



2022 VATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

MONDAY 2 MAY, RACV CITY, BOURKE ST, MELBOURNE

VATE's annual Leadership Conference provides experienced and aspiring English leaders with the opportunity to discuss the key issues facing their departments and develop skills and structures to overcome the challenges of the current educational climate. With the student cohort at the centre, grappling with two interrupted years of remote learning from home, hear from a range of presenters as they share their experiences with assisting students with a goal to improving their engagement, enjoyment and results in English.

Keynote speaker

Maddie Witter, Berry Street

Maddie is a co-author of the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) and author of *Reading Without Limits: Teaching Strategies to Build Independent Reading for Life* (2013). She is a co-founder of KIPP Infinity in Harlem, a top performing school in the United States, and Parkville College, a school for young people who have been or are currently incarcerated in Victoria.



Keynote address

The power of books to heal the impacts of trauma

In this presentation, English teachers and leaders will leave with practical trauma-aware tools to support student wellbeing, personal development, and respectful relationships through the power of shared reading. Maddie will share dual purpose lessons that will simultaneously build wellbeing and literacy outcomes in a safe and inclusive way for all learners, including learners impacted by adverse childhood experiences. Participants will learn how to build wellbeing strategies such as resilience, hope and respectful relationships while building students' abilities to make and support inferences, examine and respond to literature, and think critically. Participants will also leave with a cultivated shared reading booklist developed in partnership with Berry Street and The Little Bookroom.

Cost and registration

2022 Individual Member \$215 | Organisational Member \$245 | Concession Member \$215

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

Venue

RACV City Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne. Location and directions available [here](#).

Please [click here](#) to view RACV hygiene guidelines and the most up to date information with regards to COVID-19.

www.vate.org.au

events@vate.org.au | ABN: 22 667 468 657 | Inc No A0013525E

VATE
VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Program overview

8.00am		Registration, tea and coffee; browse the VATE bookshop
9:00am	VCAA update	Annelise Balsamo, Curriculum Manager, English, and Kellie Heintz, Curriculum Manager, EAL
9:45am	Keynote	The power of books to heal the impacts of trauma Maddie Witter, Berry Street
10:45am		Morning tea and networking
11:15am	Workshop 1	1a: Compassionate leadership for turbulent times Nirvana Watkins, Geelong Grammar School, and Kate Manners, Camberwell Girls' Grammar School 1b: Developing consistent reading and writing practices as a new English leader Abbey Panosh, Phoenix College 1c: Low literacy learners: Structures and supports Ben Jones, Wodonga Middle Years College
12.25pm	Workshop 2	2a: Mapping the student journey through curriculum Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy 2b: Empoword: Student voice and creative writing practice Grace Elkins, The Village High School 2c: Leading through change: Lessons from a new school Elise Westphalen, Edgars Creek Secondary College
1:35pm		Lunch and networking; browse the VATE bookshop
2:20pm	Workshop 3	3a: Connecting grammar with reading and writing skill development Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy 3b: Improving critical capacity by using context and diversity to meet student needs (and wants) Daniel Piacquadio, Seymour College 3c: Life without TEEL Ben White, Monivae College
3.30pm		Conference concludes

Workshop details

Workshop 1

1a: Compassionate leadership for turbulent times

Pitched at existing and aspiring leaders, this workshop delves into the challenges and opportunities presented by the dynamic circumstances of our work over the past two years. The workshop presents examples of schools leading evaluation and revision of curriculum, the strategic initiatives that enable teams to function more flexibly in onsite, remote and hybrid environments, and trauma-informed team leadership to enable a balance between excellence, accountability and compassion.

Nirvana Watkins, Geelong Grammar School, and
Kate Manners, Camberwell Girls' Grammar School

1b: Developing consistent reading and writing practices as a new English leader

This workshop will outline how our school has been working through changes in reading and writing practice for a number of years – primarily, how we transition from teaching content to how we teach the lifelong skills of reading and writing. My goal as a new Literacy Leader was to not only continue to implement these practices, but create consistency in how we deliver reading and writing instruction as a team to not only feel more connected with changing practices, but create a more visible impact for our learners. In this workshop I will share our key discoveries and helpful strategies.

Abbey Panosh, Phoenix College

1c: Low literacy learners: Structures and supports

It's tough knowing where to start for our learners with low literacy skills. Join this workshop to give your learners the literacy boost they need; finding solutions to create a balanced approach to literacy with practical examples from real classrooms which give your students the confidence and skills they deserve.

Ben Jones, Wodonga Middle Years College

Workshop 2

2a: Mapping the student journey through curriculum

In this workshop, we will look at the journey a student takes through a school from Year 7-12 English and discuss the impact curriculum has upon that journey. We will look at curriculum auditing, strategies to assess the journey that is being offered to students, how different students need and deserve different journeys, and how we can keep a clear view of these journeys when we make changes at a year or unit level.

Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy

2b: Empoword: Student voice and creative writing practice

How do we centre student voices and simultaneously increase engagement and outcomes for student writing? This interactive workshop looks at the power of creative writing to amplify student agency. This workshop will provide examples of how to increase student engagement in writing – from those on the edge to some of the most reluctant students – through a creative writing program that emphasises the transferable skills of the writing curriculum. It will explore how a focus on the power of the written word can support students to feel empowered by the impact of their writing. This workshop will provide participants with program structures and ideas that can be used across different settings to empower students through words.

Grace Elkins, The Village High School

2c: Leading through change: Lessons from a new school

If the last two years have taught us anything, its that change is constant and affects us all. In this climate, a strong culture of collaboration and improvement is undoubtedly essential for any PLC to be effective. For the last four years the English PLC at Edgars Creek Secondary College has undergone rapid change, growing from two members in our foundation year in 2018 to over 20 members in 2022. From implementing and reviewing curriculum and assessment processes, to building collective efficacy and transitioning into change management, this workshop will share practical strategies and lessons learned for developing and consolidating an English PLC.

Elise Westphalen, Edgars Creek Secondary College

Workshop details

Workshop 3

3a: Connecting grammar with reading and writing skill development

During this workshop we will look at the very real and important connection between a person's understanding of the mechanics of English (syntax, spelling and punctuation) and their ability to read and write. Schools can often find it very difficult to organically embed grammar and spelling practices within their curriculum, but during this workshop we will look at different ways a school can explicitly teach these critically important skills across the Year 7-12 English curriculum. We will also consider the real need for staff professional development in many of these more technical aspects of English and how as a leader you can support your staff to gain the confidence (and excitement!) to teach the mechanics of English in every class. We will also look at how you can use this knowledge within assessment practices to literally see real growth in your students' reading and writing skills.

Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy

3b: Improving critical capacity by using context and diversity to meet student needs (and wants)

This workshop aims to discuss the ways in which student context should inform task and curriculum design. It further seeks to explore the reasons why students may fail to employ the critical thinking skills taught in English in the 'real world' as a consequence of non-diverse task design.

Daniel Piacquadio, Seymour College

3c: Life without TEEL

Every student deserves to express themselves in their writing. TEEL can be a hindrance rather than a help, locking students into a rigid structure where they tick the boxes. What are the alternatives? In this workshop, Ben will explain his schools' journey as they have moved away from TEEL into the scary structure-less world.

Ben White, Monivae College