



The English Teachers
Association of Queensland Inc.

Providing professional support
and advocacy for English teachers

EARLY CAREER CONFERENCE

FINDING YOUR FEET

FIRST IMPRESSIONS, FOCUSSED PRACTICE AND FACING YOUR FEARS
F-WORDS FROM THE FIRST YEARS OF ENGLISH TEACHING

Saturday, 23 October 2021

Wynnum State High School
25 Peel Street, MANLY



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The Context

Whether you are taking your first steps, following your passion down a new pathway or focussing on extending your repertoire, FINDING YOUR FEET promises to be an engaging professional opportunity.

Research shows that teachers develop the characteristics of their pedagogy and practice in their first five years of teaching. The research also tells us that the biggest influence on how teachers' pedagogy is shaped comes from their peers. So why not take the opportunity to hear from some fabulous presenters and begin forming a professional network?

The Early Career Conference is here to help you find your feet in these foundational years. This is a valuable opportunity for anyone in their first few years of teaching the subject English. Whatever your stage, you will find something to help you foster the fundamental skills and flourish in professional practices.

The day will provide high quality professional development specifically tailored to the needs of English teachers and seeks to build on the most important f words – flexibility, fostering support networks, finding alternatives and focussing on students' learning. This year's program features workshops covering a range of professional and curriculum-related issues, presented by beginning teachers, and experienced English teachers.

Keynote: Formative Feedback Loops: The Double Helix of Collaborative Learning



The double helix describes the molecular shape formed when two linear strands that run opposite to each other twist together. Connected by smaller bonds, the degree of freedom expressed - the bending, twisting and compression - is inherent to their linked relationships. Learner and teacher feedback relationships mirror this. Joined by learning goals, cycles of feedback and classroom experiences, our double helix in English can set the DNA for critical professional learning that impacts on the very make up of our work!

Beginning teachers are critical to our identity as professionals and so this workshop is designed to help set the DNA for focussed feedback practices, fantastic foundational habits, and foster our future teacher educators!

Carly Sopronick is well known for her dynamic, energetic, and engaging style – both in the classroom and in conferences. Carly currently works at Pimlico State High School in Townsville, but has taught across all year levels in English as well as in a multitude of curriculum areas through team-teaching. She's the co-founder and co-coordinator of the FNQ regional Cluster Collaboration Network, has been a member of the Centres for Learning and Well Being with Education Queensland. She was the Master of Ceremonies at June HALT national summit conference, and is a Lead Teacher under the AITSL standards. Her outstanding practice has been recognised at the state Showcase Awards, with Carly winning Queensland Teacher of the Year in 2018.

Program

Time	Activity	Presenter
8:30 – 9:00	Registration and Sign-in for Covid Safe contact tracing	
9:00 am	Introduction and welcome	Lindsay Williams, President
9:10 – 10:10am	Keynote: Formative Feedback Loops: The Double Helix of Collaborative Learning	Carly Sopronick
10:15 – 11:00am	Session 2: 2A: Fashioning Fun with Fiction: Working with War Poetry OR 2B: Finding Freedom: My First Five Years in a Country Town OR 2C: Fixing the Fearsome Five: Solving the Most Common Problems in Oral Presentations	Shannyn Gilberd and Sam Crawford Amy Bray Kevin Ryan and Adrian Pauley
11:05-11:50	Session 3: 3A: The Fundamentals: English Teaching Starter Pack OR 3B: Fitting Fictions: short stories in the English classroom OR 3C: Free Verse: Poetry Freedom	Jack Selman Juliette Holmes and Alex Smith Anne Wood
11:50 – 12:35pm	Lunch + Networking	
12:35 – 1:20pm	Session 4: 4A: Modelling Writing: A Foolproof Feature to Foster a Flourishing Classroom. OR 4B: Farcical Fictions of Teaching OR 4C: Feeling Free to Fail Forwards	Elyse Smallacombe Sinead Dean Steven Wallace
1:25-2:10	Session 5: 5A: Foundations of grammar? How about fun! OR 5B: Favouring Forethought for Fierce Learning	Sophie Butler Ben Hore and Carly Sopronick
2:15-2:25	Close	Ellen McGuigan & Belinda Hampton

This program constitutes 4.45 hours CPD

Register at www.etaq.org.au

Cost \$45



Covid Safety

A Covid Safe Plan will be in place for this event. The key features are:

- Sign-in using the Check in Qld app;
- maintain the required physical distance from others;
- a pre-packaged lunch will be served to you.

If you are not well on the day, please do not come

The full Plan is available for your perusal from a link on the event page.

Session 2

A. Fashioning Fun with Fiction: Working with War Poetry

Abstract

Does the thought of teaching 'creativity' give you the collywobbles? Do you perspire at the prospect of producing poetry? Do you want to feel more confident in your creative writing practices?

This presentation will share a collection of activities designed to appeal to the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners of your classrooms by building fields of knowledge, deconstructing texts and constructing original, imaginative pieces. Honed with year 12 General English students completing IA3: imaginative written response, these skills are relevant and transferrable for all year levels. Utilising a variety of teaching tools is highly beneficial in encouraging active participation and developing confidence with creative writing, ultimately reflecting in the quality of responses from our students.

You will leave this session with access to a bank of tools to creatively engage learners and spark inspiration to create your own magic.

Presenters

Samantha Crawford and **Shannyn Gilbert** are enthusiastic English teachers based at Pimlico State High School. Serving as year coordinators, Sam and Shannyn take pride in encouraging students to participate in a plethora of activities.

Incorporating understandings from their additional subject areas of Modern History and Music, these earring-aficionados have

co-created a war-poetry inspired creative writing unit that engages and excites even the most reluctant of students.

Outside of work these passionate pet mums can often be found enjoying the local handmade markets, eating woodfired pizza or sampling Townsville city's selection of cocktail menus.

B. Finding Freedom: My First Five Years in a Country Town

Abstract

This presentation will be about finding freedom not only as a developing teacher, but as a person, during my country service in Bowen, North Queensland. My 5 years in Bowen were some of the best times of my life and I would love to share my experiences of getting to know the students, their backgrounds, connecting with staff and sharing how I grew from a Brisbane Private School Girl (who had never moved out of home) to an empowered educator. Country service is often thought of the 'worst case scenario' for a graduates and I would love to change that perception through sharing anecdotes, tips I've learned and how I became a confident English and Drama teacher.

Presenter

Amy Bray is a 36 year old mother of two from Brisbane. After five years in Bowen, Amy transferred to Murrumba State Secondary College where she worked as a Senior English teacher for 8 years, teaching English, General English and Literature (my favourite subject). Amy is now the Head of Department Teaching and Learning at



Burpengary State Secondary College where she teaches Year 12 General English and Year 9 English. Amy is a lover of rosé, Shakespeare, reading, the musical *Hamilton* and Queensland Maroons.

C. Fixing the Fearsome Five

Abstract

We have been observing students doing their oral presentations for over 25 years. In that time classrooms have changed, topics have changed, technology has changed ... but some things haven't changed. Students are still making the same mistakes as they always have.

These top five problems have frustrated every teacher trying to teach oral presentation skills:

- The student reads to the class
- The delivery lacks engagement
- The content lacks relevance and purpose
- The student appears ill-prepared
- The student's aids for speaking (speech notes and/or slideshow) hinder rather than help them deliver with confidence

We will show the ways we have addressed the root causes of these problems and how these principles can be taught most effectively to meet the needs of today's curriculum. Classroom activities and student exercises that can be used for students of all levels of ability and confidence will be demonstrated.

Presenters

Kevin Ryan & Adrian Pauley have over 25 years of experience at teaching students the skills and techniques for successful oral presentations. They have distilled this experience into strategies that can be used in the classroom - by any teacher. They have co-authored the following books: *Speaking Out*, *Speaking and Debating with Style*, *Primary Speaking and Listening* and *CDs Speak Well*, *Impromptu Speaking* and *Teaching the Persuasive Oral*.

Session 3

A. The Fundamentals: English Teaching Starter Pack

Abstract

We know tapping into the creativity of our students is what builds their engagement with English, but we also know that managing behaviour is a real challenge in the English classroom. In addition, we need regular formative assessment to figure out whether our students are on the right track. This workshop aims to provide examples of activities that strike a balance between the demands mentioned above. I will cover a few of my go-to activities, how I use them as formative assessment, how the activities can be differentiated, and my approach to managing behaviour during each one. The activities include:

- Character-profiling your audience.
- Symbols and significance on novel covers.
- Film studies for the tech-addicts.
- Class starts in 30 and I have nothing.

Presenter

Jack Selman is a graduate from the Queensland University of Technology who began his career at Stanthorpe State High School after participating in the Kelvin Grove Teacher Education Centre of Excellence program. Since 2019, Jack has taught English in years 7-10, Essential English and General English. Jack has also been a part of the Behaviour Management Team and the Pedagogical Framework Team at Stanthorpe, seeing collegial feedback to teachers as essential to the improvement of practice.

B. Fitting Fictions: Short stories in the English classroom

Abstract

This workshop explores using short stories in English from Years 7 – 12. We will look at reading strategies suitable for junior, Essential and General English classes using

DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) and strategies from George Saunders' book 'A Swim in a Pond in the Rain'.

We will look at using short fiction to explore and emulate writing styles; to introduce diverse voices into the English classroom; share some of our successes and failures; and arm beginning teachers with a host of resources for teaching with short fiction.

Presenters

Originally from the UK, **Juliette Holmes** is a graduate of UQ and has been teaching in Queensland state schools for seven years. She currently teaches General English, Literature and Year 9 English at Park Ridge State High School. She is also a QCAA marker for English EA and mentor to Alex Smith.

Alex Smith is a Brisbane native and first year teacher at Park Ridge State High School where she has taught all grades, currently focusing on Essential English in Yrs 10 – 12.

C. Free Verse: Poetry Freedom

Abstract

Do you feel apprehensive about teaching poetry? Are you afraid you don't have the skills and knowledge to teach poetry effectively? You are not alone! Teacher knowledge and attitudes to the genre of poetry have been linked to the success and failure of poetry teaching. Researchers have found teachers' apprehension to teach the genre stems from their own insufficient knowledge and a belief that students do not understand poetry. Teachers who believe they can teach poetry will enable all students to engage in the genre and their students are more likely to be successful in reading and writing poetry.

This practical session will increase your confidence in teaching poetry. You will learn how to create poetry units of work and assessments for all year levels that can lead your students to a poetic heart rather than away from it.

Presenter

Anne Wood has over 25 years' experience as an English Teacher. She has taught in both NSW and QLD, in the State, Independent and Catholic systems. At her current school AB Paterson College, she is the Head of English. Her passion is literature, in particular poetry. She is currently studying a Doctor of Education at Queensland University of Technology.

Session 4

A. Modelling Writing: A Foolproof Feature to Foster a Flourishing Classroom.

Abstract

The "I do" element of the Gradual Release of Responsibility is a crucial bridge to foster students' confidence in writing. It is easy to hand students an A sample piece of work and say, "this is what an A looks like." The challenge lies in showing them what processes they can use to get there.

Modelling writing using think-alouds centres on the teacher demonstrating the thoughts and actions that go into creating a text and gives students practical strategies to elevate their writing. Purposeful modelling allows students to identify strategies to elevate writing, consider why the strategies are being drawn on, judge their effectiveness, then apply them in their own work.

Become a student in my middle school classroom as I model the fundamentals of making your thinking visible.

Presenter

Elyse Smallacombe is in her fourth year of teaching and currently teaches a range of general and essential English classes from grades 7-12 at St Laurences College. She has previously taught at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide and at Hanoi Adelaide School in Hanoi, Vietnam, teaching the SACE and SACE International respectively.

B. Farcical Fictions of Teaching

Abstract

The teaching profession is often represented as pristine, well-adorned classrooms with beautifully artistic worksheets; quiet, industrious students and smiling and confident teachers. This farcical fiction belongs in a Disney world!

I am a social media maniac, film fanatic and crafty creator who entered my first year of teaching with a romanticised and idealistic perception of what my classroom, resources, and teaching would be and look like. I fell off my pedestal – and hard! Learning is messy, noisy and if you want to sleep – your resources won't be 'instaworthy'. And that is OKAY! I would like to share 5 of my most significant realisations and how they have enhanced my practice, changed my perception of what a quality professional 'looks like', and allowed me still have a life:

- Planning – moderation processes
- Resourcing – quality over presentation
- Student driven – group & pair work
- Marking – calibrating and celebrating
- Wellbeing – making time for yourself!

Presenter

Sinead Dean is a perfectionist learning to be self-reflective, rather than highly critical! Sinead teaches all English classes, with a dream to take on a technologies class so she can share her love of textiles and craft with students in a legitimate way! Sinead is a lover of learning – her own and engaging others. This is Sinead's first foray into presenting and she is both terrified and excited about sharing practices.

C. Feeling Free to Fail Forwards

Abstract

Failing, finding friends, feeling defeated, and fighting fatigue. The early years of any career are fraught with mistakes. This session is about the many ways to tackle, and get the most out of, errors in the English classroom.

Presenter

Steven Wallace has taught in Australia, Vanuatu, and the UK, engaging with various curriculums and student populations. He is currently Head of Faculty English at St Patrick's College, Shorncliffe.

Session 5

A. Foundations of grammar? How about fun!

Abstract

Since the advent of the Australian Curriculum: English and its 'Language' strand, evidence-based systematic and explicit grammar-based approaches have once again become à la mode. However, many teachers – particularly those who have recently undergone a Middle or Secondary Years teaching degree – barely learn the grammar and mechanics of language at university, let alone how to teach it effectively! This presentation aims to equip early career teachers with the knowledge of teaching grammar, punctuation and vocabulary effectively and enjoyably by exploiting tools such as:

- kinaesthetic learning activities (e.g., Flyswat game);
- colour-coding;
- injecting humour;
- teaching grammatical concepts with metaphors (e.g., embedded clauses are the delicious meat patty of an otherwise dry and boring burger bun!);
- importance of modelling and encouraging metalinguistic discourse from students.

By teaching our students the value of grammar, they will become cognisant of "the infinite repertoire of choices which are available to them as writers" and thus "better express themselves with greater craft and creativity" (Myhill & Watson, 2014).

Presenter

A tragically passionate enthusiast of grammar, **Sophie Butler** graduated as a

secondary French and English teacher from the University of Queensland in 2018. She began working at Ipswich Grammar School in 2020. Now completing a Master of Education (Contemporary Literacies), Sophie aspires to coach others' literacy practices to ensure that both practitioner and student can benefit from an improved understanding of the inner workings of language. After all: there is no greater weapon of thought than writing itself.

B. Favouring Forethought for Fierce Learning

Abstract

As beginning and early career teachers we are often consumed with the organisational elements of our classroom practices which can often seem overwhelming and very time-consuming. Regardless of system, sector and year level, there are some essential processes you can engage in to streamline your planning and enhance the implementation of learning.

During this workshop we will apprentice into ways of unpacking the critical skills, processes and content for a unit based on the Education Queensland Moderation Processes of Before, After, After, End. We will examine ways of sequencing the learning and differentiating for the specific learners in our class. Then we will undertake a blind-making calibration of a junior secondary English task against the QCAA standard elaboration criteria. This workshop will build your confidence and provide evidence-based approaches to the effective teaching and learning of a unit

Presenters

Ben Hore is a second-year teacher at Pimlico State High School who was trained to teach in the English and Mathematics subject areas at James Cook University. Ben has been a classroom teacher of Yrs 8-12 English and a Year 7 numeracy support class. Ben exercises through social sport and reads in his spare time. He epitomises lifelong learner attributes and soaks up,

transforms and applies this learning in his own contexts. He is a compelling young teacher who shares and supports both his students and peers to engage in reflective practice.

Carly Sopronick is a Certified Lead Teacher at Pimlico State High School who has worked across sectors and states in a variety of roles from relief teacher, HoD Teaching Services & Learning Support, Master Teacher, CLaW Head of Learning, Pedagogical Coach and classroom teacher of Years 7-12 English and 7-9 Humanities. Above all else she is a parent, avid sewer, whimsical weaver and macramé maker – though if there were standards applied to these she would not make the continuum!