VATE Middle Years Conference 2019

DATE:
Friday 16 August 2019

TIME:
8.30am – 3.25pm

VENUE:
RACV Country Club, Healesville

Celebrated as a place of sanctuary, Healesville hosts VATE's 2019 Middle Years Conference, specialising in professional learning for developing your Years 7-10 students' reading and viewing, writing, comprehension, speaking and listening, engagement and enjoyment! You will be exposed to innovative teaching approaches, practical workshops with thought-provoking and ready-to-use strategies for your English classroom.

A keynote begins the day, before your choice of workshops from teachers, educational consultants, and academics.

Keynote – Gregory Donoghue
The teenage brain, learning and student wellbeing

Gregory Donoghue is a Learning Science Researcher and PhD candidate at the Science of Learning Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

As a former police detective and child protection investigator, Gregory has decades of experience dealing with victimised and traumatised children, and now centres his academic and research on how the learning sciences, including educational neuroscience, can enhance student learning and wellbeing.

In his current research, Gregory is investigating how specific learning strategies can impact student wellbeing, developing a conceptual model of learning which can be applied to a range of desirable educational outcomes, not limited to academic achievement.

CONFERENCE PRICES:

Concession	$195.00
Individual	$215.00
Organisational	$240.00

Register at www.vate.org.au

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Program overview

8.30am	**Registration**				
9:30am – 10.30am	**Keynote**	**The teenage brain, learning and student wellbeing** Gregory Donoghue, Science of Learning Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne			
10:30am – 11.00am	**Morning tea and networking**				
11.00am- 12.10pm	**Workshop 1**	**1a: Beyond good and evil: Strengthening character analysis through philosophy** Lauren Kyte	**1b: Engaging middle years students** Rhonda Browne	**1c: Making explicit the language of persuasion** Kate Cash, Claire Nailon and Anne Dalmau	**1d: Supporting the retelling of Indigenous stories in the 21st century with traditional and digital texts** Nicole Jasinowicz and Josh DeKruiff
12.15pm-1.25pm	**Workshop 2**	**2a: Assessment alternatives: The authentic writing folio** Hugh Gundlach	**2b: Building capacity in Year 10 teachers to prepare students for VCE** Avril Kinczel and Cayt Mirra	**2c: Spirited Shakespeare** Christie Thompson	**2d: Letting the lunatics have control of the asylum: student agency in Years 9-10 English** Natalie Faulkner, Reshma Ravi, Briony Schroor, and Shane Woon
1:25pm	**Lunch and networking**				
2.15pm-3.25pm	**Workshop 3**	**3a: Argument analysis for middle years: Beyond buzz words** Cindy Sullivan and Nalan Velisha	**3b: Catering to a range of readers in a cross-curricular context** Natalie Gleeson	**3c: Inclusive classrooms: Ensuring diversity in English text lists** Cayt Mirra, Rebecca Leahy and Cathy Ferguson	**3d: Skill mapping: Teaching senior English skills without teaching a 'mini-Year 12'** Hayley Harrison

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Program

1a: Beyond good and evil: Strengthening character analysis through philosophy

From Year 7 to Year 12, each text that we teach requires consideration of moral and ethical questions. But how do we shift student thinking beyond 'good' and 'evil', so that they fully appreciate the complexity of characters and circumstances within their studied texts? This workshop will provide practical strategies for applying philosophical inquiry to the English classroom, including how to use thought experiments, ethical frameworks and discussion strategies to strengthen student engagement and responses.

Lauren Kyte, Sunbury Downs College

1b: Engaging middle years students

Engaging a new generation of global students who are easily bored and hard to stimulate can be debilitating. This interactive workshop will give you some stimulating ideas for your tool kit to enable you to capture students' imaginations. Informed by student and staff surveys and teach the teacher programs, discover activities and assessments that engage students.

Rhonda Browne, Geelong College

1c: Making explicit the language of persuasion

In this workshop we will share teaching strategies that show how the language of persuasion, beyond labelling, can be explicitly taught in the middle years. The language and grammar of argument and persuasion will be the focus of a series of reading and writing activities with consideration of texts from a whole text, paragraph, sentence and word level. We will provide strategies for teachers to make visible the choices authors make in the context of argument and to show students how they can make these choices too.

Kate Cash, Pascoe Vale Girls' College, Claire Nailon, Nazareth College and Anne Dalmau, Parade College

1d: Supporting the retelling of Indigenous stories in the 21st century with traditional and digital texts

This workshop showcases how we have implemented a digital text unit in the Year 8 program to develop comparative skills while making connections with Indigenous stories. The unit goes beyond engagement to consider the knowledge and skills that students will need for future text study in their senior years. Using a video game as text, we explore how we have overcome traditional views on text study to create a unit of work that has empowered our students to take control of their learning.

Nicole Jasinowicz, Wodonga Senior Secondary College, and Josh DeKruiff, Wodonga Middle Years College

2a: Assessment alternatives: The authentic writing folio

Why is English so hung up on text essays and argument analysis? Why can't we assess students' knowledge and literacy using alternative learning products to essays? In this session we will plan a unit for the middle years that will engage students and develop their skills, without compromising performance on traditional assessments.

Hugh Gundlach, VATE Education Officer and Melbourne Graduate School of Education

2b: Building capacity in Year 10 teachers to prepare students for VCE

This session will explore the ways that Year 10 teachers can get their students VCE ready, and how leaders can work with these teacher teams to build capacity and improve teaching practice. We will outline the steps we have taken in our Year 10 team and some of the challenges we have encountered. This session will provide practical strategies for working with other teachers and ways to measure improvement.

Avril Kinczel and Cayt Mirra, Alkira Secondary College

2c: Spirited Shakespeare

How do we 'hook' students into enjoying the work of a 400-year-old playwright? How do students access the language? How do we instil students with the confidence to perform Shakespeare's plays? This session showcases some strategies from the 2019 Bell Shakespeare regional mentorship program in Sydney, and demonstrates how to communicate the relevance of the Bard's work in the 21st century classroom.

Christie Thompson, Apollo Bay P-12 College

2d: Letting the lunatics have control of the asylum: student agency in Years 9-10 English

How do we engage students in English and take ownership of their own learning within mixed ability classrooms? How do we allow for student agency and student voice? How do we develop essential 21st century enterprise skills? We don't have all the answers, but we have attempted a bold experiment in putting the children in charge of their learning programs. A course that encourages students to be creative and critical thinkers and improve their metacognition. In this workshop we will share our findings from our three-year experiment and how it has translated into the senior years.

Natalie Faulkner, Reshma Ravi, Briony Schroor, and Shane Woon, Nossal High School

3a: Analysing argument: Beyond buzz words

Three years into the new Analysing and presenting argument task in the VCE English Study Design and we continue to encounter students who are approaching this as a 'language analysis' task. This workshop will offer practical strategies to shift middle years students to a more holistic approach which is built upon developing a deeper understanding of audience, purpose, context, argument and the art of persuasion. In this workshop, we will also examine ways of combating the potential inequality that exists within this task, with the goal of upskilling the 'average' student who does not engage with news media texts on a regular basis.

Cindy Sullivan, Hume Central Secondary College and Nalan Velisha, Suzanne Cory High School

3b: Catering to a range of readers in a cross-curricular context

The development of reading comprehension skills is not the sole responsibility of the English teacher, rather, it is important that we develop a shared approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies for all subject areas. In this workshop, we will use the VCAA Literacy Learning Progressions to differentiate to a range of reading ages and using cross-curricular text types.

Natalie Gleeson, St Francis Xavier College

3c: Inclusive classrooms: Ensuring diversity in English text lists

This session will explore the importance of teaching novels that feature a range of characters from diverse backgrounds, as well as the importance of studying texts by a variety of authors. We will take a closer look at the booklists in schools currently, and present a range of texts that feature characters of diverse gender, ethnicity and sexuality, with a focus on how these could be taught in the middle years.

Cayt Mirra, Alkira Secondary College, Rebecca Leahy, Yarra Hills Secondary College and Cathy Ferguson, Swinburne University

3d: Skill mapping: Teaching senior English skills without teaching a 'mini-Year 12'

Teaching the skills of VCE English is much more than teaching the course at a junior level. This session will look at the fundamental skills of VCE English and participants will begin building a skills matrix from Year 12 through to Year 7. Relevant learning activities for different skills/year levels will be discussed and there will be scope to further develop the matrix into a Learning Continuum as part of a Mastery Learning approach to assessment.

Hayley Harrison, Educational Consultant

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