

## Engaging with Writing in the Middle Years Classroom

The VATE Professional Learning and Research Committee is excited to launch 'Engaging with Writing in the Middle Years Classroom' – a semester-long online professional learning series targeting the teaching and learning of writing in Years 7-10.

Helping students to master the skill of writing is an important area of practice for English educators. From understanding the benefits of introducing writing to your classroom, through to nurturing a writing culture, providing opportunities to write and edit various pieces of work, as well as supporting teachers with the process of assessing writing, this online professional learning series will guide you through the process of strengthening the writing culture in your context as well as develop your capacity to teach writing with confidence. Hear from a range of experienced English teachers and author **Cate Kennedy** who will provide strategies, tips and suggested learning activities to enhance the teaching and learning of writing in your classroom.



### Opening Panel: Why Teach Writing?

All VATE members are invited to register to attend the **free** opening panel on Wednesday 9 March 2022 from 4-5:15pm. The panel will be chaired by the convenor of the VATE Professional Learning and Research Committee, Helen Billett, and will include Dr Lucinda McKnight (Deakin University), Wendy Vitols (Foster Secondary College) and James Fogarty (Parade College).

This panel will consider the value of teaching writing in the English classroom from both a theoretical and practical perspective. Our panellists will explore the theory around writing and draw connections to the Victorian Curriculum. The panel will discuss how schools can develop a writing scope and sequence from Years 7 to 10, as well as unpack what professional writers see as important in the writing process and how this can be incorporated into the middle years English classroom. The panel will provide a springboard into the writing workshops.

### Cost and registration

2022 Individual Member \$195 | Organisational Member \$210 | Concession Member \$180.

Please [register online here](#) on the VATE website. Email [events@vate.org.au](mailto:events@vate.org.au) with any queries.

# 2022 Professional Learning

## The Writing Series

Registration for the Engaging with Writing in the Middle Years Classroom series will consist of four live workshops and access to two pre-recorded workshops that will be available after the first workshop.

### Workshop 1: Show Don't Tell: Writing in the English Classroom

**Presenters:** Helen Mason and Joe Reischel (Glen Waverley Secondary College) and Kylie Price (Eltham College of Education)

Wednesday 30 March 4 – 5:15pm

Students often mistake using verbose language for good writing not realising that to make a character leap off the page, they need to provide a chance for the reader to see that character in action. The focus of this workshop is to give teachers ideas about how they can help their students to have an authentic voice in their writing and bring their characters and settings to life in the readers' minds. In this workshop, Helen, Joseph and Kylie will share some strategies which will encourage students to engage with low stakes writing and begin to build their confidence in this space.

### Workshop 2: The Artful Writer and Developing a Writing Culture

**Presenter:** Dr Amanda McGraw (Federation University)

Wednesday 18 May 4 – 5:15pm

Artworks can be used as a source of inspiration for writing and students can explore thinking dispositions that enable writers to cultivate their skills including close looking, stepping inside, being adventurous and connection-making by studying works of art. In this workshop, Amanda will share some of the approaches that she has developed in conjunction with the Education Officer at the Art Gallery of Ballarat that enable students to expand their writing skills and help them to understand how good writers think.

### Workshop 3: Teacher as Writer: Building Individual Capacity

**Presenter:** Cate Kennedy (Author of *Like A House on Fire*)

Wednesday 1 June 4 – 5:15pm

This session will focus on building your individual capacity as a writer. When asking students to undertake imaginative writing, it is important to model assuming the identity of a writer. Modelling the process of undertaking writing tasks and using strategies in order to assist with the creation of a writing culture and community is an important role for the teacher to take when teaching writing. In this session, teachers will be challenged to step into their identity as a writers.

# 2022 Professional Learning

## Workshop 4: The Drafting and Editing Process

**Presenter:** Emma Jenkins (VATE Education Officer)

Pre-recorded session

How can our students employ the writing strategies suggested by YA authors? In this pre-recorded session, hear from Cath Moore, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Will Kostakis, Vivian Pham and Ellen van Neerven who share the processes they use for editing their work. In this session, Emma will unpack the common editing strategies used by the authors and suggest classroom activities for engaging students with the process of editing their own and others' work.

## Workshop 5: How can I use Mentor Texts?

**Presenters:** Mary Mason and Helen Billett

Pre-recorded session

What is a mentor text? What criteria can be used in order to select appropriate mentor texts in the classroom? In this pre-recorded session, Mary and Helen will explore the different ways in which mentor texts can be used to engage with the writing process in the English classroom.

## Closing Panel: The Assessment of Writing

**Presenters:** Helen Billett, Dr Lucinda McKnight (Deakin University) and Brendan Winter (Christian College Geelong)

Wednesday 15 June 4 – 5:15pm

Assessing writing in a meaningful and constructive way is a concern for many teachers. How do you assess writing without taking away student agency and voice? Is it possible to assess writing holistically? How can students (and teachers!) feel empowered by the assessment process? This session will outline some of concerns about the assessment of writing and provide a range of formative and summative assessment opportunities that may work in your context.