robison, A.J., & Weigel, M. (2006). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2008). *Convergence Culture: When old and new media collide (2nd Ed.)*, Fredericksburg: New York University Press.
- Keener, J. (2015). Shakespeare, Manga, and the pilfering of Japan's soft power. *Studies in Comics*, 6 (1), 43–59.
- Killen, R. (2005). *Programming and Assessment for Quality Teaching and Learning*. South Melbourne: Cengage Learning.
- Klehr, M. (2012). Qualitative Teacher Research and the Complexity of Classroom Contexts. *Theory Into Practice*, 51, 122–128. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2012.662867.
- Kolb, S. (2012). Grounded Theory and the Constant Comparative Method: Valid Research Strategies for Educators. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 3 (1), 83–86.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. California: Sage Publications.
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd edition). California: Sage Publications.
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2008). Multiliteracies and 'Basic Skills' Accountability. In L. Unsworth (Ed.) *New Literacies and the English Curriculum*. London: Continuum Books.
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2016). Building a metalanguage for interpreting multimodal literature: Insights from systemic functional semiotics in two case study classrooms. *English in Australia*, 51 (2), 85–99.
- Marsh, J. & Millard, E. (2009). *Literacy and Popular Culture: Using children's culture in the classroom*. London: Sage Publications.
- McCarthy, H. (2009). *The Art of Osamu Tezuka, God of Manga*. New York: The Ilex Press.
- McCarthy, H. (2014). *A brief history of manga*. New York: The Ilex Press.
- McCloud, S. (1993/2000). *Understanding Comics*. New York: Paradox Press.
- Moeller, R.A. (2011). 'Aren't These Boy Books?': High School Students' Readings of Gender in Graphic Novels. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54 (7), 476–484.
- Napier, S. (1998). Vampires, Psychic Girls, Flying Women and Sailor Scouts: Four Faces of the Young Female in Japanese Popular Culture. In D.P. Martinez (Ed.) *The World of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures* (pp. 91–109). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Napier, S. (2001). *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*. New York: Palgrave.
- Oohagan, M. (2007). Manga, Anime & Video Games: Globalizing Japanese Cultural Production. *Perspectives*, 14 (4), 242–247. Doi: 10.1080/09076760708669041
- Orbesen, J. (2016, September 27). Margaret Atwood's 'Angel Catbird' says too much. *Chicago Review of Books* (online). Retrieved from: <https://chireviewofbooks.com/2016/09/27/margaret-atwoods-angel-catbird-says-too-much/>
- O'Sullivan, K-A. (2014). The online identities and discourses of teenagers who blog about books. In A. Goodwyn, L. Reid, and C. Durrant (eds), *International Perspectives on Teaching English in a Globalised World*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Pantaleo, S. (2014). Reading images in graphic novels: taking students to a 'greater thinking level'. *English in Australia*, 49 (1), 38–51.
- Patten, F. (2004). *Watching Anime, Reading Manga. 25 Years of essays and reviews*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Poitrass, G. (2001). *Anime Essentials: Everything a fan needs to know*. CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Prumm, K. & Patruno, R. (2016). The Elements of Learning and Achievement Manual. Department of Education, NSW. Retrieved from: <http://www.theelements.education.nsw.gov.au/introduction-to-the-elements>
- Richmond, S. (2008). *The Rough Guide to Anime*. London: Rough Guides Ltd.
- Ruble, J. & Lysne, K. (2010). The animated classroom: Using Japanese anime to engage and motivate students. *The English Journal*, 100 (1), 37–46.
- Sabeti, S. (2012). Reading graphic novels in school: texts, contexts and the interpretive work of critical reading. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 20 (2), 191–210.
- Saito, T. (2011). *Beautiful Fighting Girl*. (translated by J. Keith Vincent & Dawn Lawson). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Sallee, M.W. & Flood, J.T. (2012). Using Qualitative Research to Bridge Research, Policy and Practice. *Theory Into Practice*, 51, 137–144. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2012.662873
- Schenker, B. (2014, March 2). Market research says 46.67% of comic fans are female. *The Beat*. (online webpage). Retrieved from: <http://www.comicsbeat.com/market-research-says-46-female-comic-fans/>

- Schodt, F. (1983/1997). *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, New York: Kodansha.
- Schodt, F. (1996/1999) *Dreamland Japan: Writings on modern manga. 2nd edition*. CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Schwartz, A. & Rubinstein-Avila, E. (2006). Understanding the manga hype: Uncovering the multi-modality of comic book literacies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50 (1), 40–49.
- Schwartz, G. (2013). Graphic novels and teacher research in the knowledge society. *The Educational Forum*. 77 (2), 151–160.
- Smeaton, K., Maybee, C., Bruce, C., & Hughes, H. (2016). Crossing literacy and informed learning boundaries with Manga. *ACCESS – Journal of the Australian School Library Association*. 13–26.
- Stranieri, V. & Evely, C., (2004). Spirited Away-Study Guide. *Australian Screen Education*, 34, 57–67.
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2006). *VCE Literature Text list 2007*. Retrieved: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/bulletin/06febsu3.pdf>
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2007). *VCE English/ESL Text list 2008–2009, VCE Literature Text list 2008*. Retrieved: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/bulletin/07febsu1.pdf>
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2008). *VCE English/ESL Text list 2008–2009, VCE Literature Text list 2008*. Retrieved: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/bulletin/2008FEBSUP3.pdf>
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (n.d.) *Victorian Certificate of Education Literature Advice for Teachers 2016–2020*. Retrieved from: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/literature/Literature-AFT-2016.docx
- Wertham, F. (1954). *Seduction of the Innocent*. New York: Rinehart.

Kelly Cheung developed curriculum materials on manga and anime texts while teaching in NSW schools. She completed a Master of Research, Macquarie University under the supervision of Dr. Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, on English teachers' use of manga and anime. Kelly is continuing her research with English teachers, now as a PhD candidate. kelly.cheungl@students.mq.edu.au

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan is the Associate Head of Department: Learning and Teaching in Educational Studies, Macquarie University, NSW. Her research interests include the discourses and pedagogies of English and multiliteracies education and in enriching students' learning, especially in times of change. kerry-ann.osullivan@mq.edu.au

24/7

OPEN

Visit our online store for professional resources selected especially for
Australian literacy educators and English teachers.

aate.org.au • alea.edu.au

Freephone (Australia) 1800 248 379 • Office 08 8332 2845
Email aate@aate.org.au
Or walk in to English House, 416 Magill Road, Kensington Gardens, SA.
Open Monday to Thursday, 9-4 pm, Friday by appointment.

The Writing Mind: A PLAY

Sara Shaw, Monash University

Production notes

It was week three of the first semester of my Master of Teaching degree at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and already my lecturers were talking about our first assignments. In my English method unit, we students were required to write a reflective autobiographical narrative inquiring into particular critical incidents from our past experiences in the English classroom as a way of conceptualising the impact of English and literacy teaching on our own evolving professional identities. I had been studying to be a teacher for only a few weeks, having left a career of 11 years in the wine industry to begin a new path, one I had started down and diverted from many years before. Through those 11 years I had continued to read voraciously, but I had fallen out of practice with my writing. I wasn't sure I had what it takes to become what I kept hearing that all of us were becoming – an English teacher. I questioned whether I would be able to teach writing to young people if I had lost touch with myself as a writer. I wondered how I could help them make meaning from their own experiences through writing if I struggled to construct meaning from my own.

Early on Friday morning on March 2016 in my English method workshop, my lecturer invited us to begin our narratives with a reflection, a meditation, anything; just write. The desire was in my fingertips, I started sifting through the mind files, but for several scattered minutes, nothing eventuated. I took a breath. As I stared at that blank screen, I followed the advice of my professor and envisioned myself in all of the English classrooms of my past. I stepped inside a black-box theatre and played the scenes out, remembered the rooms, reconnected with my teachers and the literary heroes they gifted me, the rich dialogues we shared, and how these figures helped me to find the writer

within. From these imaginings come the following vignettes that make up the play you are about to read. In this place, I, the author, become the NARRATOR, employing what Brecht (1961) might call an alienation effect to tell my story. That is, I step outside of my own experience and turn around to look in, defamiliarising myself from myself, developing an aesthetic that creates critical distance and thereby opens up the rooms of my mind for more robust reflection.

* * * * *

The following play contains accounts of real events rendered to form my version of the truth through an exploration of moments in my history through storytelling and memory. In this version, I have recreated events and conversations from my past, using what narrative methodology theorists Doecke, Turvey, and Yandell (2016) call 'memory work'. Through the invocation and reconstruction of memory, I and others who write in this genre (Doecke, Turvey, & Yandell, 2016), engage in the act of writing from the 'historical imagination' (p. 96), immersing ourselves 'in an inquiry that has yielded unexpected insights into [our] situations as educators and historical actors' (p. 95). Through a combination of memory and history, the truth becomes somewhat diaphanous, shifting focus to the derivation of meaning in the making of ourselves as teachers and writers.

* * * * *

In order to maintain anonymity and protect the privacy of one person, I have changed his name to Clive Carruthers. All other individuals retain their true identities as their words are drawn from my experiences with them or their published works, especially Judith Butler whose dialogue is mostly taken from her 2003 essay, *After Loss, What Then?*

* * * * *

SCENE 1: Year 12 classroom at private boarding school, the Midwest of North America, 1999

(Lights up, enter several Year 12 students, including the NARRATOR followed by an older male teacher. All shuffle into desks except the NARRATOR; she stands on the edge of the classroom, facing the audience stage left.)

NARRATOR: *(aside)* A clatter of metal legs and plastic table-tops as we tumble into neat rows of wrap-around desks and look toward the chalkboard at our ancient English teacher, Clive Carruthers. He glazes over us with a perfunctory eye, pushes an unlabelled video cassette into a VCR. Two scholarly-looking characters, Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell, appear on the convex face of the CRT television.

CAMPBELL: The world without spirit is a wasteland. People have the notion of saving the world by shifting things around, changing the rules, and who's on top, and so forth. No, no! Any world is a valid world if it's alive. The thing to do is to bring life to it, and the only way to do that is to find in your own case where the life is and become alive yourself.

(CARRUTHERS stops the video.)

CARRUTHERS: See! *(he shakes his finger at the screen)* THE WASTE LAND?! What is it? How do poetry and mythology make sense of our own lives? Not that it would get into your egocentric little bodies, but this comes right back to that depressed fellow Eliot.

NARRATOR: *(aside)* My thoughts sprint at the possibilities of what old Clive could possibly be shouting at us. He points to the chalkboard, littered with dissected poetry in Middle English. Somewhere in that sea of verbiage, I think I have a grasp of what's happening, but the pressure is on. He's going to call on me soon, and I'm not sure I know the answer ...

CARRUTHERS: *(overlapping with NARRATOR)* Shaw! What are Campbell and Eliot banging on about? What's all this nonsense about the Waste Land? No, I didn't say GETTING WASTED, I said WASTE LAND.

NARRATOR: Existentialism?

CARRUTHERS: Good! Could you elaborate, please?

NARRATOR: Umm ... yeah ... the world is a meaningless place. And we create meaning. That's what all the mythology is about, creating meaning.

CARRUTHERS: Close enough!

(CARRUTHERS starts the video again. The voices from the video player fade as lights go down.)

Spotlight up on stage left.)

NARRATOR: Clive Carruthers terrified me. But as a very traditional English teacher, I have to thank him as he introduced me to five literary 'heavyweights': Shakespeare, Keats, Eliot, Salinger, and Joseph Campbell. In doing so, he laid a foundation for my relationship to literature, setting the course of my life. I don't remember Clive ever directly praising me, but did feel that he encouraged me to write. You could say that he gave me the first gifts of great literature. In doing so, he unlocked a world in me.

The last time I saw Clive was right before graduation day.

(CARRUTHERS enters, spotlight up stage right.)

NARRATOR: He said to me:

CARRUTHERS: You probably won't, but take some literature classes in college.

NARRATOR: And so I did.

(Lights down. End scene.)

(Spotlight up, stage left. NARRATOR moves downstage, sitting on a stool stage left to talk to audience.)

NARRATOR: Fast forward to 17 years from this moment. It is 2016 and I am studying to be an English teacher in Melbourne, Australia. I have been asked by my lecturer to cast my mind back and try to remember an English classroom from my past. In my mind, a younger me materialises into a high school classroom, a Year 12 student scrunched into a small plastic desk amid tidy rows, a fleet formation of students with our greatly respected English teacher at the helm.

Grey and hunched but still agile, Clive Carruthers paces the room, lecturing at us excitedly, punctuating his sentences with a bang on the desk or an exclamatory wave of his arm. He fills our little heads with all that he can shove in with only one hour a day five days per week for the thirty-six weeks we have been allocated to his space. We sit in the classroom, we observe reverently, taking in as much as we can from the old master. His teaching style was traditional, yes. And no, we did not engage in collaboration or open discussions, nor did we draw connections to our own experiences or to greater social and cultural conditions from these texts. The stage belonged to the Wife of Bath and the Fisher King, to Hamlet and Polonius, to Clive and his chalkboard. The individual voices of students and the voices of communities beyond ours were unintentionally hushed by these dominant figures. In focusing on the works of only dead, white men in a classroom of privileged white students, Clive affirmed a society which silenced women and people of a different race

or ethnicity to our own. In studying literature at university, I would later discover women writers like Morrison, De Beauvoir, Danticat, Woolf, and Allende. I would also encounter non-white male writers like Marquez, Lorca, Murakami, and Wright. I would live in Los Angeles, Berkeley, and Oakland, I would become baptised into a more multicultural world. Yet, these voices did not enter Clive's classroom, and I was not critical enough to understand the impact of these omissions on myself and my cohort or on an even greater population of American people.

Given the deficits within Clive's classroom, my peers and I would need to learn about the world and develop our own narratives elsewhere. Similar to the literacy hour of the UK NLS that Jonathan Neelands describes, we students were not provided the opportunity to use our writing in ways that were reflective of our identities. We were not provoked by 'authentic real life contexts.' This high school English classroom was not a room for creative discourse, not a place for playing with spoken or written language. However, the passion of my teacher and the power of the literature divined a wellspring in me. In gifting me the writing giants, in extracting the meaning from their texts, he built on my love of literature and desire to teach. He encouraged me to write, which made me feel like a writer. Natalie Bellis, an English teacher whose writing I admire, talks about this feeling and the pride that it can instigate in students for their own writing. Though we were instructed to adhere to a rigid essay structure, though critical narrative was disregarded from the curriculum, I nevertheless became empowered through Clive Carruthers' encouragement to develop my writing mind outside the traditional English classroom.

(Blackout. End Scene.)

SCENE 2: Around a table in a small classroom, University of California – Berkeley, early 2000s.

(Lights up on 8 female students and a professor, JUDITH BUTLER, dialoguing around a round table. The students are a mix of undergraduates and postgraduates studying 'Comparative Literature and Rhetoric' at the University of Berkeley, in California. BUTLER is teaching a class on 'The Politics of Loss, Death, and Mourning'. The NARRATOR joins them at the table as BUTLER begins.)

BUTLER: On the one hand, there is the loss of place and the loss of time, a loss that cannot be recovered or recuperated but that leaves its enigmatic trace. And then there is something else that one cannot 'get over,' one cannot 'work through,' which is the deliberate act of violence against a collectivity, humans who have been rendered anonymous for violence and whose death recapitulates an anonymity for

memory. Looking back to the texts we are reading, how do Charlotte Delbo, Marguerite Duras, Primo Levi, Mahmoud Darwish, and Sebald come to terms with the collective acts of violence against their communities? Do they come to terms?

STUDENT 1: They activate their mourning in writing, and in some ways, they work through it, but it cannot reach a place of resolve.

NARRATOR: I agree – the losses are utterly incomprehensible. It's like trying to understand the number of stars in the sky. Writing exists as the venue for their mourning. It acts as a space to give voice to the destruction, not to redeem it.

STUDENT 2: I like how Primo Levi encapsulates some of that idea in *The Drowned and The Saved* when he says 'If we had to and were able to suffer the sufferings of everyone, we could not live.' Again, the task of the literature is to create space for mourning, but the collective suffering is too great to recover.

BUTLER: Yes, they are marked for life and that mark is insuperable, irrecoverable.

(Voices fade, lights down.)

(NARRATOR appears stage right, spotlight up.)

NARRATOR: This was one of the last classes I took before graduating from university. Judith Butler helped to facilitate that class. She shared her ideas, she mediated, but she never lectured. She created an atmosphere of interest, a non-judgemental space for open dialogue, a free-flowing hour of discussion and idea formation twice a week for a whole semester. She introduced me to a world of female writers, writers marginalised by their communities, communities of people who had suffered immeasurably because of their religion, their gender, and the colour of their skin. I began to consciously develop my identity as a woman, understand the power of my gender, a power that would grow in the years to come. We spoke about personal experiences in this classroom, we worked through cultural, social, and historical narratives that dealt with the politics of loss and mourning at a collective level through representatives from many different communities. We examined non-fictional narratives that were emotional and controversial; these voices were palpable and opened the greater world to me. I played in this space. I had a voice here, a place for creative expression.

(Lights down. End scene.)

(The NARRATOR returns to the stool stage left, spotlight up on her.)

NARRATOR: These two classroom settings, both formative for our narrator, represent teaching modes that approach writing and literacy using discrepant pedagogies. The traditional lecture format exemplified by my high school teacher, Clive Carruthers, emphasises meaning-making from classic texts but minimises dynamic involvement by the learners in the classroom. In that respect, he does not seek to actively or creatively develop students' individual voices through dialogue, impacting their writing at a formative level that is designed to appeal to the singular audience of their instructor. Being shaped in this way through closed dialogue could have stifled my relationship to writing, however, I was fortunate to land in spaces like that of Butler's classroom which further developed my concept of individual voice and identity through writing and narrative. The open discussions and opportunities to draw on personal experiences, to listen to voices from myriad communities, and to engage in creative interpretation of texts came through in our writing, encouraged our personal narratives, providing students with what English education researchers and teachers Brenton Doecke and Douglas McClenaghan would refer to as ...

(NARRATOR *pauses as* PROF BRENTON DOECKE *and English teacher* DOUGLAS McCLENAGHAN *enter stage right.*)

NARRATOR: (*nodding toward* DOECKE *and* McCLENAGHAN) I'll let them speak for themselves.

DOECKE: (*nods politely*) Indeed. I would refer to the situation Sara speaks of as a lively classroom environment in which talk is a medium for learning and the exchange of views ...

McCLENAGHAN: Where students take an active role in their own learning rather than compliantly doing what they are told to do.

(ALAN GRIFFIN *enters stage right.*)

GRIFFIN: (*To* NARRATOR) May I contribute a view?

NARRATOR: By all means. (*Speaking to the audience, and nodding toward* Griffin) Allow me to introduce you to another English teacher, Alan Griffin.

GRIFFIN: My own view of English teaching aligns with Butler's model. I see subject English as a space for student learners to be developing [their] own identity through the study of complex themes and issues and engagement in language and imaginative play.

NARRATOR: Absolutely. Thank you, gentleman. Within this open, playful, and welcoming writing and language

environment, I felt safe to take risks, to experiment within my writing. I did not fear failure, I could explore, expand, become. In my writing mind, I did the same.

(*Lights down. End scene.*)

SCENE 3: Rotunda Lecture Theatre, Monash University – Melbourne, 2016

(*Lights up, theatre is full of students, Professor GRAHAM PARR at the lectern. There is a live Google Doc projected onto the back curtain with a title that reads 'My Journey Into English Teaching'.*)

PARR (2016): You're going to write the next greatest Australian novel. And it's going to be called something really imaginative like, *My Journey Into English Teaching*. But like any great novel, it has to have a really gripping fantastic opening sentence. So you have a moment to think about an opening sentence that really gets there, that somehow grips people so that when they open the novel they can't stop reading. And you'll have to make a decision. Will it be a short sentence, a long sentence? Is it going to be serious? Is it going to be flippant, is it going to be ... whatever?!

Now go for it. Write your opening lines and let's see what they look like. You've got three minutes to do it. Pressure!

NARRATOR: (*aside*) It's the third week of lectures, my third week as a postgraduate, and all I can think about is how my writing mind is flabby from lack of exercise. The past eleven years working throughout the wine industry had been interesting, challenging, character building, but I am realising in this third week that I was complacent in my career, overripe, uncritical. I need now to exert my writer self, rediscover that part of my mind, act with critical awareness ...

PARR: Ok, thirty more seconds ...

NARRATOR: ... I write 'My writing mind had begun to atrophy. It was a mushy, wine-soaked rag.' My sentence appears up on the screen at the front of the lecture theatre alongside dozens of other sentences written by my peers. I knew then that I had to reengage with my student-self, the young person that sat in classrooms and formulated a voice as person and a writer. I would need to do this to become a teacher of writing.

(*Lights down. End scene.*)

EPILOGUE

(*Lights up. NARRATOR appears centre stage.*)

This exercise of revisiting and reflecting on my past

experiences of learning English in high school and at university in the US and here in Melbourne, to reveal the shaping of my teacher identity, has again unlocked a world in me. In the process of preparing to write this short play, I have exhumed poems, letters, short stories, journal entries, and essays of the past, foraging for fragments to re-invigorate my writing mind. I appreciate that these reflections are necessary activities as I form my identity as a teacher. Reflection will be a critical component of my journey for the lifetime of my career. Natalie Bellis' (2014) words, which I have read as part of my English methods study at Monash, resonate with me: 'I need to continue to reflect on how my own practices and professional identity are shaped by a multiplicity of voices' (p. 91). The voices that inform my teacher identity emanate from English classrooms past and present, they stem from the many selves I enact in my personal life, and like Bellis, professional standards, curriculum, and society will form sections of this polyphony in the classroom and community. As I navigate the landscape of this profession, I intend to continue reflection as a means of transformation, to maintain a curiosity and a critical awareness of the world, and to learn and evolve as a teacher and a person.

Though my own beliefs about teaching are beginning to emerge, I look toward experienced educators like Butler, Bellis, Griffin, Doecke, McClenaghan, and Neelands for guidance and mentorship. Neelands (2001) outlines a 'pedagogic contract for human learning' (p. 14) which echoes my own emerging ideas. He looks at literacy as 'rooted in the world rather than in classrooms and textbooks' (p. 3). I envision a learning environment rich with possibilities to use students' own experiences to shape their worlds and their learning (Neelands, 2001; Doecke & McClenaghan, 2005), where

teacher-facilitated dialogue is an integral component of that space, urging students to speak their minds openly and channel their perceptions into their writing. An incarnation of these ideas in the classroom would see students and teachers playing with language to unearth new voices (Neelands, 2001) within their own narratives as well as the appropriation of popular culture 'in order to extend their language and literacy' (Doecke & McClenaghan, 2005, p. 249). It would be a space where 'the rules can be made and unmade and are always changing as we change,' and where children 'see themselves as producers rather than mere reproducers of language and textual practices' (Neelands, 2001, p. 15). This space would also encourage reflection, re-visioning, and an openness to change (Bellis, 2014) in collaborative dialogue as well as in writing. While I acknowledge that there will be challenges imposed by curriculum, policy, and school culture, I will endeavour to craft a learning space filled with inquiry, community, collaboration, flexibility, and creativity.

As an English teacher, I will encourage my students to find their writing mind, in whatever capacity, recognising that it will differ for each individual learner. The writing mind is the central site where language, literacy, and creativity intersect; the space where the authentic voice and personal narrative begin to take shape. In developing the writing mind, students have the opportunity to explore creative uses of language, draw connections between themselves and humanity, and access deeper self-awareness through writing about their experiences. If they can reach themselves through writing, they can wield the power of language. If they have the power of language, they possess the tools to unlock their greatest potential.

(Blackout. End of play.)

Post-production notes

I'm writing these final 'post-production notes' in December, many months after I submitted my original assignment for English methods in March this year. As I look back on this work for the first time since then, I feel like I am reading them as a changed person. The music of my writing mind begins to croak a little and then hum, the songs of the past come together with the present and fill the page.

Looking on from the distance that time allows me, I can see that in my assignment I was trying to give life to my old classrooms on a stage I created – I played the narrator, the playwright, and the director. Through the act of re-making my history in writing, my story began to crystallise into a personal narrative, a developing professional identity. I noticed a belief system was

emerging. There is something about being asked to look back in this way, something essential in unearthing this part of me to fully connect to my teacher-self, who I was, and who I want to become. If I can interrogate my past and integrate it with my present, if I can believe in myself as a teacher, as a writer, as a leader, then perhaps I can weather the challenges of the profession. Perhaps I can join with my community in crafting creative and successful learning spaces that promote collaboration, tolerance, imagination, and authenticity. In writing this narrative, I realised that I was becoming an English teacher – I could stand amongst my peers, I belonged here, this career was my inner call. At the end of the first year of my MTeach, I am convinced that this is my inner call.

That is not to say that I don't have fears or I'm not

in some way aware of the difficulties of English teaching. I do have fears about how students will respond to my teaching, that I'll struggle to engage them, that they'll refuse to write from within ... or to write at all. As an English teacher, I'll continually aspire to help the young people of my classrooms. I'll keep trying to find the place that they can write from, the authentic voice that their narrative spills out of.

References

- Bellis, N. (2014). 'The limits of my language ...': Acts of resistance and re-visioning in the secondary English classroom. In B. Doecke, G. Parr & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Language and Creativity* (pp. 89–102). Putney, NSW: Phoenix Education.
- Brecht, B. (1961). On Chinese Acting. (E. Bentley, Trans.). *The Tulane Drama Review*, 6 (1), 130–136.
- Butler, J. (2003). After Loss, What Then? In D. Eng and D. Kazanjian (Eds.), *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (pp. 467–473). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Campbell, J. & Moyers, B. (1988). *The Power of Myth*. New York: Doubleday.
- Doecke, B. & McClenaghan, D. (2005). Engaging in valued activities: Popular culture in the English classroom. In B. Doecke, & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=Learning* (pp. 247–260). Mile End, SA: Wakefield Press.
- Doecke, B., Turvey, A., & Yandell, J. (2016). Memory/History. Editorial. *Changing English*, 23 (2), 95–97, DOI: 10.1080/1358684X.2016.
- Griffin, A. (2003). 'I am a teacher- oimigod!': The construction of professional knowledge for the beginning English teacher. In B. Doecke, D. Homer, & H. Nixon (Eds.), *English Teachers at Work: Narratives, counter narratives and arguments* (pp. 312–325). Mile End, SA: Wakefield Press.
- Levi, P. (1986). *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Summit Books.
- Neelands, J. (2001). *Remember, We Are Human! The 2001 Garth Boomer Memorial Address*. Retrieved from http://www.proceedings.com.au/aate/aate_papers/neelands.htm.
- Parr, G. (2016). *English methods lecture notes*. Week 3. 18 March, 2016.

Sara Shaw is a recent graduate of the Master of Teaching program at Monash University in Melbourne. Originally from Alaska, she has permanently relocated to Western Australia where she plans to teach English, negotiate social discourse in literature and student narrative, and engage in deeper learning as a teacher researcher.



Footy, Gangs and Love: Using Auto-ethnography to Problematiser Practice on a Practicum

Roz Bellamy

Abstract: This article was written as an auto ethnography, which allowed for a complex and personal exploration of professional standards, teachers' professional identities, neoliberal reforms, and approaches to literacy and creativity. This article reflects on a practicum which involved teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to two year nine classes at an all boys' school. This provided rich opportunities for comparisons, experimentation, and learning from mistakes. Using auto ethnography as a pre-service teacher promoted reflective practice, which is pivotal for graduate teaching and for determining personal views on a range of controversial and polarising topics facing educators today.

During my Master of Teaching, pre-service teachers were generally instructed to write in one of two genres: academic writing or personal narratives. The latter appeared in the form of hastily written journal entries, which we considered 'reflective practice' on our practicums. While most pre-service teachers were too busy to write detailed entries analysing our practice, it became clear to me after completing my studies that there are immeasurable benefits to this sort of writing. Bloomfield (2010) asserts that pre-service teachers are usually hesitant to critique the pedagogy of more experienced teachers, such as their mentor teachers, and that therefore, 'Critically reflective opinion commonly is kept within safe boundaries or confined to private thought or writing' (p. 227). As per this description, I began my studies seeing these two genres as discrete. It was only in assignments where we quoted our reflective practice, which looked out of place in block quotes in between our academic writing voice, that these genres met.

However, in the English Education method, students were required to combine these two genres and write a narrative about our teaching experiences that referred to academic literature. Later, I understood this sort of writing to be 'auto ethnography', a qualitative narrative methodology, in which writing is considered a method of inquiry (Richardson, 2000). Auto ethnography is an appropriate methodology to use in education as it links the personal to the cultural, or a personal encounter within an educational context (Dyson, 2007). The case study below uses auto ethnography as a methodology to explore current debates over professional standards, teachers' professional identities, neoliberal reforms, and approaches to literacy and creativity.

A case study

Preparing to start my three-week practicum for the second semester, after completing my first semester of English Education at university, I felt nervous. What would my experience be like this time? Which texts would I teach? What would the students be like? Almost more importantly, what would my mentor teachers be like? It was impossible to predict how I would go. I am tested in the classroom in a way that I haven't been in any other job so far in my life. Having taken a break between my Honours degree in creative writing and my Master of

Teaching, I have worked in a range of professions, yet it is teaching where my strengths and weaknesses have been put under the spotlight. I was deeply conscious of being a pre-service teacher who loved books and writing but hadn't yet figured out the magic trick for making teenagers love books and writing; I engaged deeply with the critical theory and academic research behind teaching, but found it challenging to apply it to my practice.

I was returning to the school where I had completed a two-week placement in first semester. I followed up with the school and was given contact information for my two new mentor teachers. A few days before the practicum was due to begin, I heard from one of my mentor teachers, who told me that I would be teaching two classes of Year 9 English. Both classes were studying Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and viewing the Baz Luhrmann and Franco Zeffirelli film versions.

Relieved to have some direction, I began preparing. I borrowed resources on the play. I re-read parts of the play and re-watched Luhrmann's and Zeffirelli's film versions. I read articles from first semester, including Jeffrey Wilhem's (2007) compelling example of teaching *Romeo and Juliet* using an inquiry approach to curriculum. Wilhelm discusses the significant changes in his motivation and his students' engagement when he began 'to reframe my teaching units around essential questions' (2007, p. 64). I did not know how much of an opportunity I would have to implement some of these ideas and activities, particularly as I was starting to teach the unit several weeks in, had limited time, and needed to be actively preparing the students to write a text response. I planned to do my best to make the unit engaging and provide interesting and thought-provoking activities in the lead up to the students' written assessment.

Context

The school is a Catholic boys' college, based strongly on Marist traditions. It is proud of its 'vertical' pastoral groups, in which the older and younger boys interact and support each other. The school is also very passionate about football. Many of the boys state their intention to become professional football players. As I am not a Catholic, and know little about AFL, I felt out of place at the school. Fortunately, the school accepts many pre-service teachers, and we worked together in the staffroom. This gave us the opportunity to collaborate, discuss how we were teaching a particular unit, and share ideas.

Year 9 is the last year in which students are not streamed for English. Their assessment tasks are considered important as they determine whether students qualify for 'Extension English', regular English or 'Foundation English' (remedial, or basic skills English) in Year 10. Many of the mid-range students were now, in term 3, quite focussed on getting into Extension.

Class A: My first mentor teacher, Kerrie,* was very welcoming and seemed excited to have a student teacher. She explained that the boys in her class struggled with Shakespeare and that she was very encouraging to support them and encourage them to have a go. No answer was wrong while they were learning Shakespeare. She told me that they had watched the Baz Luhrmann film once, all the way through, and they were now re-watching it. They had not studied the play nor watched Zeffirelli's film yet.

Class B: My second mentor, Ron, was welcoming, in a different way. Quiet and introverted, he focussed on explaining where his class was up to. They had already written their text responses. He wanted me to spend time teaching them key scenes from the play, and focussing on the language, particularly on symbolism and metaphors. It turned out that there was another assessment task coming up, an oral assessment in which students enacted key scenes, so my work with the language of the play would help prepare them for this.

I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to observe both classes for the first few days. I watched class A re-watch the Luhrmann film, as Kerrie paused and asked questions about the symbolism. The symbols they focussed on related to the costuming, filming techniques and dramatic devices. I was given a class list and advised which students would be able to answer questions about the film/play and which students struggled the most with English.

In class B, the students had just handed in their text response essays and were ready to move on. Ron got the students to read one of the scenes aloud, and then as a class they worked through the language in the scene. After the class, he sat with me and helped me plan my next few classes. I would create PowerPoint presentations based on several scenes and then have the students discuss and write responses on the language and events. His advice was very detailed and helpful, but I was apprehensive. Ron's humorous and dramatic approach was extremely effective and the students had

been engaged throughout the class. I worried that I wouldn't have the same rapport, especially since due to timetable clashes I wouldn't be teaching that class as much as Class A. I was uncertain as to how they would respond to a student teacher.

Analysis of practice

I learned the names of the more challenging, disruptive students immediately. I spent time with these students in the following weeks, working to build their understanding of the play, praising their work and encouraging them to put effort into the activities. There were other students who seemed to have a comfortable grasp on the play and film and who were able to offer rich, valuable insights in class discussions. After attending a Year 9 drama excursion, I discovered that several of the boys in each class I was teaching were drama students. This explained a lot, as these boys were far more familiar and comfortable with referring to a play and its language conventions. They were more enthusiastic about reading out scenes and were willing to guess at the meanings inherent within. Some were willing to play Juliet, the Nurse or Lady Capulet, and didn't laugh when they read the lines.

There were extensive differences in students' abilities within class A. This was my fourth placement, but I had never come across students with such varied writing abilities. Each time I set a task, I walked around, stopping to answer a range of questions – some on task, some tangential but vaguely in the realm of an English classroom, and some purely intended to waste time – and looked at the students' work. I was impressed by some of the work, which could have been written by senior students, while other pieces resembled the work of Year 7 students. Many of the students needed help with every line of their writing, and no amount of scaffolding was enough.

Kerrie wanted me to spend time working on themes with Class A. For their text response essay, two of the five topics they could choose were about themes, which they had not studied in class. I knew that I had to break the work down as much as possible to make it accessible and engaging. Having assessed the students' prior knowledge of themes – and getting mixed responses – I planned several lessons that introduced and developed the idea of themes. First, I asked the students to identify themes from the play or film – beginning very generally, and giving them some hints, so that they felt confident participating – and turned these into a mind map on the board. I then got the students to link

these themes to things in their own lives. According to Doecke and McClenaghan (2005), 'Young people can make a Shakespearean text a vehicle for exploring questions of value and identity ...' (p. 248). I realised the more we linked the play to popular culture or their own lives, the more they would get out of the unit. Later, reading Yandell's (1997) writing on helping students find meaning in Shakespeare, and his focus on the 'social relations of particular classrooms in shaping the meaning of any engagement with canonical texts' (2011, p. 229), I hoped that this approach had challenged any notion of there being one correct interpretation of Shakespeare, and had encouraged students to find individual meaning rather than follow a collective reading of the text.

This took some prompting, as the students seemed nervous to make connections to their personal lives, perhaps unsure if they would embarrass themselves. I asked some questions to get them thinking. Many of them referred to Romeo as Leo, using the actor from the Luhrmann production. 'Do you relate to Leo's character? Or anything else in the story?' The more confident students spoke up with the obvious answers. 'Girlfriends. Family.' These were linked to the themes of love and loyalty. To get them to think outside their own lives, I asked, 'Can you think of anything in Melbourne – something that you saw in on the news, or hear a lot about – that you think relates to *Romeo and Juliet*?' The answers became more creative. The students referred to 'Footy' and 'Bikie gangs,' again making a connection to the Luhrmann film. They linked these to the themes of revenge and, again, loyalty, speaking at length about friendship, kinship and what one does for 'their mates.' I asked them, once all of these links to their lives were up on the board, 'Is *Romeo and Juliet* still a relevant play for Year 9s to study?' They nodded emphatically.

Once they seemed comfortable with the themes and could reinforce them with examples from the text, I gave them homework: choose a theme, think of a song that represents it, describe how it relates and which scenes it would suit. One of the students in the class, Jason, who had been struggling with themes, wrote about a Chris Brown song. He was able to link the song, 'Loyalty,' to Mercutio and Benvolio's loyalty to Romeo, and mentioned the scene in which Mercutio defends Romeo against Tybalt. He also described Tybalt's loyalty to the Capulets, referring to fight scenes, and finished by explaining why loyalty is such an important virtue.

I was interested to read Jason's response, knowing that he was extremely hesitant to contribute to class during the unit and that when approached he usually shook his head and said he didn't know anything. Despite some issues with phrasing, it was a positive and commendable effort from Jason. His response showed a far greater understanding of the text and characters than he realised, which I pointed out every time that I worked with him in class from then on. Later, Jason told me that he had chosen to write his text response on themes, which felt like high praise. It meant he felt comfortable enough to write an extended response on themes, despite several students in the class proclaiming that the question on themes was harder than any of the others.

Many students had come back with unexpected, clever song choices and were able to write concise explanations linking the song to theme and the theme to characters and events. I was pleased, overall, by the way the students responded to my lessons on themes. I created handouts and ran a class in which the students looked through a list of quotes I collated and linked them to various themes.

In class B, we were working methodically through key scenes of the play. The version that the students had bought had a 'modern language translation' on the left side, beside the original Shakespearean language. Despite this translation, they struggled to make sense of the language. I was asked countless times (by both classes) if for a particular activity or assessment task they were meant to be using the 'left hand side or right hand side'. When I answered the latter, they usually groaned; the left may have been confusing, but the right side was incomprehensible.

However as soon as we started close textual analysis in class B, the students seemed to realise that they understood more than they had thought. I started with looking at Romeo's soliloquy leading up to the balcony scene, and was impressed to see that students could make connections to other scenes in the play. Many could think of quotations or scenes earlier or later in the play that were connected by theme or symbol (such as light). I gave them questions that tested them on a variety of levels – some answered with basic comprehension, others were analytical and able to synthesise knowledge of other parts of the play. Many students were able to analyse symbols and metaphors and wrote fluent sentences using quotes. Occasionally, like class A, they referred to film techniques such as lighting, even when asked for a language technique, but when

prompted could think of evidence from the play. I realised after several lessons that this class felt very comfortable with the play and the film as texts. At this point I introduced the Zeffirelli film version to them and we explored key scenes, contrasting the version to Luhrmann's film and the play.

In class A, it was time to start writing. Kerrie told me that she had provided a scaffolded handout for their text response earlier in the year, on the novel *Swerve*. She suggested that I adapt this for *Romeo and Juliet*, saying 'They found *Swerve* an easy text to write about. It is Australian and easy to read ... they will really struggle writing about *Romeo and Juliet*.' I gave them a sample introduction (on a different topic) and a deconstructed table for each element of their paragraphs. I scaffolded it to this level as I had previously taught essay writing to Year 7 students at the school, using verbal explanation, showing a video and then getting them to write, and found that this was not enough. Many students needed a highly detailed handout to follow along and fill in. Kerrie told me that the 'weakest' student in the class, Larry, had filled out his tables in great detail. She showed me his work and he had gone to great effort to fill in the table. When I marked his essay, I saw that he had managed to structure it very well. The ideas showed a limited understanding, but he had worked hard at constructing something that was thoughtful and analytical. Some of the ideas did not link together, or didn't make sense, but I could see a structure to his writing and an engagement with the text. Kerrie told me that I should feel proud, as he usually failed text response tasks and refused to put in effort.

There is a strong, and often problematic, emphasis on structure and templates in Australian classrooms (Clyne, 2005). This can make essay writing formulaic and prescribed, and suggests to students that structure is valued over content. This can lead to less exploration, experimentation and creative uses of language, particularly in a NAPLAN focussed school (Bulfin, Parr & Rutherford, 2013). I thought about this when I created my lessons on essay writing, however I was conscious of their teacher's insights and suggestions and also the students' comments about their writing. They expressed worries and doubts about their abilities – some of this anxiety can probably be linked to the rather rigid TEEL structure they were expected to follow – and requested help and support. Many of the students thanked me for my help and efforts in the lead up to their text response essays,

and acknowledged that they would have struggled without it. In the future I will have to work out how to ensure students are prepared for assessments set by the school without making my work with them too exam-focussed and based on prescribed structures. It is problematic when assessment tasks are decontextualised, completely separate to what is being taught in class and even intrusive to class work (Bellis, 2011). These tensions – especially between my sense of the students' engagement and learning, contrasted with set assessment tasks that may not allow the students to show the extent of their understanding – will be something I continue to think about throughout my career in teaching.

I spent lessons on structure and focused on linking sentences, which I had been told the students struggled with. I had seen evidence of their difficulty with writing when I set short writing activities. Even when they only had to write a paragraph or half a page, they seemed unsure where to start and finish. When I asked them to tell me the components of an essay, they could recite terms, but when I checked their understanding of these terms, they were unsure and hesitant. I used animated Youtube videos, visual explanations on the board and printed essay samples to demonstrate possible ways to structure a text response. I followed this with pre-writing activities, in which I got the students to create a 'map' to help them with their essay writing. I encouraged them to work in the medium that most suited them, their laptops or books, and plot out their ideas in either dot points, drawings, concept maps or sentences. Once they had many ideas recorded in some form, we then worked on connecting ideas into their main arguments. I told them that this was a useful technique for senior English and even university studies, and that it would help them avoid mind blanks and not knowing where to start.

Students were given periods of class time to work on their essays with my help. I struggled with the students' use of ICT. They used their laptops whenever possible, finding written work exerting, and asked for electronic copies of every handout. They used search engines and online sources, and several times they copied information from the internet, changing a few words. I had to explain what could be considered plagiarism, despite their teacher having explained it in detail earlier that year. I was concerned that their use of ICT was preventing their development of literacy skills, since many of them thought that finding information online and paraphrasing for their entire piece was acceptable.

One benefit of ICT, however, was the students' ability to contact me by email during my time at the school. This meant that when they were working on their writing at home, they could email me with what turned out to be thoughtful, considered questions about the texts or how to structure their responses. For students who may be hesitant to ask a question in class, this is a way to receive support and encouragement that allows them to return to their writing more confident and sure of their line of thought. This regular contact eventually culminated in my feedback on their writing assessments, which meant, as Gill explores in her chapter on online conversations in a literature classroom, 'my response to their writing is far more able to be framed in terms of a conversation, rather than in terms of correction.' (2005, p. 164) While I still had to correct structural, grammatical and spelling errors, or offer another perspective on an idea they presented, I feel that my work in class and via email meant that my feedback could be perceived as a conversation, not a final and unambiguous correction.

When they finished writing their essays, I decided to spend a class on workshopping and peer editing, rather than moving on as planned. Students worked in pairs and swapped their essays. I told them to offer each other compliments, then suggest improvements for sentences or structure, and then finally to look at spelling and punctuation errors. This worked very successfully. I was pleased to see two students who were generally disruptive and disengaged working together. One was telling the other, 'Your paragraphs aren't long enough!' He called me over to confirm what he was saying. 'Miss, don't you think these paragraphs are too short?' I agreed, and asked the student what the paragraphs were missing. We looked at the sample paragraph structure in the worksheet I had given them. He replied, 'I guess I don't really have evidence or examples.' I was pleased to see students asking each other questions about their work, offering a range of useful feedback and prompting each other to edit and make changes. I then offered some time for students to implement these changes and re-draft their work based on suggestions from me, their usual teacher and peers.

I had not previously used peer editing or workshopping in my classes. I had been inspired to use it based on experiences in our English Education workshops and had also found encouragement to do so within the STELLA Standards Framework (Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia) and in curriculum documents. STELLA's section on Writing

says 'Accomplished teachers endeavour to motivate their students, even when they encounter resistance. They are adept at devising prewriting activities ... enable students to learn through revising their work. Their classrooms are writing workshops in which students are able to discuss their work with each other ...' (2002). Furthermore, the Australian Curriculum: English (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2017) lists reviewing and editing the students' own work and other students' work for content, organisation, paragraphing, sentence structure, etc., under the Literacy strand for Year 9 students.

In class B, we had spent many lessons looking at scenes in the play. Once I felt that students' confidence with the language was developing, I added in some creative activities. After working through one particular scene, using four different students to portray Lord Capulet as his anger grew throughout the scene and then having a class discussion about it, I got students to draw a comic strip version of the scene. The students were hesitant but I encouraged them to have a go. I told them I didn't care about their drawing skills or how they represented the characters – they could be turned into their favourite characters or creatures from another text, if they liked.

Students created very creative cartoons. Since many students had already had their chance to demonstrate their abilities in class, whether by reading a scene powerfully or through impressive analysis of a quote or symbol in the text, I was eager to encourage less confident students to be playful and show their knowledge in this alternative text form. I instructed students to use text as well as visuals, either through speech bubble quotations or captions. Students asked if they had to use text from the play and I told them that they had to use some from the scene but could combine it with modern language. It was wonderful to see many students who avoided speaking in class enjoying this task and comfortably quoting the play and representing the characters in their own ways. I collected their work and had immediate insight into their comprehension of the scene and their ability to represent it with words and images. I awarded prizes to the 'best' two, in terms of their ability to use the language from the scene and to recreate it visually in a compelling way. I had never used chocolate as an incentive to students before, worried about food allergies and the general message I might be sending about food. However, I had seen most of the other pre-service teachers at the school experiencing great success with games or

competitions with chocolate prizes, so I decided to try it. I heard one of the 'winners' saying, 'I never win anything, especially in English!'

Discussion

I struggled with many of the constraints, which including having started mid unit and not getting to teach the unit 'my way', which would have included more of a focus on the play alongside the film versions. Also, the fact that the classes had two fast-approaching assessments meant that my time was restricted and allocated to preparation. I also struggled with the fact that class A had spent more time on the film versions than the play, while B had studied both extensively. There was a set of twins, one in each of the classes I taught, and I was conscious of the fact that the student in B would potentially have a much deeper understanding of the play. This is not to say that students in A didn't get great learning opportunities, but I feel that B was given the chance to go so much deeper into all of the texts. I mentioned this to Ron at one stage, as he was suggesting I use the same activities and lesson plans with Kerrie's class, and I had to explain that it wouldn't be possible. He said that his class was 'stronger' overall and that there were more students struggling with English in A. Gradually, I realised that the classes were making meaning of *Romeo and Juliet* in different ways, and at different paces, and that I could learn from both rather than seeing one as insufficient.

Another interesting aspect of my placement, in retrospect, was seeing the way other pre-service teachers were handling the same material. One pre-service teacher had set the text response essay as a class test written in one period rather than over several classes and at home. We were marking the essays at the same time and she emphasised the poor quality of the writing. While the essays I marked had faults, certainly, I was pleased that my students seemed to have detailed knowledge of the plot, characters, themes and symbols, and were able to link textual evidence to any claims they made. My marks ranged from 11 to 19 out of 20. I was relieved that my students had been able to work on the text response assessment gradually, with support and scaffolding. It helped them create their best possible work. I was aware of how fragile the boys' beliefs in their English abilities were at that school. A fail, when they had tried so hard, could dissolve their confidence in their writing and reading abilities.

Thinking about Gill's preference for discussing 'rather than 'correcting' student writing' (2005, p. 160),

perhaps I could have gone further in framing my feedback as a conversation. I had to write a large numerical grade on the cover of the assessments, which most students read and shared with each other, only glancing at the comments. It would have been beneficial to discuss their work with them, or to give them their comments first and only later provide a grade. In terms of the physical distribution of feedback, there would have been less 'interruption' of their writing if I placed all feedback at the end, and I could have asked questions rather than telling them what needed changing. I offered feedback in my final class with A, going through areas where many students had lost marks and discussing possible improvements. I also focussed on what had been *great* about the essays.

During the practicum, I realised that English teachers constantly have to make decisions about what matters. There are 'wars' over grammar (Andrews et al., 2006; Howie, 2006; Locke, 2010) and over what constitutes literature (McLean Davies & Kent, 2011; Howie, 2008; Bellis, Parr, & Doecke, 2009). It is up to us, individually, to work out how we feel about these things, what we will agonise over and what we dedicate resources and time to and what we might accept without asking enough questions, perhaps based on what we read in frameworks and syllabi or hear from our colleagues. In what can be such a contentious field, it is important to reflect on pedagogic reasons behind the ways we teach writing and how this impacts on students. Ryan and Kettle (2012) call this process reflexive mediation, in which teachers reflect on their content knowledge and on appropriate pedagogies for writing, including inquiry approaches, teaching structure, modelling text types and composing strategies, providing specific feedback and developing critical approaches. Reflection, including autobiographical writing, provides such important insights for our future teaching.

I feel that the constraints I faced for this unit meant that I could not delve further into interesting aspects of *Romeo and Juliet* as a text. I could not spend much time on Cultural Heritage from Locke's 'Models of English' (2005), and I would have liked to discuss societal deference to the canon, and hear some perspectives on what the students thought of the idea of 'the classics,' perhaps including a debate on the relevance of Shakespeare. I was able to work on Skills Acquisition, Personal Growth and Critical Literacy to some extent. However, there were limitations I felt as a pre-service teacher. If A and B were my regular classes, there would

have been some big questions I would have asked about literature in modern society, the idea of remakes and reinventing texts, some of the out-dated aspects of the canon – the privileging of Old White Males – and encouraged discussion about the meaning of the Shakespearean language and how they made meaning of it. I could only marginally explore aspects of various 'framing' models (MacLachlan & Reid, 1994), such as inter-textual and extra-textual framing. This including looking at a modern cultural context, what we bring with us to the play and film texts, how we looked at one text based on our reading of the other (in this case, going back to the play after 'reading' the film), and some exploration of how the films modernised and in some ways parodied the original play. To some extent, I attributed this to the frenetic pace of a school, as time does not always permit teachers to experiment, critique and play with language, literature and framing the way they might wish.

Conclusion

In the future, I plan to focus more on analytical frameworks and critical literacy in my lessons. MacLachlan (1994) demonstrates the importance of using frames as a strategy for making literature more relevant to students. Taking MacLachlan's approach, I would 'raise students' awareness of the politics of framing, challenging them to become resisting rather than submissive readers' (p. 12). I tried to do this on the practicum when I questioned the relevance of the original text, and the intentions of the two filmic versions, encouraging them to examine how the themes and characters had been represented and what this informed us about the context. Without the same constraints, and in my future classrooms, I would offer even more creative tasks, interwoven with Locke's orientations (2005), showing the students that language, literacy and literature are inseparable, even if the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2017) may claim otherwise (Bellis, 2011). I would get the students to write freely and without many constraints on a related theme, symbol or idea in the text. This could take the form of an autobiographical narrative connecting their own lives to the play, or they could represent their responses to the play in different genres and mediums. Studying film adaptations of a text could prompt a range of related activities. I could ask the students, how would you remake it? Why? Cast the film, explain your creative and visual choices, and justify your use of language. These sorts of activities could extend the students' thinking about

the language and their confidence in their own writing and creativity.

In terms of my own development as an educator, I will continue to write about my experiences. As Doecke and Parr write, explaining why writing is so significant for educators as well as students, 'We are equally concerned to promote the value of writing as a vehicle for grappling with issues emerging in their professional lives.' (2005, p. 9) The more I reflect on my practice, think about issues and dilemmas in my work, and perhaps find unexpected solutions, the more I will grow as an educator. Just as writing enriches my teaching and experience of the world, I can build students' belief in themselves as valid writers with important opinions.

**Pseudonyms have been used in this article for all teachers and students mentioned.*

References

- Andrews, R., Torgerson, C., Beverton, S., Freeman, A., Locke, T., Low, G., & Zhu, D. (2006). The effect of grammar teaching on writing development. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(1), 39–55.
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2017). *The Australian Curriculum: English*. Retrieved from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>
- Bellis, N. (2011). 'The visitor, the learner, the guest': an Australian teaching in England. In B. Doecke, G. Parr, & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Creating an Australian curriculum for English* (pp. 67–79). Putney, NSW: Phoenix Education.
- Bellis, N., Parr, G., & Doecke, B. (2009). The making of literature: A continuing conversation. *Changing English*, 16(2), 165–179.
- Bloomfield, D. (2010). Emotions and 'getting by': A pre-service teacher navigating professional experience. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), 221–234.
- Bulfin, S., Parr, G., & Rutherford, S. (2013). Narratives of/in English teaching and learning. *Idiom*, 49(3), pp. 2–7.
- Clyne, M. (2005). Writing, testing and culture. In B. Doecke & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=Learning* (pp. 120–128). South Australia: AATE and Wakefield Press.
- Doecke, B., & McClenaghan, D. (2005). Engaging in valued activities: Popular culture in the English classroom. In B. Doecke & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=learning* (pp. 247–260). South Australia: AATE and Wakefield Press.
- Doecke, B., & Parr, G. (2005). Writing: A common project. In B. Doecke & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=learning* (pp. 1–16). South Australia: AATE and Wakefield Press.
- Dyson, M. (2007). My story in a profession of stories: Auto ethnography – an empowering methodology for educators. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(1), 36–48.
- Gill, P. (2005). Talking to write: On line conversations in the literature classroom. In B. Doecke & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=Learning* (pp. 149–165). South Australia: AATE and Wakefield Press.
- Howie, M. (2006). The importance of being politically correct. In B. Doecke, M. Howie & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Only connect. English teaching, schooling and community* (pp. 283–293). Mile End, SA: Wakefield Press & the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.
- Howie, M. (2008). Embracing the other within: Dialogical ethics, resistance and professional advocacy in English teaching. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 7(1), 103–118.
- Locke, T. (2005). Writing positions and rhetorical spaces. In B. Doecke & G. Parr (Eds.), *Writing=Learning* (pp. 75–95). South Australia: AATE and Wakefield Press.
- Locke, T. (Ed.) (2010). *Beyond the grammar wars: A resource for teachers and students on developing language knowledge in the English/literacy classroom*. London: Routledge.
- MacLachlan, G. (1994). The teaching of literature: A killjoy profession. *Idiom*, 29(3), 7–21.
- McLean Davies, L., & Kent, H. (2011). From literature to literary practice: Teaching texts in the Australian English curriculum. In B. Doecke, G. Parr, & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Creating an Australian curriculum for English* (pp. 99–112). Putney, NSW: Phoenix Education.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 923–948). (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Ryan, M., & Kettle, M. (2012). Re-thinking context and reflexive mediation in the teaching of writing. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 35(3), 287–300.
- Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA). (2002). The accomplished teacher in the English/literacy classroom. Retrieved from <http://www.stella.org.au/pdf/languagemodes.pdf>
- Wilhelm, J. (2007). *Engaging Readers and Writers with Inquiry*. New York: Scholastic, 64–74.
- Yandell, J. (1997). Reading Shakespeare, or Ways with Will. *Changing English*, 4(2), 277–294.
- Yandell, J. (2011). Agency and the canon: Your Shakespeare, everybody's Shakespeare? In B. Doecke, L. McLean Davies, & P. Mead (Eds.), *Teaching Australian Literature: From Classroom Conversations to National Imaginings* (pp. 213–230). Mile End, South Australia: Wakefield Press.

Roz Bellamy is a Melbourne-based writer, editor and teacher. She writes for a range of publications, including *Archer Magazine*, *Daily Life*, *Everyday Feminism*, *Going Down Swinging*, *Kill Your Darlings*, SBS, *Seizure* and *The Vocal*, and her writing was shortlisted for the 2014 Scribe Nonfiction Prize

Grief

Rory Harris

a wash of Chinese ink
& then an emerald cloud framed
the gallery is perched, the underground rattles
& there is no wait time
as the street sings under the weight of swung bags
late Saturday afternoon Orchard Road
& in the dust of roadworks the footpaths widen for
commerce
a mall built around water, beer flows on the plaza
into the bird chatter dawn
kids hold the place to ransom
mobile phones, six shooters to the fluttering trees
I step through wet party town
dodge Christmas decorations
& let the tropic light around me

in one of those nine hundred room hotels
east meets west buffet breakfast gluttony
& it really doesn't matter
if the eggs aren't free rage
here the staff have done their courses
in the gentle art
to find the newspaper & open the day

in the overcast morning
the fun run has closed the expressway
Changi Airport is a mall before a heaven of clouds
with a smoker's room to die for

outside the departure lounge
the familiar fashion frolic of returning Filipinos

a passenger is kneecapped by the plane's food trolley
limping above the world we close ranks
& are offered too many free drinks

& then a dash across Manila at peak hour
a prayer in patience lost luggage dreaming

through the wash of streets
a rhythm of heat & the pimping of stars
lined up & ragged scripts folded & unfolded
& the creases of beauty harden in the grappling night

Kym from Shalom, the Christian Hostel
drives with poorly bandaged broken knuckles
& tells me he got them fighting
he looks at the splint on my arm
I tell him *from taking on the bad guys*
& he wants to know if I'm a pastor
I think about what I'll say next

we talk the mantra of fathers
our children & their school fees

the first English language lesson on Negros is policy
who speaks, to whom & on whose authority?
I reframe it, *winners & losers*
& remember those at the margins
one of the Year 11s laughs

after school at the Su-ay market
I run into three teachers on their way
to pay their condolences
a student from a few years ago died three days ago
when any young man in his mid-twenties
is driving the family car
numbers & timing are everything
there is no second language for grief

the parish priest rides by on a motor bike
the scramble of pieces that make a pattern
I drink rum close to the shade of a mango tree
waiting for the world to bloom into fruit

the calm dawn dog bark dark
the humidity sets around us
a table cloth for the morning

when two old men talk over coffee
they rest in their silences
translations of an age

I try to teach metaphor
& retell a story about my parents
I look in the mirror & my father stares back

I grab a handful of sugared peanuts & taste candy all day

Maam closes the school two hours early
the entire staff attend a memorial service for the
ex-student
the father, an ex-priest, rages against his God
rattles past the cliché of *potential*
& *the exchange of a life*
this is rock hard no nonsense anger
a young man fragile is that moment
where a rush of blood filled his eyes
& clotted his heart against the order of how he planned
to live
& in the rain afterwards
& in the click & flutter of mah-jong tiles & cards
small table stakes & chancers & other entertainments
a family waits & waits to gather to bury him

against a father's chest, a mother's breast
they held & fed you, heart against beating heart
& now the rain has set in, I toast the storm
overflowing the drains which carries a river

we dream into the middle distance
between rain & sun & after the storm
reveal what it is that brought us here
a hand within a hand within a hand
laid to rest gently into this earth

I walk the length of the *Barangay*
the roosters crow
a small measure of settlement
to loosen our limbs & extend our lives
a greeting with each step
in the sway awake rhythms of each other's lives
as the cock is placed into the ring

the classrooms chant
the heat of the day rises

in the front room of Anawim, centre for the deaf
hands are raised & touched to foreheads & blessed
a gurgling joy as the candy is hidden until after dinner

& I ask about Christopher's welfare
& am told by his father that he has died
but not already dead

We eat bread & drink coffee over the estuary
the mangroves flutter behind us
empty rum bottles hang together on lines
& clink the approach of friend & stranger
after mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception
we play *Find Mary* amongst the students
pinning a red petal to their humanity

driving from Su-ay to Bacolod
we pass a man with his arms under his head
his right leg has exploded opening to bone
his motor cycle pushed to the side
the truck that hit him stalled further down the road
two men stand over the body & direct traffic
they are waiting for the police to arrive
& then, maybe then, a cover to reduce our fears
later in the airport's smoking room
I drink Pilsen & smoke enough cigarettes to pollute an
island state

we spend an entire day
preparing for the wedding
videoed from every angle
the speeches are still going
as the chairs are packed away
& I take off my *barong*

guard the gifts as the reception is ferried home
in one over flowing single car

we gather in our smiles
at morning tea
the unexplainable is silent
washing over us
a mass is built around a life
this abundance of food
we rest between speakers
as a new world is created in our arms
this commissioning
& afterwards beer, rum & karaoke
it must be Sunday

in the street the labour
of enterprise
each space built upon itself
to profit a life
small money huge effort
to begin each day
& then the rain floods
as the brooms of the *Barangay*
shift the rubbish
down drains in the dim dawn
we roll & sweat against the moving air
to this resting time

at the parish party a bottle of Jack Daniel's appears
it must be Christmas
the gift must be long & I receive two belts
sleep children sleep
there will be a morning at the end of it

December 2016

English Syllabus interpretation:

The relationship between literary theories and teacher beliefs

Jill Ireland, University of Wollongong, Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, Macquarie University and Susan Duchesne, University of Wollongong

Abstract: This paper examines the relationship between the literary theories underpinning an English syllabus and teachers' personal epistemologies and pedagogical beliefs. The study discussed here used semi-structured interviews and an online survey to investigate 50 New South Wales teachers' views of the theoretical basis of a senior English syllabus that came into force in 2000, and represented a substantial change of emphasis for the subject. Participants described the extent of alignment between literary theories they saw as influencing the Syllabus and their preferred literary theories, and linked this to their epistemological beliefs and their teaching practices at senior secondary level. Where there was a mismatch between the perceived theoretical basis of the Syllabus and teachers' own preferred literary theories, this fuelled participants' perceptions that the Syllabus was unduly influenced by unstable and contradictory literary theories which were seen as undermining their existing conceptions of English as a school subject. The study's findings suggest the importance of considering teachers' beliefs in developing and implementing a new syllabus.

Introduction

Contemporary teachers work in a rapidly changing educational environment. Substantial changes in a written curriculum mean that teachers need to interpret and make sense of the new requirements and the changes of classroom practice these entail, as Hargreaves (2003) notes.

After considerable deliberation, the Australian Curriculum for senior schooling is being embarked upon, with each state curriculum authority currently developing a new Stage 6 Syllabus. In New South Wales, the consultation period on the draft documents for the senior English courses closed in October 2016. In this context of curriculum change for the subject, it is timely to ask some key questions to inform the processes of development and implementation. What has been learnt from previous experiences of planning and implementing new curriculum at senior secondary level? What has emerged from research on how teachers interpret and implement new curricula, especially those that may entail changes in teacher attitudes and practices?

While there are multiple paradigms for the relationship between teacher beliefs and their current educational practices, irrespective of the source of teacher perceptions about a new syllabus, these *perceptions* influence how they interpret and enact the syllabus. Where teachers perceive a syllabus innovation to conflict with their existing beliefs and practices, this has the potential to affect how it is implemented (Pajares, 1992; Ertmer, 2005).

Context of the study

This paper considers the case of a major curriculum innovation in Senior Secondary English that represented a change for teachers' practices as well as the theoretical basis for the subject

(Manuel & Brock, 2003). The paper is drawn from a doctoral study completed at Macquarie University (Ireland, 2014) that focused on teachers exercising professional judgement in interpreting the role of literary theories in a senior English syllabus which came into force in New South Wales in 2000. While the study considered senior English curriculum in one state, the findings are of broader interest at a time when English teachers in each Australian state and territory are considering how their jurisdictions will implement the new Australian Curriculum Senior Secondary English courses, and what sorts of changes this will entail in their classrooms.

In NSW schools, a syllabus is developed by the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards authority. This frames for teachers the rationale and the specific content of their subject area, and the basis on which students' learning will be assessed. The teacher's role is to exercise professional judgement in interpreting, preparing and enacting the written syllabus (Ben-Peretz, 1990).

Each teacher's interpretation of curriculum is strongly influenced by their knowledge and beliefs, subject conceptions, and experience of teaching contexts, and these in turn shape what teachers plan and enact (Pajares, 1992; Remillard & Heck, 2010). Marzano (2003) identifies the potential for friction and dissonance between a written curriculum and the ways teachers perceive their planning (the intended curriculum) and their responses to students' needs and interests (the enacted curriculum). As Pajares (2002) points out there is the potential for particular aspects of curriculum to lack congruence with teachers' pedagogical and epistemological beliefs, which can lead to curriculum contestation. If the dissonance between curriculum and teacher beliefs is difficult to resolve, the resulting contestation may be ongoing and disruptive.

Contestation

Contestation is defined here as long-lasting debate and conflict which resists resolution due to divergent assumptions. There are multiple sites of contestation and controversy that can arise for teachers in their processes of interpreting a written curriculum. The curriculum as a whole can be considered a site of contestation in terms of questions about the nature and role of teaching (Hargreaves, 2003; Ball, 1982; Kennedy, 2005). English as a subject has been a site of contestation over many years with various debates about its main purposes and distinctive qualities.

(Goodwyn, 2003; Marshall, 2000). Literary theories also constitute a contested field, and there are conflicting views about the merits of using various literary theories in the teaching of English (Bonnycastle, 2002; Cuddon, 1998; Leitch et al., 2001). Further, a specific syllabus may itself be a source of contestation as was the case in this study. When significant curriculum change is introduced, it entails both contestation and negotiation for participants who hold different underlying educational assumptions, beliefs and values (Luke, 2011; Kennedy, 2005).

The search for congruence

Teachers focus considerable effort on their search for congruence between written, intended, enacted, experienced and assessed curricula because this is important for both student achievement and for teacher professional satisfaction (Madda, Halverson & Gomez, 2007). Educators also seek congruence between mandated curricula and their existing beliefs and practices. The influence of literary theories in mandated curriculum provides an interesting case, as these theories have links to specific beliefs about English as a school subject, as well as to particular beliefs about how the subject should be taught (Marshall, 2000).

Beliefs have been defined by Schoenfeld (1998, p. 19) as 'mental constructs that represent the codification of people's experience and understandings' into propositions that motivate their behaviour. As units of cognition, beliefs combine to form knowledge, including hypotheses and faith claims, as well as opinions and statements based on empirical evidence (Leder, Pehkonen & Törner, 2002). Teachers' beliefs are said to influence 'almost everything one thinks about the business of teaching, the place of the school in society, most desired methods of teaching/learning and, finally, who should control curriculum and how it should be constructed' (Smith & Lovat, 1990, p. 71). Because beliefs are so pervasively influential, it follows that any curriculum innovation teachers see as challenging will be examined thoroughly for its congruence with their existing teacher beliefs. In the case of an English syllabus, these beliefs may centre on notions of English literature and how it can be studied, as well as pedagogical ideas about the ways the subject should be taught.

Contestation around a new English Syllabus

In 2000, a new and very different English Stage 6 Syllabus (Board of Studies, 1999) came into operation

in New South Wales. It was very different from its long-established predecessor and provided new courses of study for an increasingly diverse cohort of Higher School Certificate students. It reflected changes in thinking about the nature of English and literary theory and the developments in Cultural Studies that had occurred since the previous syllabus was written. There was considerable contestation surrounding the introduction of this Syllabus, centring on contrasting perceptions about the literary-theoretical bases of the Syllabus, and how these might align with or challenge existing teacher beliefs and practices. The contestation over this Syllabus occurred in both the educational sector and the wider community:

Public debate and opposing views about the substance and direction of the new courses reflected an equally robust debate within the ranks of the English teaching profession itself. (Manuel & Brock, 2003, p. 23)

A key issue in this debate was the perception that the Syllabus was shaped by diverse literary theories, in ways that constituted a significant shift in the foundations of English as a school subject (McGraw, 2005). Prior to the introduction of this senior Syllabus in 2000, English teachers in NSW had been working for a long period from a stable syllabus in the tradition of F.R. Leavis (Rosser, 2002; O'Sullivan, 2005). The Syllabus which commenced in 2000 was very different in that it was perceived to be taking account of recent developments in cultural studies and literary theory, which could have major implications for classroom practices in English (Hardage, 1999; Manuel & Brock, 2003; McGraw, 2005).

While literary theories are notoriously hard to define (Eagleton, 2003; Graff, 1979), they are essentially speculative accounts of how literature and other cultural artefacts can or should be encountered and interpreted. Examples of literary theories include formalism, Marxist literary theory, New Criticism, Leavisian criticism, reader-response theory, feminist literary theory, queer theory, and poststructuralism. Diverse literary theories essentially offer rival epistemological hypotheses about knowledge, meaning, the idea of veracity, the authority and even the existence of textual evidence (Cunningham, 2003; Eagleton, 2003).

The epistemological principles and assumptions on which literary theories rest are strikingly diverse. When they are embedded in a syllabus, these literary-theoretical principles and assumptions may not always be congruent with a teacher's existing epistemological

beliefs (their systems of belief about knowledge and knowing), which function as the lenses through which everything else is perceived (Pajares, 1992). In addition, many literary theories are logically incompatible with other theories, making it difficult to *combine* multiple theories into a single personal epistemology (Cole, Hill, Kelly & Rikowski, 1999). How an individual accounts for and understands these diverse literary-theoretical hypotheses can be expected to influence their attitudes and their practices (Hardage, 1999; Fish, 2001; Kitching, 2008).

In order to investigate the nature of English teachers' beliefs and their views about a new syllabus and its possible theoretical bases, the research question for this study was:

What is the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the literary theoretical basis of the NSW English Stage 6 Syllabus (1999) and their own beliefs and practices regarding literary theories?

Methodology

This research project explored how English teachers acted as syllabus interpreters within the context of contestation over literary theories that they perceived shaped the rationale for a new senior syllabus. Evidence was gathered from teachers' self-reports, in order to hear their voices on an issue which had been the focus of much discussion within the profession, in professional publications, and in the media (Manuel et al., 2009; McGraw, 2005; Freesmith, 2006).

The study was conducted in three phases, during which 50 NSW teachers of senior English provided their perceptions about the influence of literary theories in the English Stage 6 Syllabus ('the Syllabus') and the place of these in their classroom teaching.

Phase 1 of the study (2006) took the form of semi-structured interviews with five teachers in independent schools in one locality in order to test proposed lines of inquiry. From a Glossary of 19 theories produced by the principal researcher, the research participants were asked to select those theories they perceived as underpinning the Syllabus, and to specify which literary theories they personally held. They were also asked to evaluate the influence of any specific literary theories on their classroom practice in Year 12. Phase 1 participant feedback led to the interview questions being streamlined into an on-line survey.

The Phase 2 on-line survey (2007–2008) was completed by 25 English teachers drawn from across all NSW secondary school systems. The on-line survey

participants produced reflective responses about their attitudes and teaching practices concerning literary theories. The Glossary of literary theories provided for the Phase 2 survey participants had been amplified to include specific examples of classroom practices linked with each of the nineteen literary theories presented. Participants were able to add any other literary theories they saw as being influential upon the new Syllabus or their own practice.

Phase 3 of data collection (2010) comprised in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 teachers about their views on and their approaches to teaching literary theories in senior English. The teachers described their perceptions of the influence of literary theories on the Syllabus, the types of applications of these that they believed were expected, assumed or required, and the degree to which they believed explicit teaching of literary theories was necessary or productive for their students. To help the teachers move beyond generalisations and to gain deeper insights into the investigation, Phase 3 participants were asked to give examples of recent lessons that demonstrated their approach to literary theories in senior English classes. Respondents were also asked to look beneath both the Syllabus and their own conceptions of English as a subject, to explore which literary theories (if any) they perceived as being influential in shaping the new Syllabus documents, and to relate these to their own beliefs and views of the purposes of English as a subject.

Considering the sample of participants from all three Phases of the study (N=50), almost a third of the teachers began teaching Year 12 English in the each of 1980s, the 1990s, and the first decade of the new millennium, with the remaining three having commenced before 1980. Seventy percent of the teachers had also taught the previous syllabus. The average term of tertiary education of the participants was 4.48 years. Fifty-two percent of participants were Heads of Faculty.

The analysis and underlying assumptions of this study drew on what Doyle (1993) has called teachers' *curriculum processes*, those processes through which teachers interpret, enact and evaluate curriculum in all its dimensions. From this perspective, teachers are seen as interpreting the 'meanings and intents' of curriculum documents (Remillard & Bryans, 2004, p. 6), rather than taking them as self-evident instructions to be obeyed. A curriculum processes framework recognises that there are links between teachers' curriculum actions and internal factors such as beliefs, values,

emotions, interests and motivation. It also assumes that teachers' actions and attitudes are influenced by external contextual factors emanating from the school and from the wider community. A logical corollary of a curriculum processes framework is that diversity of curriculum practice is seen as both inevitable and valuable (Brady & Kennedy, 2010).

This study's interpretivist paradigm is compatible with a critical realist epistemology in that interpretations of reality are not taken for granted, but are understood to reflect the theoretical assumptions of both the participants and the researcher (Robson, 2002). An interpretivist paradigm assumes there will be no single meaning attached to a complex phenomenon such as curriculum change (O'Donoghue, 2007). The meanings assigned to the role of literary theories in a new English syllabus could be expected to vary because of individual differences in teachers' perspectives, experiences and contexts. Consequently, rather than having a pre-structured research design with variables specified early, this study used general guiding questions to explore the field and allow patterns in the data to emerge gradually.

Themes identified from the data were displayed as matrices, charts and diagrams, to compress and display patterns, and to help investigate clusters, contrasts, and interacting networks of data for their explanatory power. Preliminary conclusions were tentatively drawn and verified by reducing data further to forms that facilitated analysis at a higher conceptual level. Every attempt was made to be open to unexpected patterns and themes, rather than seeking confirmation of any predetermined hypothesis. In each successive phase of the study, participant responses and evaluations opened up further lines of enquiry.

Findings

The participating teachers' reports of the difficulties they experienced in trying to reconcile diverse literary theories revealed epistemological beliefs that were connected with the particular literary theories they held themselves. According to the 50 Year 12 English teachers participating in this study, the diverse literary theories they saw as underpinning the 1999 NSW English Stage 6 Syllabus ('the Syllabus') were aligned to differing degrees with the literary theories the teachers held themselves. It was also apparent that the teachers' own epistemological beliefs were significant in many of the issues they had with the literary theories they perceived to underpin the Syllabus.

One factor that made it hard to resolve the controversy about the role of literary theories in the new English Syllabus was that the document itself did not explicitly or unambiguously state its theoretical foundations. This left teachers

to interpret and assimilate what is essentially an eclectic amalgam of elements of poststructuralism, new historicism, feminism, cultural heritage and personal growth perspectives. (Manuel & Brock, 2003, p. 25)

Research by O'Sullivan (2005) and by McGraw (2010) found teachers reported ongoing difficulties with interpreting and assimilating the theoretical bases of the Syllabus. The participating teachers in the present study had trouble finding congruence between what they perceived to be an incongruent mix of theories shaping the Syllabus and the literary theory or theories they found workable themselves. They were also faced with the not-inconsiderable task of increasing their understanding of these multiple theories and the ideological assumptions behind them. Disparities emerged between teachers with regard to knowledge of literary theories and familiarity with teaching them.

Relationship between literary theories and epistemological beliefs

All but one of the research survey participants stated that they believed that a diversity of literary theories shaped the underlying bases of the English Stage 6 Syllabus. In contrast, when asked to name any literary theories they held themselves, more teachers (32%, being 8 of 25) claimed to identify with *no literary theories* than with *any* of the 19 listed literary theories.

Marxist critical theory, feminist literary theory, reader response theory and Christian literary theory were the theories nominated most frequently as the literary theories the survey respondents held themselves (five of the 25); however, even the theories *most commonly nominated* as personally held were mentioned by only 20% of the teachers. This leaves more than three-quarters not holding these particular literary theories, reinforcing the sense of teachers' personal epistemologies being very diverse.

Sixteen percent of research survey participants (4 of 25) indicated that they held to one of the following theoretical stances: Leavisian/Practical criticism, post-colonial theory, and postmodernist/poststructuralist theory. None of the other theories teachers claimed to 'hold themselves' were selected by more than 8% of participants.

Eighty-four per cent of the participating teachers identified a lack of alignment between what they perceived the Syllabus to expect from them with regard to teaching literary theories, on the one hand, and their own stances towards literary theories on the other. These teachers reported disparities between the diverse perspectives on texts, meaning and interpretation they saw as being implicit in the Syllabus, and their own beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing in literary studies. To give an example, one teacher remarked,

I struggle with the idea of teaching literary theories. While I find the theories interesting I am often at odds with them (especially postmodernism) and feel that they disrupt students' experience of literature. (Rural independent school teacher)

Pedagogical reservations about the negative impact on students of some literary theories appear to make teaching such theories a 'struggle' for this teacher.

Another teacher tabled both epistemological and literary reservations which may be seen to arise from the same philosophical roots:

Postmodernism and poststructuralism ... are often in opposition to my own worldview. I also struggle with the faddish structural techniques associated with these theories. (Rural independent school teacher)

Where research participants distinguished between their own epistemological positions and the theories they considered teaching to their students, they typically provided a rationale for how their epistemological and pedagogical beliefs interacted to affect their practice:

Personally I read texts through a Humanist lens. Professionally, I have VERY strong beliefs in NOT espousing one particular 'ism'. That's so narrow and self-defeating. I want to inject my students with my passion for literature. That's what will sustain them in life, not some mindless adherence to a philosophical literary theory. (Metropolitan independent school teacher)

This teacher's response sets up a conflict between two philosophies of teaching English: one that emphasises a love of literature and another that interrogates texts through a literary-theoretical lens. The teacher indicates where her own commitments lie, and she reinforces her preference with positively loaded words.

An experienced teacher made the following statement of her personal epistemology: 'Postmodernism is a problem. "Perspective" is all very well except when reality strikes you in a WW II bunker! I prefer realism.'

This teacher appears to argue that theories such as postmodernism are artificial constructs which do not stand up to the test of real life, particularly in times of crisis. She links this to her view of literary theory in the Syllabus: 'The senior English course with its texts and theories just doesn't seem to gel ... literary theory can take on a life of its own and the students need it like a hole in the head' (Regional government school teacher). This teacher seems to imply that the juxtaposition of texts and theories leads to an awkward co-existence rather than complementarity, and implies the teaching of English is valued for its links to 'real life'.

Teachers experiencing epistemological dissonance with the Syllabus perceived that their students appeared to have similar conflicts. This presented professional dilemmas for them about whether it was advisable to teach students to critique literary theories. One rural teacher described the situation in this way:

Kids rail against what they see as nonsense. But for exam purposes they have to do postmodernism. I try to take on board students who disagree with the Syllabus on literary theory, but as a teacher you face a disturbing paradox that you have to do it this way for the exam even if you vehemently disagree with the theory in it. (Rural teacher)

At the time of this interview (2006), this respondent felt that teachers had to teach students to apply postmodernist theory in a certain way for the high-stakes external examination, even if neither the teachers nor the students endorsed that particular theoretical position. She indicated that teaching literary theories one saw as 'nonsense' was 'seriously disturbing for an educator', and stated that this contributed to her leaving the teaching profession.

Theoretical eclecticism in the Syllabus

Contrasting perceptions about the actual theoretical foundations of this Syllabus may be seen as a reflection of its eclectic incorporation of approaches drawn from divergent literary theories, or as an indication of a lack of theoretical clarity informing the Syllabus, or both. Five of the 25 teachers completing the Phase 2 survey indicated their belief that *all of the listed theories* underpinned the Syllabus, while one indicated that *no literary theories* underpinned it at all. The remaining 19 teachers generally listed 3–8 theories, with a total of 17 different theories being highlighted as influential in the Syllabus. Such disparities in teacher perceptions suggest that teachers found identifying the exact

theoretical bases of the Syllabus to be very difficult. It may also suggest that some teachers had limited levels of understanding and knowledge of some of these literary theories, and this view supports the observation made by Manuel and Brock (2003) that

Many teachers in 2000 ... found themselves ill-equipped – practically, theoretically and philosophically – to implement English courses that demanded of them a radically different set of assumptions about the teacher, the student, the text, the act of reading, and the 'art' of responding to and, now, composing literature. (p. 23)

Both a lack of consensus about the actual theoretical bases and their own under-preparedness may have contributed to the difficulties teachers reported in determining what role literary theories needed to play in their Syllabus implementation in the classroom, particularly where they experienced a mismatch between any specific literary theories and their own epistemological beliefs.

Postmodernism

Over the three Phases of this research, of all the theories mentioned by the respondents, the postmodernist/poststructuralist cluster was most often perceived as underpinning the Syllabus (72%). However, this was also the dominant cluster in conflict with the literary theories that the teachers held themselves (69% of participants). Of the 19 theories identified in the Glossary, the teachers' epistemological objections to the perceived influence of a literary theory in the Syllabus were overwhelmingly related to postmodernism or poststructuralism.

The presence of an elective called Postmodernism in the English Extension One Course may have led participants to focus on this literary cluster. In addition, poststructuralism/postmodernism cannot easily be added to other theories, because it claims to dissolve or debunk previous theories rather than to refine or enhance them (Eagleton, 2003; Bonnycastle, 2002; Henderson & Brown, 1997). If teachers already gave some credence to the Syllabus reflecting a collection of literary theories, then learning more about poststructuralism/postmodernism could present a professional dilemma: one could carry on holding an eclectic theoretical mix, or one could abandon the existing set of theories in order to adopt a position in line with poststructuralist/postmodernist theory.

It should be noted that teachers were officially advised in 2011 that the Postmodernism elective was

being discontinued. While this may be part of the natural cycle of curriculum content renewal, it could reflect recognition of the difficulties experienced by teachers in teaching rather iconoclastic theories to students who are facing high-stakes examinations.

Distinctive characteristics leading to postmodernism being the theory singled out for criticism may include its claims about the collapse of meaning (Graff, 1979), its rejection of the notions of truth and authority (Perkins, 1992), its reliance on 'self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement' (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 1), and its rejection of grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984). One teacher, in admitting that she largely avoided such radical challenges to notions of meaning, offered a pedagogical rationale, which she saw as based on her personal epistemology: 'I do feel that if we take cultural assumptions for granted it is in deference to our students' age and a desire not to totally undermine their sense of stable values by which to live and make meaning' (City independent school teacher). Her statement recognises this teacher's sense of having a professional duty of care to adapt her classroom content to the students' levels of maturity so that students are able to deal with challenges to their existing worldviews.

One city teacher offered this rationale for *not* personally holding a postmodernist/ poststructuralist position: 'Poststructuralism is an economy that eats itself—it is ultimately self-destructing, an animal that eats its young' (City independent school teacher). This teacher appears to be suggesting that poststructuralism does not support educational purposes. A Head of Faculty described his epistemological objections to postmodernism: 'the idea that there is no truth is self-defeating: it defeats the truth it is supposed to be conveying' (Rural independent school teacher). This teacher had engaged in sustained study of literary theories, had amassed a substantial personal library on the subject, and had taught the Postmodernism elective before deciding that this inherent self-contradiction in logic made it unproductive to teach this content to his secondary English students.

Reliance on secondary sources on literary theories

Teachers involved in this research described how they increased their professional knowledge about literary theories and how they investigated the degree of alignment between these theories and their own beliefs. They noted that the primary sources of twentieth century literary theory were generally written

in languages other than English, and in complex and somewhat abstruse language, making it more difficult to comprehend and to examine the implications of these theories for their professional practice.

Only two respondents out of 50 said they had read the original literary theorists (albeit in translation). The remainder relied on secondary sources, glossaries and dictionaries of literary-theoretical terms, so as to glean enough information to understand the essentials of the theoretical concepts and strategies involved.

Participating teachers criticised the English Syllabus and the Support Documents (Board of Studies, 1999) for their vagueness and ambiguity concerning the actual role or any requirement of the teaching of literary theories. It was ironic that literary theories about the elusiveness of meaning were exemplified in the language of the Syllabus suggesting or hinting at their strategic importance, with their existence implied but not stating explicitly what teachers and students were expected to know about and to *do* with these theories. The Board of Studies, in recognition of the resultant confusion, published a Support Document in September 2007 that stated explicitly that students were *not* required to cover or explore diverse literary theories in any compulsory parts of the senior English Courses. Notwithstanding this statement, the teachers surveyed and interviewed after this publication continued to articulate their uncertainty about the role literary theories were meant to play in their teaching.

The research participants saw the Syllabus as representing and implying so many different literary theories and varied conceptions of the subject that it lacked coherence. They spoke of the English Syllabus being 'confused about its own expectations' and 'divided against itself'. This produced frustration for them when working to interpret it and to enact it in classroom learning activities. These findings show that teachers' uncertainty about the actual theoretical basis or 'slant' of the Syllabus arose from the document's own linguistic imprecision and vagueness, and also from its inclusion of principles from many literary theories without due recognition of their epistemological roots or of the irresolvable conflicts that exist between them. As Hargreaves (1996) has observed in a study on the culture of teachers' work, in a similar way the English teachers in this study ultimately came to question their capabilities to deal with this significant curriculum innovation on top of their other professional responsibilities.

Conclusion

The findings of this research show that these teachers experienced ongoing uncertainty about whether and how they should teach students to apply literary theories to texts, and that they questioned their ability to teach the theories effectively. In the case of NSW senior English, teachers saw themselves as poorly prepared 'practically, theoretically, and philosophically' (Manuel & Brock, 2003, p. 23) to teach literary theories, and this led them to experience uncertainty about their ability to interpret and to enact the challenges of a new Syllabus. When markers confirmed that literary theories were being used ineffectively by students (NSW Board of Studies, 2007b), this reinforced both teachers' reservations about the innovation's appropriateness and their sense that they were ill-equipped to teach it.

From the evidence gathered in this study, recent literary theories challenged teachers' conceptions of subject English, which compounded their concerns about their cognitive complexity and the associated workload stresses produced. In particular, the potential for recent literary theories to destabilise notions of determinable meaning made it hard for English teachers to weigh up the claims and counter-claims of various theories in order to teach them clearly to students. This produced a situation where not even the standards for testing the credibility of claims could be agreed on.

This case has implications for other syllabus innovations that rest on irresolvable contestation among epistemological beliefs. Feedback from teachers on the feasibility of including diverse ideological assumptions in a syllabus may be vital in determining whether and how contested curriculum innovations will enhance learning in practice. Not listening to teachers' evaluations of the risks and benefits of an innovation makes it more likely that an innovation will be short-lived or ineffectual due to superficial or confused adoption. The money, time and emotional effort involved in implementing curriculum change, and the extraordinary diversity of possibilities for change, make it very important to avoid ill-advised, confusing or abortive curriculum initiatives (Kennedy, 2005).

Teaching is a stressful and demanding occupation, and teachers invest considerable emotional energy in developing their professional identities as educators. Marshall (2000) and O'Sullivan (2008) argue that teachers of English make strong connections between their personal identities and their professional identities as English teachers. The findings of this research

strongly suggest that these connections also rest on being able to maintain congruence between teachers' own epistemological beliefs and their pedagogical practices.

English teachers characterise their subject as having an orienting function for students' unfolding sense of themselves, and this heightens their sense of the subject's significance. This would go some way to explaining teachers' perceptions that a Syllabus influenced by unstable and contradictory literary theories could pose a threat to personal epistemology and a sense of self for both teachers and students.

The findings of this study are important in that they illuminate the experience of teachers who perceive a new syllabus to be de-stabilising for their existing beliefs and practices in ways that are not helpful for students or for the profession. Lessons can be learned here about the importance of, and the need for, shared understanding and ongoing professional engagement in decision-making processes.

Teachers' epistemological and pedagogical beliefs shape their syllabus interpretation. These beliefs should be seen as a valuable source of insight, having been tested through professional practice, rather than as something which can be disregarded or marginalised by curriculum developers as they attempt to produce a radically altered mandated curriculum while bringing about significant change that may challenge those existing beliefs. It follows that the inherent relationship between the epistemological bases of curriculum change proposals and teachers' epistemological beliefs should be a critical consideration in the development of any new curriculum.

References

- Ireland, J. (2014). *Contestation over literary theories: English teachers as syllabus interpreters* (Doctoral dissertation). Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW.
- Ball, S.J. (1982). Competition and conflict in the teaching of English: A socio-historical perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 14(1), 1–28. doi:10.1080/0022027820140102
- Ben-Peretz, M. (1990). *The teacher-curriculum encounter: freeing teachers from the tyranny of texts*. New York, NY: University of New York Press.
- Board of Studies NSW. (1999). *English Stage 6 Syllabus Preliminary and HSC courses*. Sydney, NSW: Author.
- Board of Studies NSW. (2007a). *HSC English (Advanced) course—Module B: Critical study of texts: Support document*. Sydney, NSW: Author.

- Board of Studies NSW. (2007b). *HSC Notes from the marking centre: English*. Sydney, NSW: Author.
- Bonnycastle, S. (2002). *In search of authority: An introductory guide to literary theory* (2nd ed.). Peterborough, ON: Broadway Press.
- Brady, L., & Kennedy, K. (2010). *Curriculum construction*. Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.
- Cole, M., Hill, P., Kelly, M., & Rikowski, G. (1999). *Resistance postmodernism and the ordeal of the undecidable: A Marxist critique*. Northampton, UK: Institute for Education Policy Studies.
- Cuddon, J.A. (Ed.). (1998). *A dictionary of literary terms* (4th ed.). London, UK: Blackwell.
- Cunningham, V. (2003). *Reading after Theory*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Doyle, W. (1993). Constructing curriculum in the classroom. In F.K. Oser, A. Dick & J. Patry (Eds.), *Effective and responsible teaching* (pp. 66–79). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Eagleton, T. (2003). *After theory*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Ertmer, P.A. (2005). Teacher pedagogical beliefs: The final frontier in our quest for technology integration? *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 53(4), 25–39.
- Fish, S.E. (2001). Interpreting the Variorum. In V.B. Leitch et al. (Eds.), *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism* (pp. 2067–2089). New York, NY: Norton.
- Freemith, D. (2006). The politics of the English curriculum: Ideology in the campaign against critical literacy in *The Australian*. *English in Australia*, 41(1), 25–30.
- Goodwyn, A. (2003). We teach English not literacy. In B. Doecke, D. Homer, & H. Nixon (Eds.), *English teachers at work: Narratives, counter narratives and arguments* (pp. 123–134). Adelaide, SA: Australian Association for the Teaching of English.
- Graff, G. (1979). *Literature against itself: Literary ideas in modern society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hardage (1999). The theory bases of Stage 6 English. *The New HSC Curriculum Support Newsletter*, 3, 14.
- Hargreaves, A. (1996). Revisiting voice. *Educational Researcher*, 25(1), 12–19.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Henderson, G.E., & Brown, C. (1997). *Glossary of literary theory*. Retrieved from <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/Glossary/>
- Hutcheon, L. (1989). *The politics of postmodernism*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Kennedy, K.J. (2005). Charting the global contexts of the school curriculum: Why curriculum solutions are never simple. In C. Harris & C. Marsh (Eds.), *Curriculum developments in Australia: Promising initiatives, impasses and dead-ends* (pp. 1–14). Deakin, VIC: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- Kitching, G. (2008). *The trouble with theory: The educational costs of postmodernism*. Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Leder, G., Pehkonen, E., & Törner, G. (2002). *Beliefs: A hidden variable in mathematics education?* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Leitch, V.B., Cain, W.E., Finke, L.A., Johnson, B.E., McGowan, J., Williams, J.J. (Eds.). (2010). *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Lyotard, J-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Madda, C.L., Halverson, R.R., & Gomez, L.M. (2007). Exploring coherence as an organizational resource for carrying out reform initiatives. *Teachers College Record*, 109(8), 1957–1979.
- Manuel, J., Brock, P., Carter, D., & Sawyer, W. (2009). *Imagination, innovation, creativity: Re-visioning English in education*. Sydney, NSW: Phoenix Education.
- Manuel, J., & Brock, P. (2003). 'W(h)ither the place of literature?': Two momentous reforms in the NSW senior secondary English curriculum. *English in Australia*, 136, 15–36.
- Marshall, B. (2000). *English teachers: The unofficial guide: Researching the philosophies of English teachers*. London, UK: Routledge Falmer.
- Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McGraw, K. (2005). HSC English in the media: The reporting of conventions and controversies. *English in Australia*, 143, 27–35.
- McGraw, K. (2010). *Innovation and change in the 1999 NSW HSC English syllabus: Challenges and problems*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Sydney, NSW.
- O'Donoghue, T. (2007). *Planning your qualitative research project: An introduction to interpretivist research in education*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- O'Sullivan, K-A. (2005). *Silent voices: A study of English teachers' responses to curriculum change*. (Doctoral dissertation). Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW.
- O'Sullivan, K-A. (2008). Metaphoric patterns in the representation of preservice English teachers' professional identities. *International Journal of Educational Practice and Theory*, 30(1), 93–106.
- Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307–332.
- Pajares, F. (2002). Gender and perceived self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. *Theory into Practice*, 41(2), 116–125.
- Perkins, D. (1992). *Is literary history possible?* Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Remillard, J.T., & Bryans, M.B. (2004). Teachers' orientations towards mathematics curriculum materials:

Implications for teacher learning. *Journal of Research in Mathematics Education*, 35 (5), 352–388.

Remillard, J.T., & Heck, D. (2010). *Influences on the enacted curriculum*. Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum. Retrieved from <http://mathcurriculumcenter.org/PDFS/RemillardHeck.pdf>

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Rosser, G. (2002). Examining the HSC – questions and answers, *Change*, 5 (2), 91–109.

Schoenfeld, A.H. (1998). Toward a theory of teaching-in-context. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.berkeley.edu/Faculty/aschoenfeld/TeachInContext/teaching-in-context.html>

Smith, D.L., & Lovat, T.J. (1990). *Curriculum: Action on reflection*. Wentworth Falls, NSW: Social Science Press.

Jill Ireland teaches English literature at the University of Wollongong, Bega. Her research interests include secondary English curriculum interpretation, and worldviews in adolescent fiction.

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies at Macquarie University, NSW. Her research interests include the discourses and pedagogies of English and multiliteracies education and enriching students' learning, especially in times of change.

Sue Duchesne co-ordinates the teacher education program at the University of Wollongong's Bega Campus and lectures in the program. Her research interests include engagement in learning, and pre-service teacher development.



The Ambivalent Legacy of Dartmouth Five Decades on:

What, Now, Should We Teach the English Teachers?

Jo Jones, Curtin University

Abstract: This essay expresses a profoundly ambivalent response to the legacy of Dartmouth, particularly Dixon's 'Growth' Model of English. English educators owe a debt to Dixon in terms of innovative pedagogical methods that are part of the daily shapes of tertiary and high school English classes, including the way drama and performance invoke excitement and engagement, and the advantages of energised spoken formats used to debate issues and discuss texts. On the other hand some of Dartmouth's key conceptual and methodological tenets, as they have played out over the decades, have become counter-productive elements of English teaching in the twenty-first century. Here, a final-year tertiary teacher education course – 'Teaching, Literature, Culture' – is used to challenge the dimensions of the Growth Model as they manifest in the present time.

Preoccupations

In the Tasmanian State Library archives I came across a collection of newspaper extracts bundled up in an obscure folder, the remnants of a scrapbook. They were a fascinating series of opinion pieces published in Hobart's *The Mercury*, August 1967, written by academics (including professor and poet James McAuley), tertiary teachers, former high school teachers, and interested citizens. The artefacts follow lines of debate that are strikingly familiar to English teachers fifty years later. They express resentment at the way that literary studies in high schools is characterised by 'dissections' of great work, taught at the cost of formal expression; they assess whether or not leaving examinations should be abolished, and why students often seem to resent a subject in which previous generations have found such enrichment and joy; they debate the results of tertiary input into high school English coursework. A thread that runs through these opinionative offerings is a familiar exchange around the need for students to personally benefit from the exposure to literature and the need for teachers to have the passion and ability to imbue the texts with 'life', inducting children into an enriching world of affect and sensibility. 'Shake Spear' writes that English professors should be devising and implementing a system to 'Kind[le] in children a flame which would burn brightly throughout their lives and enable them to enjoy the literary fruits of the ages' to counteract the 'dismal failure' of the present system, 'that has made English a tragic farce which most children cannot give up too soon.' Sandy Bay resident, Doris Milledge, writes, 'In the middle grades, teaching should be very thorough – there is no short cut to the learning of spelling, etc., though methods can be interesting ... but above all it should be inspirational and create a love and feeling for the subject. No teacher, himself [*sic*] lacking this love and feeling for teaching should be called upon to teach it'.

One year after the 1966 *Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching and Learning of English* or 'Dartmouth', and the same year as the publication of Dixon's iconic *Growth through English* (1967), it seems unlikely that the influential discussion of Dartmouth could have filtered through to the Tasmanian English Teaching Community down in the (relative) Antipodes, especially before the publication of its key works. Yet, one of the most compelling points brought to bear by this fascinating folder of newspaper clippings is the way in which many of the key tenets of Dartmouth responded to a fervent need for direction in English teaching across the English speaking world, including the need for definition and structure within a vast and shifting subject. There is also the fierce persistence of a fundamental connection between English studies and positively broadening or enriching individual lives. The characteristic threads of Dixon's *Growth Through English* articulation of subject English, particularly the entrenched 'skills' and 'heritage' approaches, are recognisable in the exchange. The assumption behind these texts is that students should be transformed through an intense and impassioned engagement with language.

The limits of Dartmouth

The profound familiarity of the exchange played out in *The Mercury* newspaper, however, also begs a vitally important question: if Dixon's growth model was so revolutionary and so transformative, why are we still driven by the same questions of subject definition, function and purpose? The comments about passion and interest – the Romantic 'kindling of a flame' – seem to strongly reflect Leavis's evangelical commitment to the enriching effects of literature that he iterated as early as 1930 in *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*. While Leavis's influence is evident, this 'snapshot' of a discursive moment reveals the way Dixon's growth model follows on quite naturally from Leavis's teachings. The compatibility of new and old understandings is an interesting occurrence at this important and supposedly revolutionary moment in the culture of English education. My own response to the legacy, as an academic and teacher educator, is one of profound ambivalence. Like so many English teachers, I am enticed by the Romance of transformative models of 'growth' teaching that dominates pedagogical theory and so many seductive representations of English teaching in popular culture. On the other hand, I find that some of Dartmouth's key conceptual

and methodological shapes, as they have played out over the decades, encourage some of the most frustrating and counter-productive elements of English teaching in the twenty-first century.

This essay is, firstly, a critique of the remarkable and continuing emphasis on Dixon's growth model fifty years after its presentation at Dartmouth (1967) and its effects – past and present – 'at the chalkface'. It is also, as is fitting in the year of the fiftieth anniversary, a re-evaluation of so many of Dartmouth's key tenets. Secondly, I offer a response to some of the negative ongoing effects of the Dartmouth school through a discussion of a teacher education course.

As Ian Reid claimed in 2003, in a discussion that remains deeply relevant, the growth model continues to flourish even though many of its ambivalences and inconsistencies have clear negative effects. Reid notes the disempowering nature of 'personalism' for many students, a profoundly Romantic idea, over-reliant on a fallacious notion of a 'true self' that 'disguises the social constructedness of any individual identity' (p. 104). He writes: 'the search for one's own voice ... can encourage a shallow view of personal growth' (p. 140). Like Reid and, even more particularly, Annette Patterson (1997, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2014) I see the need to re-engage the relatively neglected work of Ian Hunter (1988, 1994, 1996, 1997) who claimed that the diminished regard for teaching of writing and 'rhetoric,' or argument, nuanced modes of persuasion, and grammatical skill has disadvantaged many of the very students the growth model claims to empower and that we should not set rhetorical skills and literary and ethical engagement in false opposition. This essay is based on the vital recognition of the role that English plays in governmentality (the shaping of governable and self-regulating citizens) and a kind of normative moral training that is not straightforwardly emancipatory (Hunter 1996, after Foucault, 1991). We must conclude, therefore, that the emphasis on 'feeling' and a kind of undefined 'growing' in the face of markedly different achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged groups certainly questions the assumed connection between Dixon's model and social justice. It also erodes confidence in the teachers that seem to have no 'real' subject, and appear to teach a confusing combination of texts and ideas that people find it difficult to grasp. The old myth that in English there are no wrong (or poor) answers still dominates student (mis)understandings. English teachers have lost their expert authority, unlike History, Physics, Mathematics

teachers, and the like. This does not aid in the valuable cultivation of confidence as part of the teacher/student relationship. Also, instead of encouraging students to love literature many recent formulations of English education often cause students to resent it as a subject where they cannot navigate a clear way to success. Indeed, English teachers themselves have an unresolved love/hate relationship with their subject. Most teachers enter the profession because they love literature but then proceed to apply the 'blunt analytical instrument' (Turner, 2009, p. 176) of the race/class/gender lenses of critical literacy. Once 'growth' met 'cultural materialism' in the 1980s, student learning occurred through an oddly sadomasochistic form of loving to hate literature, the vestige of a misguided past.

The preparation of this article has emphasized the way that my professional role as a teacher educator is in many ways a response to the challenges that have arisen from the ambivalent effects of the personal growth model of teaching. I must acknowledge the debt I owe Dixon and Dartmouth in terms of many of the dominant pedagogical methods used during the course, including the various ways to engage student that invoke drama and performance as well of the energy and vigour of using the spoken formats to debate issues and discuss texts. Yet, I also attempt to deal with some of the more problematic aspects of the post-Dartmouth era.

Revised paradigms, new practice: A beginning

In response to the current social, education and cultural conditions in which we find ourselves, I have devised three theoretical categories that feed into teacher practice and professional identity. The first theoretical category is *knowledge for authority*. Pre-service teachers in this decade are sometimes underprepared for the language skills and content knowledge they need as English teachers. Having expert knowledge in the subject not only prepares teachers for the profession but goes a long way to provide their authority as accomplished and capable professionals. The second theoretical category is *know your history*. Teachers need an understanding that English teaching itself is not based on the transcendent virtue of the teaching of texts but, in itself, is part of a historical and cultural process. Our concepts of English teaching are often based on an understanding derived from literature itself (particularly Romantic literature), Enlightenment philosophies teachings to do with the social purpose of education

that span back to Hobbs and Locke, and the movement and 'progress' of culture more generally. Thirdly, English teachers need to be *be conscious of reflexivity* in teaching. Like the ouroboros – the symbol of the snake eating its tail – we must be aware of the double nature of education; that it simultaneously liberates and controls. As Patterson and Mellor observed in 2004, the taken-for-granted opposition between freedom and normativity is false. Teachers like to see themselves in opposition to power, but their role as straightforwardly liberating is a skewed view of the way English teaching has operated in the past two centuries as a function of government. It has the potential to provide individuals with the analytical and persuasive skills to both challenge and reinforce social mores, remembering that some of these mores – for instance, the belief in social equality and justice – are basically desirable, even when one considers the many different ways these beliefs manifest. In this way English education is a force for a type of social control. Teachers may be cultural critics and sometimes cultural radicals; yet, in school-based teaching roles, teachers also protect existing culture and power structures. Schools are by nature not extreme radical institutions. English teachers might be a more radical 'spoke' in the 'wheel', but they are still part of that wheel; spinning to perpetuate cyclical patterns.

The attached teaching program (Appendix 1.), and assessment tasks (Appendix 2.), are from my own secondary English Education course at the University of Tasmania. The course is undertaken by students in the second year of a two year Masters of Teaching course. A course on teaching years 7–10 English has been completed in the previous year. While this course, titled 'Teaching, Literature, Culture', is by-no-means perfect (and writing this essay has prompted me to make further refinements) it provides a useful means to articulate a pedagogical response to the challenges of English teacher education at the present time. Here, I attempt to open a discussion about a teacher education course and invite further sharing of what we offer in terms of content, pedagogy and experience to the next generation of teachers.

In addition to the three categories proposed above, a vital methodological response to the demands of teaching such a vast, multifaceted subject at the present time is what I call *integrated pedagogy*. This concept is illustrated in the course outline by three 'categories' of text (see Appendix 1: Resources column.). The first category (in bold) identifies conventional foci of

teaching and includes novels, graphic novels, films, documentaries. Threaded through the readings is the category related to the specific pedagogy of teaching specific textual forms and complex literary and textual concepts (marked *). Also present (marked #) is the category of readings that enhance understandings through critical response (critical readings of texts, such as the chapter on sexuality from Furneaux's 2011, *Dickens in Context*) or illuminates vital English teaching conundrums; for example, why and/or how we should teach texts from the literary canon. These threads form the 'macro-narrative' of the course. In the weekly activities – the nuts-and-bolts of 'microteaching' – we integrate grammar into pedagogical business of teaching texts and concepts. These activities teach students the patterns of grammar as they themselves learn how to integrate the teaching of it with actual texts; following the methods of Myhill (2008).

An important aspect of *knowledge for authority* is the large number of textual forms students must be familiar with that they could not reasonably be expected to learn within the three year course of an undergraduate English degree. It is, therefore, imperative to integrate breadth in textual forms studied, and so this course includes: the novels *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens, 1861, 2004) and *Wanting* (Richard Flanagan, 2009); *Great Expectations: the graphic novel* (Green et al.) and film versions of *Great Expectations* (Newell, 2011); single episodes from two different documentary series, *The Children who built Victorian Britain* (Macaulay, 2011) and *The First Australians* (Cole & Perkins, 2008); an example of opinionative journalism by Waleed Ali (2014); and a speech by Richard Flanagan (2011). As is evident from the choice of texts, there is substantial overlap in narrative and contextual material and the order of texts is intended to be usefully sequential.

As I mentioned previously, the course, in its week to week tutorial activities, attempts to address one of the most difficult challenges faced by teachers of my own generation (my high school years were in the late 1980s and early 1990s) and the younger teachers who form the majority of my students. The post-Dartmouth set became more and more deeply attached to growth in English in these 'heady times', as Bill Green, Phil Cormack and Jo-Anne Reid (2000) write with slightly tongue-in-cheek nostalgia:

As new teachers in these heady times, if anything we like we were at the beginning of a new History, a new age, and in the vanguard of nothing less than revolution ... Already in circulation [during the 1970s] there was the

exciting new rhetoric of language and learning, small group work, negotiated curriculum, personal response and the like. As new teachers we breathed all of this in. (p. 98)

Yet the Post-Dartmouth generations 'felt our way' through English, realising upon reaching university that we knew little about the craft of literature; or even how to write a well-structured and complex argument.

In the course 'Teaching, Literature, Culture', close reading and grammar are taught in weekly tutorial activities as part of discussion of how to teach works of prose literature. It teaches the technical details of language that Dixon disparagingly refers to as 'the dryness of schematic analysis,' yet, to my mind, it is not artificial, meaningless, or dull. The combination of grammar and close reading brings life and energy to both, like the solving of a puzzle as, indeed, the child protagonist from the novel we discuss attempts to do when making out the character of his parents. The sentence from chapter one of Dickens' *Great Expectations*, where Pip imagines his father in response to the physical features of his grave, is both an exercise in the consideration of grammar during the formation of a sentence and the various ways of using adjectives for specific effects. We also discuss the arrangement and choice of words towards more specifically literary concepts such as the way Pip's older narrative voice (his first person point of view) looks back with humour and fondness on his early years. The skilful construction of an innocent child in the poignant longing for his family at their grave, makes the appearance of crazed and starving Magwitch all the more dramatic and effective. We go on to discuss the writer's craft when decisions are made to use incomplete sentences in the service of dramatic tension or characterisation. When Pip is described as a 'cold bundle of shivers,' meaning is conveyed through metaphor rather than literal meaning. I provide my students with a clear definition of the elements of grammar in tabulated form, as well as useful lists of literary devices. So, while structured, the integration of these elements provides for a lively and un-formulaic analysis. It is my intention that personal imaginative connections with fictional and unfamiliar worlds still exist in our subject, but this must be skilfully combined with the complexity and subtlety of the crafting of language, a process that in and of itself, is surely a part of 'appreciation' and personal enrichment.

A number of distinguished Australian theorists including Jo-Anne Reid, Bill Green and Phil Cormack

(2000), Annette Patterson (2008, 2011, 2014), Bronwyn Mellor (Mellor & Patterson 2004), and Ian Reid (2003) have made various direct and indirect cases for English educators to have a deeper understanding of their disciplinary history; to *know your history*. Many teachers have little knowledge of the 1921 British Newbolt Report or any other landmarks in the history of English education (Green et al., 2000). Most practising teachers have never heard of Dartmouth and have, at best, a hazy theoretical knowledge of what growth pedagogy is in its initial, formal iteration, even though its key tenets shape powerfully their practice. Knowledge of historical development of English has a crucial and active role to play in cultivating a sharp critical awareness of English as a historically influenced cultural entity that moves in response – or reacts against – what went before it. With a ‘meta’ understanding of the narrative of English teaching for the past two centuries, one is more prepared to see various pedagogical ‘mantras’ – such as the well-worn ‘fire the canon’ or King’s 1993 edict ‘from the sage on the stage to the guide on the side’ – in a balanced way. Powerful new theories can then be understood as ideas that belong to a time and a place that react to perceived deficits and imbalances rather than edicts for all time. Historical awareness would guard against overly dogmatic adherence to ideas often adapted in extreme and simplistic terms. Overview texts about important moments of English education are included in ‘Teaching, Literature, Culture’. For instance, a simple online reading in the first week discusses the way that Matthew Arnold saw English as a way to spiritual, social and national well-being as far back as the mid-Nineteenth Century, as did Leavis and his disciplines after the global catastrophe of World War I.

Finally, cultivating a *consciousness of reflexivity* is to engage texts that critically and self-consciously represent ideas of education, and, sometimes more specifically, English education. (See Appendix 2.) As pre-service teaching students discuss and workshop their different texts and read each other’s work (eventually producing a substantial learning program), they critically engage with the ideas of education explored, both positively and negatively, through the movement of culture and time. Whether it is the nostalgic, tweedy boffindom of *Goodbye, Mr Chips* (1939 or 2002), the romanticised view of inner city teaching in *To Sir With Love* (1967), the tortured, alcoholic poet Dr Frank Bryant of *Educating Rita* (1983), or the hip friend-teachers of *Donny Darko* (2001) and *The Perks of Being a*

Wall Flowers (2012), all of these texts contain complex and fascinating ideas about education that inform the emerging identity of our new teachers.

The final weeks of ‘Teaching, Literature, Culture’ spends substantial time on Richard Flanagan’s novel *Wanting*, a historical novel of early Tasmania in the time of Franklin’s governorship in the 1940s and 50s, where, among many other complicated events, Indigenous Tasmanians that have been removed to Flinders Island are dying. Lady Franklin removes one of these children – Mathinna, based on a real child – and takes her back to Hobart to ‘educate.’ The child is terribly damaged by the ‘educative’ process. The other narrative thread consists of Lady Franklin and Dickens in London, where Dickens’ views of morality, love and life are challenged when the aging writer meets teenaged Ellen Tiernan just before he embarks upon writing *Great Expectations*. *Great Expectations* itself is so vital to the course because it is the iconic formation narrative that explores the complex and ambivalent effects of formal education. The good it does. The bad it does. Like Dickens and so many others explore, the ways in which modern ideals and systems organise human existence are complicated, multifaceted and ambiguous.

The course is intended, among other things, to critique English – the entrenched ‘arch’ critical subject – and to consider the ways in which some politically compromised aspects of English teaching in Australia. The formulations of critical literacy as they exist at present encourage a form of political correctness in secondary student work that is often reductive and overly simplistic. Often, these responses are performative and inauthentic. They are required to object to racism/sexism/class oppression as a matter of course – a process that often appears in glib rehearsed responses: an inevitable endpoint of a subject too ambitious in both disciplinary scope and political aims. For further discussion on the ethically compromised nature of English exam responses see Jones (2011).

Self-reflexivity is the best response to teaching in the contemporary world, and as a response to the legacy of Dartmouth. We must understand the ambivalence and doubled-edged nature of education and the systems it works through. While as a teacher I like to think that ultimately we do more good in the world than bad, we must always proceed in the understanding of the limits of our profession. We provide students with knowledge, skills, understandings and ideas that they may choose to adopt. But we must accept that what we feel is right for students, here and now, is contingent and

defined by the specificity of our geographic, historical, cultural and social location.

References

- Aly, W. (2014, February 21). The Whole Point of Detention for Asylum Seekers is Horror, Whether it is Acknowledged or Not. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-whole-point-of-detention-for-asylum-seekers-is-horror-whether-it-is-acknowledged-or-not-20140220-333yw.html>
- Cole, B., & Perkins, R. (Directors) (2008). *The First Australians: The untold story of Australia* (Documentary). Sydney: SBS.
- Dickens, C. (2004). *Great Expectations*. London: Penguin.
- Dixon, J. (1967). *Growth Through English*. London: National Association for the Teaching of English.
- Dixon, J. (2009). English Renewed: Visions of English Among Teachers of 1966. *English in Education*, 43, 241–250.
- Flanagan, R. (2009). *Wanting*. Sydney: Random House.
- Flanagan, R. (2011). Alan Missen Oration: On the Decline of Love and the Rise of Non-freedom. *Quarterly Essay*, 44, 73–94.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality, trans. R. Braidotti and revised by C. Gordon, in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (Eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 87–207.
- Green, B., Cormack, P., & Reid, J. (2000). Putting the Past to Work. *English in Australia*, 127–128, 111–119.
- Green, J., Dickens, C., Stokes, J., Bryant, C., Cardy, J., & Sanders, J.S. (2009). *Great Expectations: The Graphic Novel*. Litchborough, Towchester: Classical Comics.
- Hunter, I. (1988). *Culture and Government: the Emergence of Literary Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited.
- Hunter, I. (1994). *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994).
- Hunter, I. (1996). Is English an Emancipatory Discipline? *Australian Humanities Review*, April. Retrieved from <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-April-1996/Hunter.html>
- Hunter, I. (1997). After English: Toward a Less Critical Literacy. In S. Muspratt, A. Luke & P. Freebody (Eds.), *Constructing critical literacies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 315–34.
- Jones, J. (2011). Literary futures, disciplinary pasts and pedagogical frames: A Western Australian perspective. In B. Doecke, L. McLean-Davies & P. Mead (Eds.), *Teaching Australian Literature: From Classroom Conversations to National Imaginings*. Mile End, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 333–351.
- King, A. (1993). From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side. *College Teaching*, 41 (1), 30–35.
- Leavis, F.R. (1930). *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*. Cambridge, England: Minority Press.
- MacCauley, J. (1967, August 31). Compromises of Education. *Hobart Mercury*, p. 5.
- Mellor, B. and Patterson, A. (2004). Poststructuralism in English classrooms: Critical Literacy and After. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17 (1), pp. 85–102.
- Milledge, D. (1967, September 4). Teaching of English. *Hobart Mercury*, p. 6.
- Myhill, D., Jones, S., Watson, A., & Lines, H. (2013). Playful Explicitness with Grammar: A Pedagogy for Writing. *Literacy*, 47 (2), 103–111.
- Newell, M. (Director) (2012). *Great Expectations* (motion picture), Britain and United States: BBC.
- Patterson, A.J. (1997). Setting Limits to English: Response to Ian Hunter. In Luke, A., Muspratt, S., & Freebody, P. (Eds.) *Constructing Critical Literacies: Teaching and Learning Textual Practice* (pp. 311–22). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Patterson, A.J. (2008). Teaching Literature in Australia: Examining and Reviewing Senior English. *Changing English*, 15 (3), 311–322.
- Patterson, A.J. (2011). Teaching English: Some Remarks on the Emergence of the Sympathetic Teacher in the English Classroom. In Doecke, B., McLean Davies, L., & Mead, P. (Eds.) *Teaching Australian Literature: from Classroom Conversations to National Imaginings* (pp. 319–332). Mile End, South Australia: Wakefield Press.
- Patterson, A.J. (2014). The Legacy of Ian Hunter's Work on Literature Education and the History of Reading Practices: Some Preliminary Remarks. *History of European Ideas*, 40 (1), 89–95.
- Reid, I. (2003). The Persistent Pedagogy of Growth. In B. Doecke, D. Homer, & H. Nixon (Eds.) *English Teachers at Work: Narratives, Counter Narratives and Arguments*. Kensington: Wakefield, 97–108.
- Reid, I. (2004). *Wordsworth and the Formation of English Studies*. London: Ashgate.
- Shake Speare. (1967, September 4). System of Teaching English Condemned. *Hobart Mercury*, p. 6.
- Turner, G. (2009). Cultural Studies 101: Canonical, Mystificatory and Elitist? *Cultural Studies Review*, 15 (1), 175–87.

Jo Jones is a lecturer in Literary and Cultural Studies at Curtin University the Faculty of Education. She has a PhD from Curtin University on Australian historical novels and the History Wars. She has taught extensively at various Australian universities including the University of Tasmania and the University of Western Australia. At present, Jo is working on recent versions of Australian Gothicism and local formations of literary canons. She has two forthcoming books, *Required Reading: A History of Secondary English Syllabus Lists*, co-edited with Tim Dolin and Patricia Dowsett, Monash UP, 2017 and *Dark Times: The Australian Historical novels of the History Wars* (provisional title), UWA Publishing, 2017.

Appendix 1

Teaching, Literature, Culture Grid of Content.

Week	Module / Topic	Resources
1	Background: Subject English. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is literature for? • Who is it for? • What does it do? • English and modernity. 	*Atherton, C., A. Green, et al. (2013). Introduction. <i>Teaching English Literature 16–19: An essential guide</i> , Taylor & Francis. 1–27. *History of English as a Discipline. Australian Catholic University. http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/siryan/academy/Foundation/English_As_Discipline.htm
2	Great Expectations: Novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canon? 	Dickens, C. (2004). <i>Great Expectations</i> . London: Penguin Group. *Pike, M. (2003). Firing the Canon. <i>Teaching Secondary English</i> . SAGE Publications. 140–157. #Schweitzer, S. (2011) The Bildungsroman. <i>Charles Dickens in Context</i> Ledger, S., & Furneaux, H., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 140–147 *'Great Expectations: Pip and Magwitch' Teaching English, BBC and http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dickens/great-expectations-pip-magwitch
3	Great Expectations: Novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching novels • Teaching context • Hot seating 	*Atherton, C., A. Green, et al. (2013). Teaching Contexts. <i>Teaching English Literature 16–19: An essential guide</i> , Taylor & Francis. Ch 3. #Furneaux, H. Childhood. <i>Charles Dickens in Context</i> . Ledger, S., & Furneaux, H., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 86–193. # http://www.victorianweb.org/ # http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/how-charles-dickens-saw-london-13198155/?no-ist # http://charlesdickenspage.com/dickens_london.html
4	Great Expectations: Novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical approaches • Reading practices 	*Mellor, B., Patterson, A., & O'Neill, M. (1991). <i>Reading fictions</i> . Scarborough, W.A.: Chalkface, 1991. 4–28. *Great Expectation Penguin Teacher's Guide. http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/greatexp.pdf
5	Great Expectations: Film/Teaching film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing textual forms 	Newell, M. (director) (2012). <i>Great Expectations</i> . BBC Films: United Kingdom. # Newell Interview. http://www.bfi.org.uk/live/series/1231
6	Great Expectations: Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The art of adaptation. 	Newell, M. (director) (2012). <i>Great Expectations</i> . BBC Films: United Kingdom. # Cartmell, D., & Whelehan, I. (2013). <i>Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text</i> : Taylor & Francis. Chapter One.
7	Great Expectations: Graphic Novel	Green, J., Dickens, C., Stokes, J., Bryant, C., Cardy, J., & Sanders, J.S. (2009). <i>Great Expectations: The Graphic Novel</i> . Litchborough, Towchester: Classical Comics.
8	Expository writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media writing, opinion writing • Cultivating informed judgement 	Macauley, Christina, <i>The Children Who Built Victorian Britain</i> (videorecording (DVD)): BBC4 c2011. Aly, Waleed. 'The whole point of detention for asylum seekers is horror, whether it is acknowledged or not.' <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> , Comment, February 21, 2014. http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-whole-point-of-detention-for-asylum-seekers-is-horror-whether-it-is-acknowledged-or-not-20140220-333yw.html
9	Teaching Documentary Film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual persuasions. 	Cole, B., & Perkins, R. (2008). <i>The First Australians</i> (videorecording (DVD)): the untold story of Australia. (Sydney): SBS, c2008. Episode 2.
10	Wanting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature and history • Literature and politics 	Flanagan, R. (2009). <i>Wanting</i> . Sydney: Random House. Flanagan, R. (2011). Alan Missen Oration on the Decline of Love and the Rise of Non-freedom. <i>Quarterly Essay</i> , 44. 201, 73–94. http://www.abc.net.au/tv/bigideas/stories/2011/09/27/3325858.htm
11	Wanting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching literature and concepts of race • Teaching literature and place 	*Davidson, Jim. (1989). Tasmanian Gothic. <i>Meanjin</i> , 48.2, 318–52. *Jetson, T. (2006). Place. <i>The Companion to Tasmanian History</i> . Alexander, A (Ed.) Sandy Bay: Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies. 466–472.
12	Wanting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive teaching. 	*Patrick McGee. (1993). De-colonisation and the Curriculum of English McCarthy, C., & Crichlow, W. <i>Race, Identity, and Representation in Education</i> . London: Routledge. 280–88.
13	Conclusion.	

Appendix 2

Teaching, Literature, Culture Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task 1: Great Expectations: A methodological comparison.	
Task Description: A. Write a script for a lesson ('chalk and talk') on a chapter selected from <i>Great Expectations</i> . (700 words, suggested) B. Design a lesson on the same chapter combining the inquiry method and group work. (400 words, suggested) C. Evaluate the merits and drawbacks of each method, referring to your previous responses. Consider effective ways to combine the methods. Refer to appropriate secondary sources appropriate to your chapter choice. (400 words suggested)	
Task Length	1500
Assessment Criteria	1. Demonstrate knowledge about literary theory. 2. Apply the tools of literary analysis to a text. 3. Interpret and evaluate traditional and contemporary methods of teaching English.
Assessment Task 2: Senior Secondary Program	
Task Description: Part A: Choosing a text from the list below – one text per student – and a text from the course, (<i>Great Expectations</i> or <i>Wanting</i>) create a unit programme (6 weeks) that fulfils the requirements of a senior secondary course (TQA or ACARA). Include two assessment tasks. (1500 words) Choose two different forms of text, e.g. film and novel, film and play, novel and play. *You may use the film or novel/play version (or both) on which to base your program.	
Novels and Films: <i>Mr Pip</i> , Lloyd Jones <i>An Education</i> , Nick Hornby <i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> , Stephen Schbotzky <i>The Reader</i> , Bernard Schlink <i>The Book Thief</i> , Marcus Zusak <i>Tom Brown's School Days</i> , Thomas Hughes <i>Nicholas Nickolby</i> , Charles Dickens <i>David Copperfield</i> , Charles Dickens <i>Villette</i> , Charlotte Bronte <i>Goodbye Mr Chips</i> , James Hilton <i>The Chocolate War</i> , Robert Cormier <i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i> , Muriel Spark <i>The Wave</i> , Todd Strasser <i>To Sir With Love</i> , E.R. Braithwaite <i>Anne of the Windy Poplars</i> , L.M. Montgomery <i>Howard's End</i> , E. M Forster <i>Emma</i> , Jane Austen <i>The Jungle Book</i> , Rudyard Kipling Novels: <i>Sorry</i> , Gail Jones <i>Fingersmith</i> , Sarah Waters <i>The English Teacher</i> , R K Narayan <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> , Ernest H Gaines <i>Ms Hempel Chronicles</i> , Sarah Shun-lien Bynum Play and Film: <i>The History Boys</i> , Alan Bennett <i>Educating Rita</i> , Willy Russell <i>Pygmalion</i> , George Bernard Shaw Film: <i>Pleasantville</i> <i>Dead Poets Society</i> <i>Rushmore</i>	
Part B: Extended analysis. Discuss the processes you have undertaken to write this programme. This should be a nuanced account of balancing the ideological goals of the course with the realities of classroom teaching limitations and assessment practises. Explain how you think your program will lead to equipping students with skills, knowledge, and understandings that will serve them in spheres of life other than their senior secondary English studies. You should also comment on the relevance of official curriculum material and whether the set guidelines helped and/or hindered the task of course writing.	
Part C: End with a ten point outline of your own teaching 'manifesto'.	
Task Length	2,500 words.
Assessment Criteria	1. Write a unit outline appropriate for a senior secondary English course, stipulating the characteristics of the class that you are targeting. 2. Apply knowledge of textual form and literary critical theory. 3. Critique the dominant principles and practices of contemporary English teaching and connected curriculum documents. 4. Demonstrate a creative approach towards establishing your own individual ideas about teaching practice and principles. (add text)

Exposing the Dynamic Nature and Potential Role of Student Attribution Processes on English for Academic Purposes Achievement in Higher Education

*Heejin Chang, Angela Windsor and Lindsay Helwig,
University of Southern Queensland*

Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the reasons that English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students in the Open Access College at the University of Southern Queensland give to explain their success in a course of study. It will examine how students' internal and external attributions change while studying EAP. The data has been gathered through a survey administered four times to EAP students. The students come from English as an Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds and intend to undertake tertiary study in English at USQ. The data foregrounds the potential role of adaptive and maladaptive attribution processes in the EAP learning experience, showing that the majority of students possess a mixture of internal and external attributions that evolve over a course of EAP study. The implications of this study are the potential to contribute to the development of more holistic approaches in EAP programs.

Introduction

Factors relating to globalisation, digitisation of education, the expansion of English as a pivotal medium of communication in higher education, and government policy movements continue to influence the priorities of the higher education sector. Within this dynamic landscape a more diverse tertiary student population has emerged, accompanied by a shift in focus from supporting equitable participation in higher education of recent times to one of facilitating *successful* participation, with enhanced emphasis on capability (Leach, 2013) and employability.

These trends are necessarily reflected in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs. In addition to traditional cohorts of international students with histories of academic success in their first language (L1), EAP enrolments in Australian universities now include greater numbers of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students who are the first in their family to attend university and who have a much wider range of reasons for choosing university pathways. There is also more intense scrutiny of literacy outcomes (Arkoudis, Baik, & Richardson, 2012), with a general acknowledgement that academic literacy and language proficiency levels among students with EAL are inadequate to meet the communication demands of university studies and the workplace (Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency, 2013).

For EAP practitioners, addressing the reality of larger numbers of EAP students from non-traditional backgrounds in more dynamic and accountable higher education environments (Richardson & Coates, 2014) now requires a wider and more holistic scope (Arkoudis, Baik,

& Richardson, 2012). There is also growing recognition that this new scope for supporting language learning achievement entails foregrounding a wider range of language learning elements and processes and a greater understanding of how psycholinguistic and environmental processes potentially interact as a system and contribute to language development outcomes (Beckner et al., 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2012; Ryan & Dornyei, 2013; Ushioda & Dornyei, 2014; Henry, 2015), despite the best intentions of EAP practitioners (Larsen-Freeman & Ryan, 2015).

Motivation and SLA – systems within systems

Within the second language acquisition (SLA) field, motivation is an area that has begun to embrace a more systemic approach for understanding language development (Ryan & Dornyei, 2013; Ushioda & Dornyei, 2014; Schumann 2015). Dornyei's L2 motivational self-system theory and directed motivational current theory both attempt to explain the relationships between cognition, emotion, action, and the learning context in the L2 development process (Dornyei 2009; Ryan & Dornyei 2013; Henry, Davydenko & Dornyei 2015). They have particular relevance for supporting EAL students to develop adaptive behaviours when approaching language learning tasks and the necessary capacity to build and sustain motivation and lifelong learning within achievement contexts (Ryan & Dornyei, 2013). The theories for both these constructs involve a number of system components and processes themselves, and a deeper understanding of these and their interaction within specific contexts may provide EAP practitioners with new strategic possibilities for understanding fluctuating language learning task engagement and, in particular, for enabling successful outcomes in dynamic and more diverse contexts (Dornyei, 2009a; Dornyei, 2009b; Ushioda & Dornyei, 2014; Henry, Davydenko, & Dornyei, 2015) where EAP teachers' capacity to intervene to address the influence and interaction of individual factors in the language development process, such as age, gender, socio-economic background, social class, intelligence, and language aptitude, is limited.

Attribution processes

Because of the inherent complexity of hidden factors such as beliefs, perceptions, and reasoning within the motivation construct, research favouring a 'micro' approach (Dörnyei, 2005; Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2004; McGroarty, 2001; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Ushioda,

2011) foregrounding the hidden social and mental mediating processes involved in driving or inhibiting macro behaviour in a system is necessary more than ever before (Henry, 2015; Irie & Ryan, 2015). Weiner's (1979) attribution theory from mainstream psychology may offer useful insights for revealing the interaction of mental and social processes taking place in L2 learning experiences for the purposes of gaining a broader understanding of connections between cognition and language learning behavior, the unpredictable results that may ensue, and therefore, strategies for specifically addressing motivational barriers to language learning achievement.

According to Weiner (1979), an individual's perceived causes for previous success or failure can be categorised according to three dimensions: stability, locus, and controllability, which have significant thinking and emotional consequences on future behavior (Weiner, 2000). The stability of a cause concerns the individual's perception of the causal duration and to what degree the cause is expected to change, with potential impacts on a student's expectations of future success and consequent learning behaviour. This dimension may also carry secondary psychological consequences including feelings of hopelessness or hopefulness (Weiner, 1985, 2000). The attributed cause of previous success or failure may be perceived by the individual as being internal or external to them, and can lead to feelings of pride or shame, with significant impacts upon self-esteem. The controllability of a perceived cause concerns an individual's perception of who controls the cause of the previous success or failure event. This concerns whether an individual feels they or others are in control of the perceived cause of their lack of success and may invoke feelings of guilt, anger, or shame.

For English language professionals, this theory from mainstream psychology offers new explanations for more variable EAP success rates in current contexts and new avenues for action research into the interaction of student thinking with language learning behavior such as willingness and degree of engagement, application of effort, striving, and willingness to take risks, during a program of study. The theory highlights the interaction of psycholinguistic and environmental processes in the second language acquisition process and may provide EAP educators with an evidence base for broadening the type of information gathered during language learning placement and needs analysis activities to more effectively target language learning

support and feedback, inform pedagogical decision making, and meet the accountability demands of a range of stakeholders in current EAP contexts.

Attribution inequality and English as a second language achievement

In achievement contexts, it has been shown that attributions to stable and internal, and / or uncontrollable causes of a lack of success, such as intelligence are maladaptive and have negative impacts on future expectancies of success and self-esteem, respectively, with potentially detrimental consequences on striving behaviour and academic performance (Weiner, 2000). Numerous studies in the educational psychology, special education, and First Language (L1) domain (Banks & Woolfson, 2008; McClure et al., 2011; Nunez et al., 2005) have confirmed these attribution, thinking, and behaviour patterns. However, in the field of foreign language learning, studies are few and have shown conflicting results. In an investigation into the relationships between attributions of students enrolled in undergraduate Spanish, German, and French as a second language courses and their self-efficacy and performance, Hsieh and Schallert (2008) concluded that the way students explained unsuccessful results was an important predictor of future achievement. They found that those students who attributed their failure to more internal and controllable causes such as effort had higher self-efficacy despite the poor outcome. In contrast, lower self-efficacy was associated with students who explained poor results in terms of uncontrollable factors. Such factors in a language learning context could include the difficulty of the task, or the teacher, for example. Studies by Cochran, McCallum and Bell (2012), on the other hand, with college students enrolled in introductory Spanish, German, and French courses found that attributions to success were not a predictor of success.

Similar studies in the English as a foreign language (EFL) higher education domain are also scarce, but have found that students with higher language proficiency results tended to attribute their success to less stable and more controllable and internal attribution dimensions, such as effort, whereas students with lower proficiency tended to explain their results according to factors outside their control (Gobel, Thang, Sidhu, & Oon, 2013; Peacock, 2009). Research by Gobel and Mori (2007) examining relationships between achievement in EFL reading and oral classes and the attributions of first year Japanese university students suggests

that culture may have an impact on the attributions students give for success and failure. The most common attributions for success were found to be classroom atmosphere and the teacher; both stable, uncontrollable, and external dimensions, whereas internal attributions were predominantly endorsed to explain failure. Studies by Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) found that positive language learning achievement in a tertiary Iranian context was strongly related to ascribing success to effort *and* ability and that future language learning success was most effectively predicted from stable and personal attributional dimensions. Conversely, the researchers found that lower marks were associated with attributions to causes such as luck and mood.

For English as an Additional Language (EAL) professionals in Australian higher education contexts, this research provides insights into the role of students' thinking and subsequent learning behavior and broader opportunities for enhancing support during a course of EAP study. It could be suggested that successful language learners who come from traditional educational backgrounds with a range of social capital, may also have developed more adaptive attribution processes to explain their previous success. Therefore, future research based insights into the role of attributions in the language learning domain has the potential to enable EAP practitioners to develop syllabus incorporating the development of students' awareness of the influence of their self-perceptions on their language learning progress so that they may ultimately be able to monitor and alter their own attributions to support the use of adaptive learning behavior as they progress through their university studies. Furthermore, such research may also encourage teachers to incorporate attributions assessment into needs analysis questionnaires at the beginning of EAP programs to assist teachers to capture a more holistic understanding of student readiness and needs and to subsequently develop more effective and targeted feedback strategies at different stages during a language course.

However, the possible relationships between attributions and language learning outcomes in the Second Language (L2) field, in general, and in Australian EAP contexts, in particular, still need to be explored. This study attempts to expose the role attribution processes may have on EAP achievement in higher education preparatory contexts. The following research questions guided this study:

How do EAL students explain their success in EAP in higher education?

- a. Which attributions do students cite as being relevant to their EAP language learning success?
- b. What noticeable changes were evident in the listings (most cited to least cited) of attributions as students progressed in the EAP courses?

Methodology

EAP program and Participants

The EAP program at University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is offered at two levels and includes two courses in level one, EAP1, and four courses in level two, EAP2. It takes ten weeks to complete EAP1, and ten weeks to complete EAP2, as shown in Table 1. Both are completed on campus.

Table 1 EAP Program

Level	Course	Course description
EAP1	Academic Speaking and Listening	To develop academic English speaking and listening language, skills, and strategies
	Academic Reading and Writing	To develop academic English reading and writing language, skills, and strategies
EAP2	Studying at University	To prepare for entry into mainstream university programs
	Communication Processes	To enhance reading and writing in academic English.
	Academic English Skills	To improve four language skills in academic English
	Applied Communication	To focus on academic English and academic numeracy

In this study, the participants consisted of 29 EAL students (11 females and 18 males) who started EAP1 and successfully completed EAP1 and then transferred to EAP2 after 10-weeks of EAP1. The age range was from 18 to 38. Nine out of 29 students were over 30, 18 were between 20–30 and two were under 20 years of age. There were two PhD, five post-graduate, and 22 undergraduate students (see Table 2).

Table 2 Nationality of students

Nationality	A number of students	Nationality	A number of students
Afghanistan	6	Vietnam	2
Iraq	7	Korean	2
Saudi Arabia	4	China	4
Iran	2	East Timor	1
Russia	1	Total	29

Research instrument

The questionnaire was designed with three sections. The questions in the first section attempted to collect

demographic data of participants. The questions in the second section were based on the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS) developed by Hsieh (2004), a self-report instrument which measures casual attributions for success and failure by ranking responses to six categories: ability, effort, task difficulty, mood, luck, and teacher influence. These responses are tabulated and interpreted using the 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The questions in the last section are based on the Revised Causal Dimension Scale (CDSII) (McAuley, Duncan & Russell, 1992). It examines responses to 12 items in four attribution dimensions (locus of causality, stability, external control, and personal control) using, again, the 5-point Likert scale. An example of one of the items assessing the locus of causality dimensions was 'related to yourself – related to the situation'. Students rated the extent to which they felt the cause was external or internal on this scale, by circling a number from 1 to 5. Some questions related to the 12 items were modified to meet individual levels of English.

Procedures

Students were asked to complete this questionnaire four times during EAP1 and 2, to examine if and how student attributions to their achievement changed. The first data collection was at the beginning of EAP1. Twenty-six out of 29 completed this first data collection. The second collection was in the middle of EAP1. Only 24 students participated. The third collection was at the beginning of EAP2, and 27 out of 29 participants responded. At the end of EAP2, 24 participants had completed the questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire in each collection took 15–20 minutes.

Results

At the beginning of EAP 1

In the response to LAAS, EAP students predicated that hard work resulted in successful outcomes. They cited 'effort' as being most influential on their achievement. Almost half of the students agreed (41.4%) or strongly agreed (3.4 %) respectively. The majority of students (78%) did not consider that 'luck' and their 'mood' had an influence on their achievement, and half of the students (55.2%) seemed unsure whether they had an ability to learn language successfully or not. The responses to 'task difficulty' and 'teacher' were scattered. More than a half of the students felt that if the task was designed for their level of English, they

could handle it well. A third of students indicated that they felt that the 'teacher' had an influence on their achievement.

In the middle of EAP1

Students' felt that their 'ability' (34.5%) and 'effort' (37.5%) were the most influential components on the results of their mid-term, and 'luck' and 'mood' hardly impacted their achievement. Some students responded that 'task difficulty' affected their mid-term results. As the course progressed, the role of the teacher gained value, going from 14.1% in the beginning, and gradually increasing to 20.7%.

At the beginning of EAP2

Participants in this study completed EAP1 successfully and transferred to EAP2. At the beginning the EAP2, students believed that their 'effort' (44.2%) and 'ability' (41.4%) as personal factors as well as course 'teachers' (41.4%) as an external factor, had a strong influence on their EAP1 final outcomes. A majority of students rated 'luck' (82.7%) as having a low impact on their achievement.

At the end of EAP 2

'Ability' (44.8%), 'effort' (34.4%) and 'teacher' (31%) among the six items continued to show up as strong influences. According to students' responses, two items, 'luck' (62.1%) and 'mood' (34.5%), were low-impact attributions in their language learning achievement.

The changes of each attribution

Table 3 shows the results of four data collections from the beginning of EAP1 to the end of EAP2 over 20 weeks. Each figure was obtained by summing the scale 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. The first, second and third results revealed 'effort' was the highest-impact attribution in their language learning achievement, whereas 'luck' was attributed the least. At the end of EAP2, results indicated that student attributions had changed, with students attributing achievement mostly to their 'ability' rather than their 'effort'. In other words, students who successfully completed the EAP program believed that their English skills were improved enough to achieve high grades. The impact of 'task difficulty' had also dropped dramatically from 20.6% to 3.4% during the EAP program. Successful students might apply what they learned during the course to a final text adequately so that they felt task in the final text was not so challenging. Interestingly,

'teacher' had an increasing impact on their EAP results, and rose from 14.1 % to 41.4 % at the end of EAP1 but dropped 30% by the end of EAP2. When students transitioned from EAP1 to EAP2, attributions to 'mood' and 'luck' increased slightly; even though these were still low-impact attributions. Figure 1 illustrates the changes of each attribution over the 20 weeks.

Table 3 The sum of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' scales of LAAS during EAP1 and 2

Attributions \The time	At the beginning of EAP1 (%)	In the middle of EAP1	At the beginning of EAP2	At the end of EAP2
Ability	20.6	34.5	41.4	44.8
Effort	44.8	37.9	48.2	34.4
Difficulty	20.7	20.6	3.4	3.4
Mood	17.2	10.3	17.2	20.6
Luck	6.9	0	0	6.8
Teacher	14.1	20.7	41.4	31

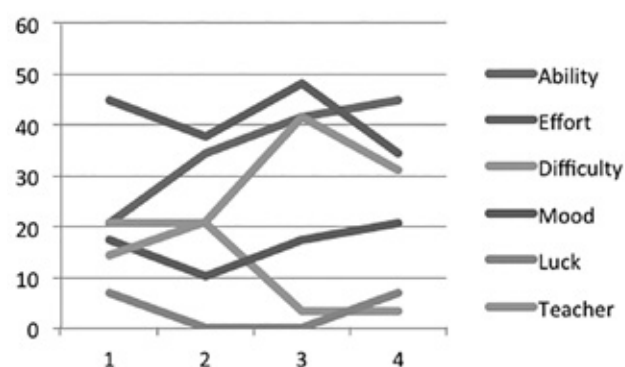


Figure 1 The changes of LAAS attributions

At the beginning of EAP 1

CDSII scores were computed for the four causal dimension subscales by summing the responses to the individual semantic differential scales. The results of the summation of students' responses indicated that students ranked internal attribution dimensions highly (i.e., inside you, not controlled by others and under your control) to their success in three dimensions. In other words, highly motivated students have a tendency to be successful in their language learning. In the 'locus of causality' dimension, most students (68.8%) attributed their success as being *related to themselves* rather than *related to the situation*. Similarly, students responded by citing internal causes and control (i.e., not controlled by others and under your control) as having the largest main effect on their

results compared to 'external control' dimensions. In terms of the 'stability' dimension, results showed that a successful language learning experience could be 'temporary' (31%) rather than 'permanent' (24%). Overall, at the beginning of the courses, students felt their previous language learning success resulted from their successful self-control. They also believed that continual effort was required to assure future success.

In the middle of EAP1

The results for the 'locus of causality', 'external control', and 'personal control' rating scales were similar to the findings from the beginning of EAP1. Language learning success was mainly attributed to internal causes such as their level of motivation. Respondents were more likely to attribute *something about you* (i.e., themselves) than *something about others* to their level of success. Half of the students, however, perceived their successful language learning experience as permanent and unchangeable.

At the beginning of EAP2

More than half of the respondents perceived that their successful language learning experience resulted from their internal motivation. Also, half believed that the cause of this successful experience rarely changed.

At the end of EAP 2

Students' internal causes had an influence on their language learning success, which aligned with the previous three data findings. A third of students still believed that the cause of their success could not be changed even though the figure was slightly lower than previous results.

The changes of each attribution

The findings of CDS II showed that the most consistent main cause given for their language learning success was internal factors. Although the figures dropped slightly at the end of EAP2, it was obvious that students' perceptions had not changed with respondents strongly attributing internal causes to their success over the 20 weeks. In addition, more students at the end of EAP 2 believed that the causes of their learning success would not change. Table 4 was produced by summing each percentage of the scale '4' and '5' (e.g., related to yourself, under your control, and so on). Figure 2 illustrates the changes on each attribution dimension.

Table 4 The result of CDS II during EAP1 and 2

Attributions \The time	At the beginning of EAP1	In the middle of EAP1	At the beginning of EAP2	At the end of EAP2
Locus of causality	68.8	72.4	68.8	41.2
Stability	24	51.6	55.1	34.4
External	6.9	13.8	13.7	10.2
Personal	55.1	72.3	72.4	41.1

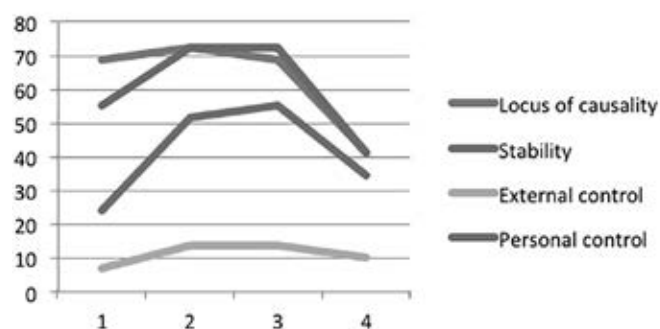


Figure 2 The changes of CDS II dimension

Discussion and conclusion

The attribution and self-efficacy theories discussed earlier cast light on the results of the surveys completed by the EAP1 and EAP2 students. While this study did not link attribution to student numerical pass/fail results, it did reveal the dynamic nature of student motivation over time, and the complex non-linear interaction of processes involved in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It also revealed some differences between the attributions given by EAP students, and those found by earlier studies considering ethnically consistent groups, as seen in the studies by Pishghadan and Zabili (2011). Awareness and consideration of these elements is important in enabling more successful results for groups of students like the EAP cohort.

The surveys indicated that a high proportion of students attributed uncontrollable factors with their success or failure throughout the EAP program. As discussed by Gobel and Mori (2007) and Pishghadam and Zabili (2011), such factors are frequently used by less successful students to explain failure. It is possible that such factors may also be used to explain results that, while technically successful, do not meet student expectations. The abdication of responsibility through the allocation of an uncontrollable attribution can protect the student, albeit at the expense of self-efficacy. However, the shift to identifying ability, an internal and uncontrollable attribution factor, as the dominant attribution, occurred over the twenty-week program, growing in importance as the course

progressed. At the beginning of EAP 1, many of the students were unsure whether ability was significant, placing a greater emphasis on effort (44.8%). As a controllable attribution, effort places success or failure within the student's capacity to change the outcome, and places responsibility for success or failure onto the student. However, the steady increase of the significance of ability over the program by the end of EAP 2 – indicates an increasing belief that elements of success or failure within the program lay outside the students' control. It is possible that this shift may have occurred in response to the challenging nature of the program, and failure to either achieve successful results, or results that met the student's expectations. It is worth noting, however, that effort remained the second most significant attribution. The dominance of ability, though, indicates that students felt that effort, internal and controllable, was limited by ability, internal and uncontrollable.

Another uncontrollable attribution increased over the EAP program – the significance of the teacher. As with ability, the significance of the teacher is an uncontrollable attribution, although, in contrast, it is external. It is worth noting that many students felt that the teacher was almost as important as effort, again indicating that uncontrollable factors could cancel out those within the student's control. This is significant, as where students feel that the causes of their success or failure are outside their control, they can experience a decrease in motivation, resulting from emotions of helplessness, guilt, shame and humiliation. This can decrease their self-efficacy, and reduce efforts to achieve their goal. Therefore, this emphasis on two uncontrollable attributions, at the expense of effort, may contribute to an explanation of unexpected EAP results. It does, therefore, need to be taken into consideration within the EAL classroom, in order to achieve more successful results.

However, other results indicated that, unlike the results found by Pishghadan and Zibili (2011), the EAP students did not use certain external and uncontrollable attributions to explain success or failure. Task difficulty, external and uncontrollable, fell in importance over the program. Furthermore, the students also placed little emphasis on luck and mood, also uncontrollable attributions. This latter finding is in direct contradiction to Pishghadan and Zabili (2011), who found that lower marks were associated with attributions to luck and mood, protecting the students from damage to their self-efficacy.

This focus on the uncontrollable attributions of ability and the significance of the teacher may have a further impact on student motivation and learning. Attitudes towards learning, and towards specific learning activities, are determined by motivation. As Manolopoulou-Sergei (2004) points out, students will evaluate the learning experience and its possible outcomes before becoming involved with the actual learning experience. Essentially, students assess their actions and performance, and make decisions based on this assessment in relation to the achievement of their goal (Manolopoulou-Sergei, 2004). Students who attribute success or failure to effort and ability may, if outcome expectations do match existing knowledge, attempt to allocate cause to an external source (Yeigh, 2007), like task difficulty or teacher. A behavioural reaction such as this may work to maintain self-esteem, leading to a possible self-preservation effect (McClure et al., 2011; Reyna, 2000; Weiner, 2000). This may then enable students who are used to success to remain motivated and persist in the face of failure. However, such attributions may also alter the effort a student puts into a task, if they feel that their effort and ability is not reflected in the outcome. This may help to explain the tendency for some students to refer to uncontrollable attributions. Thus, while their self-esteem is protected, their motivation may decline.

The choice of uncontrollable or controllable attributions, or of locus of causality, may also be influenced by a student's possible selfhood. Students who possess a clear ideal self that involves the use of English, or come from a culture, like China, where the obligation ('ought-to' self) to self is capable of acting as a sufficient motivator (Huang, Hsu & Chen 2015), may make different attributional choices than those who lack such clear possible selves. In this case, poor results, while possibly being explained by uncontrollable attributions, may not result in a loss of motivation, as the 'ought-to' or ideal self is strong enough to provide an alternative source of motivation for the student. There are, therefore, a number of factors related to attribution that need to be taken into account to improve success in an EAL classroom.

Overall, these results indicate that while about half the students in the EAP program report attributions likely to increase their motivation and self-efficacy, a reasonable percentage of the students make attributions likely to decrease their motivation and self-efficacy. Such attributions may have a negative impact on their response to future failures, decreasing their

efforts to achieve their goals. This research has not attempted to discover why students are making these attributions, although extant research indicates that students form such tendencies over their schooling experience (Weiner, 2000). Other studies, however, suggest that it might be possible to alter the attributions students make, helping them to see success or failure as something they can control, rather than something dependent on uncontrollable factors (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Future research may be able to identify the causes of EAP2 student attributions, and investigate the possibility of altering the attributions made by students in order to increase their chances of future success.

References

- Arkoudis, S., Baik, C., & Richardson, S. (2012). *English language standards in higher education: from entry to exit*. Camberwell: Acer.
- Beckner, C., Blythe, R., Bybee, J., Christiansen, M.H., Croft, W., Ellis, N.C., Holland, J., Ke, J., Larsen-Freeman, D. & Schoenemann, T. (2009). Language is a complex adaptive system: position paper. *Language learning*, 1, 1–26.
- Cochran, J.L., McCallum, R.S., & Bell, S.M. (2012). Three A's: how do attributions, attitudes, and aptitudes contribute to foreign language learning? *Foreign Language Annals*, 43 (4), 566–582.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *Psychology of the language learner individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009a). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009b). *The antecedents of task behaviour: a dynamic systems account of task motivation*. Retrieved from www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/presentations/DORNYEI_handout.pdf
- Gobel, P., & Mori, S. (2007). Success and failure in the EFL classroom: exploring students' attributional beliefs in language learning. *EUROSLA Yearbook*, 7, 149–169.
- Gobel, P., Thang, S.M., Sidhu, G.K., & Oon, Y.F. (2013). Attributions to success and failure in English language learning: a comparative study of urban and rural undergraduates in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, 9 (2), 53–62.
- Henry, A. (2015). The dynamics of possible selves. In Z. Dörnyei, P.D. MacIntyre, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Henry, A., Davidenko, S., & Dörnyei, Z. (2015). The anatomy of directed motivational currents: exploring intense and enduring periods of L2 motivation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99 (2), 329–345.
- Hsieh, P.H. (2004). *How college students explain their grades in a foreign language course: The interrelationship of attributions, self-efficacy, language learning beliefs, and achievement*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Texas, Austin.
- Hsieh, P.H. & Schallert, D.L. (2008). Implications from self-efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of undergraduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33, 513–532.
- Huang, H., Hsu, C., & Chen, S. (2015). Identification with social role obligations, possible selves, and L2 motivation in foreign language learning. *System*, 51, 28–38.
- Irie, K., & Ryan, S. (2015). Study abroad and the dynamics of change in learner L2 self concept. In Z. Dörnyei, P.D. MacIntyre, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2012). Complex dynamic systems: a new transdisciplinary theme for applied linguistics? *Language Teaching*, 45 (2), 202–214.
- Leach, L. (2013). Participation and equity in higher education; are we going back to the future? *Oxford Review of Education*, 39 (2), 267–286.
- Manolopoulou-Sergi, E. (2004). Motivation within the information processing model of foreign language learning. *System*, 32 (3), 427–441.
- McAuley, E., Duncan, T.E., & Russell, D.W. (1992). Measuring causal attributions: The Revised Causal Dimension Scale (CDSII). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 566–573.
- McClure, J., Meyer, L.H., Garisch, J., Fischer, R., Weir, K.F., & Walkey, F.H. (2011). Students' attributions for their best and worst marks: do they relate to achievement? *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36 (2), 71–81.
- McGroarty, M. (2001). Situating second language motivation. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Centre.
- Nunez, J.C., Gonzalez-Pienda, J.A., Gonzalez-Pumariega, S., Roces, C., Alvarez, L., & Rodriguez, S. (2005). Subgroups of attributional profiles in students with learning difficulties and their relation to self-concept and academic goals. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 20 (2), 86–97.
- Peacock, M. (2009). Attribution and learning English as a foreign language. *ELT Journal*, 64 (2), 184–193.
- Pishghadam, R., & Zabihi, R. (2011). Foreign language attributions and achievement in foreign language classes. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 2 (1), 1–11.
- Richardson, S., & Coates, H. (2014). Essential foundations for establishing equivalence in cross-national higher education assessment. *Higher Education*, 68, 825–836.
- Ryan, S. & Dörnyei, Z. (2013). The long term evolution of language motivation and the L2 self. In A. Berndt (Ed.),

Fremdsprachen in der perspektive lebenslangen lernens.
Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency. (2013). *Quality assessment: English language proficiency terms of reference*. Retrieved from <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/EnglishLanguageProficiencyQATerms.pdf>

Tremblay, P.F., & Gardner, R.C. (1995). Expanding the motivation construct in language-learning. *Modern Language Journal*, 79 (4), 505–518.

Ushioda, E. (2011). Language learning motivation, self and identity: current theoretical perspectives. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24 (3), 199–210.

Ushioda, E., & Dornyei, Z. (2014). Motivation. In S.M. Gass, A. Mackay (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*. New York. Routledge.

Weiner, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom experiences. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 71 (1), 3–25.

Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review*, 92 (4), 548–573.

Weiner, B. (2000). Intrapersonal and interpersonal theories of motivation from an attributional perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, 12 (1), 1–15.

Yeigh, T. (2007). Information-processing and perceptions of control: how attribution style affects task-relevant processing. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 7, 120–138.

Heejin Chang is a Lecturer in EAP program at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research interests include CALL, curriculum development, teacher education and e-learning. heejin.chang@usq.edu.au

Angela Windsor is a Lecturer – English language at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research interests include English for Academic Purposes and using complex dynamic systems perspectives for facilitating English language development. angela.windsor@usq.edu.au

Lindsay Helwig is a Lecturer in EAP program at the University of Southern Queensland. lindsay.helwig@usq.edu.au

24/7

OPEN

Visit our online store for professional resources selected especially for
Australian literacy educators and English teachers.

aate.org.au • alea.edu.au

Freephone (Australia) 1800 248 379 • Office 08 8332 2845
Email aate@aate.org.au

Or walk in to English House, 416 Magill Road, Kensington Gardens, SA.
Open Monday to Thursday, 9-4 pm, Friday by appointment.

& READING VIEWING

with Deb McPherson

With a new crop of exciting and interesting books to read and websites and films to view I'm somewhat overwhelmed for choice for this column. Now that's a great position for a reviewer to be in, it's like teachers having a range of new texts to try out in the classroom. Sometimes buying five or six copies of seven new texts and giving students a choice for a sustained reading time in the classroom with an opportunity to promote a text to the rest of the class is money and time well spent. There is a brief example at the end of this column of a wide reading task. With so much reading and viewing to be done it's wonderful to have help from colleagues. Jane Sherlock, the Project Officer for NSW ETA Student Days, was reading Sarah Crossan's award winning verse novel, *One*, recently and it made a powerful impact on her. She has kindly contributed her review of *One* for this column.

Fiction for Year 7 and 8

The Lie Tree Frances Hardinge illus by Chris Riddell
Macmillan (2015) 489 pp. hardcover



When I picked up the cover of this book and read Patrick Ness's assessment that it was 'brilliant: dark, thrilling, utterly original' I knew it had to go to the top of the pile. Its elevation was richly deserved.

It's the 19th century and Faith is a clever girl, in a time when girls had to be good, not clever. The Rev. Erasmus Sunderly, an expert in natural science, has relocated his family from Kent

to Vale, a remote island off the coast. Rumours abound and Faith's father's behaviour is unstable and cruel. When he is found dead under suspicious circumstances it is Faith who tries to find the answers.

The 'lie tree' that the Rev. Sunderly obtained by deceit and hid in a cave is central to the mystery. Faith knows its hiding place as she was ordered by her father to help him conceal it. This tree feeds off lies and its fruit delivers secrets to those that devour it. In a richly layered story it is Faith's clandestine actions that reveal the real murderer. Faith is a wonderful hero, resolute and intelligent with courage to match her wits.

Hardinge delineates Victorian society with grace and humour. The role of women and the constraints placed upon them are fully explored, particularly in the difficult relationship between Faith and her mother, a woman who uses the only weapons she has (flirtation and manipulation) to fight for her family's financial security. This sophisticated novel with its magic realism effects, and compelling illustration by Chris Riddell, will appeal to students in Year 7 who are already capable readers.

The Bone Sparrow Zana Fraillon
Orion (2016) 288 pp.

The powerful prism of a child's eye illuminates this moving novel about the refugee experience. Young Subhi tells the story. He was born in a refugee detention camp in an unnamed country. He is a member of the Rohingya people, from Burma, people who are persecuted in their native land. He is there with his mother, who just sleeps and won't eat as depression overwhelms her, and his older sister, Queeny. The 'Jackets' control the camp, the food is terrible and the surroundings squalid but Subhi's optimism is strong. He has his plastic duck and he dreams of oceans and hot chocolate. He helps Eli deliver things in the camp, a dangerous undertaking, and when Eli is moved from Family to the Adult sector he loses a great friend. Jimmie lives



outside the camp. The kids at school say the refugees have free bikes, but Jimmie's not so sure. She finds a way into the camp to discover the truth and meets Subhi. An unlikely friendship blossoms. Jimmie's mum has died and she brings her mother's book of tales and hot chocolate in a thermos to the camp, and Subhi reads to her. Sometimes the grim reality of the camp is pierced by humour and friendship and the tragedy at the end is shot through with some hope.

This novel really helps readers to walk in others' shoes, to feel what it is like to be helpless, homeless and imprisoned for no reason other than your desire to flee tyranny and fear. In an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* the author said kids are

'not bogged down by statistics and numbers and politics, they're just imagining a world they want to live in and by the time they're adults maybe they'll do a better job.

This novel could be used as a class text or as part of a 'What's it like to be different?' wide reading unit. Use it towards the end of Year 8. *The Bone Sparrow* was recently shortlisted for the 2017 CBC Book of the Year for Older Readers.

Fiction for Years 9 and 10

The Road to Winter Mark Smith

Text publishing (2016) 240 pp.



Mark Smith has written a stand-out novel set in a dystopian future in Australia. Just in case you are weary of apocalyptic tales this is one of the few novels that begins with a great surfing scene. But *The Road to Winter* is much more than that. Sixteen-year-old Finn is alone, except for his dog, Rowdy, on the outskirts of Angowrie, a small coastal town. A virus has wiped

out most of the population and his mother's bravery in sending him away from her before he got infected has saved his life. Finn's speech impediment made him something of a loner, even before the virus, and he has developed survival skills that serve him well. He leads a solitary life, only punctuated by occasional contact with Ray, an older survivor. He is careful, cautious, and it turns out, courageous.

It is after surfing that Finn sees someone on the beach. Rose is a Siley, an asylum seeker. She has not

been treated well in Australia. Rose and her sister Kas were used first as indentured labourers, then they become slaves. They have escaped the Wilders, a savage group of survivors who terrorise others. But the sisters have been split up and Ramage, the Wilders' leader, is hunting them both down. It seems Ramage has a special desire to recapture Rose. Finn recognises that while survival is vital it is not sufficient. Rose is wounded and Finn helps her and aids her efforts to reconnect with her sister. As the Wilders close in and decisions become knife-edged the humanity and resilience of Finn and Rose prove a powerful connection.

There are no special powers or fantastic escapes in this novel. An infected wound is deadly and there are no easy answers. It echoes McCarthy's *The Road* more than Marsden's *Tomorrow When the War Began*. It deals with rape and childbirth as well as survival and the treatment of refugees. One poignant conversation between Finn and Rose should capture the reader's attention:

What's wrong with people in this country, Finn? Even before the virus it was so beautiful here; you had everything. But you were so cruel. (p. 198)

Powerful, passionate and compelling, this is the sort of Australian story that will resonate in the classroom. Two more books are planned. *The Road to Winter* would also be an excellent choice to use in a Year 11 classroom, (in NSW at Standard level), as a close study of text or as part of a wide reading unit on post apocalyptic fiction.

Some useful teaching notes are available at https://d2wzqffx6hjwip.cloudfront.net/text-publishing/assets/90/0f63e01afb11e6a9042d5a34ce094a/Smith_TR_TW_TN.pdf

One Sarah Crossan

Bloomsbury (2015) 429 pp.

One by Sarah Crossan is about conjoined twins, Grace and Tippi, and my initial feeling that this could be a sentimental and sensationalised novel gave way to a realisation that this is a truly special book. It has subsequently won the 2016 Carnegie Medal, the first novel in verse to have won that award.

Grace and Tippi have two heads, four arms and are joined



at the hip. It is Grace who tells their story. She shows us their different personalities and the difficulties of living life reliant on another person for even the simplest of actions, such as walking and eating. But *One* is much more than the lives of two spirited, feisty, sixteen-year-olds. It is about resilience as the girls encounter ignorance and bigotry and battle constant health issues. They despise being pitied and want to be treated like everyone else. While reading, I could hear the words of Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 'You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.'

It is difficult to encompass the overwhelming challenges of conjoined lives but readers can consider what it is like for all those who are different and what they have to endure on a daily basis. Grace and Tippi just want to have regular teenagers' lives and they have a taste of that when they eventually go to school at sixteen. The overwhelming medical expenses for the family and their parents' financial difficulties have forced them to sell their story and going to school becomes part of their lives. They quickly make friends with Yasmeen and Jon, who are themselves marginalised, and the four of them enjoy some of the experiences of being sixteen: confiding in each other, laughing, and truanting, and drinking. When Grace falls in love with Jon Tippi helps by looking the other way. But as the girls' health fluctuates separation becomes a necessity, despite the operation's high risk of failure.

A compelling feature of this text is its accessibility. It is 429 pages but I read it in under two hours and could not put it down. Crossan captures the wonderfully different voices of Grace and Tippi in her verse. This novel is pacey, clever, powerful and both a heartbreaking and a heartwarming read. There is a poignancy to such pared back writing. The verse propels you into their stories and you can't stop. It is tight, evocative and uplifting. It has a place with students of many ages and is probably best suited to Years 8–9. Equally successful companion verse novels could include Patricia McCormick's *Sold* and Sally Morgan's *Sister Heart*.

Jane Sherlock

***We Come Apart* Sarah Crossman and Brian Conahan (2017) Bloomsbury 326 pp.**

This verse novel brings together two fine young adult writers. If you have read Crossan's *One* (see Jane Sherlock's review above) and Conaghan's *The Bombs that Brought Us Together* you will be keen to pick up

this book for the classroom and you will not be disappointed. *We Come Apart* is an explosive novel set in North London about the lives of two different teenagers, Jess and Nicu. Fifteen-year-old Nicu is a quiet guy. His dad brought his family here from Romania to make some money and then return home. He is planning Nicu's wedding to a girl from back home. Nicu has little say in it. Nicu is a gentle soul, who with his halting English, ('English is a tough watermelon to crack') finds school hard. And he finds the prejudice he encounters hard too. He's attacked, called abusive names but tries to turn the other cheek.

'Some peoples
smile and say hello
in street or on bus.
Other peoples
not like my face
and don't returning
the smile I sharing.' (Nicu, p. 15)

But he wants to stay in London. He admires Jess from afar. Jess lives with her mum and Terry. Terry is a malevolent presence, vicious and menacing. He beats her mum and is starting to turn his eyes towards Jess. Her brother, Liam, has already left and Jess feels on her own. She is known to police. She was stitched up shoplifting by supposed friends. She thinks Nicu is a bit weird but he makes her laugh and gradually, working together on a young offender's program, they grow together.



These two characters are sharply revealed though their language. They each tell the story from their point of view. The writers have captured Nicu's distinctive and unique language and the insights that speaking in a second language can often bring in phrasing and imagery. His language exposes some of the follies in society and brings much needed humour to the novel.

He is a wonderful teenager who brings out the best in the tougher Jess. Jess's language is more brutal, betraying the violence in her home and her sense of despair. Both characters find a place in the reader's heart as they struggle against oppression and find trust, support and love in each other.

We Come Apart is a swift read and a highly accessible one. Year 9 and 10 students will find much to enjoy and explore in it and it could also find a place in Year 11. It's powerful fiction with a heart aching conclusion.

And I think for a second
how lucky I am
to have found him.
How lucky I am
that he came into my life. (Jess, p. 310)
Time to set Jess free
from
me. (Nicu, p. 319)

Some useful teaching notes can be found at http://media.bloomsbury.com/rep/files/WCA_Teacher_Notes%20Final.pdf

Picture Books

A Child of Books Olivier Jeffers and Sam Winston
Walker Books (2016) 32 pp.

This remarkable picture book is for anyone, adult or child, who has fallen in love with books. It invites you to set sail across typographical landscapes that will delight and inspire you. It's an imaginative adventure in words and pictures.

A little girl navigates across a sea of words to visit a young boy and invites him to join her. Together they climb up sharp-edged mountains of words, they float through wordy caves of darkness and

hide in forests where the tree trunks are book volumes turned sideways. Their world of stories has castles and monsters and clouds made of words; entry is free, just like imagination and invention.

It's a irresistible voyage that Oliver and Sam invite everyone to join and a wonderful model for all students of what can be achieved in a picture book when words really do become pictures.



Australia to Z Armin Greder
Allen & Unwin (2016) 32 pp.

This alphabet book is definitely for high school students. Pointed and satiric it asks readers and viewers questions about what it means to be Australian and the nature of some of our actions, history and icons. Greder confronts and exposes our prejudices and follies. A stands for Aborigine as an Aboriginal figure is seen looking out to sea at the sailing ship heading his way to and on the opposing page B stands for Boat people as a small craft makes its way across the same sea. R is for Rupert and it's not flattering. M is for Meat pie and N for Nationalist while F is for Footy and C is for Calories. G is for Gold Coast featuring some overly pink bodies and on the opposing page, H for Hat, positions some people standing around looking sensible in hats.

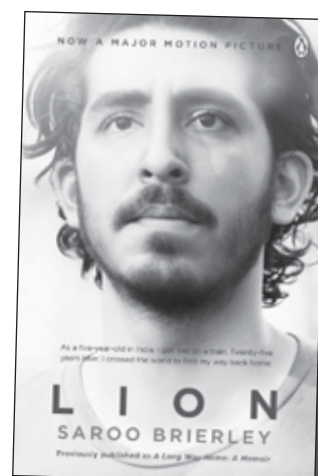
The humour, while grim and stark at times, is also sharp and often affectionate. Students will have fun with this text and could use it as a model to make some satiric commentary of their own on issues important to them. Use this picture book in Years 9 and 10 and in the senior years when you want an almost wordless introduction to satire.

Non Fiction

Lion Saroo Brierley
Penguin Random House (2013) 257 pp.

Lion has been one of the most popular films in Australia in early 2017 and its success has pointed many people back to the remarkable memoir by Saroo Brierley, originally published as *A Long Way Home*. Brierley begins at the end with a prologue that finds him outside his home in India that he had not seen for twenty-five years.

Through a series of misfortunes and accidents five-year-old Saroo became lost on a train in India and ended up in Kolkata. He spent traumatic weeks on the streets until being taken to an



orphanage. Eventually he was adopted by a couple in Tasmania and brought to Hobart where he grew up, loved and supported by his new mum and dad Sue and John Brierley.

As an adult Saroo became intrigued by the possibility of finding his Indian family. Using Google and the few clues he had from his early life he began a painstaking search for his home village where he had once lived. Chapter 9, Finding Home, is full of excitement and hope. The chapter that follows more than fulfils that hope.

Larry Buttrose has helped to shape Saroo's narrative and the net effect is of an easily accessible text with clear chapter delineations to match the powerful story. A wonderful selection of photographs augments the text.

Lion is a welcome addition to texts that provide insight into Asia and Australia's engagement with it. A unit which uses both film and memoir would provide the basis for an extensive exploration of that cross curriculum priority for students in Years 10 and 11. More information can be found at the website: <http://saroobrierley.com>

Poetry

***Let Them Eat Chaos* Kate Tempest**
Picador Poetry (2016) 72 pp.

Let Them Eat Chaos
audio iTunes (2106) length 47 minutes

Kate Tempest delivers another clarion call to action in this magnificent poem which is available in print and audio form. Right there under the title in the print version is her instruction: 'This poem was written to be read aloud.' And there is no question about that. You have to hear it and experience the musical accompaniment and the chorus-like refrains to appreciate its mesmerising effect. The poet invites us into an exploration of our alienation from each other and our planet with an accompanying chorus and musical undercurrent flowing through her words. She begins by asking us to picture a vacuum and into that space she moves the sun and our world and wonders if our world 'older



than she ever thought she'd get' is smiling or trembling at what we have done.

The pace and beat change as she introduces us to London ('Is this what it's come to?') and to the seven Londoners all awake at 4.18 am. The chorus asks: 'Is everybody else awake? Will it ever be day again?'

Jemma is awake and her story becomes part of the 'Europe is Lost' verses which sit inside this extended poem. You can hear 'Europe is Lost' on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOXXdYtZSbQ> with its litany of massacres and rejections and alienation as the traffic keeps moving.

There's Esther the carer, back aching from a double shift, and Alicia, with her memories of her partner's violent death and hopes for her son's future. Pete's on the street (when he's not back living with his dad), wasted and 'halfway to insane'. There's Bradley with his good job and feeling empty, 'life's just a thing that he does'. Zoe's awake though the long night packing boxes and Pious is lying 'beside a sleeping body, a girl she hardly knows'. She's tired but can't sleep, lovesick with thoughts of the woman who changed her life. And left her.

Their different stories come together in one poetic catharsis as a storm erupts, a hard rain falls and 'lightning charges through them'. They stumble out into the rain at 4.18 am and see each other and join together as witnesses to a shared moment of humanity.

We die so others can be born
We age so others can be young
The point of life is live,
Love if you can.
Then pass it on.

This is passionate poetry that lifts you up and carries you away; it's vital, verbal and incantatory. Use Kate Tempest in your Year 9, 10 and 11 classrooms. She is poetic dynamite and will bring the house down.

Websites

<http://tseliot.com>

What a wonderful insight this website provides into the life and work of T.S. Eliot. Valerie Eliot wanted to bring her husband's life and work to as many people as possible. Through writings, photographs and commentary we can see Eliot as a poet, critic, editor and publisher. The site was conceived by the T.S. Eliot Estate, in partnership with Faber & Faber. It is divided into four main sections, as set out in the screen shot below. The Life, The Work, Explore and News.

MENU

T.S. ELIOT

HOME	The Life	The Work	Explore	News
	A Life in Pictures	Poetry	Letters	About
	Preoccupations	Drama	Works	T.S. Eliot Prize
	People in His Life	Prose	Media	The Boston House
		The Criterion		Old Possum's Trust
		Faber		

The Life unit has a section called 'Preoccupations' that allows the reader/viewer to explore Eliot's concerns and enthusiasms in his own words set out alphabetically from Academe to Youth. 'A Life in Pictures' and 'People in his Life' contains notes and photographs on family and friends and those who were important



to him. The Work section introduces Eliot's poetry volume by volume. You can find fully annotated versions 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and 'The Waste Land' and read about the reception of the poems, as well as sharing Eliot's own reflections and comments on some of his poems. The poet can be heard reading some of the extracts (although it might be more effective to hear an actor do this). Reviews of his plays and extracts and commentary on his prose are also available. Eliot writes about other authors, there are essays of literary criticism and his comments on religious, social and professional matters. Scores of Eliot's letters can be read in the Explore unit, and the media section offers more photographs and the book covers of his work. A time line runs down the site highlighting useful dates and incidents in Eliot's life. This is a rich resource for teachers and students and would support the study of Eliot at Module B in the Advanced level in the newly released NSW Stage 6 Syllabus and Prescriptions (2019–2023).

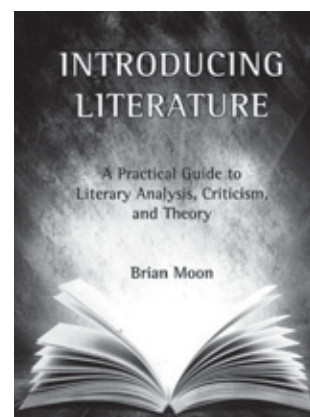
Reference

Introducing Literature: A Practical Guide to literary Analysis, Criticism, and Theory
Brian Moon Chalkface (2106) 222 pp.

It was with delight that I recently received Brian Moon's *Introducing Literature* published by Chalkface Press. Chalkface Press has a special place in my teaching career as they published some of the best resources I ever used in the classroom. Looking up at my bookshelves today I can still see *Reading Hamlet* by Bronwyn Mellor and *Reading Stories* by the same author, with Marnie O'Neill and Annette Patterson. Brian Moon's *Literacy Terms: A Practical Glossary* is still there too; its definitions and activities helped me many times in clarifying and explaining concepts and ideas for students.

Introducing Literature continues Chalkface's fine tradition. Its subtitle tells you exactly what you are getting here; a *practical* (my emphasis) guide to Literacy Analysis, Criticism and Theory. There is no question of students falling into the trap of knowing more about theory and little about texts with Brian Moon guiding the way. The eight chapters address why we study literature; making literary judgements; understanding the roles of reader, writer, text, and context; responding to and analysing texts; creative response, and theory and ideology. Moon provides wonderful scaffolds to assist students. I particularly appreciated his 'eight steps to follow' to get inside a poem or short story. His guidance means students have clear ways of establishing their responses. The directed analysis of Arnold's 'Dover Beach' is masterly, infused as it is with strategies and activities to really engage the reader and promote their understanding and lead to an informed and perceptive response.

Introducing Literature also contains an excellent resource of essential knowledge. Moon observes that some modern readers may benefit from an introduction to the connections between the Ancient Greek and Judean worlds and their influence on Western Literature. He provides brief summaries of ten Greek myths, ten narrative schemas, ten character archetypes, ten



literary sources, ten Bible stories, and a timeline of English literature (with features, dates and authors and their works of different eras and movements) for readers unfamiliar with the history of Western Literature. *Introducing Literature* is addressed to students in senior secondary schools and colleges and teachers and students alike will benefit from reading and using it. Highly recommended.

Finally, here is an example of a Wide Reading strategy to use in the classroom. Challenge students to read a book that they could stand up and promote to the class.

What's the book you would get up and declare ...

Inspired you?

Maddened you?

Changed your life?

Made you laugh out loud?

You couldn't get out of your head?

Sent shivers up your spine?

Showed you a great injustice?

Gave deep insight into relationships?

Made you weep?

Changed your life?

Your friends loved too?

Opened a door for you?

Once they have selected a book to answer read their book they need to produce a Reading Card to share with the class. You can model this behaviour and response with a book that you read and a reading card you share with your class. These reading cards can be laminated and kept to share with other classes and year groups to promote a community of readers.

The card below answers the question: What book changed your life? It's about my favourite book, *The Lord of the Rings*. It's not the best book I have ever read but one I find delight in re-reading still, many years after I read it for the first time.

Good luck with opening a few doors into the wonders of reading in your classroom. Until next time, happy reading and viewing.



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

AATE OFFICE

General Manager: Wendy Rush
Office Manager: Lucy Carberry
Administration: Jared van Abkoude
Address: PO Box 3203, Norwood, SA, 5067
Freephone 1800 248 379 Phone: +61 8 8332 2845 Fax: +61 8 8333 0394
email: aate@aate.org.au
web: www.aate.org.au

OFFICERS

President: Wendy Cody
email: wcody53@gmail.com
President Elect: Erika Boas
email: erika.boas@education.tas.gov.au
Treasurer: Phil Page
email: philip.page@education.tas.gov.au
Editor *English in Australia*: Anita Jetnikoff
email: a.jetnikoff@qut.edu.au
Research, Policy and
Initiatives Co-ordinator: Joanne Jones
jo.jones@curtin.edu.au
Commissioning Editor: Patricia Dowsett
email: trish.dowsett@sthildas.wa.edu.au

DELEGATES

ACTATE Cara Shipp
email: cara-jane.shipp@ed.act.gov.au
ETANSW Susan Gazis
email: susan.gazis@bigpond.com
ETANT John Oakman
email: john.oakman@nt.gov.au
ETAQ Fiona Laing
email: flain1@eq.edu.au
ETAWA Claire Jones
email: claire.cj.jones@gmail.com
SAETA Alison Robertson
email: alisonmrobertson@me.com
TATE Emma Jenkins
email: emma.jenkins@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au
VATE Timothy Nolan
email: timothy.bg.nolan@gmail.com

English in Australia

Members of Associations affiliated with the Australian Association for the Teaching of English receive the Journal from their association.

(Refer to address list below.)

Subscription rates for non-members of affiliated associations \$77.00 per annum (for three issues). This includes postage and GST in Australia. Overseas subscribers should email for postage rates.

Advertising: rates on application to the General Manager, AATE.

Enquiries concerning subscriptions and advertising should be addressed to:

Wendy Rush
AATE Inc.
PO Box 3203
NORWOOD
SA 5067

Freephone: 1800 248 379
Telephone: +61 8 8332 2845
Fax: +61 8 8333 0394
Email: aate@aate.org.au
Street address: 416 Magill Road,
KENSINGTON GARDENS SA 5068
Web: www.aate.org.au



Membership of AATE is available through your state/territory English teaching association.

Readers interested in membership should contact:

ETANSW	Administration Officer, PO Box 299, Leichhardt, NSW 2042 Email: admin@englishteacher.com.au
VATE	Executive Officer, 1/134-136 Cambridge Street, Collingwood, Vic. 3066 Email: vate@vate.org.au
ETAQ	Ms Trish Purcell, PO Box 3375, Stafford DC, Qld 4053 Email: trish.purcell@bigpond.com
SAETA	Ms Lucy Carberry, PO Box 3203, Norwood, SA 5067 Email: saeta@aate.org.au
ETAWA	Mr Dave Adams, PO Box 8463, Perth BC, WA 6849 Email: etawa@etawa.org.au
TATE	Mr Phil Page, PO Box 267 Lindisfarne, Tas 7015 Email: philip.page@education.tas.gov.au
ACTATE	Administration Officer, PO Box 4180, Hawker, ACT 2614 Email: info@actate.org.au
ETANT	Mr John Oakman, PO Box 40937, Casuarina NT 0811 Email: john.oakman@nt.gov.au