

CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

Official Conference Bookseller

The Chestnut Tree Bookshop

The Chestnut Tree is West Footscray's independent bookshop and cafe, proudly serving the VATE community for the third year running. We hand-pick our shelves with a focus on female, Indigenous, and underrepresented authors, and we're passionate about getting the right books into classrooms.

We offer school accounts with dedicated service, curated reading lists, and a Victorian government-registered supplier program. Visit us at the VATE Conference to browse our bestsellers and gifts, and ask about setting up an account. Subscribe to The Bookmark, our monthly newsletter for schools and educators.



Teacher Inclusion Scholarship

VATE acknowledges and thanks VATE members and friends, including the following, who have generously donated payment for work that they have undertaken for VATE in either 2025 or 2026.

Pablo Brait (Foundation for Young Australians), Sarah Coleman, Terry Hayes, Timothy Lilley, Jan May,

Tanya Notley (Western Sydney University), Graham Parr (Monash University)

The Teacher Inclusion Scholarship ensures that the annual VATE State Conference is accessible to as many English teachers as possible. This scholarship directly supports the English teaching community.

To recognise and facilitate equity of access, VATE will prioritise members who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, work with students from disadvantaged background or low ICSEA backgrounds, and/or teach in rural or regional areas of Victoria.

Acknowledgement of Country

VATE acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the VATE office is situated.

We pay our respects to Elders from all nations – and to their Ancestors and Elders past and present. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first storytellers; and that knowledge transfer through storytelling is woven into the fabric of this Country.

We acknowledge all First Nations peoples who make contributions to teaching and learning communities. VATE is committed to working towards Makarrata and truth-telling – we strive to use language that recognises First Nations peoples' continuing connection to land, waters, and cultures.

We believe a better tomorrow is possible and VATE pledges our unwavering support to the First People's Treaty process in Victoria.

Deakin

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands and waterways on which Deakin University does business. We pay our deep respect to the Ancestors and Elders of Wadawurrung Country, Eastern Maar Country and Wurundjeri Country where our physical campuses are located. We also acknowledge all First Nations Peoples that make contributions to our learning communities.





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9.00 – 9:15am	Welcome to Country President's welcome
9.15 – 10.15am	Keynote Howie Manns
10.15 – 10.25am	10 minute changeover
10.25 – 11.25am	Workshops Session 1: TW1
11.25 – 11.50am	Morning tea
11.50am – 12.40pm	Guest speakers GS1: Anna Burkey GS2: Stephanie Wescott and Laura Trevaskis GS3: Toni Jordan
12.40 – 12.50pm	10 minute changeover
12.50 – 1.50pm	Workshops Session 2: TW2
1.50 – 2.40pm	Lunch
2.40 – 3.40pm	Workshops Session 3: TW3
3.40 – 4.30pm	VATE Village Conference gathering

DAY TWO:

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER

9.00 – 10.00am	Keynote Namila Benson
10.00 – 10.10am	10 minute changeover
10.10 – 11.10am	Workshops Session 1: FW1
11.10 – 11.35am	Morning tea
11.35am – 12.35pm	Panels P1: Creating something real P2: Too happy to teach? P3: Artistic license to thrill
12.35 – 12.45pm	10 minute changeover
12.45 – 1.45pm	Workshops Session 2: FW2
1.45 – 2.35pm	Lunch
2.35 – 3.35pm	Workshops Session 3: FW3

Due to unforeseen circumstances, VATE will occasionally have to alter the program or workshops. On the day cancellations will be communicated to delegates. VATE will not accept liability for damages of any nature sustained by participants or their accompanying persons, for loss or damage to their personal property as a result of the conference or related events. The opinions expressed at the conference are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the views of VATE.



ODE TO JOY

The 2026 VATE State Conference – Ode to Joy – is a celebration of the work of English teachers that is joyful, playful, experimental and human. A tribute to work that reflects bold choices, twists, turns and the collective delight of students, colleagues and community. An expression of the quiet and the loud joys of the profession and of the deep, purposeful and enjoyable learning that springs from human connection. Classrooms are places of discovery, where joy lives, creativity grows and where we delight in the intellectual activity of teaching and shared pleasure of language. **Ode to Joy** invites teachers to seize an ‘opportunity for creative transformation’ and reacquaint themselves with the joys inherent in subject English that are fuelled by passion, collaboration and authenticity.

Jon Batiste’s ‘**Ode to Joyful**’ provided the inspiration for the

2026 VATE State Conference theme. Through his interpretation of Beethoven’s classics and the joy derived from spontaneous composition and play, Batiste reminds us that joy is something that ‘continues to transcend and stand the test of time’, highlighting its connection to imagination and its ability to help us ‘bend and shape and mold and push back against the world’. Friedrich Schiller’s poem ‘An die Freude’ (**Ode to Joy**) and the widely recognisable melody made famous by the chorale finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, treats joy as not just an emotion, but as a force of nature. Joy coaxes ‘flowers from the buds’ and is ‘drunk by every being’. Joy is for ‘all ye millions!’ – a message evoked in each stanza as Schiller extends joy to ‘the worms’ and to ‘every good thing’ beyond the stars. He praises the power of joy to efface social and political inequalities, unite people in their differences, and celebrates the

power of personal friendship – a metaphor extended to encompass the entire human race where ‘every man becomes a brother’. ‘**Ode to Joy**’ honours joy as the ‘hardy mainspring/Of the universe’.

At its core, ‘**Ode to Joy**’ is about humanity. It’s the hymn to the dream, the capacity of human beings to dream.’

Ode to Joy challenges us to imagine something better and dares us to dream for our classrooms, communities and worlds. **Ode to Joy** recognises the challenges of our daily realities yet encourages opportunities to linger in the big and little joys of our work and amplify the components of our profession that makes it fun, bold, humorous, whimsical and energetic – both for us and for our students. At the heart of this State Conference is the belief that joy is serious work and the spirit of dreaming is alive and well in each of us.

ABOUT MIMI LEUNG



Mimi Leung is an internationally recognised artist known for her vibrant, playful style. Her work infuses whimsical detail, biological references and fantastical worlds, and often explores themes of introspection, imagination and wonder. Mimi’s multidisciplinary practice spans traditional and digital media, as well as community development and creative facilitation. She lives in regional Victoria, Australia with her husband, two children and two bunny siblings; Moonlilly and Pumpkin.

Creative statement

I loved working on this brief with Emma and Kate. It was wonderful to be encouraged to be playful and chaotic! When I read the poem ‘Ode To Joy’ by Friedrich Schiller that inspired the Beethoven classic, I was particularly struck by the line ‘Even the worm can feel contentment’ because it connects with how I approach my observations of the world – I want to notice and find joy in even the smallest, most overlooked and often dismissed things.



2026 VATE FELLOWSHIP

Teaching First Nations literature, knowledges and ways of learning in English

First Nations Fellowship: Professional Learning Showcase

The First Nations Fellowship Professional Learning Showcase is a celebration of the deep professional learning that has occurred for participants of the VATE First Nations Fellowship. Over the course of a year, these participants have strengthened their knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the teaching of First Nations literature, knowledges, and ways of knowing.

VATE will cover the registration cost for up to 15 English teachers from around Victoria to attend the Showcase. Please note that the day is part of the State Conference and will take place on Thursday 19 November 2026.

Participants will hear from teachers who have facilitated a year-long inquiry into First Nations literature, knowledges and ways of learning as part of the First Nations Fellowship.

These teachers will share the results of their inquiries and share the developments from their context. The day will be facilitated by Associate Professor Amanda McGraw and Emma Jenkins, critical friends to the VATE Fellowship.

Applicants must be VATE members and be willing and able to meet certain conditions of participation in the program, including completing pre- and post-event tasks. (NB: Participants can register for the second day of the State Conference at a discounted rate.)

Expression of interest

VATE is interested in hearing from members who are committed to Makarrata, truth-telling and listening, and using their privilege as an English teacher to promote reconciliation and champion a version of English education that is critical and creative and grounded in promoting inclusivity and equity.

VATE welcomes applications from teachers who work with students who identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander, students from disadvantaged or low ICSEA backgrounds, students from rural or regional areas of Victoria, and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Please submit a 200 – 400–word reflection that responds to the following prompts:

- Your name, school and school's location
- Discuss your teaching and learning journey with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and stories (this may include your own reconciliation journey)
- In what ways are you adopting a strengths-based approach to the sharing of histories, cultures and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Please note: School principals must give formal approval for participant attendance by providing release from school on Thursday 19 November 2026.

Completed expressions of interest, including principal approval, should be submitted to education@vate.org.au by **12pm on Friday 18 September 2026**. Successful applicants will be informed by Friday 2 October.



GOING GREEN: THE GREENING OF VATE EVENTS

Climate change is real

To respond to the challenges of climate change, we need to address our individual, collective and systemic responsibilities.

At VATE we are committed to developing environmentally sustainable practices in order to minimise our carbon footprint at all VATE events. The key actions being undertaken are:

Minimising waste

This will be done through the reduction of waste such as no single serving containers and recycling (where possible) at each event.

Distribution of event material

We are committed to using paperless technology as much as possible and this includes the distribution of speakers' presentations and event information. We encourage our exhibitors and sponsors to distribute their promotional material in a paperless manner and/or on recycled paper where possible. VATE will not be distributing any paper flyers at the State Conference.



I SPREAD JOY BY...

Telling a good story.

Conference satchels

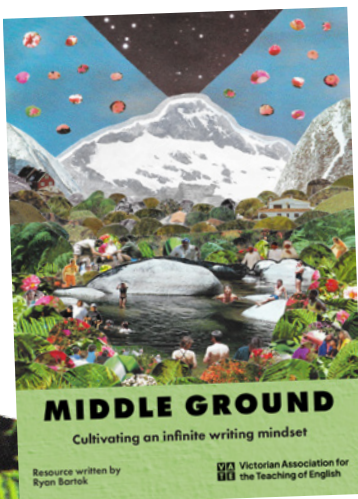
Conference satchels with promotional flyers will not be available. Delegates are encouraged to bring their own bag.

Transport to the venue

To reduce carbon emissions, we encourage all participants to find the most environmentally friendly way to travel to the venue. This may include taking public transportation, sharing a car, riding a bike, or walking.

We look forward to you joining us on this journey.

MIDDLE GROUND



The purpose of VATE's **Middle Ground** publication is to provide middle years' teachers (Years 7–10) with access to activities and lesson sequences that can assist with the teaching of English concepts, skills, knowledge, and ideas. Each edition of **Middle Ground** is mapped to the Victorian and Australian curricula and is supported by materials including professional reading, media articles, audio visual material, as well as tables, handouts and worksheets. The series title, **Middle Ground**, is designed to represent a focus on teaching the ideas, skills, concepts, and knowledge of English for fun and in connection with the lives and experiences of middle years students.

Middle Ground is free for all current VATE members. Available editions in 2026 will include:

- Reading and writing identity through comics
- Cultivating an infinite writing mindset
- Trim, taut, and terrific: Writing micro fiction with 'A Story in Miniature'
- The right to write: Exploring censorship

Explore the full library of **Middle Ground** resources including those written by State Conference Keynote Howie Manns (Slinging slang in the classroom), Guest speaker Stephanie Wescott (Who's afraid of the patriarchy? Feminist ideas, texts and representations), and workshop presenter Helena Brain (Ghostbusters: Why myths matter).

VA Victorian Association for
TE the Teaching of English



GIVING BACK: SUPPORTING OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

VATE is a not-for-profit subject association committed to a vision of subject English that is equitable, inclusive, robust, creative, responsive, and critical. Through collaboration and community, VATE serves its members and their students from all sectors and regions across the state of Victoria.

VATE is an important place of connection and community.

To reflect our commitment to sustainability and social solidarity, VATE no longer purchases delegate and presenter gifts and instead donates these funds to charities. We see this as an important act in supporting our wider community

and reflects our responsibility to 'going green' and our core values of equity, inclusion, and social engagement.

We look forward to you joining us on this journey of connecting to community.

In 2026 VATE will be donating funds to Writers Victoria.

Writers Victoria

Empowering Writers

Writers Victoria is a highly regarded not-for-profit membership organisation. We empower, support, connect and advocate for writers at all stages of their career. We provide them with opportunities for experimentation, networking and

mentoring and we open pathways to publication through the delivery of our core professional development programs and services. Writers Victoria fosters a diverse, vibrant writing community across Victoria and beyond.



All about writers

Teacher Inclusion Scholarships

Applications now invited

To ensure that the 2026 VATE State Conference is accessible to as many English teachers as possible, two scholarships are available which will help remove financial barriers for eligible applicants. The focus of this scholarship is inclusion and equity and as such VATE will prioritise applicants who work with students from disadvantaged or low SES backgrounds and/or in rural and regional areas. Each scholarship is valued at up to \$1000 and can be used towards the following expenses: registration costs; travel; accommodation.

Supporting the Teacher Inclusion Scholarships is the generosity of VATE members and friends who have donated payment for work undertaken for VATE in 2025 or 2026.

VA Victorian Association for
TE the Teaching of English

Who should apply

- Members who would not be able to attend otherwise.
- Members who have not attended a VATE conference in the last three years.
- Members who have at least two years of experience working in their school.

Applicants must agree to take what they learn at the conference back to their schools so that their colleagues benefit from their experience as well. Scholarship recipients are also expected to write a post-conference report (including photos) for VATE.

Submission requirements

- Curriculum Vitae
- 500-word maximum expression of interest, endorsed by your Principal, outlining your teaching experience within your current school, your teaching practice, why it is important to attend the conference, and how you will share your learning with your colleagues.

Please [email your application](#) to Kate Gillespie by midday Wednesday 16 September 2026.



CREATE

Without targeted support, we risk losing vital stories that enrich our culture and foster empathy, literacy and imagination.

Writers shape the way we understand ourselves, our communities and our world. Yet for many writers – especially emerging and underrepresented voices – the path to a sustainable career is steep, and the support systems are fragile.

Writers Victoria is the peak body for writers in Victoria. We support writers through professional development opportunities, pathways to publication, mentoring and networking. We need your help to keep doing our vital work.

Help us to
empower writers



Donate today

CONNECT

SUPPORT

writersvictoria.org.au

WRITERS
VICTORIA



REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Early bird rate

1 day

Concession member \$285	Individual member \$305	Organisational member \$325
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2 days

Concession member \$440	Individual member \$470	Organisational member \$500
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Early bird registration closes 12pm Thursday 8 October.

Full rate

1 day

Concession member \$310	Individual member \$330	Organisational member \$350
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2 days

Concession member \$465	Individual member \$495	Organisational member \$525
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Please note: *Organisational member rates are per single staff member. If you or your school faces financial barriers that make attending this conference difficult, please contact [Kate Gillespie](#) to discuss options.

Livestream registration

As always, this year's State Conference will be a hybrid event. We will be running twelve workshops, as well as all keynotes, guest speakers and panels live via Zoom. Delegates wishing to register for the livestream component of the conference can do so through a separate [livestream registration portal](#). You will be able to select your preferences for the workshops that you would like to stream live. Livestream delegates will also get access to the recordings for all streamed sessions (subject to recording quality).

Bulk buy

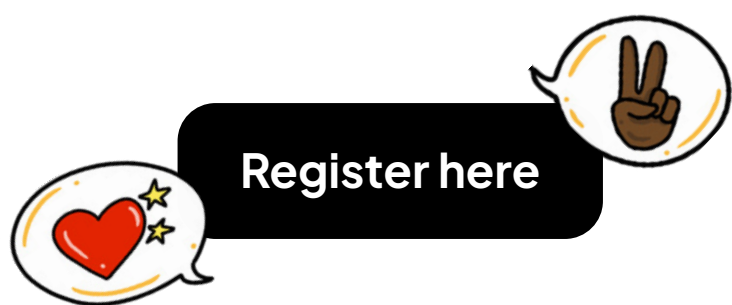
How to unlock the special multi-buy rate 🧐

Registering 5 or more staff? A secret rate awaits! (The secret is our website can't comprehend a discount code, so we have to do it manually. 🤖 The joy? You get to speak and interact with a real human.) [Contact the VATE office](#) for a multi-buy discount. **Please note:** Registrations will need to be organised at the same time.



JOY IS...

Reading and talking about books.





PLANNING YOUR CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

If a profession does not find a medium to conference with its practitioners, that profession will quickly atrophy. The VATE Conference helps keep English teaching a profession rather than a job title, and our attendance not only assures us professional development, but also ensures we remain professional.

– Peter Pidduck (*Idiom*, 2002)

VATE exists to support its members at all stages of their English teaching career in the continuous process of renewal necessary to engage with the dynamic nature of both the profession and subject English. The VATE State Conference is an opportunity to be in community with English teaching colleagues from across the state – to connect, support, actively participate, and deepen our collective identity.

VATE is not a single voice: our strength lies in the diversity of experiences presented in the conference program. We trust and value the expertise of our membership and expect critical and constructive engagement from our members with all aspects of the conference. Our expectations reflect the standards as outlined in the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct (Principles 1.8 and 3.1).

Participation guide

In order to assist delegates with planning for their conference experience, each workshop has been allocated a number that corresponds with the presenter's expectations for delegate participation. We encourage you to consider the level of participation when choosing your workshops.



<p>Lecture MINIMAL PARTICIPATION</p> <p>1</p> <p>Delegates will participate in a lecture-style session which includes note taking, observation, and the opportunity for occasional questions.</p>	<p>Discussion LOW LEVEL PARTICIPATION</p> <p>2</p> <p>Delegates will participate in some paired discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and activities related to the topic.</p>
<p>Hands on MEDIUM LEVEL PARTICIPATION</p> <p>3</p> <p>Delegates will participate in facilitated learning and hands on activities such as completing short tasks, working with others, debating, group discussion, comparing approaches, and offering feedback.</p>	<p>Embodied HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPATION</p> <p>4</p> <p>Delegates will be active participants in the workshop and will be immersed in deep exploration of ideas, extended discussion, guided application, role play, and embodied pedagogies.</p>



CONFERENCE STRANDS

In addition to the participation guide, delegates are encouraged to use the conference strands to guide their workshop selections.



Creative alchemy

This strand celebrates storytelling. Workshops in this strand bring together ideas, emotions and experiences for authentic learning; support students' reading engagement; offer ideas for building literacy skills; share strategies that help to foster a love of reading (in both students and teachers); showcase opportunities for genuine creative writing and imaginative thinking; and activities that tickle the intellectual muscle – and funny bone – of what it means to teach English.



Joie de vivre

This strand invites teachers to share the joy, creativity, curiosity and expression that is being fostered in their classroom. Workshops in this strand highlight pedagogy, curriculum and assessment that is grounded in joy; sequences and units of work that cultivate joy and bring energy to the classroom; playful (re)imaginings of English teaching staples; and sharing the pleasure of creative routines and processes.



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!

This strand explores the importance of connection and community in English teaching. Workshops in this strand support collaborative problem-solving; facilitate collegial conversation; celebrate the quiet and loud (unsung) joys of English teaching; and detail innovative ways to use joy to connect students and colleagues.



DAY ONE:

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER





KEYNOTE

LIVESTREAM

9.00 – 10.15AM



Dr Howie Manns

Dr Howie Manns is a Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at Monash University, where he studies and teaches about language and society in Australia and Indonesia. He has worked as a language professional for more than 30 years, including as an English teacher in Indonesia and as a Persian linguist for the US Navy in the Middle East.

Howie wrote his PhD on the rapid changes to the Indonesian language and society in the decade after the fall of Suharto. He has since been part of projects to investigate deafblind communication and the history and evolution of Australian slang. He has written or edited dozens of academic papers and

six books on language, including *Australian English Reimagined* and *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistics*.

Howie frequently appears in Australian and international media. He has regular segments on the ABC and co-wrote and presented the SBS explainer series *Weird and Wonderful Aussie English*. Howie is a prolific contributor on matters of language to the online website *The Conversation* (along with his frequent collaborator, Kate Burridge). But it is the wonder of language that truly keep Howie going. He is looking forward to taking you on that journey with him.

Orwell for optimists: Secret words to drive away the melancholy

George Orwell isn't known for his optimism. But when ideas run dry and our worth is measured in KPIs, it can be good to seek joy in unlikely places.

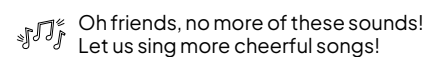
This address is a joyful journey to some of those places. It is a celebration of words. It is a celebration of teachers. But, most of all, it is a joyful celebration of staying optimistic despite it all.

We start our journey with Orwell's essay on the 'common toad' – a joyful ode to an unlikely hero and childhood curiosity. We then chase this curiosity into the wider world. From Argentina to the Strait of Hormuz, we will meet unlikely

magic words, the stories behind them, and the joy they gift in dire times. We will also meet unlikely heroic figures – fictional and real – in the celebration of words, including Juliana Berners (the patron saint of collective nouns) and Belisa Crepusculario, who, for the price of 50 centavos, 'gave the gift of a secret word to drive away the melancholy'.

Join me on an amazing journey into language, where words are magical, and Orwellian can actually mean uplifting.

STRAND:





GUEST SPEAKERS

LIVESTREAM

GS1 / 11.50AM – 12.40PM



Anna Burkey

Anna Burkey is the CEO of Australia Reads, a national not-for-profit on a mission to get more Australians reading. Originally hailing from Scotland, Anna was on the founding team of Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature and worked with the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Now living in Melbourne/Naarm, she has held senior roles at State Library Victoria – establishing

the Children’s Quarter and leading the Centre for Youth Literature – and at the Australian Publishers’ Association, where she oversaw communications and public advocacy for the publishing sector. She is passionate about books, storytelling, and learning, and wants to see more Australians have access to the life-changing benefits of recreational reading.

Reaching readers: Journeying back to books

Millions of young Australians enjoy reading. They tell us it helps them understand the world, and provides special moments to bond with family. That it makes them laugh, and cry, and figure out who they are in this crazy, shifting landscape we live in. They also tell us that they need a bit of help making space for reading, and finding books that they trust they’ll enjoy.

Now more than ever, teachers need to be equipped with the right tools, tactics, messages and data to engage students with books and reading.

As trusted booklovers in their lives, educators have the chance to engage with the playful ways students mediate the world, and adapt their approaches to meet students where they’re at.

In this address, Anna will take a practical look at how teachers can apply research insights to increase reading engagement, and provide some inspiration for how teachers and the broader school community can develop a vibrant reading culture for students.

STRAND:

I SPREAD JOY BY...

Sending a thoughtfully selected GIF in the Teams chat.





GUEST SPEAKERS

LIVESTREAM

GS2 / 11.50AM – 12.40PM



Dr Stephanie Wescott

Dr Stephanie Wescott is an academic at Monash University Faculty of Education and a former English and history teacher. Her

research interests are at the intersections of feminism, epistemic justice, misogyny in schools, and pedagogies of emancipation.



Laura Trevaskis

Laura Trevaskis is an English, history and literacy teacher and sessional tutor at Monash University. She holds a Master's in Inclusive and Special Education, consults for Clickview and has previously consulted for the

Arc Victorian Lesson Plans Project. Her interests centre on innovative lesson design, negotiating the tension between relational pedagogy, and institutional constraint.

PowerPoint is not pedagogy: An experimental year of undigital teaching

PowerPoint has become the default architecture of teaching in higher education. Standardised learning environments, whole-school models of practice and the conflation of consistency with quality have produced a culture in which slide-based teaching is widely understood as a marker of good practice. Yet presentation technologies do more than support teaching; they also shape the conditions under which teaching occurs, embedding assumptions about how knowledge should be organised, delivered and evaluated.

In response to the hegemonic status of PowerPoint, we designed an experimental year of undigital teaching in our university classrooms as both a methodological and political intervention. Our inquiry examined what becomes possible when the infrastructural dominance of slides is deliberately disrupted.

Drawing on reflective practice and ongoing dialogue between us as educators, the project traced how teaching practices shifted in the absence of slides. Without the linear architecture of PowerPoint, classroom pedagogy moved toward dialogue, improvisation, storytelling and collective knowledge-making.

The experiment also surfaced challenges. Some were readily addressed through changes to classroom routines and expectations, while others proved more resistant, particularly where institutional systems and student expectations remain organised around slide-based teaching. Rather than a nostalgic rejection of technology, this project argues for pedagogical practices capable of resisting the managerial and digital hegemonies shaping contemporary education.

STRAND:



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



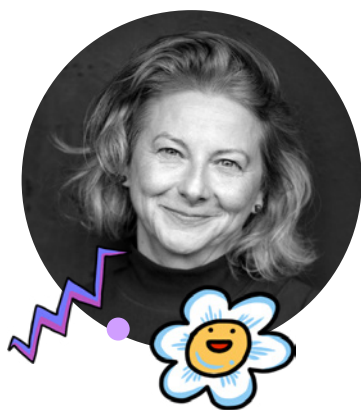
Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!



GUEST SPEAKERS

LIVESTREAM

GS3 / 11.50AM – 12.40PM



Toni Jordan

Toni Jordan is the author of eight novels including the international bestseller *Addition*, which was longlisted for the Miles Franklin Award and adapted into a feature film. Her novel *Nine Days* was a VCE text and was awarded the Indie award for Best Fiction and *Our Tiny, Useless Hearts* was longlisted for the

International Dublin Literary Award. Her latest novel, *Tenderfoot*, has been shortlisted for the Indie Award for best fiction and the ABIA award for Literary Fiction Book of the Year. Toni holds a Bachelor of Science in physiology and a PhD in Creative Arts and lives in Melbourne.

Your turn to write

VATE teachers spend considerable time and energy encouraging creativity in their students. That's because they know how important creativity is – not only is it a vital workplace skill, it's one of the things that makes us human. But this session isn't about your students' creativity. It's about yours.

Using writing exercises and prompts, Toni will guide you to start your own piece of fiction writing. Whether you're a beginner or someone who already has a creative practice, this session will give you permission to focus on a project of your own.

STRAND:



JOY IS...

Underlining sentences and passages in books – it helps to know that what you're feeling and thinking has been felt and thought before.





WORKSHOPS

TW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.25 - 11.25AM

TW1.01

LIVESTREAM

Prose and cons: Fostering a love of reading through short stories

Natalie Scott, Canterbury Girls' Secondary College and Gillian Neumann, Rowville Secondary College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop will show teachers how to develop and deliver a short story unit designed to encourage students to explore a range of familiar and unfamiliar genres. Through journaling, groupwork, and jigsaw presentations, students in Years 9 or 10 will explore their personal responses to fiction in a unit of work that honours student choice and aims to foster enjoyment in reading. A course outline, short story shortlist, and formative and summative assessment tasks will be included.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

SHORT STORIES

TW1.02

LIVESTREAM

The skills of analysing argument

Helen Billett

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Being able to use the analytical thought process in real time offers our students power and agency in a rapidly changing world. An important part of our role as VCE English teachers is to teach these vital skills. This workshop is designed to look at ways in which we teach these skills so that students see their relevance and engage with the process including the assessment approaches that build resilience in students, ways in which we can encourage persistence in our students so that they are ready for assessments and, importantly, how students can utilise these skills in their life beyond school.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS

THINKING STRATEGIES

TW1.03

Ancient myths: Epic worlds

Jo Clyne and Bridget Headlam

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Ancient Greek myths have endured for centuries, continuing to inspire reluctant readers through modern renditions such as the Percy Jackson series or Stephen Fry's witty retellings. Participants will critically evaluate mythology as both a cultural practice and literary genre, investigating structural elements including the hero's journey, magical objects, obstructive monsters, and vengeful Gods. We will take a closer look at the social function of etiological and behaviour myths and how they guided ancient civilisations in matters of morality and cohesive citizenship.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

CREATIVE WRITING

READING

TW1.04

Bringing yourself to the English classroom

Declan Dodson and Melissa Guclu, Glenroy College

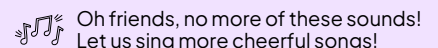
STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

For students to be authentically engaged in writing, writers need to be real and their thinking tangible. The goal of this workshop is to support teachers with modelling the vulnerability that is essential for personal writing. Through quick-writes, peer feedback and discussion, participants experience writing the self responsibly. This approach challenges the idea of writing as 'student product', where the process of crafting a text feels transactional and genuine interest is diminished. As English teachers of learners who have complex literacy challenges, we maintain that students find their voice when they can share their teacher's joy in writing.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

AUTHENTICITY

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

TW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.25 - 11.25AM

TW1.05

Curly questions: VCE English Language

Georgia Bate, Balwyn High School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This collaborative workshop will navigate the ins and outs of the Study Design with new teachers to English Language. Having trouble with a particular definition in the Study Design? Unsure about the best way to connect coursework to exam preparation? Confused about a particular requirement, Area of Study, assessment? While participants will have an opportunity to send in questions prior to the workshop, the intention of this session is to work it out together!

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

STUDY DESIGN

TW1.06

Finding joy in community and belonging in subject English

Katharine Corrin, Kyabram P-12 College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

So, you're worried about implementing VTLM2 and fear that it will zap the joy from your classroom. You're worried that common lesson plans, consistency, and structure will kill the vibe and leave you a shell of the teacher you once were. Take heart, my friends. The aim of this workshop is to support teachers of English to recognise where and how the VTLM gives us room to explore and expand our joy and passion for subject English; supporting students and teachers to build a community of belonging, where joy is infectious and builds motivation for learning in subject English.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

VTLM

PEDAGOGY

TW1.07

Just because we can, does it mean we should? The joys of critique in Unit 1 VCE English

Blair Duncan, John Fawkner College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop reclaims critique as joyful, generative, and deeply human. It showcases a holistic redesign of Unit 1 VCE English where both Areas of Study are shaped by one provocation: 'Just because we can, does it mean we should?' Rather than separating AOS1 and AOS2, the course follows a sustained critical thread. Participants will explore critique in Unit 1 not as criticism, but as curiosity. Focused on speculation, deep questioning, and critical thinking, participants will explore ethical dilemmas, 'what if' scenarios, and map the consequences of choices within texts.


VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

PEDAGOGY

TW1.08

Strategic resource design for strained English teachers

Angelina Browning, Radford College (Canberra)

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

When resource design is shared and intentional, the quiet strain many English teachers carry gives way to clarity and renewed joy. This workshop invites teachers to rethink how we create resources, shifting from isolated, text specific units to practical, long term solutions. Early career teachers can build strong habits, and leaders can explore sustainable ways to balance consistency with individual teacher autonomy. Participants will use adaptable templates they can apply immediately, leaving with renewed optimism.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT





WORKSHOPS

TW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.25 - 11.25AM

TW1.09

The learning library: The joy of children’s literature in VCE VM Literacy

Sarah McKay, Michelle Ellis and Alastair Jack, Beechworth Secondary College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

VCE VM Literacy is a vessel of opportunity for uncovering connections between classroom learning and the broader world. VM Literacy students at a rural school have rediscovered love for children’s literature through publishing picture books for the local kindergarten. This workshop celebrates joyful, meaningful writing as well as the transformation and successes of this course. Teachers will workshop the development of creative, authentic units of work that align with the Pillars of Applied Learning, exploring opportunities to spark joy in their own VM Literacy context.

VCE VOCATIONAL MAJOR TEACHERS

CREATIVE WRITING

TW1.10

The power of positivity: Persuasive writing in the middle years

Shona Cowell, St Albans Secondary College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop will focus on the ways that persuasive writing can be used to celebrate and spread positivity. Focusing on students in the middle years, this workshop will provide practical resources on how to encourage students to develop persuasive writing skills aimed at specific audiences utilising a media event to spark discussion about power. This approach aims to demonstrate cultural responsiveness and creative thinking, and explore how arguments and language can create messages of joy and celebration.

YEAR 9 TEACHERS

PERSUASIVE WRITING

TW1.11

Using improv ideas to transform your class writing

Andrew Duval, Writelike.org and Humanitas High School (Brisbane)

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Writing doesn’t have to be a solitary slog through a barren template! In this workshop, we’ll steal ideas from improv theatre to create writing experiences that spark surprise, build momentum, and develop genuine craft skills. (No acting – this is all pen and paper!) Along the way, we’ll explore what writing really is, what matters post-AI, and the systemic pressures that make it hard to teach writing well. You’ll leave with simple strategies that forefront joy, embrace uncertainty, and help students succeed.

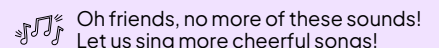
MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

CREATIVE WRITING

IMPROVISATION



- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

TW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.50 – 1.50PM

TW2.01

LIVESTREAM

Confessions of a high school librarian

Lauren Kyte, Salesian College Sunbury

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

What happens when a school librarian spills the tea on reading? (Metaphorically, of course. Hot beverages are not permitted in the library!) Combining research with plenty of stories from the shelves, this workshop will outline the vital steps to building a strong reading culture. Be prepared to explore reader identity, trends in the YA landscape, and the ways in which English teachers can inspire students to read beyond the classroom. Come for the research; stay for the librarian gossip.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

READING

TW2.02

LIVESTREAM

Preparing for the VCE English exam

Simon Ross, Parkdale Secondary College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

There is little joy to be found in teaching Year 12 students the prescribed English course. Or is there? This workshop will provide a navigator for teachers in their stewardship through the treacherous waters of the VCE English Study Design. We will engage in a highly interactive workshop, detailing how best to prepare students for the 'big dance', and the joys to be experienced by both student and teacher along the way.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

STUDENT AGENCY


ASSESSMENT

TW2.03

Class clowns: Stand-up as oral presentation

Steph Conroy and Prudence Meggitt, St Leonard's College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Stand-up comedy is one of the most joyful forms of oral presentation, and a powerful tool to critique injustice; yet, it is largely absent from the English classroom. Enter class clowns: a workshop that unpacks a speaking and listening unit designed for Years 9 and 10. Bringing together the conventions of stand-up and 'classic' oral presentation, like timing, voice, and persona-development, participants will learn common structures and forms, sample mentor texts, and write material from personal experience! Options to embed elements of the unit in existing contexts provided (in case this bombs).

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

ORAL PRESENTATION

COMEDY

TW2.04

Handwriting happiness

Emily Jackson, Xavier College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

In most English classrooms, there is a handful of students whose illegible writing holds back their progress. Proven, practical, and specific support leads to welcome improvements in handwriting. Workshop participants will discover why handwriting should be prioritised. They will then be equipped with simple and effective processes to assess, apply, and integrate strategies appropriate for any English classroom without adding to curriculum constraints.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

HANDWRITING



I SPREAD JOY BY...

Encouraging my friends to 'do it for the plot'.





WORKSHOPS

TW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.50 – 1.50PM

TW2.05

Joy as resistance: Reclaiming professional space in VCE English

Enise Tatlidil, Monash University and Ilim College

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

In contexts shaped by performativity and curriculum pressure, joy can feel marginal to English teaching. This interactive workshop reframes joy as professional reclamation. Through guided reflection, dialogic discussion, and collaborative design tasks, delegates will examine how SAC design, feedback practices, and collegial cultures can either erode or protect joy. Participants will leave with practical, sustainable strategies to restore dignity, creativity, and intellectual vitality in VCE English classrooms.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS TEACHER AGENCY

TW2.06

Joy vs artificial imagination

Bri Hassett, Gippsland Grammar

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

As teachers, we are constantly bending over backwards to ensure our assessment tasks are safe from AI interference. It's exhausting – the changes to assessment conditions, the suspicion, surveillance, and the stress it causes. It's not why we became teachers. In this workshop, we will collaborate to build learning experiences for students that reintroduce them to their authentic voices. Together, we will experiment with storytelling prompts, activities, and leave with adaptable strategies for fruitful failure and play.

ALL YEAR LEVELS CREATIVE WRITING AI

TW2.07

Local voices of Country

Emma van Wees and Louise O'Neill, St Bernard's College

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

This workshop explores strategies for engaging students, particularly boys, with First Nations poetry through Whisper Songs by Tony Birch. Developed collaboratively for the study of Voices of Country (VCE Literature), the unit uses contemporary, accessible texts grounded in a Melbourne context. The presenters will share how this approach builds genuine connection with a focus on Birch's use of language, structure, and stylistic features. These elements invite students in and deepen their analysis. It is consistently one of the most loved units, showing how relevance, place, and voice can transform engagement.

ALL YEAR LEVELS FIRST NATIONS TEXTS

TW2.08

The perks of stepping aside and saying less

Trishna Sohal Ryan, Mentone Girls' Grammar

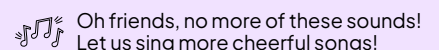
STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

This workshop details the highs (and occasional lows!) of efforts to transform and re-energise middle years classrooms by encouraging students to develop confidence in their own perceptions and interpretations of the texts we study. We will examine the importance of stepping aside and saying less as teachers, to foster greater curiosity, collaboration and experimentation in students' thinking and writing. The workshop will showcase the strategies that have been used to support this shift and offer participants an opportunity to consider how this might be realised in their own school settings.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS INDEPENDENT THINKING

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

TW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.50 – 1.50PM

TW2.09

To choose or not to choose: Helping students select the best VCE English option

Vaani Guruparan and Anna Gonzales,
Nossal High School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

In this era of student agency and voice, it has become increasingly important for students to choose the best VCE English option. While students are often resigned to two more years of compulsory English, we seek to inspire them to find joy in their VCE English choices by providing a taste of English, English Language, and Literature in our context. We will take you through the journey that we use to guide our students with their subject selection process. We are also interested to hear the experiences of others in ensuring that students feel empowered to approach whichever VCE English subject they select with positivity and enthusiasm.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

STUDENT AGENCY

TW2.10

Zesty learning in difficult environments

Sarah Longden, Lowanna Secondary College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

When faced with a challenging classroom or a difficult text, it takes lots of ideas to scaffold learning, keep the end goal in sight, and inspire students to keep going. Through writing about texts, it is imperative to link it to wider issues, gamify when needed, and always take the tangents. Participants in this workshop will join in with some games for learning and engagement, as well as hopefully walk away with some new strategies for difficult classrooms.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

ENGAGEMENT



JOY IS...

Loud, energetic, free,
non-linear conversation
where meaning is being
co-constructed in real time.





WORKSHOPS

TW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.40 - 3.40PM

TW3.01

LIVESTREAM

Embracing the VCE English team

Ross Huggard

STRAND: PARTICIPATION: 

In many schools, the VCE English team is changing and there is often a resulting need to reimagine the prevailing culture. Collegiality is built on trust and collaboration but this is not always easy to instil. Effective teams enable not only student success but also foster happy colleagues. Drawing from consulting work in a range of metropolitan and regional schools, this workshop will explore ways in which trust and conviviality can be fostered within the VCE English team. It will offer strategies as well as provide a space for rich sharing of experience and situations.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

COLLABORATION

LEADERSHIP

TW3.02

LIVESTREAM

The wonderisement of wordification: The joy of teaching and learning vocabulary

Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy

STRAND: PARTICIPATION: 

The impact of vocabulary on students' reading, writing and communication abilities is far from trivial. But there are SO many words in the world – we can't possibly teach them all. Or can we? This workshop will explore so many words we will run out and start creating our own! We will look at ways to embed new words purposefully, explicitly and incidentally throughout the curriculum and within any classroom. Be prepared to learn about how we learn new words and ways to teach new words, while learning a bunch of new words along the way!

ALL YEAR LEVELS

VOCABULARY

TW3.03

Better together: Collaborative strategies in Literature

Hannah Valmadre, Kardinia International College

STRAND: PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop is about establishing and maintaining a collaborative culture in senior Literature subjects. For students new to Literature, it can be intimidating to offer an interpretation or to use new metalanguage, but building knowledge and skills together allows them to be curious, courageous, and open-minded to a range of possible critical readings. I will share collaborative strategies such as annotation activities for Maya Angelou (or any) poetry, embodied pedagogy to introduce Shakespeare plays, using digital collaborative spaces, and Socratic seminars to conclude a text study.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE LITERATURE TEACHERS

COLLABORATION

TW3.04

Checking for understanding in the English classroom

Michael Cummins, Melbourne High School

STRAND: PARTICIPATION: 

How can students experience joy when they do not know how to respond? In this workshop, participants will experience a demonstration lesson of how scaffolding can lead to an inclusive space. This workshop is suited for teachers who would like to encourage a higher level of participation and develop confident English students. Using functional grammar alongside the work of Anita Archer, participants will gain an insight into how to create a focused lesson that engages students from multiple backgrounds and with a variety of learning needs.

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

YEAR 9 TEACHERS

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VOCABULARY

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre

Oh friends, no more of these sounds!
Let us sing more cheerful songs!



WORKSHOPS

TW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.40 - 3.40PM

TW3.05

Clarity, confidence, and joy in VCE English Language writing

Louise Noonan, Camberwell Girls Grammar

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop supports teachers by reimagining VCE English Language response writing as a curiosity-driven practice grounded in clarity and student agency. It demonstrates how explicit teaching of structure, metalanguage, and evidence can build confidence and enjoyment in senior English Language classrooms. Participants will analyse sample responses, trial teaching routines for response writing, and explore lesson and assessment strategies that foreground the joy of linguistic discovery and mastery. This workshop is primarily for teachers of Year 10 electives or Year 11 English Language.

- YEAR 10 TEACHERS
- VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS
- COLLABORATION
- CONFIDENCE

TW3.06

Pedagogy toolkit for the English Language classroom

Tristan Kent, Mount Waverley Secondary College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

VCE English Language opens up our teaching to a world of different thinking, discussion, and thrills unlike other Englishes. In this workshop, I'll share a range of routines and activities I use to create a positive culture in my classroom, help my students retain and retrieve our challenging content, and get students excited by the kinds of learning that our wonderful subject has to offer. We'll assemble a toolkit of strategies and examples to add to your classroom teaching and challenge your students to get the most out of English Language.

- VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS
- PEDAGOGY

TW3.07

Tarot for teachers

Philip Thiel, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

The 78-card precursor to playing cards has been used as a tool for play, reflection, and insight for centuries. In this workshop, we'll adopt archetypes from the tarot as guides for our practice as English teachers. How might figures and symbols from the major arcana support our professional practice and wellbeing? A model for playful classroom usage will also be pitched, suitable for both creative and analytical learning activities. The workshop is equally suitable for beginners and enthusiasts, with time allocated for guided reflection on our own professional growth.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

PLAY

TW3.08

Teacher as conductor: Discussion and debate in the English classroom

Michelle McRae, St Joseph's College Geelong

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

At the heart of a joyful English or Literature class is rigorous discussion and debate; the kind of discussion that lingers after the bell rings and continues in stolen moments between classes. Opinions fly, are refined by others, and return as nuanced readings. Standing amidst all this is the teacher, acting as a conductor, providing provocations, quietening some voices, emboldening others until a symphony is created where all students feel heard and challenged. This workshop gives practical strategies for encouraging and refining debate and discussion in the English classroom.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE LITERATURE TEACHERS

DISCUSSION

VOICE



I SPREAD JOY BY...

Bringing my eccentricity, showing students there is no single way to be academic.



WORKSHOPS

TW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.40 - 3.40PM

TW3.09

The joy of starting from scratch

Avril Good and Haley Clancy, Kolorer College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Learn about the process Kolorer College has used to design their knowledge-rich English curriculum from the ground up. As a brand new school, the English team has been able to be creative and joyful in their approach, while also considering the fundamentals of what makes an excellent English curriculum. The workshop will also outline strategies for embedding cross-curricular links, principles for developing students' cultural capital, and how English can borrow from Maths in its approach to marking and moderation. Wherever you are in your curriculum journey, you'll come away with strategies and resources for strengthening what's there, planning units, and hopefully putting the joy back into curriculum design for you and your team.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

CURRICULUM DESIGN

TW3.10

Why most English rubrics kill joy (and what to do instead)

Ben Lawless, Lawless Learning

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

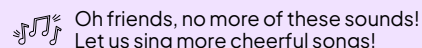
This workshop explores how common rubric designs in English can narrow student thinking and reduce writing to compliance. Participants will analyse a typical rubric, identify where it limits interpretation, voice and risk-taking, and then work through a redesigned version that opens up richer responses while still making progress visible. The workshop offers a practical approach to writing criteria based on what students do in their writing, supporting both creativity and clarity in assessment.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

ASSESSMENT



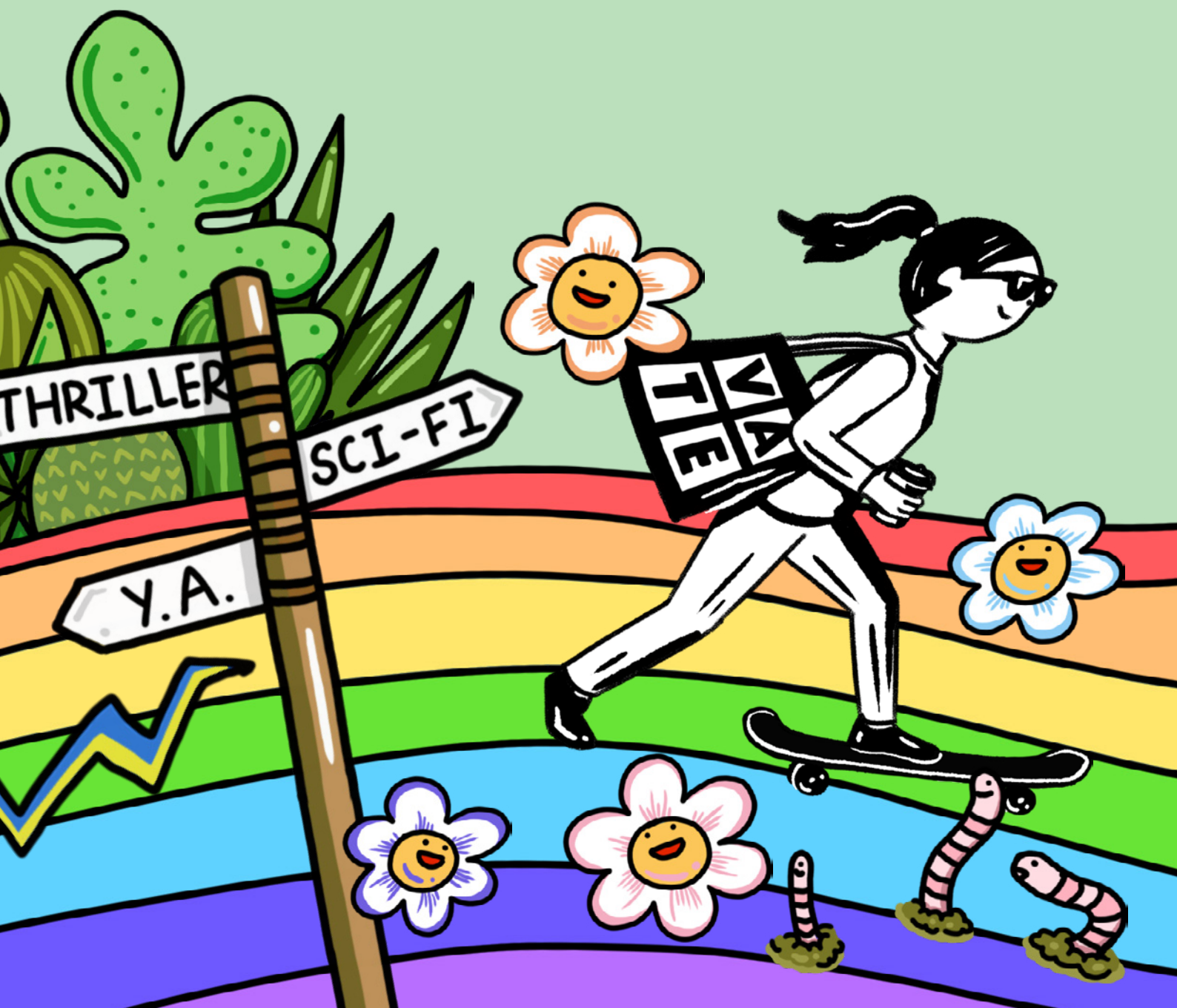
- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied



DAY TWO:

FRIDAY

20 NOVEMBER





KEYNOTE

LIVESTREAM

9.00 – 10.00AM



Namila Benson

Namila Benson is an accomplished TV presenter, broadcaster, writer and educator working across multiple media and creative platforms. With a career spanning over three decades, joy and curiosity are the ongoing foundations of her practice to explore thought-provoking and accessible conversations about the world around us. Throughout her extensive career, Namila has presented and produced multiple tv programs on ABC including *Art Works*, *Art Nation* and *Sunday Arts*. She presented and

produced *The Art Show* on Radio National and anchored magazine and music shows on Radio Australia (ABC International). Namila authored the memoir of respected Elder, actor and activist – the late, great Uncle Jack Charles. Uncle’s book, *Jack Charles: Born-Again Blakfella*, was released via Penguin Random House. Namila is the co-creator and host of national arts program, *The Art Of...* which ran for two seasons in 2024 and 2025.

Image credit: Brook Andrew

Powered by joy: The intersection of learning, creativity and joy

What’s the role of joy and creativity when it comes to learning? TV host, broadcaster, educator and writer – Namila Benson – shares insights on what happens when art and creativity collide with joy to become a transformative tool of learning. Classrooms – like galleries, theatres and museums – are not passive spaces. They encourage us to go from observation to participation.

In discussing an ‘Ode to Joy’, Namila brings it back to the basics of joy ultimately being about an ode to curiosity and connection. Namila will discuss the arts as a platform to learn about the world around us and as a gateway into different continents, cultures, eras and knowledge systems. This keynote emphasises joy, not solely as a reward or an engine of learning, but a foundation and practice.

STRAND: 



I SPREAD JOY BY...

Always facing each moment with a smile and a quick wit.



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!



PANELS

LIVESTREAM

P1 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM

Creating something real: Student voice in the writing classroom

Have you ever had one of those moments when a student (maybe even a whole class?) has been totally absorbed in what they're writing? When they know what they want to say, how they want to say it, and they really care about it? In this panel we explore the creative alchemy of student voice – how we can brew and bottle it. For both teachers and students, there is a real joy in the practice of developing students' voice. The student, as apprentice in this apothecary, learns to hone their craft from the master, adding their own elements as they build on what has come before them. This is not to suggest that this transformational process is a mystical one, divorced from the realities of AI, high-stakes testing, literacy demands and mandates of 'explicit teaching'.

We are not pure idealists – we are pragmatists. And we're ready to delve deep into exactly how we propose to centre student voice in our current times. Join experienced writing teachers and researchers, Associate Professor Lucinda McKnight and Emeritus Professor Terry Locke, in a conversation with Dr Emily Frawley, as we trouble, dissect and look to uphold writing classrooms that privilege authenticity and craft.

This panel is the third in VATE's Research/ing English initiative for 2026.

CHAIR

Dr Emily Frawley,
The University of Melbourne

PANELLISTS

Associate Professor Lucinda McKnight, Deakin University

Emeritus Professor Terry Locke,
University of Waikato

STRAND:



CHAIR

Dr Emily Frawley

Dr Emily Frawley is a teacher-educator and researcher at The University of Melbourne. Her PhD investigated teachers' identities as writers. She taught English and Literature in government schools for 13 years and was a Leading Teacher in literacy and curriculum. Emily is a past VATE President and current VATE Council member and is passionate about connecting with, and supporting, fellow teachers.



PANELS

P1 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM



PANELLISTS

Associate Professor Lucinda McKnight

Lucinda McKnight is an Associate Professor in Pedagogy and Curriculum at Deakin University. She is also, and always will be, an English student and English teacher dedicated to learning and teaching about writing. From 2022–2025 she was an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Research Award fellow leading a national project on *Teaching Digital Writing*

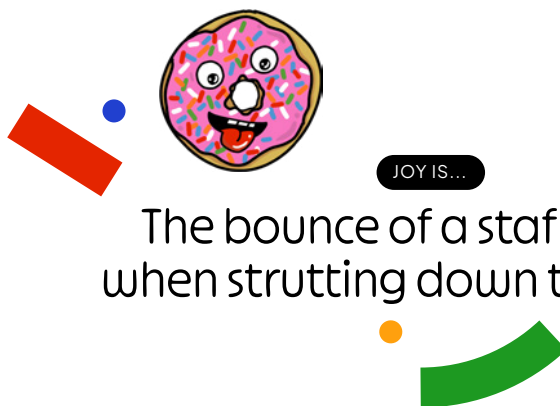
in Secondary English with thirteen English teachers; she is currently working on sharing findings from this study as widely as possible. She has been researching generative AI in the teaching of writing since 2021 and has shifted from cautious optimism to panicked concern about this field, with 'voice' being a more significant concept than perhaps ever before.



Emeritus Professor Terry Locke

Emeritus Professor Terry Locke (Waikato) lives in the Ngongotahā Valley (near Rotorua) with his wife, dog and hens. He is a somewhat ancient poet and academic with wide-ranging research interests in education and literary criticism. These include curriculum development, constructions of English, teacher professionalism, literary studies, and writing pedagogy. Recent publications include *Developing Writing Teachers* (with Lucinda McKnight: Routledge [forthcoming]), *Sense of Place, Identity and the Revisioning of*

Curriculum (Springer Nature 2023), and *Leaning Into the Wind* (Poetry: Falcons Return Press: 2026). He aligns himself with such discourses as ecocriticism, ecocentrism, implacement (sense of place as a crucial aspect of identity), anti-dualistic approaches to the body/environment relationship, alliances with Indigenous peoples and the role all of these play in addressing the climate crisis. He is a member of GARN (Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature). His work can be checked out at terrylockepoet.nz.



JOY IS...

The bounce of a staffy's ears when strutting down the street.



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!



PANELS

LIVESTREAM

P2 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM

DAY TWO : PANELS

Too happy to teach? An exploration of text selection processes, assumptions, and choices

Why do so many of the texts we teach centre on suffering, loss and struggle? Must a text be 'heavy' to be worthy of study or have we sidelined joy for too long? This panel brings together three expert English leaders to reflect on their experiences of text selection. Drawing on their work at the chalkface and in school libraries, the panellists will explore the kinds of texts that are traditionally privileged on school booklists - and the assumptions that shape these choices. Together, they will question whether emotional weight is too often equated with literary value, or whether 'sad' texts are a necessary juxtaposition to encourage joy and gratitude in our classrooms.

Through lively debate and practical examples, we will consider what may be overlooked when uplifting or hopeful texts are excluded from the curriculum. The discussion will be informed by research, cross-disciplinary perspectives, and key insights from the VATE Member Text Survey. Panellists will offer both provocations and practical reflections to expand notions of what constitutes a 'worthy' text.

CHAIR

Lauren Kyte, Salesian College Sunbury

PANELLISTS

Jennifer Varrasso, Sunbury College

Alice Nixon, Sunbury Downs College

STRAND: 



CHAIR

Lauren Kyte

Lauren Kyte is Head of Library at Salesian College Sunbury, where she leads a dynamic team committed to connecting students and teachers with rich, engaging content across all subjects. Lauren is a passionate advocate for contemporary Australian texts and has worked with both SLAV and VATE to encourage schools to reinvigorate their booklists.



VATE STATE CONFERENCE 2026 | 32



PANELS

P2 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM



PANELLISTS

Jennifer Varrasso

Jennifer Varrasso has 16 years of experience in teaching and leading VCE English and Media across various Victorian schools. She is currently the Engagement Programs Learning Specialist at Sunbury College and is passionate about using moving image to assist in improving literacy skills.



Alice Nixon

Alice Nixon is Head of English and Literacy Learning Specialist at Sunbury Downs College. With almost 20 years of teaching and leadership experience across Victorian secondary schools, she is passionate about adolescent literacy and curriculum innovation.

I SPREAD JOY BY...

Demystifying the magic of language, entering the flow state with videogames, AI, and new projects.



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!



PANELS

LIVESTREAM

P3 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM

DAY TWO : PANELS

Artistic licence to thrill: Bringing arts pedagogies into English

What happens when the English classroom becomes a studio, a gallery or a stage? When teachers exercise genuine artistic licence – and invite their students to do the same?

This panel celebrates the joy, curiosity, and creative energy that emerges when the visual arts, performance, and making are woven thoughtfully into English teaching. More than decorative add-ons, the arts give English its pulse by providing opportunities for deepening engagement with texts, paving new pathways to authentic voice, and inviting students to think, feel, and respond in ways that words alone sometimes cannot. What does it mean to deviate, interpret, and to take creative liberties with English pedagogies?

The panellists bring distinct but complementary perspectives – grounded in secondary English teaching and classroom practice, as well as experience in working across the arts and education sectors. Together, they will explore what it means to implement pedagogy that makes room for the arts alongside (and inside) the everyday work for English teaching.

- How do we make space for genuine creative risk-taking in an outcomes-driven curriculum?
- How do creative routines change the energy of a classroom?
- What does it look like when students respond to literature through image, object or performance, rather than the written word alone?
- How can collaboration between English teachers and arts practitioners open new pathways for students who don't yet see themselves as readers or writers?
- How can educators stay creatively alive inside a curriculum that can sometimes feel constraining?

Drawing on classroom experience, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and a shared belief in the power of creativity, this panel will spark conversation, offer practical provocations and remind us that joy and rigour are not in tension, they are inseparable from rich multimodal, embodied and cross-arts creative practice in English.


CHAIR

Professor Joanne O'Mara, Deakin University and VATE President

PANELLISTS

Jane Carter, Mentone Girls Secondary College and Drama Vic

Jenny Isaac, NGV

STRAND: 



CHAIR

Professor Joanne O'Mara

Joanne O'Mara is Professor of Education and the Chair of secondary subject English teaching method at Deakin University on the lands of the Eastern Kulin Nations. She is committed to work that enhances the work and lives of subject English teachers. Jo is the President of VATE.



PANELS

P3 / 11.35AM – 12.35PM



PANELLISTS

Jane Carter

Jane Carter is the English Domain Leader and Literacy Learning Specialist at Mentone Girls' Secondary College. She brings over 23 years of experience as a Drama teacher and educator, with a strong record of leading teams across the arts, professional learning, student management, eLearning, and occupational health and safety.

Jane has worked extensively with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in roles relating to study design, playlists, examinations, and assessment. She has directed more than ten school musicals and continues to act and direct within the amateur theatre circuit.



Jenny Isaac

Jenny Isaac is a museum learning specialist at the National Gallery of Victoria and a former English and Literature teacher with extensive experience teaching and assessing VCE Literature. She has led the development of innovative curriculum-aligned programs that connect the study of literature with visual art, opening new pathways for students to explore interpretation, creativity and critical inquiry.

Jenny's work focuses on building meaningful connections between schools and cultural institutions, and she is particularly interested in how art can enrich literary studies and transform the classroom experience. Through collaborations with artists, writers and educators, she develops learning experiences that challenge conventional boundaries between disciplines and invite students to engage deeply with ideas.



JOY IS...

Shovelling freshly popped popcorn into my mouth by the fistful in the darkness of the cinema.



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!

Teacher. Author. Classroom.

YA Book Stack is an in-conversation podcast series highlighting new and diverse voices and texts for students in the middle years.



Hosted by Karys McEwen

YA BOOK STACK

The title 'YA BOOK STACK' is rendered in large, pink, outlined letters. The text is set against a background of blue and red circles and white clouds. Several black birds are flying around the text, with white lines trailing behind them. A white bird is perched on the letter 'K' in 'STACK'.

VA Victorian Association for
TE the Teaching of English



Listen on
Apple Podcasts



Listen on
Spotify Podcasts



WORKSHOPS

FW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.10 – 11.10AM

FW1.01 LIVESTREAM

Approaching argument...joyfully

Liana Mannens and Trish Sohal Ryan,
Mentone Girls' Grammar

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Are you tired of students playing 'spot-the-device'? Tired of listening to the same topics? Tired of reading about how the writer 'makes' the audience do things? Well, do we have the workshop for you! Together, we will show you how to step students through the process of analysing and creating persuasive texts at Years 7 to 10. We will explore how these activities and assessments not only align with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0, but also prepare students for the demands of VCE English. By participating, you will learn how to create joy in your classrooms by fostering confidence among students, encouraging collaboration, and valuing creative engagement with tasks.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

EXPLORING ARGUMENT

FW1.02 LIVESTREAM

Conversations without computers: Dialogue in the English classroom

Emily Frawley and Alex Bacalja,
The University of Melbourne

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

In the growing face of AI, English classrooms must remain places of energy, curiosity, and shared discovery. This workshop explores how dialogic teaching – learning through rich discussion and collaborative thinking – can deepen students' engagement with literature. We'll share six practical strategies for secondary English classrooms, including question-based instruction, collective writing, and metatalk. These approaches invite students to wrestle with ideas together, build meaning collectively, and experience the joy of discovering new perspectives through conversation.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

DIALOGUE

FW1.03

Curly questions: VCE Literature

Dani Heyes, Wesley College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This collaborative workshop will navigate the ins and outs of the Study Design with new teachers to Literature. Having trouble with a particular definition in the Study Design? Unsure about the best way to connect coursework to exam preparation? Confused about a particular requirement, Area of Study, assessment? While participants will have an opportunity to send in questions prior to the workshop, the intention of this session is to work it out together!

VCE LITERATURE TEACHERS

STUDY DESIGN

FW1.04

Does this spark joy? Marie Kondo-ing the English classroom with Science of Learning

Georgia Bate, Balwyn High School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

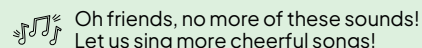
What in our curriculum continues to spark learning? And what is quietly cluttering our minds, curriculum, and classroom? This workshop invites English teachers to 'Marie Kondo' their curriculum and pedagogy – identifying practices that no longer serve student learning and to make space for approaches that do. This workshop prompts teachers to think about a renovation, upgrade and shift in practice aligned with the VTLM 2.0, Science of Learning and the building of knowledge-rich sequences. In recognising what no longer serves us, we give ourselves permission to let it go!

ALL YEAR LEVELS

CURRICULUM DESIGN

PEDAGOGY DESIGN

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

FW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.10 – 11.10AM

FW1.05

'Give 'em the old razzle dazzle': Creating joyful engagement in the English classroom

Alice Elwell, Queensland Academy
for Creative Industries (Brisbane)

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Designed for Years 7–12 English teachers, this hands-on workshop explores how a little 'razzle dazzle' can bring everyday classroom activities to life. Through modelling and participation, delegates will create character shrines to explore characterisation, trial a birthday party approach to exam revision, and experience a poetry dinner party. These playful strategies combine rigour with delight. Participants will leave with adaptable, low-prep ideas to energise lessons and foster meaningful encounters with English.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

PEDAGOGY

ENGAGEMENT

FW1.07

Memories and magic: Using picture books to teach writing in the VCE English classroom

Virginia Danahay, St Catherine's School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Rediscover the joy of reading a favourite children's book. Learn how to use picture books as a creative writing teaching tool in the VCE English classroom. Picture books are engaging and easily accessible texts for all learner levels. In this workshop, we will draw on the magic of the picture book to explore practical activities that can help teach key skills relevant to the Crafting and Creating texts Areas of Study and inspire some curiosity and creativity within the writing process.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

CREATIVE WRITING

FW1.06

Just say no to AI! Do some real (hand)writing instead!

Lucinda McKnight, Deakin University

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Young people are increasingly angry about and resistant to wasting precious learning time on AI. Research tells us any use of GenAI in education is too much. The harms of using GenAI to replace any cognitive work are rapidly mounting. Even using it for 'idea generation' or 'planning' is a cop out. Conscientious objectors, Neo Luddites and concerned citizens are assembling. But... AI is also ushering in a revival of writing! Without AI! Yes! Engaging, meaningful, physical, tactile writing in class! WRITING FOR JOY! Let's draw, sketch, write, and reconnect with what writing is for.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7–10)

CREATIVE WRITING

FW1.08

Playing with joy: Voice, play, and poetry in the Years 9–10 classroom

Rebekah Keenan Mount,
Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

'ask them to take a poem / and hold it up to the light like a colour slide.' (Billy Collins, *Introduction to Poetry*) This workshop for Year 9–10 English teachers explores playful approaches to poetry that foreground interpretation, voice and creative risk-taking. Using mentor poems by Billy Collins, Ellen van Neerven and Li-Young Lee, delegates will engage in Visual Thinking Strategies, short writing invitations and discussion. Participants will experience activities as students would, and leave with practical lesson ideas, writing prompts and strategies for joyful, artful poetry learning.

YEAR 9 TEACHERS

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

POETRY

JOY IS...

An enthusiastic
saxophone solo.





WORKSHOPS

FW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.10 – 11.10AM

FW1.09

Reframing joy in the English classroom

Mark Howard and David Thomas,
Elisabeth Murdoch College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop challenges narratives of engagement as intuitive or exploratory, reframing joy as emerging from growing control of language, and the confidence it brings. Grounded in systemic functional linguistics, we will showcase creative and analytical sequences spanning middle and senior English that build awareness of how language makes meaning. Participants will analyse student samples and view recordings of learners reflecting on their development, leaving with strategies that highlight how awareness and deliberate choice bring joy to student writing.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

AGENCY

CURRICULUM DESIGN

FW1.10

The joy of shared meaning making

Kirsty Ramdath, St Bernard's College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

While teachers make time for speech, particularly when exploring argument, the pedagogy of speaking and listening can be haphazard and sometimes tokenistic. This workshop aims to reimagine talk as a purposeful, playful, and essential part of learning. Using literary-based discussion games, participants will engage in low-stakes, collaborative play that invites curiosity, creativity, and connection. Together, we will explore how literary fiction acts as a catalyst for developing students' capacity to think, form ideas, and speak independently in an increasingly technology-dependent world.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

SPEAKING

LISTENING

FW1.11

The joy of teaching film

Alex Hand, Balwyn High School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop will serve as an introduction to the new film texts for VCE English. Participants will engage in robust discussion about the films, thinking about how we can utilise the classroom environment in discussion of these texts, and how these can deepen interpretations of a text. Participants will also analyse key stills from the films and begin to make connections between literary features and other key moments from the text.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

CRITICAL THINKING

FW1.12

The value of values

Cindy Sullivan and Nurdan Tabak,
Hume Central Secondary College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

In this workshop, we will provide strategies to support students to recognise how social and cultural values are presented in literary and persuasive texts. Participants will explore ways of moving students from this recognition to an analysis of how culture, values, and context underpin the construction of texts and how this can affect meaning and understanding. We will also explore how an awareness of values can support students to analyse persuasive intent. We will consider a dialogical approach based on constructivist theories of learning to encourage student engagement, foster learning confidence, and find the joy in analysis.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VALUES

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied



Creative alchemy



Joie de vivre



Oh friends, no more of these sounds!
Let us sing more cheerful songs!



WORKSHOPS

FW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.45 - 1.45PM

FW2.01 LIVESTREAM

Assessment and VCE English

Annelise Balsamo, VCAA, and Helen Billett

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop is a reflection on the role of assessment in VCE English. It will consider formative assessment practices, the formative and summative role of assessment for SACs, and assessment practices used by assessors in the exam. This workshop will explain the concept of global assessment in the exam and will offer teachers the opportunity to reflect on and build their formative and summative assessment skills.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS

ASSESSMENT

FW2.03

Cultivating a love of literature

Anna Carrig, Northcote High School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

How do you get students excited about classic texts? Debating the parts of the play that made them cringe or cry? Sharing how the poem made them feel? Taking a risk by putting forward a hot take on the text? This workshop will present a range of pedagogies, activities, and resources that aim to stir a love of literature in students and in turn lead to more engaged analysis. Best suited to VCE Literature and English, or Year 10 subjects that emphasise text study.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE LITERATURE TEACHERS

ENGAGEMENT

TEXT

FW2.02 LIVESTREAM

Joy was our plan all along

Allie Baker and Sarah McKay,
Beechworth Secondary College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

What if the most powerful lever for success isn't more drilling or a 'baby VCE' in the junior years, but joy? This workshop shares the story of an English team that chose creative risk-taking, rich collaboration, and a love of language. Guided by a shared vision built on curiosity, engaging texts, and student voice, we've spent several years reshaping how our students and community see English. We didn't chase data, but impressive results followed: sustained growth and impressive engagement. Come along to hear how we're doing it and leave with practical ideas for your own context.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

COLLABORATION

CURRICULUM DESIGN

FW2.04

Enriched and enriching: Supporting students to meaningfully use metalanguage in English Language

Stephanie Schepton, St Michael's Grammar School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

How can we support our students to move beyond simply listing features and instead use metalanguage as vehicle for nuanced and joyful analysis of language? This interactive workshop will provide teachers with a range of practical resources to support English Language students to meaningfully identify and analyse salient features present in contemporary texts. We will share strategies and experiences of teaching metalanguage including pathways to cultivate student joy through developing opportunities for students to authentically apply metalanguage, learned in class, to their own lives.

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

METALANGUAGE

ANALYSIS

I SPREAD JOY BY...

Finding my 'people'
by normalising being
far from 'normal'.





WORKSHOPS

FW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.45 – 1.45PM

FW2.05

Exploring the role and challenges of reading

Vivienne Thomas, Echuca College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

In this workshop, participants will explore the following questions: Is reading central to our work as English teachers? Is the class novel the only, or best, way to develop students' reading comprehension skills and engagement with reading? Are we satisfied with the number of texts our students read? How diverse (topic, degree of difficulty, genre) are the texts our students read across the year? How can we generate deeper and more complex responses from students about what they read? As teachers of English, what role can/should we play in engaging students in reading?

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

READING

FW2.07

From surviving to thriving: Joy, balance, and connection in teaching

Ashleigh Cavalin, Haileybury College, and Iva Roncevic, Mentone Grammar School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This practical workshop supports English teachers in managing workload while reconnecting with the joy of teaching. The workshop will explore sustainable strategies for managing marking, building student rapport, establishing effective classroom routines, using low-prep engagement activities, and protecting teacher wellbeing. This workshop aims to celebrate the joys of English teaching while fostering collaboration, confidence, and long-term sustainability in the profession.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

TEACHER WELLBEING

FW2.06

From avoidance to confidence: Reclaiming joy in VCE English

Julia Lippold, Lauriston Girls' School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop responds to increased joylessness in senior English, reframing avoidance as a lack of confidence rather than effort, particularly for those on special provisions or experiencing high levels of academic anxiety. Grounded in the conference theme, it positions 'joy' as the outcome of clarity, structure, and intellectual reward. Maximising self-assurance in senior English supports students to experience success and has a direct impact on how they learn.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS

CONFIDENCE

FW2.08

Inspiring creativity through art at the NGV

Jenny Isaac, National Gallery of Victoria

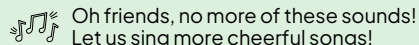
STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Drawing on the rich collection of the NGV, this workshop explores how art can be used to spark imaginative and personal writing. Participants will discover practical strategies that harness visual art to evoke emotional resonance, inspire storytelling, and encourage playful experimentation with language. Through examples including close looking and ekphrastic response, the workshop demonstrates how artworks can unlock student voice, foster curiosity, and reduce writing anxiety. Leave with adaptable ideas to create more engaging, inclusive, and joyful writing experiences in the classroom.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

CREATIVE WRITING

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

FW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.45 - 1.45PM

FW2.09

Less pedagogy, more philosophy: A joyous, life-affirming rejection of modern educational discourse

Vincent Chiang, Melbourne Grammar School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop proposes that the key to becoming a flourishing English teacher is less about pedagogy and more about philosophy. Building on the work of philosophical thinkers from Iris Murdoch to Plato, this workshop will be a values-driven exploration of the 'why?' of English teaching, with an emphasis on what is unique about our subject, and why being clear on our purpose is key to our success in the classroom (and outside of it!). Although no clever tools or curriculum maps will be provided, this workshop is nevertheless designed to help you teach at your best, with passion and joy.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

TEACHER IDENTITY

PHILOSOPHY

FW2.10

Rescuing reading

Blair Mahoney, Melbourne High School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

As English teachers we all recognise the joy of settling into a good book: the anticipation, the relaxation, and the intellectual stimulation. Yet we regularly see stories in the media about how nobody reads anymore and we can anecdotally report that our students seem to be reading less. Research shows the wellbeing and cognitive benefits that can arise from reading, but how do we convince our students and their parents of this? This workshop will build on my work in progress of developing a whole school literacy policy with reading at its core, drawing on the work of Margaret Merga.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

READING



JOY IS...

Walking, exploring,
going down twisting paths
in search of something.
Also dogs.



WORKSHOPS

FW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.35 – 3.35PM

FW3.01

LIVESTREAM

Playful grammar

Prudence Meggitt, St Leonard's College

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Imagine grammar as a playful resource that students can mess around with to achieve the best expression of their voice and their ideas. This workshop acknowledges the challenges with grammar instruction – including teacher confidence and student boredom. It draws on the latest research in best practice grammar instruction and nifty AI tricks to help you help your students. In line with the Language strand of the Australian Curriculum, have students engaging in 'metatalk' when reading, writing more effectively with actionable feedback, and feeling empowered by grammar that is relevant and fun.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

GRAMMAR

FW3.03

Authentic creative writing, place, and the power of varied mentor texts in Year 10

Edon Germano, Auburn High School

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Using Melbourne as an entry point and intersection, this workshop shows what's possible when we teach location as more than just setting in a Year 10 creative writing unit. This workshop models how purposeful selection of varied mentor texts yields engagement and reflective student writing. Here, authors are co-teachers, from song lyrics to First Nations creative non-fiction. Paired with explicit teaching and teacher-as-writer pedagogy, this workshop posits that rigour and joy were never antonymous.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

CREATIVE WRITING

FW3.02

LIVESTREAM

Teaching film like a media teacher: Elevating English responses

Jennifer Varrasso and Mark Hewitt, Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM)

STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

Teach film texts with greater confidence and help your students produce higher-quality analytical responses. Drawing on the expertise of the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), this workshop demystifies film analysis through film codes, narrative, and genre conventions. You'll learn how to explicitly teach metalanguage that elevates student writing using examples from 2027 VCE English film texts. Leave with practical strategies and language you can apply immediately to move students from description to sophisticated analysis.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

SCREEN LITERACY

FW3.04

'Can we have a FUN lesson today?'

Elise Desira and Vincent Setunga, Eltham College

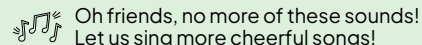
STRAND:  PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop invites educators to rethink how English can be taught through movement, creativity, and hands-on experience. Rather than relying on static, slide-based instruction, we explore how embodied and experiential learning can deepen student understanding while remaining firmly aligned with curriculum outcomes. Teachers will leave with adaptable ideas that foster engagement, support diverse learners, and create memorable learning experiences without adding to workload or requiring extensive resources. This workshop positions joy not as an extra, but as a powerful driver of understanding.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

EMBODIED LEARNING

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





WORKSHOPS

FW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.35 – 3.35PM

FW3.05

Curly questions: VCE English/EAL

Amy Christensen,
Caulfield Grammar Caulfield Campus

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This collaborative workshop will navigate the ins and outs of the Study Design with new teachers to English/EAL. Having trouble with a particular definition in the Study Design? Unsure about the best way to connect coursework to exam preparation? Confused about a particular requirement, Area of Study, assessment? While participants will have an opportunity to send in questions prior to the workshop, the intention of this session is to work it out together!

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS

STUDY DESIGN

FW3.07

From audit to plaudit: Diverse and representative textlisting

Hugh Gundlach, The University of Melbourne

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

The stories we consume shape how we see the world and whose voices we learn to value. As English and Literature teachers, each text we choose amplifies some perspectives while silencing others. Drawing on an audit of more than 25 years of VCAA textlists, discover which voices are present and which are missing, and how to make informed, inclusive curriculum choices. Have a go at auditing your text selection in a hands-on workshop.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

DIVERSITY

READING

FW3.06

Engaging in visual art practices

Claire Robinson, Bass Coast College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop for teachers of the middle years, will illuminate the opportunities within the English curriculum for arts-rich pedagogy that supports students to write with meaning, depth, and purpose. Examples of creative visual processes for the planning and publishing stages of writing will be shared. We will explore the potential impacts of these practices for enabling students to express their ideas and joyfully demonstrate their writing skills.


MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

WRITING

FW3.08

Own the text: Power, voice, and choice in VCE Literature

Meg Lindsay, St Michael's Grammar School

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

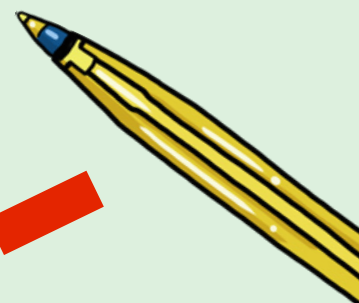
This workshop explores practical, playful strategies to amplify student voice, engagement, agency, and creativity in VCE Literature. It models approaches such as yarning circles and student-centred learning to build trust, encourage risk-taking, and support diverse interpretations. Participants will engage with flexible, non-formulaic tasks that foster authentic expression, inclusive dialogue, and creative thinking in the lead-up to assessments.

VCE LITERATURE TEACHERS

ENGAGEMENT

I SPREAD JOY BY...

By being kind, optimistic,
playful, and earnest.
Sometimes by making fun
and useful things.





WORKSHOPS

FW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.35 – 3.35PM

FW3.09

The alchemy of intent

Shalini Akhil, Brunswick Secondary College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Grounded in the Creative alchemy strand, key writing skills across English Units 3 and 4 are unpacked to help develop authentic, intentional voice. This workshop flips the concept of 'authorial intent' to spotlight students as agents of meaning. Participants will engage in practical, adaptable activities that support students to move beyond re-telling, and craft writing through deliberate, considered choices. Through modelling, discussion, and hands-on tasks, we will practise strategies to deepen reading engagement by positioning students as active meaning-makers rather than passive paraphrasers.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS

VOICE

AGENCY

FW3.11

The magic of realism

Helena Brain, Sacred Heart College Geelong

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Text lists can sometimes be disillusioning for both students and teachers with their often sombre tone; the prevailing argument is that it is only darker texts that offer enough complexity fit for analysis. However, the genre of magical realism invites us to recognise that stories can simultaneously hold serious truths alongside the joyous and fantastical. In this workshop we will unpack the relevance of this genre in classrooms today, examine text suggestions for study, and consider practical classroom-ready strategies to bring these texts to life in the classroom.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

PEDAGOGY

SHORT STORIES

FW3.10

The joy of fostering a good classroom yap

Ruby Hardy, Traralgon College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

How do we empower students to be excited to yap in English classrooms other than cold calling? This workshop explores how to empower joyful, confident discussion in middle years English classrooms. Participants will explore how language can empower students and switches the negative connotation of 'yapping' on its head. This workshop aims to foster discussions, support the development of discussion routines, and implement activities that model how to lower the stakes of participation, encourage risk-taking, and foster excitement and joy in yapping.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

DISCUSSION

FW3.12

Twelfth Night Performance

Complete Works Theatre Company

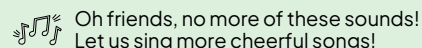
STRAND: 

O time, thou must untangle this, not I/It is too hard a knot for me t'untie' (II.II) Twelfth Night is an ambiguous mix of celebration and melancholy. It is a complicated tale of unrequited love, in which a lovelorn duke becomes entangled with shipwrecked twins in various disguises while the antics of those understairs create further chaos. Complete Works Theatre Company presents an abridged performance of Shakespeare's classic comedy for VCE English/EAL teachers featuring energetic performances, imaginative staging and celebration of the human spirit.

VCE ENGLISH/EAL

PERFORMANCE

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





THURSDAY LIVESTREAM WORKSHOPS

TW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.25 - 11.25AM

TW1.01 LIVESTREAM

Prose and cons: Fostering a love of reading through short stories

Natalie Scott, Canterbury Girls' Secondary College and Gillian Neumann, Rowville Secondary College

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

This workshop will show teachers how to develop and deliver a short story unit designed to encourage students to explore a range of familiar and unfamiliar genres. Through journaling, groupwork, and jigsaw presentations, students in Years 9 or 10 will explore their personal responses to fiction in a unit of work that honours student choice and aims to foster enjoyment in reading. A course outline, short story shortlist, and formative and summative assessment tasks will be included.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)
SHORT STORIES

TW1.02 LIVESTREAM

The skills of analysing argument

Helen Billett

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

Being able to use the analytical thought process in real time offers our students power and agency in a rapidly changing world. An important part of our role as VCE English teachers is to teach these vital skills. This workshop is designed to look at ways in which we teach these skills so that students see their relevance and engage with the process including the assessment approaches that build resilience in students, ways in which we can encourage persistence in our students so that they are ready for assessments and, importantly, how students can utilise these skills in their life beyond school.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS VCE EAL TEACHERS
THINKING STRATEGIES

TW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.50 - 1.50PM

TW2.01 LIVESTREAM

Confessions of a high school librarian

Lauren Kyte, Salesian College Sunbury

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

What happens when a school librarian spills the tea on reading? (Metaphorically, of course. Hot beverages are not permitted in the library!) Combining research with plenty of stories from the shelves, this workshop will outline the vital steps to building a strong reading culture. Be prepared to explore reader identity, trends in the YA landscape, and the ways in which English teachers can inspire students to read beyond the classroom. Come for the research; stay for the librarian gossip.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)
READING

TW2.02 LIVESTREAM

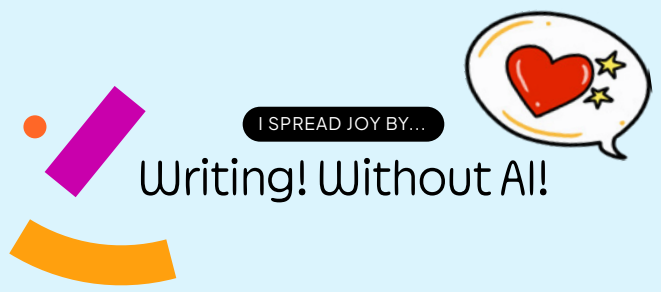
Preparing for the VCE English exam

Simon Ross, Parkdale Secondary College

STRAND: PARTICIPATION:

There is little joy to be found in teaching Year 12 students the prescribed English course. Or is there? This workshop will provide a navigator for teachers in their stewardship through the treacherous waters of the VCE English Study Design. We will engage in a highly interactive workshop, detailing how best to prepare students for the 'big dance', and the joys to be experienced by both student and teacher along the way.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS
STUDENT AGENCY ASSESSMENT





THURSDAY LIVESTREAM WORKSHOPS

TW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.40 - 3.40PM

TW3.01

LIVESTREAM

Embracing the VCE English team

Ross Huggard

STRAND:

PARTICIPATION:

In many schools, the VCE English team is changing and there is often a resulting need to reimagine the prevailing culture. Collegiality is built on trust and collaboration but this is not always easy to instil. Effective teams enable not only student success but also foster happy colleagues. Drawing from consulting work in a range of metropolitan and regional schools, this workshop will explore ways in which trust and conviviality can be fostered within the VCE English team. It will offer strategies as well as provide a space for rich sharing of experience and situations.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

COLLABORATION

LEADERSHIP

TW3.02

LIVESTREAM

The wonderisement of wordification: The joy of teaching and learning vocabulary

Hayley Harrison, Connect Literacy

STRAND:

PARTICIPATION:

The impact of vocabulary on students' reading, writing and communication abilities is far from trivial. But there are SO many words in the world – we can't possibly teach them all. Or can we? This workshop will explore so many words we will run out and start creating our own! We will look at ways to embed new words purposefully, explicitly and incidentally throughout the curriculum and within any classroom. Be prepared to learn about how we learn new words and ways to teach new words, while learning a bunch of new words along the way!

ALL YEAR LEVELS

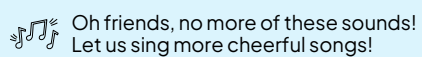
VOCABULARY



JOY IS...

The anticipatory nostalgia of a trip yet to begin, and already not wanting it to end.

- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied





FRIDAY LIVESTREAM WORKSHOPS

FW1 / SESSION ONE / 10.10 - 11.10AM

FW1.01

LIVESTREAM

Approaching argument...joyfully

Liana Mannens and Trish Sohal Ryan, Mentone Girls' Grammar

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Are you tired of students playing 'spot-the-device'? Tired of listening to the same topics? Tired of reading about how the writer 'makes' the audience do things? Well, do we have the workshop for you! Together, we will show you how to step students through the process of analysing and creating persuasive texts at Years 7 to 10. We will explore how these activities and assessments not only align with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0, but also prepare students for the demands of VCE English. By participating, you will learn how to create joy in your classrooms by fostering confidence among students, encouraging collaboration, and valuing creative engagement with tasks.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

EXPLORING ARGUMENT

FW1.02

LIVESTREAM

Conversations without computers: Dialogue in the English classroom

Emily Frawley and Alex Bacalja, The University of Melbourne

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

In the growing face of AI, English classrooms must remain places of energy, curiosity, and shared discovery. This workshop explores how dialogic teaching - learning through rich discussion and collaborative thinking - can deepen students' engagement with literature. We'll share six practical strategies for secondary English classrooms, including question-based instruction, collective writing, and metatalk. These approaches invite students to wrestle with ideas together, build meaning collectively, and experience the joy of discovering new perspectives through conversation.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

DIALOGUE

FW2 / SESSION TWO / 12.45 - 1.45PM

FW2.01

LIVESTREAM

Assessment and VCE English

Annelise Balsamo, VCAA, and Helen Billett

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

This workshop is a reflection on the role of assessment in VCE English. It will consider formative assessment practices, the formative and summative role of assessment for SACs, and assessment practices used by assessors in the exam. This workshop will explain the concept of global assessment in the exam and will offer teachers the opportunity to reflect on and build their formative and summative assessment skills.

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

VCE EAL TEACHERS


ASSESSMENT

FW2.02

LIVESTREAM

Joy was our plan all along

Allie Baker and Sarah McKay, Beechworth Secondary College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

What if the most powerful lever for success isn't more drilling or a 'baby VCE' in the junior years, but joy? This workshop shares the story of an English team that chose creative risk-taking, rich collaboration, and a love of language. Guided by a shared vision built on curiosity, engaging texts, and student voice, we've spent several years reshaping how our students and community see English. We didn't chase data, but impressive results followed: sustained growth and impressive engagement. Come along to hear how we're doing it and leave with practical ideas for your own context.

ALL YEAR LEVELS

COLLABORATION

CURRICULUM DESIGN

I SPREAD JOY BY...

Sending unsolicited photos of my guinea pigs.



FRIDAY LIVESTREAM WORKSHOPS

FW3 / SESSION THREE / 2.35 - 3.35PM

FW3.01

LIVESTREAM

Playful grammar

Prudence Meggitt, St Leonard's College

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Imagine grammar as a playful resource that students can mess around with to achieve the best expression of their voice and their ideas. This workshop acknowledges the challenges with grammar instruction – including teacher confidence and student boredom. It draws on the latest research in best practice grammar instruction and nifty AI tricks to help you help your students. In line with the Language strand of the Australian Curriculum, have students engaging in 'metatalk' when reading, writing more effectively with actionable feedback, and feeling empowered by grammar that is relevant and fun.

MIDDLE YEARS TEACHERS (ENCOMPASSING YEAR 7-10)

GRAMMAR

FW3.02

LIVESTREAM

Teaching film like a media teacher: Elevating English responses

Jennifer Varrasso and Mark Hewitt, Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM)

STRAND: 

PARTICIPATION: 

Teach film texts with greater confidence and help your students produce higher-quality analytical responses. Drawing on the expertise of the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), this workshop demystifies film analysis through film codes, narrative, and genre conventions. You'll learn how to explicitly teach metalanguage that elevates student writing using examples from 2027 VCE English film texts. Leave with practical strategies and language you can apply immediately to move students from description to sophisticated analysis.

YEAR 10 TEACHERS

VCE ENGLISH TEACHERS

SCREEN LITERACY



JOY IS...

Laughter during discussion, silence when something hits, and small breakthroughs over time.



- 1 Minimal participation: Lecture
- 2 Low level participation: Discussion
- 3 Medium level participation: Hands on
- 4 High level participation: Embodied



Oh friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs!



ABOUT VATE

Ambition

VATE is a not-for-profit subject association committed to a vision of subject English that is equitable, inclusive, robust, creative, responsive, and critical. Through collaboration and community, VATE serves its members and their students from all sectors and regions across the state of Victoria.

Purpose

VATE exists to support its members at all stages of their English teaching career in the continuous process of renewal necessary to engage with the dynamic nature of both the profession and subject English. Through professional networks, advocacy, research, journals, professional learning, and resources, VATE leads and nurtures a community of teachers of secondary English committed to their students and the advancement of the profession.

Commitments

VATE is committed to Makarrata and Truth-telling. VATE acknowledges that we work, teach and learn on unceded land. Our work will recognise and celebrate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia as the first teachers and storytellers. For a fair and just society, we will promote and advocate for truth-telling in the English curriculum and collaborate with First Nations people and organisations to co-create programs and resources.

VATE will advocate for the English teaching profession and our students in a range of educational contexts and the wider community. We will develop and provide policies and programs that underpin our advocacy work.

VATE will strengthen and nurture learning communities, professional networks, collaborative inquiry communities, and other professional learning contexts which allow teachers to reflect collaboratively, creatively, and critically on current practices and future directions for English teaching.

VATE will continue to develop effective professional learning programs for teachers to ensure continued development in the learning and teaching of English at all secondary levels. We will strengthen our commitment to equity of access for all members by delivering professional learning through a range of modes.

VATE will initiate, support, identify, and disseminate research to our members through our journal, *Idiom*, and other publications and resources.

VATE will strengthen and expand our suite of publications. We will commit to developing new resources that are freely available to our members.

To benefit its members, VATE will develop strategic partnerships at state and national levels with other teaching and subject associations, bureaucracies, statutory bodies and organisations.

To respond to the challenges of climate change, VATE will develop environmentally sustainable practices to minimise our carbon footprint at all VATE events and in all aspects of our work.



WE ARE VATE





ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Burwood Serviced Apartments

300 Burwood Hwy, Burwood
(03) 8820 6161
burwoodapartments@outlook.com

- \$169 p/night one bedroom
- \$229 p/night two bedrooms
- \$329 p/night three bedrooms

Reference the Deakin University Conference with VATE when booking to access a discount.

Quest Burwood East

315 Burwood Hwy, Burwood East
(03) 9069 6888
questburwoodeast@questapartments.com.au

- \$170 p/night studio
- \$205 p/night one bedroom
- \$325 p/night two bedrooms

Please use 'VATE2026' when booking to access these rates.

Quest Mont Albert

741 Whitehorse Rd, Mont Albert
(03) 8843 1500
questmontalbert@questapartments.com.au

- \$205 p/night one bedroom apartment, including parking
- \$305 p/night two bedroom apartment, including parking

To access this rate mention 'Deakin Conference 2026' when booking via phone or email, or use 'Deakin2026' when booking online.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CODE OF CONDUCT

VATE is committed to creating a safe, productive, and inclusive environment for all our in-person and virtual professional learning events where everyone can learn, network, and associate in an environment of mutual respect. All participants, including but not limited to attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, traders, VATE staff members, and service providers, are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct applies to all VATE professional learning events, including those sponsored by organisations other than VATE but held in conjunction with VATE.

VATE has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or harassment. If you experience harassment or hear of any incidents of unacceptable behaviour, please contact Kate Gillespie (executiveofficer@vate.org.au) or a VATE staff member in attendance.

Unacceptable behaviour is defined as the following:

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form.
- Verbal abuse of any attendee, speaker, volunteer, exhibitor, traders, VATE staff member, service provider, or other guest, examples of which include, but are not limited

to, verbal comments related to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, economic status, race, religion, age, immigration status, refugee status, ethnicity, or nationality.

- Inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in presentations.
- Disruption of presentations during sessions – all participants must comply with the instructions of moderators, facilitators, speakers, and VATE event staff.
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact.
- Inclusion of promotional materials, special offers, job offers, product announcements, or solicitation for services in presentations, postings, and messages; VATE reserves the right to remove such messages.

VATE reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal of a participant violating this Code of Conduct without warning or refund, in response to any incident of unacceptable behaviour.

CATERERS

The Healthlink Crew

Disclaimer: Levels to reactions of allergens vary, with some reactions being simply due to proximity (airborne) and others occurring only after consumption of the allergen. VATE is therefore unable to guarantee there are no allergens in the food and beverages being served at this event.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

By car

The Deakin Burwood Campus is a 30-minute drive from the Melbourne CBD, depending on traffic.

- From the Melbourne CBD join the Monash Freeway (M1).
- Take the Burke Road exit.
- Turn right at Toorak Road and follow it for about 10 minutes.
- Toorak Road becomes Burwood Highway and you'll see Deakin University on the left

Car parking – Download OPark App

Car parking is available in the multi-level car park (car park 6) at Deakin University, Melbourne Burwood Campus. **You are only able to pay using the OPark app.**

What you need to do:

- Download the [OPark App](#) from either Google Play or Apple Store.
- Log into your OPark account / or create a new account.
- Should you require assistance, email your questions to OPark-support@opark.com.au or call 6160 1012.
- Further information can be found at <https://opark.com.au>
- You can also email Deakin's Parking Team: parking@deakin.edu.au

Casual parking can be purchased by the hour or by the day through the [OPark app](#), which is free to download. You will need to use the relevant OPark zone number when starting a parking permit session. The daily price of parking varies by location and OPark permits are only valid in 'General' permit zones (white-lined spaces). Please do not park in orange-lined spaces as these require a different permit type.

8.30am - 4.30pm: \$1.60 per hour, capped at \$6.40 for the day.

VATE takes no responsibility for cars that do not follow the parking information provided by Deakin.



By public transport

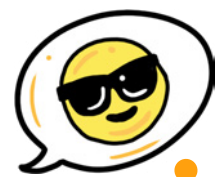
Deakin University is accessible by tram, train and bus. It takes one hour to get to the Burwood campus from the CBD.

Tram

The most direct journey is by tram: Take the No. 75 tram from Stop 4 (Flinders Street) to Stop 63 (Deakin University/Burwood Highway).

Public bus services

A Deakin shuttle bus – route 201 – provides high frequency services from Box Hill bus port and train station. For more information visit the Public Transport Victoria Journey Planner: <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/journey>



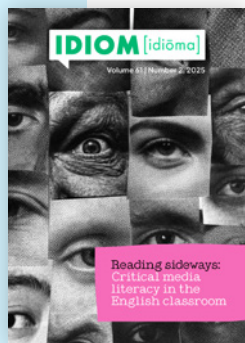
I SPREAD JOY BY...

A well-timed pun,
complimenting
people on
their outfits.



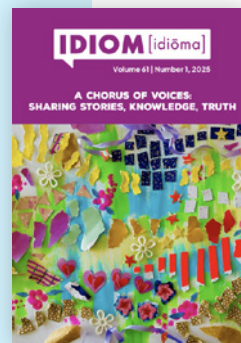
Idiom – VATE’s member journal

VATE’s member journal *Idiom* provides an important space for the VATE community to share insights, expertise, experiences and practical advice for the benefit of our English teaching colleagues and to help foster professional dialogue and development. *Idiom* is published online twice a year and members can access a large back-catalogue of previous issues. The latest edition of *Idiom* is **Lesson planning: The teacher as expert and learner**, which investigates our practices as English teachers in relation to lesson planning, examining systemic expectations, highlighting the tensions, and unpacking the approaches that enable success.



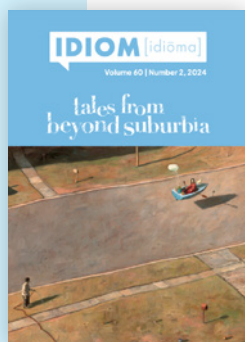
Reading sideways: Critical media literacy in the English classroom

This edition of *Idiom* is a response to the urgent need for greater media literacy and explores the important role of subject English in developing critical media literacy skills in our young people.



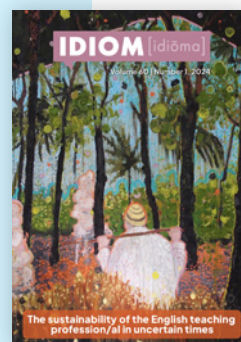
A Chorus of Voices: Sharing stories, knowledge, truth

This *Idiom* elevates and amplifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, supporting VATE’s commitment to deepening our knowledge and appreciation of the experiences and perspectives of First Nations peoples.



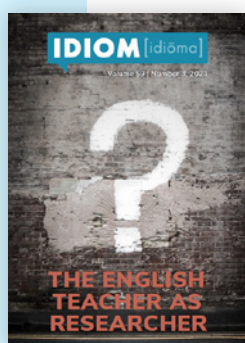
Tales from beyond suburbia

This edition highlights the voices of English teachers and students working and living in rural and regional areas around Victoria, and includes articles exploring curriculum as it pertains to regional and rural English education.



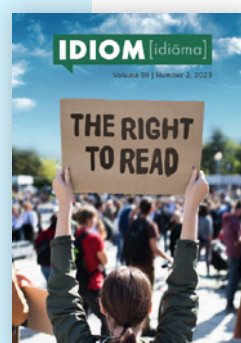
The sustainability of the English teaching profession/al in uncertain times

This issue explores the sustainability of English teaching, both for teachers and the profession, highlighting the many different stories of English teachers’ efforts to create sustainable conditions for their work in contemporary education contexts.



The English teacher as researcher

This *Idiom* focuses on an important aspect of the work of English teachers as researchers, undertaking practitioner inquiries, and collaborating with other English educators, reflecting on practice and sharing experiences to improve the teaching and learning of English.



The right to read

The texts teachers choose to explore with students in English can inform, empower, and develop critical, creative, and literate citizens. This *Idiom* speaks back to those who want to limit the choices of students and teachers, and celebrates our classroom experiences.

VA Victorian Association for
TE the Teaching of English

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