



Teachers Mutual Bank has been named the Bank of the Year in the Roy Morgan 2015 Customer Satisfaction Awards*.

Visit **tmbank.com.au** for full details or call **13 12 21**



*The Customer Satisfaction Awards are based on data from Roy Morgan's Consumer Single Source survey (over 50,000 consumers annually), as well as Roy Morgan's Business Single Source survey (over 12,000 business decision makers annually). These two large, nationwide studies provide a thorough and accurate way to identify and recognise Australia's top businesses in Customer Satisfaction. **Membership eligibility criteria apply to join Teachers Mutual Bank (TMB).** Teachers Mutual Bank Limited ABN 30 087 650 459 AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 238981 | 00959-MAR-0416-IE-BOTY



Executive Editors John Quessy Deb James Terry Burke **Managing Editor** Bronwyn Ridgway **Editorial Committee** Cathy Hickey Alexander Leggett Gloria Taylor Sue Osborne Sue Osborne Alexander Leggett Chris Ruddle About us

IE is a tri-annual journal published by the Independent Education Union of Australia for members and subscribers. It has a circulation of more than 70.000. The contents of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Union or the editors nor imply endorsement by them. **Email**

NSW/ACT: ieu@ieu.asn.au VIC/TAS: info@ieuvictas.org.au QLD/NT: enquiries@gieu.asn.au IE online

www.ieu.asn.au/publications/ Contributions

Contributions and letters from members are welcome. Printing does not reflect endorsement and contributions may be edited at the editor's discretion. Email iemagazine@ieu.asn.au **Advertising**

Chris Ruddle

(02) 8202 8900 Advertising is carried in IE in order to minimise costs. Advertising does not in any way reflect endorsement of the products or services.

IE is available free to members of the IEU, or by subscription. Kayla Skorupan: (02) 8202 8900 **Print Post Number** 100007506



Australia wide

News and views from around Australia.

Kaleidoscope

Naomi Steer Australia for UNHCR founder dedicated to global human rights.

Codes of conduct and managing professional boundaries

What's reasonable?

The not so lucky country

The plight of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Literacy and numeracy for preservice teachers

When, why, how?

Jumping through hoops

Teachers are leaving the profession they love...

Too cool for school?

Why homeschooling numbers are increasing in Australia.

Lesson of the Safe Schools Program debate

If only politicians listened to schools.

What's missing from the AITSL Standards?

The Standards will soon be mandatory for all teachers.

It's the message not the medium that matters

Teacher librarian Lynette Barker is an innovation expert.

Joys and challenges for an archivist

Archivist Evangeline Galettis has been awarded an OAM for her services to schools.

Understanding autism

What is this condition?

Future proofing for small schools

St Mary's College opted for a 'compressed curriculum' rather than risk losing students.

Acknowledging traditional ownership

When planning an event, what are the protocols?

Speaking the language of technology

Tools for language teachers.

Encouraging resilience and sustainability in Ugandan communities

Queensland member has been assisting communities for a decade.

Significant changes to super

What has the budget delivered for you?

independent education | issue 2 | Vol 46 | 2016 | 3

74



Editorial

Australia continues to lag behind other countries when it comes to starting school on the right foot. In this edition we report on research that disadvantaged students are falling through the cracks from day one. It is imperative for governments and policy makers to ensure children have the best possible opportunities from their earliest development (p10).

In Kaleidoscope (p5), Naomi Steer of Australia for UNHCR discusses her career as a unionist, diplomat and social justice advocate. Her dedication to representing those without a voice in society is commendable.

After much political debate and the ensuing media circus surrounding the Safe Schools Coalition, we spoke to Victorian non-government school principals about their schools' membership of the program and why they believe it is important to teach students about gender diversity, safety and respect (p18).

We also investigate the unparalleled rise in teacher workloads, driving those who have spent decades in the profession to leave, while exploring means to deal with work intensification (p8).

We are always interested in story ideas and article suggestions you would like to read about in future editions of IE.

Terry Burke iemagazine@ieu.asn.au

Australia wide

Victoria Child safe schools

From 1 August this year, all Victorian schools will need to meet a number of child safe standards. There are 12 minimum standards that must be complied with by schools. Included in the standards are:

- a child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety
- a child safety code of conduct for staff
- staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child-safe environment
- principles of inclusion, taking into account the diversity of

all children in implementing the standards

- procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse
- strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse, including at least annually the school authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the staff and the governing authority, and
- strategies to promote child empowerment and participation.

Tasmania EA Review - changes recommended

Since the latter part of 2014, the IEU, along with other key education stakeholders, has been involved in the Tasmanian Government's process of reviewing the Education Act. The government's review has now resulted in a number of significant recommended changes, including:

- extending the compulsory years of education and training by:
 - lowering the school starting age from five years to four years and six months, with a flow on to kindergarten entry age of three years and six months. This will apply to children born in 2016, and
 - lifting the minimum education and training leaving requirement to completion of Year 12 or equivalent (certificate III, apprenticeship) or until 18, whichever occurs first. This will apply to students in Year 7 in 2016
- for families of students with serious non attendance issues – a compulsory conciliation conferencing process to address the issues associated with the non attendance
- allowing for the collection of information to enable the development of risk management plans to better support students who have conditions which may cause

- behaviour that leads to risk of harm of themselves or others
- the ability to set a minimum standard for adult behaviour (eg parents/guardians) in the context of schools
- providing for dual enrolment of students with disability between a mainstream school and special school across government and non government sectors
- for non government schools, increased options in the registration process for the SRB in assessing applications, and for schools to be able to register as systems of schools if they meet particular criteria, as is the case in a number of other states, and
- in respect to home education/schooling a stronger regulatory approach including standards for registration as a home educator and annual reviews of student achievement, and the ability for partial enrolment in a school.

One area that the IEU believes still needs examination is the proposed school starting age. Currently in three Australian states a child may start school at four years and eight months, while in the other three states it is four years six months. The rationale for adopting the younger start in Tasmania has not been given.

NSW Review of education structures

On 10 March, NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli announced a review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BOSTES). An issues paper was released on 31 March with submissions due only three weeks later. The Union is concerned that the short process hindered genuine consultation. Despite the time limitations the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch made a comprehensive written submission.

BOSTES and its predecessors have a long and proud history of curriculum development and the Union is particularly supportive of its work in implementing the Australian curriculum in extensive consultation with stakeholders (particularly practicing teachers). The model adopted by the BOSTES respects teachers as authors and co-authors of NSW syllabuses.

In contrast to the significant role of practicing teachers in curriculum development, the teaching profession has little voice in the accreditation process.

The Union is concerned BOSTES is focussing on the needs of the Teacher Accreditation Authorities (TAAs), school proprietors and school systems rather than the needs of the profession. In the submission the Union highlighted issues regarding TAA registration and accountability, as well as registration requirements for schools.

Regardless of the outcome of the review, the Union will persist in its demand for high quality, consultative and transparent processes for policy development and implementation of curriculum, assessment, teacher accreditation and school registration in NSW.

WA Independent public schools

The WA Liberal Government introduced the 'Independent Public School Initiative' (IPS) in 2009-10. This was presented as an opportunity for schools to have more localised decision making, high level of autonomy, greater control over their finances and more say over staffing. Since then, 456 of the over 1000 public schools in Western Australia have transitioned and become an IPS.

Recently the Education Committee of the Legislative Council undertook an enquiry into the IPS initiative. The IEUwa was invited to make a submission particularly in regard to any negative effects of the IPS initiative on independent school student enrolments and staffing.

The evidence based view the Union put forward was that in communities where an IPS is in close proximity to an independent or Catholic school there are a number of instances where enrolments in those non government schools have suffered significantly. This may have been a factor in a number of small schools becoming marginal and closing during and at the end of 2015.

There has also been a negative impact on staff at some non government schools as employment is not as secure if there is a competing IPS. It leads to more staff being on short term contracts and not in a strong position when it comes to enterprise bargaining.

There has been a downturn in the WA economy, that combined with the IPS factor, resulted in a record number of non government schools having staff redundancies at the end of 2015.

Queensland

Study examines teacher stress

Increasing workloads, additional administrative tasks and the pressure of parental and student expectations are leading causes of stress for Queensland teachers regardless of their career stage, new research has revealed.

The findings of the Supporting the Educators:
Occupational Stress and Wellbeing across the Teaching Career Span project, a collaborative venture with Griffith University, the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) and the IEUA-QNT, has provided insight into what strategies are needed to counteract the health and wellbeing as well as retention issues that stem from educator stress.

Key survey findings for IEUA-QNT members included:

- respondents reporting low work life balance, the impeding use of technology in the classroom and relatively high role demands
- administrative duties produced the most demands, often forcing respondents to utilise detrimental workload management techniques such as working late or on weekends in order to stay on top of paperwork and other administrative duties
- the use of such detrimental workload management techniques then contributed to poor perceptions of work life balance and supervisor support with respondents reporting an intention to leave the profession, and
- positively, respondents were generally satisfied with their jobs, reporting relatively few bullying experiences and high colleague support.

NT Message stick grows in strength

In the lead up to the launch of the IEUA-QNT's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) later this year, a traditional Indigenous form of communication will represent an important part of formally recognising Australia's First Peoples.

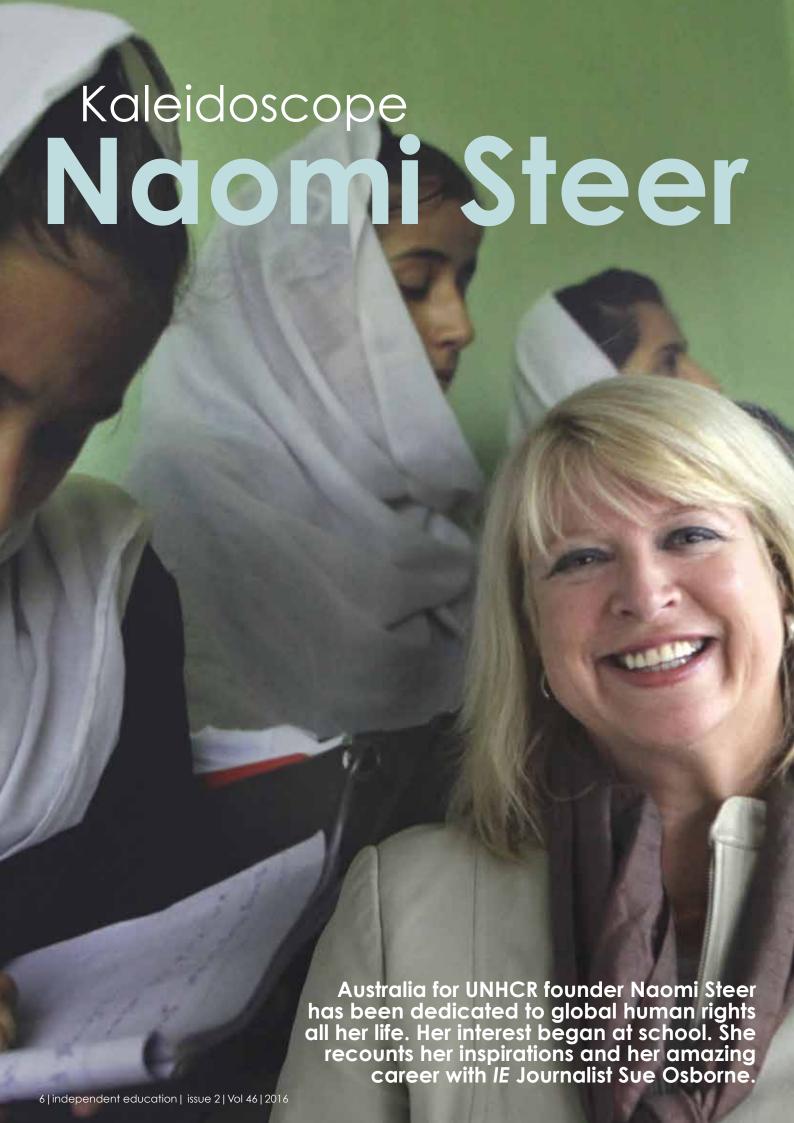
The message stick, which was donated by IEUA-QNT member, Noonuccal woman and Quandamooka elder, Thersa Nunn, to our Union Council, is currently making its way across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

IEUA-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said our Union invites all members to show their solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by participating in passing the message stick onwards.

Nunn said the use of this form of communication is a gesture designed to replicate the traditional method of exchanging information between different Indigenous clans and language groups.

"For me the message stick is a symbol of our Union's growth in strength and respect for each other and to never forget that everyone walks the path of reconciliation together with us," she said.

To learn more about the message stick and its journey visit www.qieu.asn.au/messagestick





My first school was Parramatta Public School. My mum used to pack two lunches, one to get stolen and one I could eat. It was a very diverse school. I don't think we used the word multicultural in those days. I'm glad I went there as it gave me a broad outlook on life at an early age.

High school was Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College in North Sydney.

I had a history teacher that took us to hear Jack Lang speak. She was an amazing teacher that used what was happening politically or socially to engage her students. She went beyond the call of duty. Going to a Catholic school did give me a sense of social justice as there was always fundraising for missions in PNG and elsewhere and the nuns were active in the community.

It gave me the idea that social justice was not just about charity but getting involved in the political sphere as well. Throughout the school there was a culture of expectation that girls would lead independent lives and contribute to the community.

I was hopeless at maths and science. We had a Vietnamese refugee called Wat arrive at the school who was great at maths and science but struggled with English. As I was a chatterbox the teacher paired us up. I suppose she hoped we'd rub off on each other. So in the 70s I had an awareness of Vietnamese refugees.

I didn't have much of an idea what I wanted to do when I left school. I knew I was interested in communication. I ended up doing law at the University of NSW, which was the cutting edge course at that time. Students visited Long Bay Jail as part of the

legal service there, interviewing prisoners. Years later I was a board member of Justice Health the agency that oversees inmates' health services in NSW. I found going back to Long Bay confronting and I wondered how I used to blithely show up as a 21 year old student.

After uni my first job was with the Department of Foreign Affairs as a diplomat, and my first posting was to the UN in New York. I was part of the human rights committee working on refugees and women's rights. I helped with the conclusion of the Convention Against Torture, which had taken 30 years to negotiate. It was a seminal moment.

I learnt that Australia punched above its weight then. The calibre of senior diplomats was wonderful. Australia was respected, particularly around its human rights ethics in the mid 1980s. Australia was a founding member of UNHCR back in the 50s – people forget that.

After New York I was posted to India where my role included looking after cultural exchanges working with artists and performers from both countries. After three years I decided to resign. People were surprised I wanted to leave such a great job but I wanted to get back to Australia to do something that was more hands on and change making.

Actor's Equity needed an industrial organiser and I had some links from my cultural work so I took the position. It was different after the conservative diplomatic world. The office was in bohemian Kings Cross. One of the first things I had to do was coordinate the puppeteers subcommittee.

independent education | issue 2 | Vol 46 | 2016 | 7



Australia was respected, particularly around its human rights ethics in the mid 1980s. Australia was founding member of the UNHCR – people forget that.

77

I held a protest to save the heritage Regent Theatre. After carrying diplomatic bags for politicians I was going up against them.

The membership of the union was wonderful and creative and we had some big issues around Australian content and culture and getting the working wage for actors above the poverty line.

I became the elected secretary of the NSW branch and oversaw the amalgamation with the journalists' union, which was a huge exercise. In 1996 I was elected to Unions NSW as Deputy Secretary, at a time when unions were trying to amalgamate and work together. I was one of the few women to hold that position.

I loved my role at Unions NSW but I was keen to to do something that helped link Australians to the global human rights movement. Being asked to set up Australia for UNHCR to help fund UNHCR's global humanitarian operations combined my international interests with my advocacy and fundraising work. This year UNHCR will raise \$35 million from 100,000 mainly individual donors, to do lifesaving projects. People should be really proud of that. We like to highlight to the government that this level of support is available in Australia. Unions, including the IEU, have always been great supporters as well.

When I started UNHCR I thought I would be based in Australia. But I've been to Afghanistan, Burma, Somalia, Sri Lanka, East Timor, Chad, and the DRC [Congo].

One of our first ground breaking projects was to set up a reproductive health program for the Rohingya in Burma. They are one of the most marginalised peoples in the world, with no citizenship.

We set up a hospital in Somalia. I never thought I'd go there. I asked the doctor at the hospital why I wouldn't be kidnapped. He said because he treated the leaders of both the opposing clans in the areas. I wasn't that reassured!

Australia is the largest donor to programs around sexual and gender based violence in East Africa and the DRC. Eighty per cent of refugees are women and children. We also run women's education and livelihood programs. Refugee issues are women's issues.

I guess this concern for women started and was reinforced right back in those early days at Monte, and it's stayed with me through life.

Support UNHCR: https://www.unrefugees.org.au/donate/donate-now#monthly

Codes of conduct

and managing professional boundaries: What's reasonable?

Around the country, many school employing authorities, systems, and other child focused organisations have been developing policies and codes of conduct or practice which deal with 'child safe practices'. The current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has certainly heightened this focus, Cathy Hickey, **IEU VicTas Assistant** Secretary, writes.

What is a child safe code of conduct?

A child safe code of conduct or protective practices guidelines will usually cover all staff, not just teachers. This has the advantage of ensuring consistency across staff. However, the challenge is to ensure that they are written in clear and precise language, free from jargon and ambiguity.

Codes or guidelines should be concise and practicable and focus on the key purpose which is child safe practices and reasonable expectations of staff in various educational settings. So, one might say that stating that 'staff should not be alone with a student without approval of the principal' seems an unworkable and unreasonable expectation for teachers in many day to day contexts.

In contrast, statements about 'working with students in an open and transparent way' will better enable the school and staff to discuss and come to clearer understandings of what this means in daily practice for different staff groups and education contexts.

The Guidelines for Building the Capacity of Child-Safe Organisations states that a code of conduct for child safe organisations promotes positive work practices and provides guidelines about the behaviour, relationships, attitudes and responsibilities expected of employees and volunteers. Training of staff is key.

What shouldn't be in a child safe code of conduct?

Child safety codes of conduct should not attempt to import every employment expectation of staff into them. For example, punctuality and specific role expectations, statements about what could be termed as expectations about 'quality teaching' are not appropriate and make the code overly complicated.

Reproducing in a code of conduct sections or all of other school policies (for example, the social media or anti-bullying policies) also makes a code unwieldy and impenetrable.

Including statements about prohibiting specific behaviour that will be impossible and impracticable to adhere to in all educational settings and contexts needs to be thought through carefully.

For example, in some contexts or for some occupational groups/volunteers it might be appropriate to have prior approval from the principal of an action/ activity with students, and in others professional judgement guided by general principles (of the code itself or the relevant professional Code of Conduct or Ethics, for example) is the more appropriate wording.

Managing professional boundaries

Some professional bodies set out as part of their suite of professional statements, codes of ethics or guidelines on professional boundaries to assist the profession. For teachers, as with other professional groups, it is important that codes or guidelines embed reference to the use of professional judgement and common sense in applying the guidelines to the various situations in which a teacher may find themselves.

Good guidelines will examine the nature of professional boundaries in teaching practice, outline some strategies to minimise the risk of a boundary blurring or violation occurring, and raise awareness of situations where these could occur.

It is key that staff or where relevant, members of a profession, are involved in the development of relevant codes of conduct or guidelines. This ensures that the resulting code or guideline is clear, reasonable, practicable and commonly understood and adhered to. This is in everyone's interest.

References

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people. Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings (revised September 2011) Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services

Schedule: Guidelines for Building the Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers

Capacity of Child-Safe Organisations. Community and Disability Services Minister's Conference.



independent education | issue 2 | Vol 46 | 2016 | 9

The not so lucky Country

the plight of students from disadvantaged backgrounds

Since late last year three Australian educational reports, all based on comprehensive research, have shone the spotlight on the significant gaps in educational achievement and participation of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds at all levels of schooling and in the workforce.

These reports give us greater insight into why some students succeed and why some 'fail', and their implications should be given greater consideration by governments and policy makers.

Those who miss out

The report Educational Opportunity in Australia 2015 - Who Succeeds and who Misses Out looked at students at four key milestones – readiness for school, succeeding in the middle years, completing school by age 19, engaging in education, training or work at age 24. The results of this report show that while most young people are succeeding, a significant and worrying proportion are missing out at these milestones.

The middle years a concern

The Australian Child Wellbeing Project was conducted by researchers at Flinders University, the University of NSW and the Australian Council for Educational Research and its report Are The Kids Alright? Young Australians in their Middle Years was released early this year. While most young people in their middle years are doing well, a significant proportion have low wellbeing and are missing out on opportunities. Marginalised students are more likely to report lower levels of wellbeing, including high levels of health complaints, experience of bullying, low levels of engagement at school, low levels of subjective wellbeing and low levels of

social support. One in five (19%) in the survey reported going hungry to school or bed. These young people were more likely to miss school frequently.

Unprepared for the first year of schooling

The Australian Early Development Census (AECD) is a nationwide measure that looks at how young people have developed by the time they start their first year of full time school. The report released this year on the 2015 results shows that one in five children (20%) were developmentally vulnerable in one or more of five domains, that is in language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge, physical health and wellbeing, or social competence and emotional maturity. Students from disadvantaged communities have a 33% chance of being developmentally vulnerable, while those with the least disadvantage had a 16% chance.

In respect to other groupings: 28% of boys are considered developmentally vulnerable compared to 15% of girls, and 42% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are in this group. The study shows that from 2012 to 2015 there was some decrease in the vulnerability of children in two of the domains, language and cognitive skills (by 2.4%), and communication and general knowledge (by 1.2%); but an increase in vulnerability in physical health and wellbeing (by .4%) and social competence (by .5%)

Working with students and parents in disadvantaged communities – one school's experience

IE talks with Holy Child Catholic Primary School Principal Alan Smith about some of the key issues in working with disadvantaged students and families.

IE: In your experience, what are the important influences on young people's wellbeing, and what are the key challenges to successful participation?

Alan: The most important influence is the respectful relationships a young person has formed. Supportive relationships give them feelings of safety and control, and allow them to explore choice and decision making in an environment that can support and encourage positive social expectations.

I believe the key challenge areas are participation and engagement in schooling, family capacity, and effects of trauma. Participation I see as multilayered - coming to school, arriving on time and staying at school for the full day is the first challenge children from disadvantaged backgrounds often have. The second is the participation of the family in the school and their child's learning. If children lack role models and good experiences of learning, they can struggle to learn new concepts and gain better understandings. The third is families participating effectively in a community, which celebrates learning and recognises this as authentic. The effect of low participation impacts on self esteem and children can feel they can't achieve, 'I'm no good at school and school is boring'. Low emotional connection, self awareness and self management issues can lead to high anxiety, frustration and possible violence.

Another important factor is building family capacity, being able to effectively communicate your needs and or your wants in English, improving the family's capability to access relevant information to address their needs. The effect can be families lowering their expectations and beginning to 'silo', becoming isolated from the community, focusing inwardly and being suspicious of those outside the community leading to distrust and suspicion.

Trauma is also a significant concern for teachers in disadvantaged areas. Trauma may be as explicit as families coming as refugees from the Middle East and Africa resettling in our communities, or it can be more subtle, families experiencing separation and/or family violence. The effect on the individual can be breakdowns in relationships/friendships, unsafe behaviour/violence, withdrawal from social interactions and a myriad of other manifestations.

IE: What strategies do your staff engage in to help students and families engage in schoolina?

Alan: We educate the mothers of our children teaching them English and seeking opportunities to engage them in further learning. We work with other schools and community organisations in partnership clusters and alliances to develop the opportunities for the community to learn and see itself differently. We use our curriculum to develop multiple connections between learning, recycle language, ideas and options. We build children's capacity to learn and be competent in academic English.

We try to reduce trauma through safe stable classrooms, teacher professional learning and a continued focus on building positive relationships with our families (SWPBS). We explore social and emotional competencies throughout our curriculum planning, we invest in staffing with an emphasis on student and staff wellbeing.

Education needs to engage children in active authentic thinking/learning. Teachers should be readily able to answer a series of questions having strong pedagogical content knowledge. Curriculum needs to support teachers in this endeavour, providing connectives to other areas of learning and to real life. Teachers are the most important relationship for young people explicitly teaching and ensuring it is relevant to the child's needs.

IE: What is the impact of children starting school 'developmentally vulnerable' on primary schools and what would you recommend to policy makers and governments?

Alan: The impact is significant. We would recommend continued quality preschooling with an emphasis on early childhood education. An emphasis on parental education would also be a positive opportunity for development, encouraging parents to move away from electronic devises for children to drawing implements and paper, occasionally letting children play with ICT. We would recommend providing learning experiences for children, going to the zoo, local library and local playgroups. We would suggest events that celebrated learning in the local community, bringing families and educators together for meaningful opportunities to demonstrate practical learning.

Alan Smith is the Principal of Holy Child Catholic Primary School in Dallas, Melbourne. The school serves one of the most disadvantaged areas of Victoria.

Literacy and numeracy for preservice teachers:

When, how, why?

For decades, **Australian universities** have played a central and leading role in the initial education and training of teachers. In 2013, there were over 79,000 students enrolled in initial teacher education (ITE), in over 400 • courses at 48 providers across the nation. **IEUA NSW/ACT Branch** Professional Officer Matt Esterman writes.

Current requirements to enrol and participate in NSW based university teaching degrees

- Minimum ATAR score (as determined by the universities for that intake)
- Since 2009, HSC Band 4 in English and General Mathematics for primary teaching and HSC Band 4 in English for secondary teaching – updated to three Band 5 results including one in English.
- Ongoing curriculum requirements within the ITE program as determined by BOSTES
- Ongoing practicum expectations: minimum 80 days supervised teaching practice (60 days for graduate entry two year programs).

The Union has supported the next generations of teachers coming through the various ITE programs and therefore wishes to highlight a new feature to be integrated into these formative and essential steps to entering the profession.

In March this year the Federal Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham released a statement announcing the opening of the National Literacy and Numeracy Test for preservice teachers across Australia, to be completed before they graduate from a recognised teaching degree. According to the Minister, the test, to be conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), "will ensure Australian children are taught by educators with literacy and numeracy skills in the top 30% of the population."

The test itself must be completed before graduation and "will be delivered flexibly and available to students through a mix of physical testing centres and online delivery." The statement highlighted that "92% of the students who sat the pilot test last year passed the literacy component and 90% passed the numeracy component".

Universities and their curriculum are within the federal educational sphere, though in NSW, the Board of Studies and Educational Standards (BOSTES) also have legislated powers to oversee and endorse teaching degrees and their delivery.

Universities are therefore in the same complex and shifting world of policy and regulation that schools traverse, whereby national and state priorities and demands are mounting, sometimes conflicting, and not always utilised for the benefit of teachers, students or parents.

Constructive spirit

The Union's view is that the experience of initial teacher education should be formative, supportive and inclusive of the range of those who successfully enrol. Our position is that the test should be undertaken in the constructive spirit in which university education works best, including being taken in the first year of the course so that any issues can be highlighted, remedied or otherwise addressed quickly and fairly for all parties.

The Union has reservations about the cost of the program: ACER is to charge \$160 per test and it is not yet clear who will foot the bill. The IEU hopes that all universities will adopt the best practices demonstrated by some in NSW, in which the university pays the cost without passing it on to the student.

The Union is respectful of universities to choose the method and manner in which they implement the national requirements and look forward to working constructively with them to support our preservice teacher colleagues. We also acknowledge that there are more requirements than ever before on entrants to teaching degrees, due to changes implemented by the NSW Minister of Education and BOSTES.

Preservice teacher members need to be cognisant of the changes, those in NSW or ACT who have questions about initial teacher education (ITE) or ongoing teacher qualification requirements and accreditation, email accreditation@ieu.asn.au

References

Birmingham, S., 7 March 2016, Media Release: Teacher test registrations open today BOSTES, Initial Teacher Education, http:// www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/greatteaching-inspired-learning/blueprint-foraction/initial-teacher-education/ Matt Esterman asked Professor Michele Simons, Dean School of Education and Lead Dean Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at Western Sydney University about the practice and approach that Western University (WSU) is taking on this issue.



Our largest teacher education programs are graduate programs – so our students have already completed an undergraduate degree in preparation for their enrolment in our Masters of Teaching programs.

The School of Education at WSU is supportive of the literacy and numeracy test as part of our processes to prepare graduate teachers for the profession. The School is committed to maintaining high standards for literacy and numeracy and to developing graduate teachers who are in the top 30% of the Australian adult population for personal literacy and numeracy. It is important that we ensure that our graduating teachers are well prepared for all facets of their work as teachers and we see the literacy and numeracy test as part of our work in doing this.

At WSU we take a holistic and systematic approach to preparing our preservice teachers for success in the literacy and numeracy test.

Our processes for supporting our preservice teachers commence from the first week they are with us – during orientation. During this time they complete a diagnostic literacy and numeracy tasks. The literacy task takes about 90 minutes to complete. The numeracy task about 60 minutes to complete.

The Academic Literacy TASK is designed to quickly and accurately measure academic literacy, in particular use and knowledge of the English language at the word, sentence, paragraph and whole text levels.

Similarly the numeracy task has been designed to evaluate preservice teachers' fundamental knowledge, core skills and proficiency in various aspects of numeracy.

Both tasks are assessed as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Those students who we find need some assistance to achieve a satisfactory rating on these diagnostic tasks are then provided one-to-one assistance with literacy and numeracy advisors who are academics with expertise in these areas. These people provide access

to resources and also link the preservice teachers to the wide range of resources that the WSU makes available to all students to support numeracy and literacy development.

Preservice teachers must successfully complete the Academic Literacy and Numeracy TASKs with a satisfactory grade before they can undertake their first professional experience unit. Once they have completed our tasks satisfactorily, we then encourage the preservice teachers to sit the national literacy and numeracy test when they are able to do so. Here in NSW our preservice tachers must pass the national test prior to them taking up their final professional experience placement so we need to work diligently to ensure that our processes support this happening.

We have also integrated support for the development of pre service teachers' personal literacy and numeracy skills into our programs. There are multiple opportunities across a number of units where preservice teachers are supported in very explicit ways to continue to develop these skills as they progress through their course with us.

The test is important for a number of reasons:

- Teachers play an important role in the development of children and young people; we need to assure the children and young people as well as their families and the wider community that our teachers are the best they can be when they graduate from WSU.
- This test is one way we have of showing the quality of our graduates.
- More importantly the application of the tasks and completing the tests and the way we manage it here at WSU models what we believe to be best practice. We do not 'teach to the test'; we take an approach that emphasises that literacy and numeracy development for the job of a teacher is integral to that role. The ways in which teachers apply literacy and numeracy in their work needs to be understood, practiced and learned by our preservice teachers. Our preservice teachers come to us with many skills and the diagnostic approach that we use acknowledges the capabilities that they bring while providing them with a way to benchmark their capabilities in these two important areas and then plan for their ongoing learning and development.

It is a little hard to know what to say about changes as up until now, only a small number of our preservice teachers have participated in pilot testing and validation of the national test. We do not have much information about the exact nature of the test. As we learn more about the test – particularly when ACER is able to provide some mock tests – we will be able to refine our diagnostic tasks to ensure that they are more rigorous predictors of success in the national test.

I am keen to see how the national test accommodates preservice teachers with disabilities and other needs. It is important to ensure that we have a diverse teaching profession and it would be a step backwards if the test did not support this.

Widely available, high quality resources to assist preservice teachers to prepare for the national test are also an issue.

Jumping through hoops

Teachers are leaving the profession they love...



After two longstanding teachers decided to ao public on Facebook about resigning from a profession they loved, their posts went viral, striking a chord with thousands around the world after they highlighted the immense pressures of a data heavy and increasingly standardised education system. In a bid to ianite public debate about the state of education in Australia, Kathy Margolis and Gabbie Stroud have continued to speak out, hoping to encourage others to do the same. They spoke with IE Journalist Alex Leggett about why they think the joy has been "sucked out" of teaching.



Kathy's story:

After working as a primary school teacher for more than 30 years, Kathy Margolis decided to leave the classroom for aood.

She wrote a letter to Queensland's The Courier Mail about

why she was leaving the profession and she uploaded the letter on Facebook, which to her surprise became a viral post that has since been shared more than 40,000 times.

"I have heard from teachers from all over the world saying they could have written the post, word for word, outlining the same issues," Kathy said.

She has since joined forces with the small advocacy group, Protecting Childhood, which is launching a petition to help restore the profession.

"It's very hard for teachers to actually express anything negative about the system," she said.

"In the news, the focus is on younger teachers leaving within the first five years.

"I think this is appalling. They have gone into this job with a passionate attitude, and now they are leaving and I don't blame them.

"We are asked to jump through so many hoops. Older teachers have the wisdom to know that we can get away without jumping through some of these hoops especially when it doesn't benefit the children.

"Younger teachers, many on contracts and wanting to make a good impression, relentlessly jump through every hoop put in front of them.

"It's harder for older teachers because we have seen how teaching should be, where there was once joy and creativity involved.

"Sadly, it is being slowly sucked out like a vacuum."

Queensland Education Minister, Kate Jones, responded to Kathy's viral post on talkback radio and later spoke with her on the phone.

"I was very impressed with Kate and she was very genuine in her concerns. She seemed to have a pretty good handle on what day to day life was like in the classroom," she said.

"But not all politicians understand what it is truly like in classrooms. Unless teachers are filling these positions I don't think it is going to get any better."

Kathy said she has no aspirations to go into politics but agreed teachers need more input in this arena.

"As I mentioned in the post, we have very little autonomy anymore. We are told what to do, how to do it and when it has to be done."

She said it is also the children who feel under pressure from all the assessment they are made to do.

"I don't want to be a data collector. I want to spend time engaging children in real learning," she said.

"Data tells us nothing new about the strengths and weaknesses of our students. All these tests do is add to the stress our students are feeling and detract from valuable learning time."

Kathy mentioned the numerous media reports comparing our system with overseas models including Finland, where standardised testing is rare and there are more manageable class sizes.

"Here's a system that is statistically proven to work, so why aren't we heading in that direction?"

"Teachers in Finland are the cream of the crop. The profession is seen as a more revered career choice and they aren't burdened by endless data collection."

Kathy said that parents and teachers must work together as education affects the whole of society.

"Parents need to be the biggest advocates for teachers. What some parents don't understand is that as teachers we know we are doing some things that aren't in the best interests of their children but we are powerless to tell them that.

"We want the same things parents want for their kids, for them to be the best version of themselves they can be."

Gabbie's story:

After 20 years of teaching in primary schools, Gabbie had reached the point of burnout. With her physical and mental health at risk, she also chose to leave teaching.

Her colleagues described her departure as "a great loss" but she felt morally and ethically conflicted by the state of Australian education.

"I resigned because my body became physically burnt out," Gabbie said.

"I had what I can only describe as a breakdown. I was at my desk with hands trembling and the words "this is not teaching" pounding through my head.

"I left because I realised education wasn't going to change and that a



profession I once enjoyed had become something I had to endure."

She said there was also a great disconnect between what she was being asked to do and what she knew to be true about teaching and learning.

"Every child learns in their own way and own time and my teaching should reflect that. However, education today is now driven by standards – standard curriculum, teachers performing to standards and standardised testing," she said.

"This standardisation goes against my fundamental beliefs about what's best for young learners."

Gabbie said she is disappointed by the way governments have "let teachers and students down".

"They are making decisions that aren't informed by real world classroom experiences," she said.

"Even when they take researched, academic or theoretical reference points, they impose measurement and standardisation."

She said that something must be done sooner rather than later and proposed some solutions to teacher attrition.

"There should be better training for preservice teachers, a sabbatical after 10 years of teaching, further uncluttering of the curriculum and providing full time psychologists in schools," Gabbie said.

"We need to look at recent research, education systems overseas and our history here in Australia to establish a new vision for Australian education.

"We need to keep our sights on our young learners and remind ourselves every day that they are our future."

References:

To read Kathy's full post, go to https://www.facebook.com/kathy.margolis.7/posts/10208843143294643

For details about Protecting Childhood and upcoming events, visit http://www.protectingchildhood.org

For more information on Gabbie's work, visit www.gjstroud.com

Boundary fences: Protecting teaching and learning

The IEUA NSW / ACT Branch has commenced a review of existing systemic agreements to both reinforce existing industrial understandings and extend them to embrace emerging work.

Unsurprisingly 'meetings' in all their various forms will be a feature of the claim for systemic schools. The plethora of demands on teachers requires management.

Work intensification

This topic is always on the agenda, but teacher work intensification is clearly the issue with the most currency in schools. Union members express concern about increasing demands generated by technology, assessment and reporting, parental and student expectations, changing curriculum, cocurricular activities, school events, accreditation and standards requirements, professional development and meeting demands among other issues.

The Union is seeking solutions to ameliorate this problem, such as encouragement of school based consultative committees, a provision to enable the development of agreed work practice/workload guidelines in schools, expanded support for those seeking accreditation at Proficient Teacher level and reinforcement of appropriate notice by schools of term dates, professional development and meetings.

From a union perspective in systemic schools this 'management' emanates from the Enterprise Agreement and Work Practice Agreements. A feature of the independent schools claim in NSW will be consultative committees to progress matters determined by members to be a priority in their schools.

The evolution of work will be reflected in the systemic claim. The quantity of teacher time now devoted to the collection, analysis and recording of data is considerable. The role of paraprofessionals in this process must be expanded. Patrick Roach, Deputy General Secretary of NASUWT, the UK's biggest teacher union, who recently attended the IEUA National Executive Forum commented, "Globally, data generation and analysis is being used to strip teachers of their professionalism".



IEUA-QNT member and Curriculum Leader English at St Benedict's College in Brisbane, Chris Carlill, discusses the current debate surrounding the use of technology in schools and to what extent it works as a resource in collaboration with the knowledge and skills of teachers in classrooms.

Technology in schools is embedded in broader narratives about educational change. Two fundamental logics drive the narratives: instrumentalism and determinism. Instrumentalism follows the logic that people use technology to meet a need, as a means rather than an end. In contrast, determinism posits that technology shapes who we are, how we behave, and our future as humans. Educational leaders find it difficult to reconcile and enact these two logics.

Invariably, innovation imperatives from school leaders, driven by instrumentalism, determinism, or both, lead to 'must have' and 'must do' downward pressure on teachers, students and parents with the inherent risk of educational and social failure as a primary motivator. Furthermore, it places added demands on teachers, especially in terms of professional development and self efficacy. In relation to teaching and learning, technology may enhance collaboration in some instances, but with an added layer of expectation and entitlement that sees teachers being at the beck and call of students outside established hours of duty.

What is missing in the debate is advice on the balanced use of technology in teaching and learning. Portable devices and learning management systems, despite their ability to be promoted in a competitive educational marketplace, only seem to perpetuate the delivery or reception mode of teaching and learning. Closing the lid and experiencing real face to face interaction may be an old fashioned concept, but it really is the best way to join the conversation and build relationships day to day.

What schools need is evidence based direction on how to help students be more responsible and reflective regarding their use of devices in class. Over-reliance is a stressor as much as enforced 'digital

detoxing'. Students' ability to self manage their engagement with technology, like so many social behaviours, begins with appropriate modelling at home. Unfortunately, many parents see technology as a vital function of preparing for the future and support usage with little regulation and intervention. It is like letting kids eat what they want when they want because they like it, even though we know the consequences. Instead, the implementing of control measures falls to teachers who have to compete with technology, rather than finding where technology can complement.

A dimension to this debate is the growing call for handwriting to regain a place in classrooms from prep to senior years. This is not some reactionary Luddite call to arms, but a gesture towards a more balanced, slower rate of information acquisition, processing and application of learning. Problem solving is not always one click away. Students, individually and in groups, need to ruminate on problems, to struggle with cognitive dissonance, to sketch, label, erase, and re-do. In this case, the messier the better works for many.

Technology in schools is a constant challenge that exists within ongoing change processes. Learning to use or using to learn is an ongoing dilemma for all stakeholders as new iterations of technologies emerge. School leaders have to show resolve and flexibility when deciding on implementation imperatives, both in the short and long term.

The credo of 'useful, usable, and used' can help guide decisions about technology in the classroom without getting locked down in future proofing and what makes up the best blend. Teachers and students need time to engage in hands-on processes, regardless of whether the tablet is made of slate or plastic and glass.



Former IEUA-QNT member, teacher and researcher at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Dr Rebecca English discusses the increase in parents choosing homeschooling for their children and what this means for the education profession.

In particular, the focus has been on the growth in numbers of homeschool families. There are many reasons why the increase in parents choosing to homeschool their children has an impact on teachers across Australia.

a major topic in the Australian media.

Transition between home and schools

There is evidence children move between homeschool and schools. In her 2009 thesis titled More Than One Way to Learn, Glenda Jackson, of the Australian Home Education Advisory Service, notes that many children who left school subsequently returned. This group includes 'school refusers'. Jackson's data suggests there is a great deal of movement between schools and home settings. As such, it is reasonable to expect teachers may encounter and have to manage children transitioning between sectors.

In NSW, the increase in families accessing home education led to the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) calling an inquiry in 2014. The inquiry suggested reviewing the registration process, reviewing access to the HSC and exploring ways BOSTES, schools and families could work more closely. One of the most interesting aspects of the inquiry was the acceptance of this type of education, acknowledgement that it is not going to go away, and a view that transitions between homeschool and school should be seamless.

Dissatisfaction with schools

In her thesis, Jackson argued parents choose to home educate when their children were from a different 'ability group'. She argues that few parents/ students who choose home education are 'average'. Instead they tend to be 'gifted', 'advanced learners' and students with 'learning and/or health difficulties'. These children have experienced bullying, lack of support or have not thrived in

mainstream schools. While many people think of the families who home educate as mainly religious, this does not appear to be the case in Australia. In my research, I have talked to a lot of non religious families who have chosen to pursue homeschooling.

For many parents, the choice to homeschool their children is a result of dissatisfaction with mainstream schools and institutionalisation. Many describe schools as places where children are given limited autonomy over their learning. Others describe bullying and a lack of support for their children's individual needs, with various anecdotes of this included in the BOSTES Inquiry report. For some parents, they would never choose schools because they are ideologically opposed to governmental intrusion into family life.

Back to school

Many homeschooled children eventually return to school. For some, it is about access to tertiary study after high school. Others are looking for a change. For some students, there is a need to access specialised professional teachers, for example the particular knowledge and skills of physics teachers. Jackson describes it this way: "Students who entered or returned to secondary school appreciated access to expert knowledge, peer mediation, inclusive professionals and socialisation experiences with peers". Her work suggests Australian high school teachers may find a lot of formerly home educated students in their classes.

References

Jackson, Glenda 2009, More Than One Way to Learn (2009), http://www.hea.edu.au/ media/619/morethanonewaytolearn.pdf

BOSTES Inquiry report, go to http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/homeschooling

For further details on Dr English's research, go to http://eprints.gut.edu.au/76250/



Few parents/
students who
choose home
education
are 'average'.
Instead they tend
to be 'gifted',
'advanced
learners' and
students with
'learning and/or
health difficulties'.





IEU members will remember the media frenzy and political circus that occurred in March when conservative members of the federal government called for funding of the antibullying Safe Schools Program to be ceased because it was "turning kids gay". The level of hype even forced Malcolm Turnbull to urge his own politicians to use "measured language" when discussing the issues.

The government's answer was to commission a quick review of the program conducted by Professor Bill Louden. The program, which is run by the Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA), is aimed at raising awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or intersex (LGBTI) school students and includes a strong antibullying focus. Many government and independent schools are members of the SSCA. To date only two Catholic schools in Australia are formally members.

The result of the review is that the program will continue to be funded with some amendment, primarily that the program runs in secondary schools. Congratulations to the Victorian Minister for Education, James Merlino who did listen to schools, parents and students. He declared that the program would run in Victoria unchanged. He is confident about how the program is being implemented in Victoria, where it will become mandatory in government schools by 2019.

IE spoke to three Victorian non government school principals about their membership of the Safe Schools Coalition.

Jim Laussen is Principal of Overnewton Anglican Community College, a K-12 coeducational school with over 2000 students. Ivan Mahoney runs St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre, a small Edmund Rice secondary college offering an alternative environment for students who have for a variety of reasons, been unable to connect or have been rejected by mainstream schooling. Paul Tobias is Principal of St Joseph's, a large Catholic boys' school of over 1700 students in Geelong.

Safety and respect

For Laussen, the motivation to join the SSC was the acknowledgment a couple of years ago that Overnewton was not as safe for same-sex-attracted, intersex and gender diverse students as they wanted it to be. Some students were avoiding school; others weren't able to participate fully.

The school's counselling staff have used the resources to provide professional learning for teachers and teachers have used the resources to provide support for them in providing appropriate discussions in 44

Our involvement with Safe Schools is just another way we make our Catholicism, our universality, real.

"

pastoral care sessions. The resources have been used mainly with senior students.

"The Safe Schools Coalition has helped us teach our students how to better navigate the differences that they see each day. For instance, we have always encouraged our children not to use gender based or racist putdowns; now we are asking them to add slurs about sexuality and gender diversity to the list," Laussen said.

Mahony sees his school's membership as an expression of their aim to be an inclusive educational community, embracing all young people, staff and parents irrespective of race, religion, gender, ability or sexuality. He reports that they have mainly used the program in staff development activities to increase sensitivity and awareness of working with all their students. The program provides some excellent antibullying curriculum resources. Ivan explains that they seek to work with students within their Four Principles: Participation, Safe and Legal, Honesty and most importantly Respect. He says that the Safe Schools is ultimately about safety and respect.

"We have 372 students, over 100 of us are Muslim asylum seekers, over 100 of us have involvement with Human Services and Juvenile Justice, over 30 of us live in out-of-home care. Our involvement with Safe Schools is just another way we make our Catholicism, our universality, real."

Tobias believes that the vision of Safe Schools – that all Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing is congruent with his school's vision.

"In the case of our college, we have tried to develop a school culture which is respectful and tolerant of diversity and inclusion. This has assisted us in attempting to produce well balanced, emotionally intelligent young men who are capable of intimate, healthy heterosexual relationships. At the same time, we can support LGBTI students who can suffer serious mental health issues, if they lack that support."

Parental support

All three principals have had full parental support of their membership of the program, and have been concerned that the recent outcry from some quarters has been both misinformed and unhelpful given their schools' focus on understanding and respecting diversity and optimising mental health in their student communities.

Laussen said: "There's a lot of misinformation about what the Safe Schools Program involves. We have never been told what to do or how to do it. We have never been pressured to promote homosexuality as a preferred lifestyle, to encourage students to come

out, to teach children about homosexual acts, to teach children how to bind their chests. Given that we are a Christian school, I have made several offers to key people to come to my school and meet with my staff and students to gain an understanding of how a Christian school can be a member of the SSC and use their materials. Disappointingly, no one has taken up that offer."

Mahony also highlights the parental support. "I have had a number of parents come and thank me personally about the impact our membership has had on their young people. Young people and parents have also expressed their concerns about the recent national review and its impact. Much of the debate has totally ignored the impact that has been felt by young people who are dealing with these issues on a day to day basis."

Challenging the misinformed and intolerant

Mahony believes that much of the opposition to the program stems from a conservative agenda, based on homophobia and discrimination.

When the controversy about SSC became public, Tobias wrote to both the state and federal governments highlighting support and also making the point that "sometimes, as a consequence of trying to understand everyone on the LGBTI spectrum and provide specific information about each, the Coalition provides critics with the perception that the original purpose of Safe Schools is being hijacked".

"The ongoing problem for any Catholic educator working in this area is the suggestion that they are promoting a lifestyle which is inconsistent with the teachings of the Church. My own view is that same sex attracted young people are a part of Catholic schools, and that they can become marginalised unless we educate our communities about the importance of the values of the Gospel, like inclusivity, tolerance and respect for the uniqueness of every individual."

At the end of the day, these three schools use the Safe Schools Coalition materials, tailored to their own programs, and within their unique educational contexts, students' needs, and ethos. They strive to create inclusive, safe environments for their students.

Laussen has the last word. "We are a faith based school; our students can attend our school knowing that, regardless of their gender, faith, ability, ethnicity or sexual orientation and identity, they are loved and safe and that we have mechanisms in place to support each of these aspects of diversity."

Prepared by Cathy Hickey and Loretta Cotter of IEU VicTas.



What's missing from the AITSL Standards?

The Australian
Institute for
Teaching and
School Leadership
(AITSL) Professional
Standards for
Teachers (hereafter
the Standards)
were introduced
to the profession
in 2012 and will be
mandatory for all
teachers in NSW by
2018, Holy Cross
Sydney Principal
Adam Taylor writes.

The Standards have been lauded as a framework which, at long last, define what a teacher should know and be able to do to earn the right to be considered a professional.

Are the Standards the key to an improvement in teacher quality, a claim government reports and peak bodies often make? What do teachers think about them? What difference do they, or will they, make to teachers' lives?

These are the kind of questions that interested me as I embarked upon doctoral research on the Standards, now completed. My study took as its case a high performing school system, from which were drawn 71 classroom teachers across a diverse range of seven secondary schools.

A high performing school system, which can provide the support, positive pressure and capacity building that enable schools to respond to a rapidly changing education agenda, was selected as the case because it is most likely to present the extent and limit of what is possible with the Standards. Teacher participants were engaged in a total of 50 hours of semi structured interviews, which produced 500,000 transcript words, which sought to elicit teachers' conceptions of the Standards, how the Standards had already impacted on them as teachers, and how the Standards may impact on them in the future.

Unconvincing rhetoric

In general, my research found that teachers remained unconvinced of the rhetoric that the Standards, as an accreditation system, "will position the profession to improve student outcomes and also result in teachers being more highly valued in the community" (BOSTES, 2015).

It was not that teachers argued that Standards did not present a definitive statement of what a teacher should know and be able to do, but rather that the most important stuff (to them) — the human that the teacher presents to the world — was missing from and therefore apparently unimportant to the Standards.

To put it more technically, the Standards are clear about the epistemological dimensions of teachers' work (what a teacher must know and be able to do), but they have little to say in the ontological domain, that is, the human the teacher is always in the process of becoming. A research participant put it simply and beautifully, albeit in an inchoate statement when she said:

The only thing that I think is missing (I think it's missing but you can't put it in a standard) is the whole 'can you actually teach?'

Indeed, the search for absences and silences in the data produced perhaps the most interesting of all the data that



I collected. Even though the specific question 'what's missing in the AITSL Standards?' was only one of 25 distinct questions in the interview guide, it produced just over 10% of all interview data references that I coded. Teachers emphasised that the most important element of being a teacher is the free expression of what I have termed teacher dispositions. Teachers placed high value on the importance of relationality in teaching and did not feel that it found full expression in the Standards.

The Standards, therefore, while they may measure knowledge and skills of the teacher — things that matter — they do not measure everything that matters: "There is so much that's not on these pages" said one teacher. Yet another participant in the research was critical of some pre new scheme teachers' resistance to change, but admired the elusive exemplary teacher quality of their dispositions in the classroom:

"I have sat in their classes and I have watched them and I have worked with them, I have team taught with them and they just have this vast array; just the way they challenge the students and their interactions with them and all those things, even when they are not that charismatic in the classroom, I find that they just have this—they understand. They just see it and they understand it, they are so switched on."

When asked what is missing in the Standards the participant noted:

"I don't know if they could put it in writing, could they? The natural, organic stuff that happens in the classroom? You couldn't, you just can't; what teachers do in the classroom, whether you are new scheme or not, I just don't think you could put that into words."

This last quote emphasises the difficulty in capturing the dispositions that teachers felt were the most important parts of being a teacher. Various research in the last 10 years or so has sought to categorise the special qualities of the expert teacher in the epistemological domain; what is particular to the argument in my research is that these special qualities that were felt to separate the exemplary from the non exemplary teacher should be conceptualised as belonging in the ignored ontological, not the epistemological domain what Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) call "embodied understanding of practice" and Gorodetsky and Barak (2016) call "becomings". Understanding teacher dispositions as elements of the ontological domain conveys much more strongly the concept that they are quintessential to the personhood of the teacher. "Teachers are indeed people. Who you are is how you teach" (McCulla, 2012).

Professional standards for teachers may well be necessary, but they are not sufficient. On their own, they offer a portrait of the exemplary teacher which leaves out the dimension of being a teacher which practitioners believe to be the most important part of the profession-teacher dispositions. Over time, the danger is that the normalisation of professional standards as portraying the image of the ideal teacher will diminish rather than enhance teacher quality.

An ethical narrative would valorise teacher dispositions, highlighting their importance. The way forward is to augment or complement professional standards within an ongoing ethical narrative developed by teachers, for

teachers. It is not just about establishing.

412 Sage Publications doi:

It was not that teachers argued that Standards did not present a definitive statement of what a teacher should know. but rather the human that the teacher presents to the word was missing from and therefore apparently unimportant to the Standards.

77

teachers. It is not just about establishing something like an independent college of teachers, and then writing an ethical statement (although this may be an important first step). Professional ethics cannot end with an ethical statement because any codified statement, of itself, will not engage teachers in the ongoing ethical conversation that is necessary to encourage an audacious and independent reflective thinking that will inspire them.

The newly instituted but still embryonic College of Teaching in England, holds some promise as does the model of the independent General Teaching Council of Scotland. Another model that exists is the ethical committee of the Trade Union of Education in Finland, the OAJ, which has produced a statement of A Teacher's Ethical Principles.

In addition to the ethical principles document, the OAJ continues to make statements on ethical issues connected to education and the work of teachers. The transformation of trade unions into teacher professional associations is well developed in other Scandinavian countries besides Finland, for example in Sweden and Norway. In many jurisdictions, however, the work and image of trade unions is so polarised that such an agency cannot do the work of professional leadership. Whether or not teacher unions in Australia can take up this work is a auestion for association and federation leaderships to consider.

References

BOSTES (Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, 2015, 26 May. Teacher accreditation enews [Web-based newsletter]. Sydney: Author. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/eVdJyC

Dall'Alba, G., & Sandberg, J 2006 Unveiling professional development: A critical review of stage models. Review of Educational Research, 76(3), 383– 412. Sage Publications. doi: 10.3102/00346543076003383

Gorodetsky M & Barak J, 2016 Becoming learners/teachers in nomadic space. Teachers & Teaching: Theory & Practice, 22(1), 84–100. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1023030

GTCS General Teaching Council of Scotland 2012 The standard for careerlong professional learning: Supporting the development of teacher professional learning. Edinburgh: Author. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/gLdLt6

GTCS General Teaching Council of Scotland c2012 Our independent status what does it mean?. Edinburgh: Author. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/7bwHtu

Ingvarson, L 2014) Standards-based professional learning and certification: By the profession, for the profession. In L. Martin, S. Kragler, K. Bauserman & D. Quatroche, Handbook of professional development in education: Successful models and practices, pre K-12 (pp. 385–411). New York: The Guilford Press.

Lilja, P 2014 A quest for legitimacy: On the professionalization policies of Sweden's Teachers' Unions. Journal of Education Policy, 29(1), 86–104. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2013.790080

Mausethagen S & Granlund L 2012 Contested discourses of teacher professionalism: Current tensions between education policy and teachers' union. Journal of Education Policy, 27(6), 815– 833. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2012.672656

McCulla, N 2012, 3 August Teachers' lives. Sir Harold Wyndham Oration. Sydney: Australian College of Educators. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/yw9RPU

OAJ Trade Union of Education in Finland 2013 A teacher's ethical principles. *Helsinki*: Author. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/N7yDfm

PTI The Prince's Teaching Institute 2014 A new member-driven College of Teaching: A Blueprint. London: Author. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/ey1pEq



It's the message not the medium that matters

Teacher librarian
Lynette Barker recently
returned from Budapest
where she travelled as
one of four Australian
'Innovative Expert
Educators' selected to
attend the Microsoft
Global Educator
Exchange.

At the E2 Global Exchange I was inspired by Anthony Salcito's (Vice President of Worldwide Education at Microsoft) vision: "We need to empower every child on the planet to achieve more".

Technology and libraries offer amazing opportunities to support this vision.

As a primary school teacher librarian I teach information processing skills to students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Skills like critical thinking and information processing are required across all key learning areas, so I feel I'm fostering in students lifelong skills of great value.

I know what I'm doing is important so I love teaching it.

The digital world has a growing influence on our daily life, so I ensure that technology is a core component of library lessons, although I rarely plan a lesson around technology alone.

When designing a lesson, I start with a learning intention and then look for the best way to achieve that outcome. Most often it will involve a combination of tools and formats, and will always include a quality piece of literature.

For example, during a recent Year 4 lesson we discussed the removal of Newcastle rail line. We examined an 1856 newspaper report about Newcastle residents fighting not to have the railway line extended into the city centre. This was a print resource made accessible via technology. We compared it to current blogs arguing that we should not terminate the line in the suburbs – that we should 'keep the line' into the city centre.

We went on to read the picture book Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne, to further explore the concepts of author bias and differing perspectives. We also viewed a variety of emotive protest images, discussing how they may be used by authors to sway a reader's opinion. Overall we examined a variety of information sources – all valuable.

Technology does open up an incredible array of learning opportunities and it is important that all teachers move towards developing skills and confidence in the use of technology to enhance learning.

I always advise teachers to be 'gentle on themselves' when beginning to explore technology use in the classroom – select one technology you find interesting and give yourself time to play with it. When you are ready to take that technology into your classroom be honest with students and ask for their support.

"It's okay to fail, okay to experiment. Have the confidence to say to the class 'we're going to try this today and it may not go to plan'."

When you master something – move on to a new challenge.

For me, it is the trend towards using game-based elements in learning to engage students that has captured my imagination. I have commenced a 'Minecraft Mates' project with the Teacher Librarian, Kerry Gittins, from the International School of Lausanne, to explore possibilities in this area.

In Budapest I formed great friendships with the other Australian and New Zealand Microsoft Innovative Educators – opening doors to some exciting Skype and collaborative tasks in the library.

Chat to your teacher librarian, explore the library space-you might be surprised at the exciting things taking place-and you will always find some beautiful literature to share with your students.

independent education | issue 2 | Vol 46 | 2016 | 23



Last year Archivist Evangeline Galettis was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to her community, particularly educational institutions. **Evangeline has worked** at St Catherine's School Waverley in New South Wales for 21 years where she is responsible for a museum with extensive archives documenting the school's 160 years. She is also a St Catherine's Old Girl and has worked tirelessly to establish a strong Old Girls network that now stretches across the world IE Journalist Bronwyn Ridgway writes.

Teacher, archivist, historian, author and community volunteer, Evangeline is passionate and focused and has been an IEU member since 1988. She has taught in many Sydney schools including Claremont College, The International Grammar School, The Scots College, Ascham, MLC Burwood and St Catherine's, but has been doing archival work now for many years.

"Some of the joys of being an archivist are creating significant and celebrated places for collections, or simply sifting through stories and researching a particular person. Although that person may have been dead for 50 years, you can get to know him or her from a sociological perspective. It's like working on a very big jigsaw puzzle. Information might come through a phone call or a letter, or discovery of an item that's been tucked away for decades; they're significant pieces of that wonderful puzzle.

"School archivists create a sense of community wherever they work and we have the opportunity of enhancing collections over time. We educate and publish and give value and place for what is the history of education here in Australia. I use all my experience and qualifications in the process but there are many courses we need to do to keep up with things and we help each other with our projects. I've met some extraordinary archivists in Catholic schools, independent schools, selective schools and of course colleges and universities."

Evangeline has a Master of Education, a Bachelor of Education as well as a Diploma in Teaching and she firmly believes archivists need to be part of a strong and supportive network. In conjunction with her union membership she is a professional member of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), a member of Museums Australia and the History Council of Australia. Membership of all these groups is not inexpensive, but as Evangeline said, the information you can share with other colleagues is invaluable.

Conferences of the ASA are always interesting, Evangeline said, with some 300 to 400 members gathering annually. While

44

...not many employers or school staff know or understand what archivists do, nor do they appreciate that archived materials need to be preserved for decades to come.

77



the ASA Schools Special Interest Group with its membership of over 135 archivists from schools throughout NSW and ACT, meets regularly throughout the year.

"Over time I've helped people in other schools who haven't had specific training but have been asked to work on a project around a centenary or significant event. Some archivists have been teachers, teacher librarians or administrative staff."

Professional development is key to keeping abreast of important issues and developments. They need to be knowledgeable about ICT programs, copyright law, oral history, preservation of textiles and documents, digital archiving, disaster archive management, administration and policy development, project management and sundry curatorial methods. Archivists need good communication skills to be able to advocate on behalf of their treasures, not just for the present but for the future as well.

"There are a number of challenges that face archivists in schools. Sadly, not many employers or school staff know or understand what archivists do, nor

do they appreciate that archived materials need to be preserved

for decades to come. By sharing a school's history, archivists have the ability to help school leaders work and plan for the future. Our job is about advocacy and it would be advantageous if archivists could be part of leadership discussions, strategic planning and decision making. The material we produce for consideration

and examination must be accurate and authentic; not many know that we all work to the Archivists Code of Ethics.

"In addition, archivists need space, resources and budgets. There needs to be careful consideration and planning for housing large quantities of historical goods. I'm very fortunate I have compactus units with vast storage capacity, as well as a museum that takes pride of place in the school grounds. Students and members of the community can drop in and view our collections, it helps them engage with the history and culture of the school.

"Often school executives have little idea of the volume of material archivists work with, nor are they aware of the issues of governance or the value of what is being held in storage or on display. We are entrusted to identify, preserve and conserve; many teach students about the history of their school and archival processes. We also write extensively for school and educational publications.

"It's extraordinary that there is no agreed classification under which schools employ archivists and no salary scale. We can be paid at any level from teacher librarian to clerical assistant. This needs to change, our work is important and we should be paid at the appropriate level. It's time the Association of Independent Schools and the IEU recognised our value so that wages and conditions change for the better. We're concerned about the future and who will choose to work in this field if we're forgotten in negotiations and omitted in MEAs. How will schools attract qualified and skilled young people to the position of school archivist in the future?"

independent education | issue 2 | Vol 46 | 2016 | 25



What is this condition?

It is common in casual conversation to hear the terms. 'Oh! He (she) is on the spectrum'. Initially, the phrase was used to excuse a person's unacceptable behaviour but increasingly it is being used tongue-in-cheek to describe behaviour that is at the edge of normal, TLN Executive Officer Michael Victory writes. As teachers we experience this type of behaviour every day, often from students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We have an important role in leading the community in responding to the needs of children with ASD. This article is a quick primer on the background to ASD.

How does ASD manifest itself?

Typically children with ASD have difficulty with standard forms of communication. They have difficulty with the social skills that those without ASD take for granted and have a strong tendency toward fixations of interest and/or behaviour.

ASD is widely described as a developmental disorder that affects the way that individuals are able to interact with others. People with ASD have lower levels of coping with the unpredictability of the world, finding the world to be a confusing place. Individuals with ASD often have sensory sensitivities, they may be under or over sensitive to any of the five senses.

How did we get to ASD?

The condition we now know as ASD was first given a name just after World War II by Leo Kanner, working out of Johns Hopkins University in the US. He derived the name, Autism, from the Greek word for 'self'. Working independently

In Vienna in the 1940s Hans Asperger identified a similar condition. It is from him that the condition known as Asperger's syndrome derived its name, but his work did not become widely known in the English speaking world until the 1980s.

Australia is influenced by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), which is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in America. In 1980, 'infantile autism' appeared in DSM for the first time, followed by 'autistic disorder' in 1987. 'Asperger's syndrome' was added in 1994, with the term 'autism spectrum disorder' being introduced in 2013 to cover all diagnoses, as a result Asperger's syndrome is no longer used by medical professionals. In education, the words 'highfunctioning' and 'low-functioning' to describe the capacity of an individual to meet standard expectations have become common but these terms are not recognised in the medical literature.

Funding and diagnosis

The significance of the diagnosis in DSM is that there is typically a link between an official diagnosis and additional funding to support the treatment and/ or education of a child with a formal diagnosis. Once again what has crept into our discourse in education are the words 'funded' and 'unfunded'.

What causes ASD?

At present there is general agreement among researchers that ASD is a condition rooted in neurological and chemical processes and there is a strong genetic component. There is no evidence and no creditable research to link ASD with environmental factors such as parenting style or with a response to vaccinations as part of an immunisation program. At present there is no known cure for ASD.

What is the impact of a spectrum?

There is a debate in the community and in education, not yet overtly articulated, between advocacy groups who are rightfully seeking support for individuals whose participation in the community is severely impacted by the condition of ASD, and parents and educators and individuals who encounter difficulties with children, and adults, and who want to put a label on that difficulty. When a condition is described as being on a continuum, or spectrum, then it leaves open the possibility that a person's behaviour can be diagnosed, labelled and funded.

The philosopher Michel Foucault has been critical of the medical pathologisation of human behaviour. Once behaviour is defined as a medical condition then it opens the possibility of there being a need for a medical treatment, thus 'Do we need a pill for that condition'? The serious question that is raised becomes, 'Is every human behaviour that is a little different, a disability or condition, or simply another mode of normalcy'?

As teachers we need to be wary in this debate; whether there is a medical treatment or not is a medical issue not an educational issue. A diagnosis, a label and funding do not solve the core educational issues. Our challenge remains, how to provide a high quality education for all students whether they have a diagnosis of ASD or not. Our general philosophical approach should not change because of a diagnosis, though our classroom practice might. Let me briefly explore that seeming contradiction.

What are my responsibilities?

All Australian states and territories are subject to various anti discrimination legislation, which, in summary, provides that schools cannot discriminate against a child on the basis of a disability and are required to make reasonable adjustments in respect to the educational provision for that child.

We also have an ethical and moral responsibility to engage with all of our students. Put quite simply, 'What is the name of the student in your class that you are choosing not to teach'? No serious teacher will ever answer that question.

The Dutch education philosopher Gert Biesta describes education as a significant encounter between two human beings, teacher and student. It may be that children with ASD present a bigger challenge because we do not share their experience and so we have a lesser understanding of their lifeworld. We are at a disadvantage in the encounter. That becomes our challenge, to learn how to engage. This is not easy, but that is our commission as teachers.

There are many great resources to help us understand the condition of ASD and many teachers are now sharing the strategies that have succeeded for them in working with students with ASD (see for example online courses at www.tln. org.au). In future editions of *IE*, practical classroom ideas for working with students with ASD will be published.

School leaders and employing authorities should be investing in professional development for teachers and education support staff to ensure that legal, professional and ethical responsibilities to children with ASD and their families are being met.

References

Biesta G 2013 The Beautiful Risk of Education. Paradigm Publishers: Boulder, Colorado.

Shapin S 2016 Seeing the Spectrum: A new history of autism in The New Yorker 25 January 2016 (reviewing the book by Donvan J and Zucker C In a Different Key: The Story of Autism. Crown Publishers)

http://www.amaze.org.au/discover/ about-autism-spectrum-disorder/what-isan-autism-spectrum-disorder/

Additional resources

The American author Temple Grandin has received wide publicity for her work on autism both in the USA and here in Australia.

Novels by Mark Haddon (The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night) and Graeme Simsion (The Rosie Project and its sequel) are accessible reading that might provide an insight into the lifeworld of people with ASD.

For more academic insights and general information with an Australian flavour, Latrobe University has established the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, www.latrobe.edu.au/ otarc

Michael Victory is the Executive Officer of the Teacher Learning Network (TLN). TLN is owned by the IEU VictTas and AEU (Victoria) and works in partnership with IEUA NSW/ACT Branch to provide professional development programs and resources to schools across Australia. More information about TLN is available at www.tln.org.au



Future proofing for small schools

When enrolments began dropping at St Mary's Catholic College Casino the school had to come up with a way of making itself sustainable into the future, particularly in Stage 6. Rather than cut classes and risk losing more students, the school opted for a compressed curriculum, as **Curriculum Leader** Duncan Pollock tells IE Journalist Sue Osborne.

Pollock said a curriculum review around 2013 had identified a possible problem in the Stage 6 subject offerings for such a small secondary school.

"The only way to reduce classes is in the senior years because they are essentially electives, and that can lead you into a spiral where more students leave because they can't access the subjects they want to do," Pollock said.

Core science subjects such as physics and chemistry only had three or four students in each class some years, which was not sustainable.

"If you can't keep these subjects running you risk losing your really good academic kids."

In consultation with the Lismore Catholic Schools Office and via its own research, the executive team at St Mary's decided adopting a compressed curriculum was the best way of "future proofing" the school.

The executive managed to find about 15 schools, mostly regional and some quite isolated, which had adopted this style, and consulted with them widely.

St Mary's is now transitioning into the compressed curriculum this year.

Compressed curriculum means that Years 11 and 12 students work together in class. So in Term 4 Year 10 will begin their HSC learning with Year 11s.

Students study three subjects only in Year 11 and complete the preliminary and HSC courses for these three topics. The next three subjects are completed the following year. As students are studying half as many subjects, twice as much teaching time is allocated to each subject – classes are one hour lessons but there is often two hours of classes in a day.

Pollock, the school's Assistant Principal and the Leader of Pedagogy spent quite a while gathering information and models on compressed curriculum before the idea was floated with the school community.

"We didn't want people imagining what it would be like and coming up with the worse case scenario," Pollock said.

"I had a good look at the structural side of things like timetabling and hours for subjects. Most schools we had spoken with were very positive about compressed curriculum."

As a software and design teacher, Pollock said he has found daily two hour classes, or one hour before and after the lunch or recess breaks, allows him to "roll on" with learning.

"If you see students for an hour and then there's a big gap, you might spend 10 minutes at the start of each lesson reminding them of what you did last time. It's much fresher in their minds when you see them every day.

"In fact, a lot of teachers have found they have completed the preliminary course a lot sooner than they expected."

Pollock said compressed curriculum offers more flexibility in timetabling, because he was able to put together line patterns offering two chances to do



We've never seen having two year groups in the class as a

the class as a disadvantage. The younger kids in the class will be mixing with older kids that have already done three HSC exams.

"

English and Studies of Religion for instance, so students were able to do their first choice subjects.

Prior to the compressed curriculum some students had been forced to take expensive TAFE courses or just miss out on a subject altogether.

Subjects like physics and chemistry, with the combined year group, could potentially have 10-15 students rather than three or four, which Pollock said offers a better dynamic, livelier and with more chances for discussion.

"We've never seen having two year groups in the class as a disadvantage. The younger kids in the class will be mixing with older kids that have already done three HSC exams."

Concerns were raised initially, particularly by teachers of project based subjects that there would not be enough time to complete major projects for the HSC.

Pollock said while the calendar time for major projects has reduced, the classroom time is the same, if not slightly increased.

"Our TAS teachers used to have one hour classes for subjects such as woodwork. By the time they had unpacked it was nearly time to pack up again. Now they have the potential for two hour classes they are quite happy with the progress they can make.

"Once people got their heads around how the compressed curriculum works they were okay.

"One problem we hadn't initially anticipated was the maturity of writing

that develops over time. We are addressing that by doing more explicit teaching on how to approach long answer questions, tackling it a bit more quickly than we might do normally to get kids up to speed."

The parent community has accepted the change, he said. At subject selection interviews parents gave positive feedback because their children could choose the subjects they wished to study.

Parents who have older children that have been through the traditional HSC process said they were finding the three subjects a year routine less stressful.

The doubling of lesson time had also sparked an interest in experimenting with new pedagogical techniques among some teachers.

Pollock and several others have introduced 'flipped lessons' or 'flipped classrooms'.

Originating from the US, flipped teaching involves providing students with new content to study at home, usually in the form of an online video so that classroom time is devoted to discussion or practical application.

"That way students get to see the content twice, and they don't do the hard work, applying it, at home."

If you would like to speak to the St Mary's executive about compressed curriculum, email the College at smhcas@lism.catholic.edu.au





Protocols for acknowledging traditional ownership set out the ways in which organisations display their respect for traditional owners and elders at formal and informal events. including meetings, seminars and conferences. When planning an event, a good place to start is to consult with Aboriginal staff within your school or workplace, the local **Aboriginal organisations** in your community or the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education** Consultative groups in your state or territory.

You can then gather information and advice about:

- the traditional owners of the specific country in which your event is to be held
- the appropriate level of recognition, and
- the appropriate ceremonies and performances.

Australia is made up of many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander countries and peoples, each with their culture, language, beliefs and customs. Traditionally, when Aboriginal people travelled, they would not enter another's country until the traditional owners of that land welcomed them.

The Welcome to Country is a traditional practice that has special significance. Welcome to Country should only be delivered by the Aboriginal people in their own local homelands and community and this could be an Elder, an adult or child who belongs to country. It is generally given at the commencement of any gathering and is a significant recognition of the guardianship of Australia by the traditional owners.

The Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered by Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people, both adults and children. It is delivered at the commencement of a gathering, meeting or function by the chairperson, an Elder or a student. The Acknowledgement of Country is recorded in the minutes of the meetings. When the name of the traditional custodians is known, it is specifically used but when it is not known, a general acknowledgment can be given instead. During the gathering, meeting or function other speakers may also give

acknowledgement to the traditional owners of the land.

There are a number of examples of Acknowledgement of Country with some organisations specifically creating unique and meaningful ceremonies in the context of their workplace or school. Further information about Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country can be found on the website of each State and Territory's Department of Premier and Cabinet.

A sample could be:

"I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. I pay my respects to the elders past and present, knowing the stories of the Aboriginal people will always be written in this landscape."

Or:

"I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. I pay my respects to elders, past and present and the Elders from other communities who may here with us today."

By incorporating Aboriginal cultural practices and ceremonies into official events, we are able to recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal people, their heritage and culture. We also demonstrate recognition of Aboriginal people and their culture every time we acknowledge Country and the Elders, both past and present.

Karen Forbes IEUA NSW /ACT Branch Organiser working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Party.

Speaking the language of technology

Are you a language teacher thinking about how best to use technology in your classroom? Or perhaps you want to brush up on your own language skills? Either way, fortunately there are lots of useful tools available. In this article, IEUA NSW/ACT Organiser Keith Heggart profiles three of the most popular.

Duolingo

This is one of the most popular language learning apps available at the moment. It has more than 50 million learners are registered for its Spanish courses, while there are 30 million French learners. There are other languages available, including Swedish, Turkish, Russian, with more languages like Vietnamese, Swahili and Hindi currently being added. As a side note, apparently Klingon (from Star Trek) will soon be offered!

Duolingo is deceptively simple. Each language course is structured into different sections, starting from simple and working up to more complex. The sections themselves are short, with an emphasis

on vocabulary, made up of listening, speaking and writing (typing)
exercises. Once a section is mastered, a learner can move onto the next one, but each section fades over time and requires revision.
If you are already an advanced learner, you can take a test to unlock more advanced content.

There are game based elements to Duolingo that might make it appeal to young (and older) learners. For example, the more practice you undertake, the higher your level. You can also have a leaderboard with friends showing who has earned the most points over a given period. And finally,

successful completion of a section earns you lingots, gems that can be spent on online goodies and unlocking new sections for you to learn.

As a side feature, Duolingo also offers an immersion section. In this section, learners translate sections of the web (there are a lot of excerpts from Wikipedia articles). They submit their translations for approval by the community. This feature ensures that there is some degree of freshness to the activities, although it should be noted that much of Duolingo is based on repetition.

Duolingo is available on Tablet, Phone and Computer. It is free.

Memrise

Memrise is very similar to Duolingo, but it has the added bonus of many more languages. There are more than 200 languages available for learners, and it uses a clever system of adaptive learning technology to ensure that students are constantly being challenged, but not beyond their abilities. Like Duolingo, there is an emphasis on games based learning.

Memrise uses a flower analogy to describe the learning process. New information is planted like 'seeds' in short term memory, and over time, as the skills and information are practiced, they become strong flowers, and are part of the learner's long term memory.

Memrise encourages users to set a daily goal of a certain number of points, and then it reminds learners at a certain time to complete the daily goal. This feature is a useful one, and the courses are short and simple enough that they can be completed while sitting on a bus or waiting in line.

Memrise is actually much more than just langauges – it has already made the jump to other subject areas, and offers courses on things like geography, history and science. In fact, there are more than 300,000 courses available for learners.

Unlike Duolingo, however, Memrise has adopted a Freemium model. While basic courses are free after a learner registers, more advanced courses must be purchased with a subscription. This model would demand consideration should a teacher think about adopting Memrise in their classroom.

ELLA

ELLA (Early Learning Languages Australia) is the federal government's program to boost the number of students studying languages. It is currently being trialled in preschools across Australia. Rather than a single app, there are 35 different apps that have been developed around five languages – Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, French and Arabic.

The apps are designed to appeal to younger children, so there is an emphasis on play, animation and surprises.

According to the review, the results from the program have been encouraging, and there are plans to potentially roll it out nationally in 2017.

ELLA is currently on trial. More information can be found here: https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia

Keith Heggart published information on this topic in e-teaching, ACEL, April 2016.



IEUA-QNT member Linda Brady of St **Benedict's Catholic Primary School north** of Brisbane has been travelling to Uganda for more than a decade helping to provide resources and improve conditions in disadvantaged communities. Here she reflects on her experience with IE Journalist Alex Leggett. She believes the country can overcome its war torn past to build a brighter future for the next generation.

Linda and her husband John have been travelling to Uganda since 2005 to help run an annual leadership conference, empowering men and women in the community to be self sustainable.

The Leadership Leaven Conference is organised through NET ministries Uganda and aims to create leaders at individual, church and organisational levels based on Christian leadership principles.

"We help Ugandans who are prepared to put their own money and efforts into a project, people who are already doing wonderful things, then we work with them or find them a partner so they can turbocharge their initiatives," Linda said.

She said over the years these projects have ranged from feeding programs in schools, where many children come to school without meals, counselling support for child soldiers, through to micro financing local initiatives such as pineapple plantations.

"The conference is not about giving charity, though we freely give our time and pay our own expenses as our investment is about raising community leaders," she said.

Linda said that the event gets bigger every year, with people now attending from neighbouring countries like Kenya and Tanzania.

"We have met people from all walks of life including community leaders, business people, politicians, educators, medical professionals and university students," she said.

"There are many success stories including one woman from northern Uganda who had experienced all that the atrocities of war can dish out to innocent people.

"After hearing about the conference, she walked and hitchhiked for days and thought if it could give her one new strategy or idea that she could use it would be worth the journey.

"When we first met her, she wanted to devote her life to looking after what was left of her family and community.

"Later she became a counsellor, working with troubled people including returned child soldiers.



"She is a strong and determined woman and we were privileged enough to get to know her."

There can be as many as 200 students in just

one classroom, which was the case in one of the refugee camps we saw.

77

Fundraising for resources

In addition to the conference, Linda and her husband also have a partnership with their local parish, Our Lady of the Way, Petrie and St Bruno's Parish in Ssaza, a poor parish of Masaka.

"Our parish has been very generous, helping fund programs to support the HIV/ AIDS widows and orphans," she said.

She said Uganda has one of the world's fastest growing and youngest populations, with more people being under the age of 18 than adults.

"Many of the country's young people have grown up without a father figure and the elderly are often raising grandchildren because of the impact of war and the HIV/AIDS epidemic," she said.

Due to the large population of young Ugandans, one of the biggest challenges in schools is the size of classes.

"There can be as many as 200 students in just one classroom, which was the case in one of the refugee camps we saw," Linda said.

"In the villages, the numbers can fluctuate on a daily basis. One of the reasons for this is the long distances children have to walk to school." Principal and unionist, Ayosius Mukasa, of St Joseph's Primary School Masaka, said the cluttered education system is a huge problem.

"There are too many kids in classrooms, in my school's Year 1 class there are 167 kids," he said.

"This makes it very difficult for teachers to teach and mark the books in the lesson – so time management becomes a problem."

Mr Mukasa said the Ugandan government must provide more school buildings and resources to help address the problem.

"We need to adopt new systems and learn from other countries," he said.

"Teachers' salaries are not good enough and this needs to be improved as they are doing a really big job."

Linda said they work closely with St Joseph's, helping provide them with vital learning resources.

"Each year I go to Uganda, St Benedict's is very supportive and through their generosity we raised over \$1000 last year for much needed stationery at St Joseph's," she said.

Linda said it is much easier to take money with them as they already bring goods such as garments and books to donate.

"Using the money raised, we are able to buy the necessary supplies from Masaka to help boost the local economy," she said.

"When we first came to Uganda over 10 years ago, it was going to be a oneoff trip. But after the first visit the people got into our heart so we made a five year commitment there and then."

That commitment ended six years ago and the couple still find themselves returning every year.

"We love the children and the challenge of helping people take control of their lives to make a difference to their future, their family, their community and hopefully the country," she said.

"We may not be able to make a big difference, but we can start by giving people the skills, resources and support they need to get started."

For more information or to donate to the cause, contact Linda at lebrady@bne.catholic.edu.au

Significant changes to super

Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison delivered his first budget speech on 3 May 2016, which introduced significant changes to superannuation to provide greater equity and sustainability of the system. The changes are in line with the government's objective for superannuation which is "to provide income in retirement to substitute or supplement the age pension". The following points are the most significant proposed changes that you should be aware of:

- From 1 July 2017, the concessional contributions cap will be reduced to \$25,000 per year for all ages.
 Both employer and salary sacrifice contributions fall into this category.
- From 1 July 2017, a Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO), formerly known as the Low Income Superannuation Contribution, of up to \$500 will apply to individuals earning up to \$37,000 per year who have a concessional contribution (pre-tax) made on their behalf.
- From 1 July 2017, a \$1.6 million transfer balance cap will be placed on the total amount of accumulated superannuation which can be transferred into a retirement income account. Any amounts over this figure can be placed back into the accumulation account where a concessional tax of 15% will apply to earnings.
- The existing tax exemption for transition to retirement (TTR) income streams will be removed from 1 July 2017, meaning that earnings from TTR income streams will be taxed at 15%.
- Effective from 3 May 2016, there will be a \$500,000 lifetime cap placed on non concessional contributions which include all after tax contributions made after 1 July 2007. This change replaces the current \$180,000 per year non concessional contribution cap.
- The removal of the work test for people aged 65 to 74 will allow them to make

- voluntary after tax contributions until age 74.
- The income threshold for a 30% tax rate on super contributions has been reduced to \$250,000 from \$300,000.
- Catch up concessional pre tax contributions will be permitted for people with balances of less than \$500,000. This means that the unused portion of their concessional cap for five years can be rolled over. It is aimed at people who have had broken work patterns to enable to 'catch-up' when they are able to starting from 1 July 2017.
- Deferred annuities and self annuitisation products will also receive tax exemptions on their earnings making them more attractive as retirement products.
- Additional funding for the Australian Securities and Investment Commission and the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal will be provided.
- The low income spouse super tax offset is proposed to be extended to spouses earning up to \$37,000 per annum which would continue to provide an eligible contributing spouse up to \$540 per year.

Bernard O'Connor: NGS Super

The information in this article is general information only and does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a financial decision, please assess the appropriateness of the information to your individual circumstances, read the Product Disclosure Statement for any product you may be thinking of acquiring and consider seeking personal advice. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Any opinions are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of NGS Super.)



Support staff – tell us your story

In the next issue of *IE* we'd like to run a section focusing on the fascinating and diverse work that is done by support and operational staff in our schools.

Please tell us what matters to you and what you'd like to read about in *IE*.

Archivists

Aboriginal Education

Workers

Bursars and accounts staff

Teachers aides

Clerical and administrative

staff

Journalists and

communication staff

Foundation and event

management staff

Maintenance staff

Operational staff

Gardeners

Tradespeople

Canteen staff

Uniform shop staff

Nurses

Counsellors

Information technology staff

Boarding house staff

Bus drivers

Caretakers and security staff

Lab technician



Super is like a good education.

You'll appreciate it in the future.

giec.com.au





QIEC Super Pty Ltd ABN 81 010 897 480, the Trustee of QIEC Super ABN 15 549 636 673, is Corporate Authorised Representative No. 268804 under Australian Financial Services Licence No. 238507 and is authorised to provide general financial product advice in relation to superannuation. QIEC MySuper Product Unique Identifier 15549636673397.

We want to hear your story, so contact us at iemagazine@ieu.asn.au and tell us what matters to you

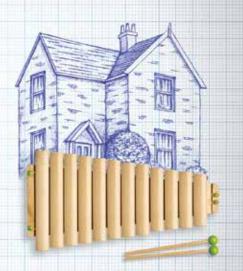


A home loan that's in tune with the needs of education professionals.

With our Education Package, we've done our homework. Because like you we're committed to helping people achieve their dreams.

- Discounts on a range of products.
- Owner occupiers and investors.
- 0.80% p.a. discount off Standard Home Loan variable interest rates.
- Suitable for construction, refinancing, renovating and first home buyers.

Call 1300 654 822 | Visit victeach.com.au



Education Package Home Loan

3.94%

4.26%

Comparison Rate

Variable interest rate.
Owner Occupied loans with LVR of 80% or less.
\$300 Annual Package fee.

Interest rate effective 23 May 2016 and correct at time of printing. Interest rate subject to change. Check website for current rates. \$50,000 minimum loan increase for existing customers switching from a loan funded prior to 1 December 2015. 1. Comparison rate calculated on a secured loan amount of \$150,000 for a term of 25 years. WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the example given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees and other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate. Fees and charges apply. Terms and Conditions available upon request. Victoria Teachers Limited ABN 44 087 651 769, AFSL/Australian Credit Licence Number 240 960.

INSURANCE FOR YOUR PEACE OF MIND.

BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUR BIGGEST ASSET.

Although we don't like to think about bad things happening to us, the reality is that it can happen. Of the working population in Australia, one in six men and one in four women from the age of 35-65 are likely to suffer from a disability that causes a loss of six months or more from work¹. So having a backup plan in case something happens, is something worth thinking about.

As a member of NGS Super, you receive award-winning insurance automatically². This means you have life, disability and income protection insurance that is top of its class! Automatic cover from the winner of *Best Fund: Insurance*³ in 2015 means automatic peace of mind knowing that you have the best cover possible, just in case.

To learn more about our award-winning insurance please visit www.ngssuper.com.an/insurance.







Issued by NGS Super Pty Limited ABN 46 003 491 487 AFSL No 233 154 the Trustee of NGS Super ABN 73 549 180 515.

¹Based on Australian insured lives and disability income business experience from 1989 to 1993 (Table IAD 89-93) published by the Institute of Actuaries of Australia.

²Automatic insurance cover is available for eligible members of the NGS Super Industry section.

³NGS Super was awarded 'Best Fund: Insurance 2015' by independent rating agency, Chant West.