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EDITORIAL

Stewart Riddle

University of Southern Queensland

Hi everyone and welcome to the first issue of *Words'Worth* for 2014. It has been quite a politically-charged start to the year, with Christopher Pyne announcing a review of the Australian Curriculum, the Greens leading an inquiry into school funding, the growth of Independent Public Schools in Queensland, and the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Group on Teacher Education. All of these policy-level movements have significant implications for English teaching, which we will see unfold over the year.

In this current context of English teaching, it seems that the theme for our 2014 State Conference is very appropriately titled, "Great Expectations: Stability and Change in English Teaching". The theme captures the sense of the 'moment' we're in, where there is much optimism and goodwill in English teaching, yet at the same time, we are facing numerous complexities and challenges in the profession. I encourage you to consider presenting and/or attending this year's conference as well as thinking about contributing to the next couple of issues of *Words'Worth* if you are able to spare a little time from your busy schedule.

As always, we have some really great contributions to this issue. Kate Townsend starts by providing a really thought-provoking reflection on her experiences at last year's AATE-ALEA national conference and considers the explicit modelling of writing in the English classroom. This is followed by some information on the Medal of the Order of Australia for Paul Sherman, a founding ETAQ member and recently-awarded life member.

John Acutt shares with us a heartfelt poem called, *The Teacher*, while Garry Collins gives us

the second instalment of *A Bushranger's Story*. If you'd like to read the first instalment, you'll find it in Vol. 46, No. 2. Given the recent criticisms in the *Australian* about the lack of poetry in schools, Garry's excellent resources are most welcome!

The 2013 ETAQ Secretary's Report is provided in full for members to see the great range of activities and engagements of the organisation last year. It is an impressive set of achievements and something for which we can be very proud. Ian Hamilton's intriguing article on empathy is well-worth the read, as is Natalie Fong's engaging second instalment of her ultimate Shakespeare experience (you can read the first half in Vol. 46, No. 3).

Anita Jetnikoff and Mel Kelly provide us with a really useful annotated guide for texts that can be used in exploring sustainability in literature for the Australian Curriculum. We then have the first batch of wonderful winning entries from the 2013 Literary Competition, with the rest to follow next issue, and finally Patsy Norton's article on *Issues facing students in conceptualising and planning before writing*.

Thanks very much for taking the time to read through these great pieces and please get in touch with me if you are interested in contributing to our journal.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the terrific work that 'tireless' Trish Purcell and 'eagle eye' Deb Peden do in helping me put together the journal. While I get the credit, both Trish and Deb give generously of their time and proof-reading prowess to help bring it all together.

Until next time,

Stewart Riddle
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ETAQ PATRON'S MESSAGE

Professor Catherine Beavis

Griffith University

Dear ETAQ members,

In March this year, I was one of almost two hundred ETAQ members attending the first ETAQ seminar for 2014. There were many threads and stories running across the day. Themes that for me stood out most strongly were those of conversation and community; the need to affirm and assert the centrality of creativity, openness, engagement and learning, and to speak back to those views and practices that limit English through narrowly managerialist approaches and assessment. These ideas stood out in Brenton Doecke's keynote particularly, but were also there in presentations and discussion throughout the day.

Conversation and community are closely linked. They characterise much of what English and English teaching is about, or should be. They also coincide strongly with the view of English running through the special issue of *English in Australia* on Garth Boomer, and his contribution to teaching and learning in Australia and internationally (Issue 48(3) 2013, released at the start of this year). As Green and Meiers say in their editorial, he was 'perhaps the most important English educator of the last quarter of the 20th Century, as well as being a major figure in Australian curriculum and schooling more generally (p.4). For Boomer, 'teaching was above all else for learning, in a profound sense (p.5)'. The titles of his books evoke powerful imperatives. They include, amongst others: *The Spitting Image: Reflections on Language Education and Social Class* (with Dale Spender, 1976); *Negotiating the Curriculum: A Teacher-Student Partnership* (1982); *Fair Dinkum Teaching and Learning: Reflections on Literacy and Power* (1985); and *Metaphors and Meanings: Essays on English Teaching by Garth Boomer* (Green, Ed, 1988).

English is one of those subjects that is more than the sum of its parts. It is, or should be, part of a lively conversation, with room for students to bring in their own experiences and concerns, engage with things that have major significance in their lives, and in the broader community; big issues, real matters, genuine learning. 'Negotiation' is a core term in Boomer's lexicon, as are 'learning' and 'meaning'. He saw both teachers and students as risk takers and explorers; as learners making sense of the world; trying things out; arguing, creating, negotiating; doing what matters and wrestling with real questions about the world and their own lives. It's a vision of English and English teaching that is socially responsible, individually empowering, and deeply connected to the community.

In his keynote, Doecke urged the importance of claiming back the subject, and for ways of talking 'not driven by the language of the market and the language of standardised reforms'. He spoke of working together, about listening and responding; about the power of stories, and the specificity and detail of school worlds and students' lives. He cited the STELLA principles – the Standards for Teaching English Language and Literacy in Australia (<http://www.stella.org.au/>) developed by AATE, and derived from teachers' own narratives, well worth revisiting. He spoke about creativity, negotiation and sociality, and the ways in which learning together, as a group, enables far more than a narrow focus on the individual, and atomized skills, imposed by mechanistic assessment regimes. He closed by asking us about our own professional lexicon or words for English. A good question. I wonder what yours might be.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Introduction

This is the 9th occasion on which it has been my honour to deliver the President's Address at the AGM of this association. It is also the last.

As at least some of you will recall, I succeeded Dr Karen Moni as President when she stepped down in July of 2005 following the completion of that year's AATE/ALEA joint national conference held on the Gold Coast. I had nominated for the Vice President's position at the start of that year in anticipation that that is how things would proceed.

As I have commented on a few occasions in the past, there is some little irony in the fact that I ceased being a full-time high school English teacher within two weeks of becoming president of ETAQ. That wasn't my plan, but sometimes things work out in ways that we don't intend. It was the best part of another four years before I actually retired from Education Queensland, but July 2005 was the last time I taught English classes in a high school.

Since 2005 I have served on the council of our affiliated national body, the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), mostly as the ETAQ rep and last year as President Elect. At the start of this year, I began a 2-year term as its President. While I plan to remain on the ETAQ Management Committee for a few more years – with the concurrence of members of course, I did not think it desirable to try to head both ETAQ and the national association at the same time.

In any case, nothing lasts forever and if organizations like ETAQ are to prosper, there need to be sensible succession plans in place so that they are periodically renewed and re-energized by the infusion of vigorous new blood in key positions. I am very pleased indeed that Fiona Laing, the English HOD at Forest Lake State High School, has nominated to succeed me.

The Secretary's Report will be formally presented a little later in this meeting and it

has been available on the website for the past week. It contains a detailed account of ETAQ's activities during 2013. In the remainder of this address I will just highlight some key elements of those activities and comment on some issues that are of current concern and look like being of importance into the near future.

KEY EVENTS OF 2013

National conference

Last year we did not run our usual State Conference. This was because, in collaboration with the Queensland branch of ALEA (the Australian Literacy Educators' Association), ETAQ hosted the AATE/ALEA joint national conference. Titled "Brave New World", this event was run at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus in early July. The actual event occurred over four days last year but formal planning for it began in May 2010.

I think it's fair to say that the event was a significant success and certainly a pleasing financial result was achieved. Now, ETAQ is of course a not-for-profit organization and making money is never the primary purpose in what we do.

However, funds accrued through occasional events like last year's national conference – something we get to do only one year in eight – can then be put to work for the benefit of members. A sizeable chunk of those funds will be used to provide assistance for selected members to attend national conferences between now and when Queensland's turn rolls around again.

While the Brave New World national conference was clearly a successful activity it was a little disappointing that not more ETAQ members took the opportunity to attend. I appreciate

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

that registration and other costs to attend such events are considerable and employer support is not always available. However, such national conferences provide the opportunity for dialogue about our work with educators from across the country and from overseas. They are both intellectually invigorating and a lot of fun.

This year's AATE/ALEA national conference will be held in Darwin in early July in the second week of the winter vacation for EQ schools. Recent ETAQ E-pistle member email bulletins have invited applications for financial assistance which will cover the cost of earlybird registration. Such applications are due by the end of March. If you don't actually open and read those E-pistles – and unfortunately only about a third of members do for any particular issue – then you may not have been previously aware of that offer.

New website

A major achievement in 2013 was to have a new website developed and launched. As part of the process, we acquired a new logo to be used in branding all of our publications. Besides looking attractive, the new website has significantly improved functionality so that most aspects of member-association interaction can now be done on line.

Jim Buckley's passing and State Conference memorial scholarships

A very sad event of the past year was the sudden passing in February of Jim Buckley. Jim was one of ETAQ's foundation members, he served as Treasurer for around 20 years, and he had been made a Life Member to acknowledge his lengthy and dedicated service to the association. As I was able to report this time last year, his funeral was well attended by members of the English teacher community who held him in high regard and I was pleased to be able to represent ETAQ by delivering one of the eulogies.

For some years now the association has been providing funds to assist country and student members to attend our State Conference. To commemorate Jim's significant and selfless

contribution to ETAQ, such grants will henceforth be known as "Jim Buckley Memorial Scholarships".

Review of the Australian Curriculum

Politicians like to claim that they create jobs. In relation to the economy as a whole many might wonder about that but certainly Minister Pyne's initiation of a review of the Australian Curriculum has generated some work for the Management Committee in the early part of this year. ETAQ contributed to a detailed AATE submission and prepared a shorter one of our own. This endorsed the AATE submission and added some comments specific to Queensland.

An Executive Summary of the two submissions could be expressed as follows:

- The review is premature
- Inappropriate people have been appointed to conduct it
- The Australian Curriculum: English is not perfect but it contains much of value and should be thoroughly understood and conscientiously worked with for a reasonable period before teachers' work is complicated by further change

We recommended that there should be no significant change to the English part of the national curriculum at this time. A similar recommendation was made in relation to the Cross Curriculum Priorities and the General Capabilities.

It will be interesting to see what comes of this review. It is to be hoped that it will not be another so-called "reform" that, in fact, makes things worse.

New CEO at the QSA and LARC membership

Those of you who read QSA Communications will be aware that the Authority is to have a new CEO as from the last day of this month. The new appointee is Chris Rider, currently Regional Director of EQ's Metropolitan Region. Chris is an ex PE teacher and was the last principal I worked under at Ferny Grove High School.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the start of last year we took the opportunity of the appointment of Patrea Walton to the top QSA job to re-raise the issue of the representation of subject associations like ETAQ on the QSA's Learning Area Reference Committees (LARCs). We'll be doing the same thing on this occasion.

As many of you will be aware, ETAQ was formally represented on the previous English Syllabus Advisory Committee (SAC) but this came to an end when the SACs were reestablished as LARCs. We are firm in our view that this was a retrograde step and we aren't prepared to let the matter go away.

Thanks to committee colleagues

In concluding, I'd like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the efforts and support cheerfully rendered by my colleagues on the Brisbane-based Management Committee and also those branch members who make ETAQ things happen in Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns – especially Donna Jones, Heather Fraser and Stephanie Wheeler-Sokolich respectively.

Things are always a team effort with individuals contributing what is possible with the various other commitments in their lives. It is appropriate, however, to make special mention of the following:

- Debbie Peden for her work coordinating the Literary Competition
- Stew Riddle for editing our journal *Words'Worth*
- Julie Arnold for providing leadership as chair of the PD Committee and Melanie Wild for taking minutes at those meetings
- Bronwyn Darben for stepping into the Secretary's role during the year and for her work with the previous website
- Trish Purcell for her invaluable work as Treasurer and Admin Officer

We do pay Trish a modest amount as our part-time Admin officer but her contribution is really a labour of love rather than a purely commercial arrangement and the value we receive is significantly greater than the amount would suggest. With valuable assistance from Fiona Laing, Trish was the driving force behind the new website.

As you'll see when we come to the election of the new committee, most members of the current one are continuing for another term.

Jenny Ivett-Hawes saw a need to step down during the year and, with retirement beckoning, Shauna O'Connor has not re-nominated. On behalf of members, I thank them for their contributions. They both convened seminars last year and arranged for their schools to be venues.

Finally I thank you, the members, for your support and participation.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, concludes my President's Address.

Garry Collins



MEET YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

Fiona Laing

When I worked throughout one entire night with a team to recreate Lady Di's wedding dress so it appeared in the display window of our bridal firm the morning after her wedding, I learnt how fabulous it is to be part of a 'happening group'. So it has been working with the ETAQ committee to make dreams happen – in our case, conferences, seminars, ideas and advocacy.

My first grown-up job selling wedding dreams to young women set me up as a skilled sales person. When I lost the passion for this and headed back to university, I had little idea that my training in selling dreams would come in so handy in the classroom. Every day, we take things that are ordinary and extraordinary, oft' too hard for our students, and package them appealingly. We sell, to our charges, the dream of an education, a great future and being able to hold one's own in educated company.

I can't really remember having to be 'sold' an education when I was at school. I was the enthusiast who just ate it up. When set a novel to read, I would use my hard-earned cash from weekend work to buy every book I could lay my hand on by that author. I'd consume them voraciously, desperately wanting to live inside those other worlds.

It took a few twists and turns before I came back to my love of literature and teaching. I remember coming into teaching thinking it would be

something I could just 'do', not expecting an apprenticeship period. My colleagues at Shailer Park State High School were a revelation to me – so very skilled and committed, as they gently guided me to learn my craft.

At both Shailer Park and later Indooroopilly, I spent countless hours helping passionate debaters play in the 'big team' of Senior A QDU Debating. The next move was HOD English, at Indooroopilly, Alexandra Hills and now at Forest Lake State High School. I love playing my part in shaping curriculum and our next generation of English teachers.

It is the ETAQ team who provides inspiration to keep learning and developing. Each new committee member brings their fresh enthusiasm and ideas to the task of advocating for teachers and making wonderful PD happen. From the thrill of our Brisbane national conference in 2013 to each and every seminar, all play their part.

We embroider our lives around the things we love. I sing in a choir, help to support my two sons, along with my incredibly supportive husband, and try to provide a real future for students, some well-placed already and some with very few advantages in life. Their big advantage, though, is they have a team of dedicated English teachers who will move heaven and earth to give them their best chance. I love being part of this 'happening group'.



SINGING THE SAME SONG: MODELLING WRITING IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Kate Townsend
Moura State High School

As a beginning teacher, I have always highly valued ETAQ professional development events for a range of reasons. These events were not only an opportunity to engage in curriculum interpretation and analysis, the sharing of new and innovative resources, discussions of issues impacting the profession and a chance to develop collegial networks, but also a great way to confirm parts of my fledgling classroom practice.

The recent AATE/ALEA conference, however, went one step further in offering attendees an additional invaluable resource: the chance to reflect on our identity as writers as well as teachers. The following article is a reflection of what I took away regarding one key theme of the conference: the explicit modelling of writing in the English classroom.

Developing identity as a writer-teacher not teacher-writer

The above phrase (borrowed from Teresa Cremin's conference address) may seem like simple semantics, but in terms of classroom practice the distinction is quite an important one. I discovered this first hand when attending Henry Laing's writing workshop, *Recharging the Batteries*, at the conference. During this workshop, teachers were challenged to complete a number of creative writing activities and share their compositions with the group. I was surprised to find that when the time came for me to read one of my pieces, I was overcome by shaky hands, a racing pulse and a heart that felt as though it might leap from my chest. This was a huge shock to me as I had always considered

myself confident in speaking to others and sharing writing samples with my classes.

Writing identity is not something discussed at university as part of a professional English teacher's persona. As my experience in Mr Laing's workshop had just keenly demonstrated to me, teachers as writers in the classroom (especially creative writers) involves taking risks. The thought of standing in front of a class of teenagers, vulnerable, and revealing my amateur writing ability in real time to my class was a fairly daunting prospect to say the least. Yet the realisation that there is a direct relationship between teacher identity and what students learn proved motivation enough for me to begin to embed this process as part of my pedagogy.

Integration into classroom practice

You can't ask someone to sing a duet with you until you know the tune yourself

The above quote by Donald Graves (Instructor Magazine, 1985) perfectly illustrates the reason why writers make the most effective writing teachers. After all, how can teachers expect to appreciate the context we are asking our students to write in if we have not experienced those conditions for ourselves? The disciplinary knowledge of being an effective English teacher includes more than just teaching students how to write; it must also include an understanding of what it means to be a writer.

To do this successfully and create a lasting improvement, teachers must develop a writing praxis. A praxis is a working or active knowledge that is relevant, interesting and useful to both teachers and students. As an English teacher,

SINGING THE SAME SONG: MODELLING WRITING IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

this knowledge is necessarily wide and varied; however, in practice this can be reduced to the integration of a number of key pedagogical approaches during writing lessons.

One of the simplest and most effective practices for modelling writing to students is to do so in real time. What this means is that rather than pre-preparing texts before a class, teachers should model the creative process in front of their students on the whiteboard. This process should be a 'warts and all' approach; it should include the teacher verbalising their thought process about vocabulary choice, perspective and text direction, complete with scribbles, crossing outs and questions posed aloud. The beauty of this process is that it both models the practical requirements of the activity and reveals the underlying cognitive process required to complete the task.

There are other benefits to this 'real-time' approach as well. For one, it reduces preparation time for teachers, who (if they are anything like me) would ordinarily spend far too much time drafting an amazing text sample to be deconstructed or exemplified in class. Additionally, you will have the opportunity as a teacher to experience the writing conditions that your students are under and become acutely aware how difficult it can be to 'write to order' in a classroom environment. This process also serves to validate the existing writing processes used by many students, resulting in a growth in their confidence as writers.

I have been trialling this process with my students over the past six weeks, and have been pleasantly surprised by their progress in terms of writing ability, enthusiasm for the activities and increasing willingness to share their work with others.

Writing and explicit instruction

Moura State High School, like many other schools across Queensland, is currently in the process of embedding explicit instruction as a key pedagogical approach throughout our

school. Having had the benefit of around twelve months of instruction using the Fleming model, I was immediately able to recognise how easily this real time writing process would fit within the 'I Do' (Modelling/Direct Instruction) phase of a lesson. By demonstrating the writing activity in real time, the students not only see an authentic example of the task but are also able to access the internal thought process needed to produce that particular text.

Once the task has been modelled by the teacher, the transition to the 'We Do' (Guided Practice/Joint Construction) phase is simple. The teacher only needs to ask for student help when selecting the next word, phrase or idea, and a class constructed text will develop on the board. This stage allows students to check the understanding of their thought processes whilst gaining confidence as their suggestions are accepted as a part of the class text.

Finally, armed with a greater understanding and self-esteem, students can attempt the task on their own in the 'You Do' (Unprompted/Independent Practice) phase. I have noticed a significant improvement in the quality of writing students are able to produce by the time they have worked through these three stages, as opposed to simply looking at a text pre-prepared by the teacher and then attempting to write a piece of their own. Additionally, the amount of instructional time taken up by re-explaining task requirements or rectifying misunderstandings has been greatly reduced, allowing more time for individual work with lower level or extension students and the opportunity to provide higher level feedback.

As you can see, the benefits of this approach are many and varied. Whilst it might require you, at least initially, to experience a level of vulnerability that teachers are not often comfortable with, the rewards you will reap will soon make any discomfort a distant memory. So why not take up the challenge and learn to croon to the tune your students are singing? I promise that the improvements you will see will be music to your ears.



AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR FOR ETAQ FOUNDATION MEMBER

ETAQ foundation member Paul Sherman was awarded an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in the 2014 Australia Day Honours list.

Left: Paul as King Lear in a one-man performance during a school visit.

The full citation read:

“For service to the arts as a poet and playwright, and to education.

Poet and Playwright, works include:

- *From Vinegar Hill to Vinegar Hill*, 1997.
- *The Murder of Gonzago*, Norwood, SA, 1988.
- *Tristan and Isolde in Venice*, 1987.
- *Melba*, presented by Brisbane Arts Theatre, 1969; published by the University of Queensland Press, 1976; staged in Melbourne by the Adelphi Players, 2013.
- *Mangrove Man*, 1976; toured by the Queensland Theatre Company.
- *The Libretto for Captain Starlight*, 1965.

Mr Sherman’s poems have been published in *The Australian* and *The Courier Mail* newspapers and in journals in Queensland, interstate, England, France, New Zealand and Hong Kong, and in Italy (Italian translation).

Has presented his poetry and that of others at the Queensland Poetry Festival organised by the Queensland Writers’ Centre.

Judge, ETAQ/QIEU Literacy Competition, from the 1990s to 2007 (The English Teachers Association of Queensland; The Queensland Independent Education Union) Director, Brisbane Arts Theatre, for several years.

Life Member, Queensland Writers Centre, 2012.

Actor; performed in the first play presented by the Queensland Theatre Company, 1969.

Volunteer, English and Drama Teacher, Kedron State High School, Queensland, since 1997; and in other schools.

Teacher, Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 1977–1995 (and earlier).

Member, Management Committee, The English Teachers Association of Queensland, in the 1980s; Foundation Member, since 1967.

Awards/recognition include:

Peter Botsman Memorial Award, English Teachers Association of Queensland, 2010.

Bundaberg Blue Lantern Poetry Prize, 2001.”



Hearty congratulations are extended to Paul and to those who initiated his nomination which ETAQ was delighted to have the opportunity to support.

The Management Committee decided last year to acknowledge Paul’s long service to English teaching in Queensland by awarding him **Life Membership of ETAQ**. It is anticipated that this decision will be ratified at the AGM in March and the presentation made at the state conference in August.

Below is the latest of Paul’s many contributions to *Words’Worth* over the years.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR FOR ETAQ FOUNDATION MEMBER

CREATION STORY (once these were called “Myths” or “Legends”) OF BEERWAH, TIBROGARGAN AND COONOWRIN

Beerwah, Tibrogargan and Coonowrin are three of the mountains north of Caboolture in south east Queensland. In 1770 Captain Cook oddly called them “Glasshouse Mountains” because, seen through his telescope from far out at sea, he thought they looked like buildings in north-east England where glass was made.

On November 7, 2003, I had the good luck to be in the old Brisbane City Council Library (then near King George Square) on the day of the launching of a remarkable book called *In the Tracks of a Rainbow* by Robin A. Wells, published by Gullirae Books, 18 Nebula St., Sunshine Beach, Q 4567. In Part Four of this book I read “Ninangura, Legends of the Dreamtime”, dedicated to the great songmen like Gaiarbau (Willie MacKenzie) and Moonie Jan (Wilf Reeves) who helped keep these old stories alive. Reading about Tibrogargan, Coonowrin and Beerwah, I wrote the following rhyming verse version, which I hope will help students as part of their studies of Aboriginal culture for the new Australian National Curriculum.

Paul Sherman January 17, 2014

Story in Stone (echoing an old Creation Story)

Tibrogargan’s furrowed brow
from ancient times, frowns here and now.
His tragic eyes, long locked in stone,
look down on us, disturb our own.

His dear wife, Beerwah, was big with child
when a flood in the river, raging wild,
swept her away. She would have drowned
but the trunk of a midstream tree she found.

Her son, Coonowrin, stood by, afraid.
Into the river he dared not wade.
Tibrogargan got to his wife in time.
He saved her, then raged at Coonowrin’s crime.

The furious father frowned, ashamed,
then a deadly blow at his son he aimed.
Coonowrin’s neck, by the strong stick’s blow,
was badly bent. It still leans so.

Coonowrin the “Crookneck” was he named.
In stone he stands, forever shamed.
The Legend’s lance, its story’s spear,
leaps from the past to pierce our ear.





FOR MIKE CONNORS (IPSWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, 1997—2013)

John Acutt

THE TEACHER

The school bell rings its final knell
It heralds now another age
And what will be the tales we tell?
What footprints left upon the stage?

The blackboard's coat he has worn thin?
The foolish he's led from the dark?
The ball point pens that he's bled dry?
The passing grade, a final mark?

No, it's more that will define the man
The weight of all the good he's done
When balanced on the scale of life
It proves he's won the race he's run.

The report card's bottom line will say
We owe a debt we cannot pay.

John Acutt



A BUSHRANGER'S STORY

— PART 2

Garry Collins

This article is the second part of one arising from one of the workshop sessions presented at the ETAQ seminar conducted at Brisbane Grammar School on Saturday 26 May 2012.

The theme for this activity was “Storytelling and the power of the word” and the workshop was entitled “A bushranger’s story”. Part 1 of this piece appeared in *Words’Worth* 2-13.

The two texts on which the workshop was based are again provided below.

Poem text:

The Death of Ben Hall by Will Ogilvie

1. Ben Hall was out on the Lachlan side
With a thousand pounds on his head;
A score of troopers were scattered wide
And a hundred more were ready to ride
Wherever a rumour led.
2. They had followed his track from the Weddin Heights
And north by the Weelong yards;
Through dazzling days and moonlit nights
They had sought him over their rifle sights,
With their hands on their trigger guards.
3. The outlaw stole like a hunted fox
Through the scrub and stunted heath,
And peered like a hawk from his eyrie rocks
Through the waving boughs of the sapling box
On the troopers riding beneath.
4. His clothes were rent by the clutching thorn
And his blistered feet were bare;
Ragged and torn, with his beard unshorn,
He hid in the woods like a beast forlorn,
With a padded path to his lair.
5. But every night when the white stars rose
He crossed by the Gunning Plain
To a stockman’s hut where the Gunning flows,
And struck on the door three swift light
blows,
And a hand unhooked the chain –
6. And the outlaw followed the lone path back
With food for another day;
And the kindly darkness covered his track
And the shadows swallowed him deep and
black
Where the starlight melted away.
7. But his friend had read of the big reward,
And his soul was stirred with greed;
He fastened his door and window-board,
He saddled his horse and crossed the ford,
And spurred to the town at speed.
8. You may ride at a man’s or a maid’s behest
When honour or true love call
And steel your heart to the worst or best,
But the ride that is ta’en on a traitor’s quest
Is the bitterest ride of all.
9. A hot wind blew from the Lachlan bank
And a curse on its shoulder came;
The pine trees frowned at him rank on rank,
The sun on a gathering storm cloud sank
And flushed his cheek with shame.
10. He reined at the court and the tale began
That the rifles alone should end;
Sergeant and trooper laid their plan
To draw the net on a hunted man
At the treacherous word of a friend.
11. False was the hand that raised the chain
And false was the whispered word:
‘The troopers have turned to the south again,
You may dare to camp on the Gunning Plain.’
And the weary outlaw heard.
12. He walked from the hut but a quarter mile
Where a clump of saplings stood
In a sea of grass like a lonely isle;
And a moon came up in a little while
Like silver steeped in blood.
13. Ben Hall lay down on the dew-wet ground
By the side of his tiny fire;

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY – PART 2

And a night breeze woke, and he heard no sound
As the troopers drew their cordon round –
And the traitor earned his hire.

14. And nothing they saw in the dim grey light,
But the little glow in the trees;
And they crouched in the tall cold grass all night,
Each one ready to shoot at sight,
With his rifle cocked on his knees.

15. When the shadows broke and the dawn's white sword
Swung over the mountain wall,
And a little wind blew over the ford,
A sergeant sprang to his feet and roared:
'In the name of the Queen, Ben Hall!'

16. Haggard, the outlaw leapt from his bed
With his lean arms held on high.
'Fire!' And the word was scarcely said

When the mountains rang to a rain of lead –
And the dawn went drifting by.

17. They kept their word and they paid his pay
Where a clean man's hand would shrink;
And that was the traitor's master-day
As he stood by the bar on his homeward way
And called on the crowd to drink.

18. He banned no creed and he barred no class,
And he called to his friends by name;
But the worst would shake his head and pass
And none would drink from the bloodstained glass
And the goblet red with shame.

19. And I know when I hear that last grim call
And my mortal hour is spent
I would rather sleep with the dead Ben Hall
Than go where that traitor went.



Folk song lyrics: *The Streets of Forbes*

Come all you Lachlan men, and a sorrowful tale I'll tell
Concerning of a hero bold who through misfortune fell.
His name it was Ben Hall, a man of good renown
Who was hunted from his station, and like a dog shot down.

Three years he roamed the roads, and he showed the traps some fun;
A thousand pounds was on his head, with Gilbert and John Dunn.
Ben parted from his comrades, the outlaws did agree
To give away bushranging and to cross the briny sea.

Ben went to Goobang Creek, and that was his downfall
For riddled like a sieve was valiant Ben Hall.
'Twas early in the morning upon the fifth of May
When seven police surrounded him as fast asleep he lay.

Bill Dargin he was chosen to shoot the outlaw dead
The troopers then fired madly, and filled him full of lead.
They rolled him in a blanket and strapped him to his prad
And led him through the streets of Forbes to show the prize they had.

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY – PART 2

Vocabulary choice

Part 1 concluded with a consideration of the effect of the vocabulary choices “renowned” and “a gun battle” in the sentence below which came from some background information sourced from a Wikipedia entry on the NSW town of Forbes.

- One of Australia’s most **renowned** bushrangers, Ben Hall, was shot dead in a **gun battle** about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town on 5 May 1865.

The noun group “a gun battle” does not tally with the version of Ben Hall’s death presented in either the poem or the folk song since it implies that the bushranger returned the fire of the police. No doubt the authorities of the day would have approved of this version rather than

that in the two texts. In addition, it could be reasonably assumed that officialdom would have looked askance on the positive connotations of the adjective “renowned” as opposed to negative descriptors such as “notorious”, “dangerous”, “murderous” etc.

The notion of how texts provide partial and selective representations of reality could be usefully explored by initially considering several visual images. The first proposed is the classic Australian painting “Bailed Up”, produced by Tom Roberts in 1895 (Figure 1). Additionally, there is a contemporary newspaper illustration (Figure 2) and then a painting depicting Hall’s death by artist William Marony, 1894 (Figure 3,). These images are discussed in Evan McHugh’s 2011 book, *Bushrangers: Australia’s greatest self-made heroes*.

Representation in visual images

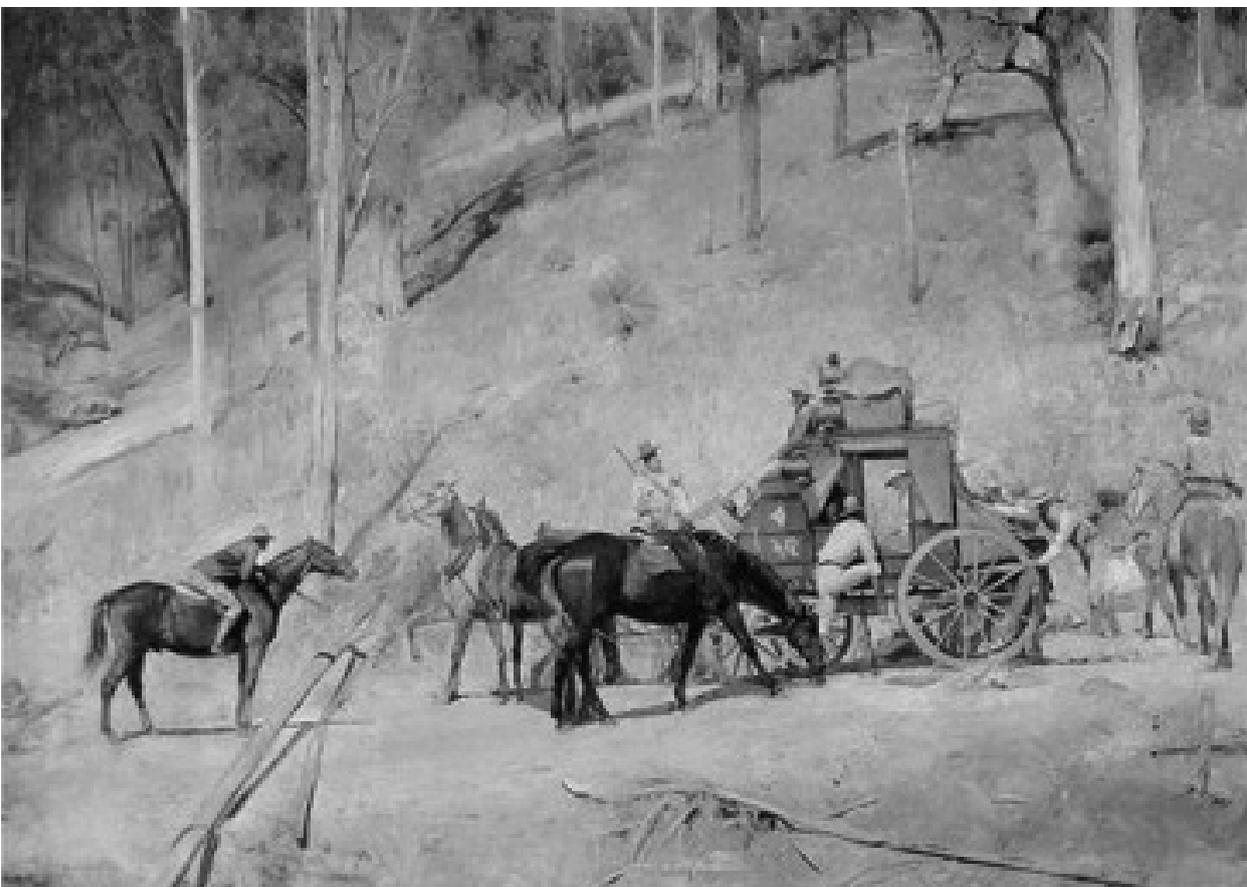


Figure 1

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY – PART 2

The Tom Roberts painting (Figure 1) provides an interesting example of how texts represent a particular version of reality. In class I would present the image on a screen without any further information and ask students a series of questions:

1. What's this about? What's going on here?
Why do you think that?
2. If there's a story, what is it?
3. Where and when is this event taking place?
How do you know?
4. What would be an appropriate title for the painting?

With junior secondary students, many of whom would never have seen the image previously, it is likely that the scene would not be immediately identified by all as the depiction of a crime in progress, an armed robbery. It would be interesting to see what titles students might propose before any further information was provided. Perhaps some of the following would be suggested:

- The stage coach
- Stopped by a fallen tree
- Unloading the coach
- A coach and horsemen
- An Australian bush scene
- Coach, horsemen and hillside

McHugh (2011) comments thus of this painting: "Arguably the most famous image of bushranging, the painting mythologises the crime, giving it the appearance of a social exchange rather than an armed confrontation." Some of the human figures can certainly be seen to be carrying rifles but the threat of deadly violence is not a prominent feature of the image.

Students could be challenged to propose how the basic elements of this image could be changed to make the crime element more prominent.

As a painting, this is obviously primarily a visual text but most paintings have titles and awareness of them will usually contribute to the meaning that viewers construct. Consideration of the title of Roberts' work can provide some opportunities for learning about

language. While the meaning of the expression "bailed up" as "held up by a robber" would have been familiar to 19th century inhabitants of Australia, it is now not commonly used and few contemporary students could be expected to know what it meant. Consequently, a first learning opportunity here is to remind students that language changes over time with new words being coined and others falling into disuse and eventually dropping out of the language altogether. This process can be observed with the word "prad" in the final verse of *The Streets of Forbes*:

They rolled him in a blanket and strapped
him to his prad

And led him through the streets of Forbes to
show the prize they had.

In 19th century Australia, "prad" was a common colloquial term for horse but it has now pretty much vanished from use. According to the Macquarie Dictionary, it derives from the Dutch word "paard" meaning horse.

Multiple meanings of words

The phrasal verb "bail up" might no longer be current in Australian English but the word "bail" on its own certainly still exists and illustrates how many words have multiple meanings. Students could be asked to suggest examples of usage or the teacher could present them with the following:

- The accused's application for **bail** was rejected and he was remanded in custody.
- The umpire replaced the **bails** after the opener was clean bowled.
- The hull was leaking so we needed to **bail** regularly to keep the boat afloat.
- The aircraft was hit by enemy fire but the crew was able to **bail** out.

A relevant Content Description (CD) from the Australian Curriculum: English (AC:E) is:

- Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts – ACELA1512 / Year 5 / Language /

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY — PART 2

Expressing & developing ideas

The issue of multiple meanings could also be brought to students' attention in discussing parts of the poem. In the first stanza there are the words "pounds" and "score".

Ben Hall was out on the Lachlan side
With a thousand **pounds** on his head;
A **score** of troopers were scattered wide
And a hundred more were ready to ride
Wherever a rumour led.

Initially, students could be asked to write short sentences containing these words as they currently understand them. This would probably give rise to sentences like the following:

- The bully then unmercifully **pounds** his much smaller victim while his gang looks on.
- The American report said that each hiker was carrying a load of around 70 **pounds**.
- The city had several dog **pounds** where their missing pet might have been taken.
- The captain's **score** was a very respectable 58 not out.
- The winger crossed in the final minute to **score** the winning try.

What of course is needed for an appropriate reading of the poem is the sense of "pounds" as a unit of currency:

- At the airport they changed their Australian dollars into British **pounds**.

And "score" needs to be understood as the number 20.

In relation to words for particular numbers, it is interesting that "dozen" is still very much alive and well while the sense of "score" as 20 is now fairly rare and the meaning of "brace" as a pair even less common.

Some numeracy in English

Before moving on from a consideration of the word "pounds" in the first stanza, a little time could productively be spent in addressing the General Capability of numeracy, in particular, the notion of monetary inflation. Students could be asked to propose what the equivalent

reward would be today. Some additional bits of information that I have provided in the past for this exercise are:

- When Australia adopted decimal currency in 1966 one pound became two dollars.
- The new Datsun 180B (a small four cylinder sedan) that I purchased in late 1974 cost \$4000.
- In 1947, my parents bought a modest but habitable house in the Brisbane suburb of Hendra for 6000 pounds.

Part of a radio jingle used when decimal currency was introduced ran:

In come the dollars and in come the cents,
Out go the pounds and the shillings and the pence.

For those not old enough to remember, there were 12 pence (pennies) to a shilling and 20 shillings to a pound. There were penny and halfpenny copper coins. When the country initially changed to decimal currency there were two and one cent pieces. Students could be asked to explain why these have been withdrawn from use.

Homophones and spelling

Another language feature worthy of note is that the word "bail" has the homophone "bale". This could lead to some incidental work on spelling since English spelling is bedevilled by the fact that many of the most commonly used words have homophones (same sound but different spelling and meaning). Stanza 10 of the poem provides rich pickings for the little activity that I like to call "Hunt the homophone" in which students are tasked to identify in a short piece of text the words that have homophones and then to write short sentences like those below to illustrate the different meanings of both them and the originals. In Stanza 10 we have the words underlined.

He reined at the court and the tale began
That the rifles alone should end;
Sergeant and trooper laid their plan
To draw the net on a hunted man
At the treacherous word of a friend.

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY – PART 2

- The horseman **reined** his mount to a halt. Queen Elizabeth has **reigned** for more than half a century. The bushranger's tracks were almost impossible to follow because it had **rained**.
- The accused has been granted bail and has to appear again in **court** in a month's time. Having been **caught** in the act, he is sure to be found guilty.
- It sounds like a tall **tale** but it's true in every word. The cruel boy had tied a can to the cat's **tail**.
- The **trooper** was obliged to follow his sergeant's orders. As an experienced **trouper**, he knew that the show must go on.
- **They're** waiting over **there** to be issued with **their** orders.
- **Two** troopers were selected **to** move in close because it was thought that more would make **too** much noise.
- We need to **draw** the line somewhere. She placed the letter in the top **drawer** of the desk.
- As the fan **whirred** above her head she tried to think of the final **word** required for the day's crossword puzzle.

Back to representation in images

After some hopefully useful digressions into aspects of language, we now come to the two images of Ben Hall's death mentioned above, Figures 2 and 3.

A useful activity to promote close reading of both the verbal text of the poem and the song lyrics on the one hand, and these two images on the other, would be to ask students to compare the ways that the bushranger's death is represented. The specific task could be for students to produce a dot-point summary account of how Ben Hall died based on the version presented in each of the four texts. This could be done individually at first and then joint versions agreed in pairs or small groups before the possibilities are considered in a whole-class discussion. An important guideline would be that students need to be able to point to the evidence in the text that leads them to a particular version of events.

The most relevant sections of Ogilvie's poem are stanzas 15 and 16.

When the shadows broke and the dawn's
white sword
Swung over the mountain wall,
And a little wind blew over the ford,
A sergeant sprang to his feet and roared:
'In the name of the Queen, Ben Hall!'

Haggard, the outlaw leapt from his bed
With his lean arms held on high.
'Fire!' And the word was scarcely said
When the mountains rang to a rain of lead –
And the dawn went drifting by.

Based mainly on these two stanzas, but also drawing on earlier sections of the poem, a summary version here could be:

- The stockman "friend" who has been supplying Hall with food succumbs to his desire for the 1000 pounds reward and informs the police of the bushranger's whereabouts.
- Lulled into a false sense of security by the stockman's untruthful advice that the troopers have left the area, Hall dares to camp for the night on the plain only a short distance from the stockman's hut and to risk a small fire.
- During the night, a party of police surrounds the sleeping outlaw.
- At dawn, the police sergeant in charge shouts for Hall to surrender.
- When the outlaw leaps from the ground with his hands up, apparently offering no resistance, the police are immediately ordered to fire and Hall is shot to death.

The version in *The Streets of Forbes* is similar with the final two verses being most relevant.

Ben went to Goobang Creek, and that was
his downfall
For riddled like a sieve was valiant Ben Hall.
'Twas early in the morning upon the fifth of
May
When seven police surrounded him as fast
asleep he lay.

Bill Dargin he was chosen to shoot the
outlaw dead

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY — PART 2

The troopers then fired madly, and filled him full of lead.

They rolled him in a blanket and strapped him to his prade

And led him through the streets of Forbes to show the prize they had.

Figure 2 (right)

McHugh (2011) says of this image: “A contemporary newspaper illustration, based on the accounts given by police, shows him being shot while attempting to flee.” With his hat firmly on his head, it does not seem that Hall is still half asleep having just leapt to his feet from a makeshift bed on the hard ground. The raised right hand could perhaps be taken to suggest that he was in the process of surrendering when the police fired. Hall is certainly not depicted with a weapon in hand.

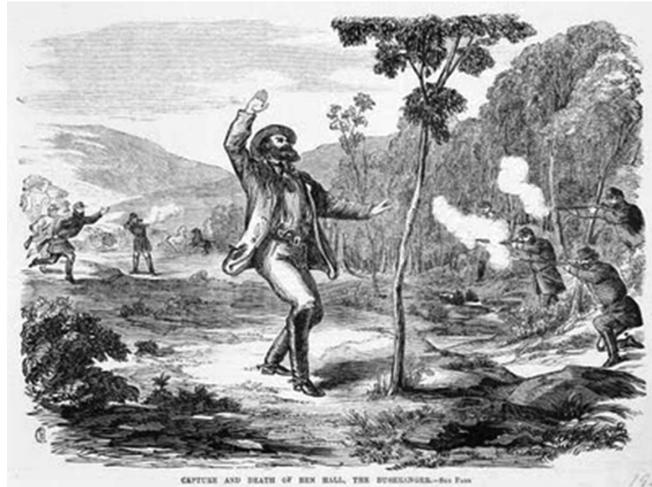


Figure 3 (right) – a painting by William Marony, 1894

Here the bushranger is shown on the ground and appears to have just been struck by police bullets. In the right foreground, part of a small campfire can be seen along with a billy and what is probably a small bag of provisions. The linear feature shown in Hall's left hand could be a horse bridle. (A minute or two could be taken out of discussion of this to ensure that students are aware of the bridle/bridal homophones.) A revolver is on the ground in front of the lying, apparently wounded, outlaw.



The relative size of the human figures is an interesting feature. The police troopers appear to be too far away to be certain of scoring hits in their opening volley.

Figures 2 and 3 both show the bushranger wearing substantial knee-high boots. By contrast, Stanza 4 of Ogilvie's poem has him barefoot.

His clothes were rent by the clutching thorn
And his blistered feet were bare;
Ragged and torn, with his beard unshorn,
He hid in the woods like a beast forlorn,
With a padded path to his lair.

Again, the most reasonable reading is that Hall was given no real opportunity to surrender and the text could be taken to mean that he was shot by Bill Dargin while still on the ground asleep.

Some teacher questions here might be:

1. How might the bushranger have lost his boots and been forced to go barefoot?
2. Why do you think the poet chose to include this specific detail?

‘Sketch to stretch’

As well as carefully reading and comprehending the images, an associated activity would be for students to produce images of their own to represent various stages in the plot of Ogilvie's narrative poem. I first encountered this activity in a PD program of yore that rejoiced

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY – PART 2

in the name FLIP (Further Literacy In-service Program). As acronyms go, that's not a bad one. As clearly illustrated by my own sample below (Figure 4), no particular artistic ability is required and stick figures are perfectly adequate. The idea is to produce an image that represents part of the meaning of the verbal text. My sample relates specifically to Stanzas 14 and 15.

Ben Hall lay down on the dew-wet ground
By the side of his tiny fire;
And a night breeze woke, and he heard no
sound
As the troopers drew their cordon round –
And the traitor earned his hire.

And nothing they saw in the dim grey light,
But the little glow in the trees;
And they crouched in the tall cold grass all
night,
Each one ready to shoot at sight,
With his rifle cocked on his knees.



Figure 4

A complete set of such images would constitute a storyboard for a “digistory” version of the poem consisting of appropriate still images, a reading of the poem and some suitable background music. I suggest that this could be a useful designing task arising from the poem.

Other aspects of comprehension

The “sketch to stretch” activity is intended to both promote and assess comprehension. It could also be profitable to do some work with multiple choice questions which, because of NAPLAN, are now much more relevant to English than was once the case. The teacher could design some like the sample below and I suggest that it is also useful to have students create some of their own focusing on allocated

stanzas. This has the capacity to give students a well-informed appreciation of how such questions work. Careful reading will also be encouraged as students will need to be able to justify their proposed options, both correct and incorrect, by reference to the text. The most productive part of the activity is, of course, discussion of what aspects of the text justify or negate the various alternatives.

- A NAPLAN style multiple-choice question based on Stanza 13
Ben Hall lay down on the dew-wet ground
By the side of his tiny fire;
And a night breeze woke, and he heard no
sound
As the troopers drew their cordon round –
And the traitor earned his hire.

The most likely reason he had only a tiny fire was:

- A. It wasn't very cold.
- B. There was little dry wood in the “sea of grass”.
- C. He didn't want to attract attention.
- D. He was confident the police had left the area.

Conclusion

I have still not yet completely “squeezed the lemon dry” on teaching suggestions related to the poem and folk song but this much is probably quite enough for this outing. Perhaps there may even be a Part 3.

As I also offered in the conclusion to Part 1, if anyone thinks that the Powerpoint file used in the workshop and/or the Word files of the texts might be of use to them, they could be obtained by emailing me at gazco48@bigpond.net.au.

References

McHugh, E, *Bushrangers: Australia's greatest self-made heroes*, Viking (Penguin), London, 2011 ISBN 978-0-670-07541-6

Author

Garry Collins taught secondary English for 35 years, mainly at Gladstone and Ferny Grove State High Schools, but also on exchange in the US and Canada. President of ETAQ from July 2005 to March 2014, he is now in the first year of a 2-year term as AATE President. He is currently a part-time teacher educator in the School of Education at the University of Queensland.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Presented to the Forty Seventh Annual General Meeting of The English Teachers Association of Queensland, Inc.

Saturday 15 March 2014

This report aims to cover the activities and interests of ETAQ during 2013.

Patron

Professor Catherine Beavis (Griffith University) was elected for a third term as Patron at the 2013 AGM. During the year Professor Beavis has continued contributing a regular Patron's Column for the Association's journal, *Words'Worth*.

Those elected at the 2013 AGM were:

Position	Name	Meetings attended
President	Garry Collins, part-time tutor at UQ School of Education	10
Vice President	Dr Kelli McGraw, QUT	8
Secretary	Jenny Ivett-Hawes, Centenary SHS	3
Treasurer	Trish Purcell	9
Membership Secretary	Fiona Laing, Forest Lake SHS	8
1. Member	Julie Arnold, Corinda SHS	8
2. Member	Diana Briscoe, The Gap SHS	7
3. Member	Bronwyn Darben, Runcorn SHS	9
4. Member	Sophie Johnson, Stuartholme	7
5. Member	Helen Johnston, Brisbane Grammar	6
6. Member	Shauna O'Connor, Brigidine College	8
7. Member	Debbie Peden, various schools	6
8. Member	Michelle Ragen, Brisbane Grammar	7
9. Member	Dr Stew Riddle, USQ	7
10. Member	Matthew Rigby, Go Grammar Consulting	3
11. Member	Leah Wells, Brisbane SHS	5
12. Member	Melanie Wild, Corinda SHS	9

Ian Hoddinott attended the February and March meetings as a member of the 2012–13 committee.

The following new members elected at last year's AGM in March attended the February and March meetings as observers as shown: Leah Wells (March), Melanie Wild (February & March).

Management Committee

The Management Committee met 10 times during 2013 and a quorum was achieved on each occasion except for the August meeting. Tentative decisions taken at this meeting were endorsed at the September meeting. Meetings were held monthly except for January and December. The February and March meetings comprised members of the 2012-13 committee.

Secretary

Jenny Ivett-Hawes found it necessary to resign as Secretary in early July and Bronwyn Darben volunteered to assume this role from the July meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Administration Officer

Trish Purcell continued in her role as the association's part-time Administration Officer and was, in addition, elected to the position of Treasurer.

Passing of former Treasurer & Admin Officer, Jim Buckley

A very sad feature of 2013 for ETAQ was the untimely death in February of Life Member and former Treasurer and Admin Officer Jim Buckley. Quite a number of members attended

Jim's funeral and President Garry Collins gave one of the eulogies.

To commemorate Jim's fine contribution to the Association over a very long period, financial assistance provided to country and student members to attend the annual state conference will henceforth be called Jim Buckley Memorial Scholarships.

Membership

The numbers of financial members of the Association for the last three years were as follows:

Year	Life	Full (i.e. individual)	Student	Retiree	Corporate	Total	Estimated total # reached
2011	10	184	34	6	155	389	
2012	10	191	38	8	177	424	3208
2013	9	175	23	6	166	379	2778

It is disappointing that we finished the year with fewer members than at the end of 2012. State ETAs have often experienced a spike in membership in the year that they host the national conference but, unfortunately, that was not our experience on this occasion.

PD Activities

In Brisbane the usual pattern of face-to-face PD activities was conducted during 2013 as detailed below. In addition, PD events were also conducted by the Toowoomba, and Townsville branches.

Seminar 1

- Date: Saturday 16 March 2013
- Type: half-day seminar
- Theme: Reading Teens
- Format: keynote address plus suite of supporting workshops
- Keynote speaker: Professor Len Unsworth, Griffith University – topic: From page to screen: transmedia literary narratives and the Australian curriculum in English
- Attendance: 122 (well down on the equivalent event in 2012)

- Venue: Centenary High School.
- Convenor: Jenny Ivett-Hawes

Beginning Teachers' Day

- Date: Saturday 27 April 2013
- Type: Beginning Teachers Day – This was the third year that ETAQ has run this activity.
- Attendance: 50
- Venue: Citipointe Christian College
- Convenor: Ian Hoddinott

Seminar 2

- Date: Saturday 17 August 2013
- Type: half-day seminar
- Theme : Across cultures
- Format: keynote address plus suite of supporting workshops;
- Keynote speaker: author Alice Pung – topic: ' Writing and reading across cultures'
- Attendance: 119
- Venue: Brigidine College
- This time slot would normally have been for our state conference but this was not held this year because of the AATE/ALEA national conference being hosted in Brisbane.
- Convenors: Julie Arnold & Shauna O'Connor

SECRETARY'S REPORT

After-school forum #1

- Date: Tuesday 15 October 2013
- Type: after-school forum
- Topic: English Communication, Queensland's Year 11 & 12 English subject alternative for less able students
- Format: general discussion plus 2 short teacher presentations
- Attendance: 65
- Venue: St Aidan's Anglican Girls School
- Convenor: Julie Arnold

Literary Breakfast

- Date: Sunday 20 October 2013
- Type: morning literary breakfast;
- Format: address with breakfast;
- Guest speaker: Matthew Condon, author and journalist;
- Attendance: 48
- Venue: Fountain View Room at The Summit, Mt Coot-tha
- Convenor: Julie Arnold

2013 AATE/ALEA joint national conference

After two years of separate AATE and ALEA national conferences, 2013 saw a return to the pattern of AATE/ALEA joint national conferences with the event being held here in **Brisbane** at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus over the **period 4–7 July**.

Full day **Master classes** were conducted on Thursday 4 July. The conference proper then commenced on the Thursday evening, continued with full days on the Friday and Saturday and then concluded early on the Sunday afternoon.

The **theme** of the conference was **Brave New World: English and literacy teaching for the 21st Century**. This theme was intended to provide opportunities to explore how English and literacy teaching in schools are, and should be, developing in the second decade of the 21st century.

Queensland last hosted the national conference in 2005 with the event being held at the (then)

new Gold Coast Convention Centre.

Preparation and planning for the national conference stretched over several years. The key Management Committee members involved were:

- Garry Collins: conference co-convenor with ALEA State Director Dr Beryl Exley
- Dr Kelli McGraw: member of the Steering and Program Committees
- Fiona Laing: chair of the Trade Displays Committee and member of the Steering Committee
- Michelle Ragen: co-chair of the Program Committee and member of the Steering Committee

Other members assisted with the actual conduct of the conference and the associated social activities.

The 2013 event was a significant success. There were 712 registrations of which 593 were for the full conference. The full time equivalent attendance was 613 and a profit of around \$139,000 was realized. This surplus was divided 50-50 between ETAQ and ALEA. Of the ETAQ share, 15% was remitted to AATE under a standing arrangement for profit sharing for national conferences. Consequently, the activity added a little over \$59,000 to ETAQ's coffers. This might seem like quite a lot but it needs to be remembered that it is only every 8 years that we have the opportunity to co-host the national conference. In addition, there is always the possibility of making a loss if things are not adequately managed.

Thanks are extended to all members who contributed to the success of the conference.

Utilizing digital technologies

A number of Management Committee members attended a JCQTA PD session on webinars in August run by Karen Bonnanno of Eduwebinar. The information provided was quite helpful to the committee in providing potential ideas for how digital technologies could be used in the delivery of professional development but the committee has elected to continue to look at other software and modes of delivery.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

To this end, the Association trialed the use of a Google 'Hangout on Air' to broadcast a session at the English Communications afternoon seminar on 15 October. This broadcast was somewhat successful, with one of the sessions able to be broadcast live via YouTube and the recording also made available for viewing after the event. Some limitations of the Google Plus platform that was used to broadcast the seminar as a Hangout on Air were: difficulties using school wireless networks to connect to Google Plus; lack of clarity for online viewers trying to read slides and handouts. Future attempts to use this service will be more successful if presenter slides are provided beforehand to enable a 'screen share' to occur online, improving the clarity of written resources. The members participating felt that the link to a YouTube broadcast/recording was easy to use, however alternative platforms for delivering webinar-type services are still being explored. Discussion is also ongoing in relation to whether the Association should upload such recordings to the members-only section of the website, or whether to freely distribute some parts of the material.

Assisted attendance at conferences

The Management Committee approved financial support to assist three country members and two Brisbane-based student members to attend the AATE/ALEA national conference in Brisbane in early July. The support involved early bird registration for all and \$200 for each of the country members to help defray the costs of travel and accommodation.

Competitions

2013 ETAQ/IEUA-QNT/James Cook University Literary Competition

The 2013 Literary Competition was an outstanding success with 741 entries received from across the State and Territory. Now in its 54th year, the event attracted submissions from students in Years 6 to 12 and their teachers, from both government and non-government schools. It is gratifying to see that we have again recorded a significant rise in interest for the Literary Competition over previous years (2012 – 705;

2011 – 458; 2010 – 424; 2009 – 529). A vigorous and collaborative promotional campaign by ETAQ and IEUA-QNT almost certainly had a positive impact on the increased submissions. The quality of the entries received this year was also exceptional with a number of the judges having to labor over winners, place-getters and the high commended entries. The winning entries were published in the November issue of the Independent Education Union of Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory Branch (IEUA-QNT) journal, *Independent Voice*.

A new venue was identified for this year's Presentation Evening: Wesley House in Brisbane's CBD. It replaced last year's venue: the Mt Coot-tha Gardens Function Centre. Wesley House proved to be a practical and central location for families and students. Many of the recipients travelled from far-reaching parts of Queensland including Cloncurry, Ingham, Sarina and Toowoomba for the Presentations. Some of these travelling writers were being acknowledged not only for 1st Place but also for Highly Commended submissions. Also, we continue to attract entries from a diverse range of schools with Hayman Island counting among the school entries.

The opening address was conducted by Dr Paul Giles, Assistant Secretary/Treasury of the IEUA-QNT. Paul gave insight into the historical beginnings of the competition reflecting on the significance of its continuity since March 1959. In particular, Paul acknowledged that this Literary Competition had enabled "*many thousands of students... to write and explore the beauty of our language and its possibilities*". The possibilities were explored further through the wisdom and experience of our guest speaker, Ms Helen Ross, a children's author, an award winning children's poet and freelance writer. Helen presented certificates and cheques to the winners for the first segment of the evening. During her address she gave an account of her road to success and provided insights to support the emerging literary talent in the audience. Helen's 'tools' for the Presentation included an oversized devil's fork which she explained she would metaphorically use to goad herself to write: and as a metaphor for her audience to

SECRETARY'S REPORT

prod themselves into action and write daily. This same prop was then used very effectively by Mr Paul Sherman, a longtime associate of the Literary Competition, who kindly recited a winning poetry piece for a student *in absentia*. It certainly brought this very commendable poetry to life. It was also heartening to have Paul return after his absence due to ill-health last year.

Thanks must also go to Mr Andrew Elphinstone, President of the IEUA-QNT, who made the presentation of certificates and cheques in the second half of the evening.

We acknowledge the ongoing support and sponsorship of the senior non-fiction section by James Cook University. Sincere thanks must also go to Rebecca Diep and her staff at Random House in Sydney: Random House has continued its support of the competition with age-related & category-specific book prizes for each place-getter.

Acknowledgement goes to *all* students and teachers for their submissions, and congratulations to the winners, place-getters and highly-commended awardees. The 1st place getters for 2013 are:

- Section A – Non-Fiction Prose: Victoria Hardingham, Cloncurry State School
- Section A – Short Story: Georgina Kanowski, The Cathedral School of St Anne and St James
- Section A – Poem: Jess Vandersande, Boonah State High School
- Section B – Short Story & Poem, Rosie McCrossin, Sandgate District State High School
- Section C – Short Story: Priyanka Iyer, Mary MacKillop College
- Section C – Poem: Luana Lima, St Andrew's Anglican College
- Section D – Short Story: Clare White, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, Darra
- Section D – Poem: Seisia Luxford, Ingham State School
- Section E – Short Story: Sue Grotherr, Calvary Christian College

With the continued upsurge of entries, came an increased workload for our judges. Sincere appreciation and gratitude is extended to the judges for their time, commitment and ability in making sometimes difficult decisions in determining prize winners and place getters for this 2013 literary competition. These tireless and committed individuals include Dr Karen Moni, Pam Schindler, Esme Robinson, Lisa Westcott, Chris Lynch, Garry Collins, Zenobia Frost, Debbie Peden, Cindy Keong and Dr Beryl Exley. What a great team of judges you are! We were very pleased to welcome a new judge in this year's competition, Ms Pam Schindler, who judged the Years 11/12 Poetry division. My acknowledgement to Chris Lynch who has judged for many years but who is now unable to continue his fine work as one of our poetry judges. We wish Chris well in his new ventures. Special thanks to Garry Collins who made a separate presentation at Sandgate District State High School on 28 October to present certificates, book prizes and cheques to Rosie McCrossin, first place winner in the poetry and short story categories of the Years 9 & 10 section. Rosie was unable to attend the Presentation Evening.

Special commendation is extended to the continuing support of the IEUA-QNT, especially the excellent work of Kay Holloway, whose tirelessness and commitment are fundamental to the success of the competition. Recognition also goes to Kay's team – Rachel Black, Di Hurst, Martin King, (Communications Manager) and Michael Oliver (Publications Officer). Thank you!

Deb Peden will continue her enthusiastic and efficient job as convenor in 2014.

Digital Story Competition

With continuing generous sponsorship from Jacaranda (John Wiley) a digital story competition was again conducted in place of the Children's Illustrated Book Competition that had operated up to 2012. The number of entries was again quite modest but it is hoped that student interest in this activity will grow in the future.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Curriculum Matters

Australian Curriculum: English

As the F-10 component of Australian Curriculum: English continues to be implemented in schools this was an ongoing influence on most PD activities conducted. It is noted that the federal government has set up a review of the Australian Curriculum and it will be of keen interest to the association and its members to see what this might deliver.

Interaction with the QSA

Most members will be aware that ETAQ, along with all other subject professional associations, has not had an ongoing formal relationship with the Queensland Studies Authority since its Syllabus Advisory Committees (SACs) were replaced by Learning Area Reference Committees (LARCs) in 2009. This is quite unlike the more sensible situation that prevails in most other states.

When Mrs Patrea Walton was appointed as CEO (previous job title was Director) of the QSA early in the year, ETAQ took this opportunity to write to her to draw the situation to her attention. In late February, as part of her process of settling into the new role, Mrs Walton conducted a consultation meeting with representatives of subject associations. President Garry Collins attended this meeting on behalf of ETAQ and took the opportunity to reinforce the issue of representation on the LARCs. In this, he was strongly supported by all other representatives at the meeting. Mrs Walton seemed genuinely puzzled as to why the QSA should have thought it a good idea to not have subject associations represented on LARCs. As reported in *English Matters* 2-13, the Management Committee felt that, at the very least, the LARCs issue was back on the QSA's radar. Unfortunately, senior staff changes in Education Queensland meant that Mrs Walton did not stay with the Authority very long.

ETAQ was pleased to have a delegation invited to attend a meeting with QSA staff in late August to discuss implementation of ACARA's

senior English subjects. As noted in the report on this meeting published in *English Matters* 6-13, it was pleasing that the QSA and ETAQ seemed to be currently generally on the same page as regards the development of QSA syllabuses from the ACARA materials. We were advised that, at that time, it was anticipated that the first cohort of Year 11 students to be taught under the new syllabuses would probably start in 2016 at the earliest. This may well now have changed as a result of reviews instituted by the state government and the likely federal government review into the Australian Curriculum mentioned above.

AATE

AATE, the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, is the umbrella national body with which ETAQ and the other state and territory English teacher associations are affiliated. During 2013, Associate Professor Karen Moni, the immediate Past President of ETAQ, was in the second year of her 2-year term as the national President.

As noted above, on behalf of AATE, ETAQ jointly hosted the AATE/ALEA national conference with ALEA Queensland. AATE council also undertook several projects to produce curriculum materials, mainly related to the Australian Curriculum: English.

During 2013 President Garry Collins was AATE President Elect and Fiona Laing replaced him as the ETAQ delegate to AATE National Council. Council business was conducted via email, teleconferences and two face-to-face meetings. One of these was held in Brisbane in early July following the national conference and the AGM was conducted in Melbourne on the weekend 12-13 October. The AGM is almost always held at English House, AATE's headquarters in Adelaide, but was run in Melbourne on this occasion to enable a briefing from AITSL staff to be part of the agenda.

Three reports on ETAQ activities were provided for publication in the AATE journal *English in Australia*.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Book Sales

The bookstall which sells a selection of AATE and Phoenix publications was well patronised at the March and August seminars. The financial results appear in the Treasurer's Report.

Branches

During 2013 branches operated in Toowoomba, and Townsville under the leadership of Donna Jones and Heather Fraser respectively.

There was no formal ETAQ activity in Cairns during 2013 but local members Stephanie Wheeler-Sokolich and Anne Leeson have plans for meetings in May and August 2014.

Publications

Words'Worth

Three issues of *Words'Worth* were distributed to members in 2013 under the editorship of Dr Stewart Riddle. Articles and teaching resources included: literature film trailers; Indigenous and Asian representations in film and literature for the Australian Curriculum; rigour and engagement in vocational English classrooms; writing feature articles; as well as unit plans, poetry, writing competition winners, book and resource reviews.

English Matters

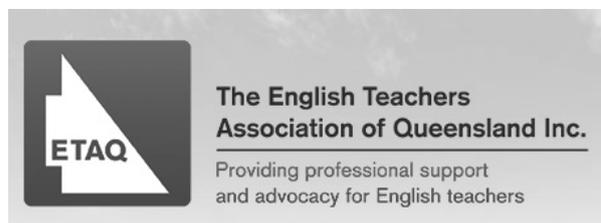
Seven issues of the 8-page print newsletter *English Matters* were distributed.

Email Bulletins – ETAQ E-pistles

Communication with members was also effected via more than 30 email bulletins entitled ETAQ E-pistles.

Web Page

1997 saw the launch of www.etaq.org.au for the first time. Its purposes were threefold: provide information about the Association and its activities, provide resources and links of practical use to teachers of English, and to



provide a discussion list. While it was rebuilt on a few occasions during the ensuing years, the web site remained fundamentally the same.

In early 2013 the Management Committee commissioned the rebuilding of the web site to refresh its look and feel and to increase its functionality by taking advantage of some of the web technologies which had been developed in recent years.

After months of discussion, a new version of the logo was chosen, incorporated into the web site and the design features were then finalised. This logo is now being used on the print materials. ETAQ has also ordered three banners featuring the new logo and design which will be on display for the first time at the AGM and March seminar.

The new site provides greater convenience for teachers of English in that it allows new members to join, existing members to renew their membership and update their details, members and non-members to register and pay for seminars and conferences. All of this can be done online.

Other enhancements include publishing the first prize winning entries for the literary and digital story competitions, greater recognition of Peter Botsman Award winners and more information about members of the Management Committee. Some information about Life Members will be posted later this year.

A priority is to provide more resources for members. If you have something you think may be suitable, please contact the Admin Officer with details.

Peter Botsman Memorial Awards

No Peter Botsman Memorial Awards were made in 2013.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

JCQTA

ETAQ continued its membership of the Joint Council of Queensland Teacher Associations (JCQTA) with the President or Vice President attending meetings held at the Queensland College of Teachers offices at Toowong.

Conclusion

Having served as a committee member for a number of years now, it is truly inspiring to see the passion, time and tireless effort that members of the Management Committee and various sub committees give to the organization.

Many thanks to Jenny Ivett- Hawes for her work as Secretary for the first half of 2013. We also give our appreciation to outgoing Management Committee members Shauna O'Connor and Sophie Johnson.

On behalf of the committee, I would also like to wish our outgoing president Garry Collins all the best in his role as AATE president for the 2014–2015 term. Garry has made a considerable contribution to the English Teachers Association of Queensland in the last decade or so, becoming president in 2005. His passionate defence of the profession and in particular standards of teaching English in this state (and nation) has been nothing short of formidable. His commitment to raising these issues in various forums, including letters to the editor, various advisory committees and through our own E-pistle is renowned.

Finally, thank you, our members for your continued support. I trust your membership of ETAQ has brought you professional development, new ideas and satisfaction.

Bronwyn Darben
Secretary

1 March 2014



THE ENGLISH TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.

— DARLING DOWNS BRANCH

Autumn Breakfast and AGM 2014

**Saturday 10 May, upstairs at the Metro Café,
Railway Street Toowoomba**

*Topic: The Changing Face of Media:
is there any room for truth on the front page anymore?*

Truth has become the ultimate victim in the lucrative business of media. Every day on the front pages of our newspapers, on our television screens and on our newsfeeds, we see truth manipulated by sensational headlines, photo-shopped images, selective reporting, and legal restrictions. This situation is exacerbated by a monopoly of media ownership, increasing power of advertisers, a tendency towards payment for stories, and poor research in the face of public demands for instant news. Educators have a vital role to play in training future generations – raised on a diet of unquestioning social media – how to identify the truth when it is being deliberately clouded.

Join us for our first event of the year, breakfast with two prominent local journalists, **Ally Martell** and **Merryl Miller**, who will share insights into the changing media landscape and its impact on representations of reality and truth.

Registration from 8.15am with breakfast served at 9.00am Further information at: www.etaq.org.au/events.html

Please join us for our AGM which will commence at the conclusion of the speakers.

NURTURING EMPATHY IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Ian Hamilton

All Hallows' School

We all bring to the teaching of English assumptions and preferences. One of my assumptions and preferences is to see subject English as a rich landscape for engaging students both intellectually and in the affective domain. We know that language, whether in literary or non-literary usage, frequently conveys more than impartial observations. Often it conveys nuances of meaning and mood. Often it elicits from the reader (listener/viewer) a response which includes impressions, feelings, interpretations and judgements.

Arguably it is a privilege, and possibly even an obligation, to ensure that literary and non-literary studies form part of the values education of our students. This may become controversial, depending on the exact values being espoused, but I am proceeding in the belief that empathy is a characteristic of all civil societies and therefore a universally admired quality. I assume this because moral imagination and empathy are capacities that should lead to behaviours that promote peaceful and respectful interactions between people and minimise prejudice, intolerance and bigotry.

Clearly, the consequence of these assumptions is that English teaching is not, nor should it try to be, an exercise in the merely technical or deconstructive. It is, rightly, a subject of the head and the heart. English runs the risk of being a rather arid, lifeless, exercise otherwise.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that much was written in the 1970s and 1980s about values education and then there seems to be a significant silence until quite recent times. This may well correspond to the widespread adoption of the assumptions of the post-modern project and its view that all meanings are polysemic constructions and therefore no firm basis for any kind of ethical discernment. Arguably one of the chief failings of post-modernism is that it renders meaningful discussion of ethics problematic or even impossible. Contemplating the worth of empathy is clearly a form of ethical discernment.

Not surprisingly, the concept of empathy can be definitionally elusive. Authors such as Elizabeth Jeffers (1994) make the distinction between empathy and sympathy, and empathy and projection (the latter meaning how *my* ego would feel if placed in the situation that I observe occurring for another). Empathy is not sympathy nor projection, because both maintain the objectification of the other. Earlier writers Gribble and Oliver (1973) had phrased the distinction as “feeling with”, rather than the more distanced “feeling for”. Jeffers (1994) offered this helpful thought: in sympathy I imagine *my* pain and therefore feel sorry for you, whereas in empathy I imagine *your* pain and in that sense can make the “imaginative linking between known experience and ontological possibilities” (Jeffers, 1994). Thus moral imagination is not sentimental, writes Gallo (1989), but cognitive: more like a reasoned choice than a warm inner glow.

Indeed writers like Wiseman (1978) describe it as a disposition that is actually essential to adult self-definition. This idea is similarly expressed by Woodruff (1989) and quoted by Jeffers. He, Woodruff, writes of empathy as a transformative way of knowing the world that seeks matrices of meaning beyond the ego¹ Sympathy may remain at one remove – a kind of inactive kindness – but empathy demands more of us.

All this begs the question of whether empathy can be taught. (For the reasons given above, I have assumed it *should* be taught). Schonert-Reichl and Oberle have answered the question in the affirmative². They seem to concur with earlier writers that endorsing socially positive behaviours, and disapproving of socially negative behaviours, is an obvious and effective way of communicating values. In other words, the dispositional nature of empathy can be inculcated into students. Furthermore, at least some practitioners of quantitative psychology are comfortable with the idea of mapping

1 Cf Roger Vilaradaga's (2009) way of describing empathy as “a set of congruent vicarious emotions that (are) other-oriented”.

2 Can Empathy be taught? (2005)

NURTURING EMPATHY IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

stages of empathetic development. Hoffman (1984) named four levels of early progression: firstly, no sense of separate self or other in infancy; followed by a middle infancy sense of physical (spatial) differentiation; followed by later infancy awareness of personal feelings and perhaps awareness of the feelings of others and lastly, the potential to move beyond the immediacy of here and now and engage in increasingly sophisticated imaginings and conceptualisations.

Whatever the worth of such models, they do point to the idea that educational practices could enhance the development of a potentially empathetic world view. Most obviously, imaginative engagement with texts has the potential to aid readers to develop moral imagination (that is, being able to imagine the rights of other people, and being able to recoil from the negative consequences of one's own unjust behaviour upon another). One might posit that visualisation (for example, of settings and characters) is an important first step towards moral sensibility because it reveals the human capacity to "realise" the imaginable, which lays the foundations for moral imagination, which lays the foundations for sympathy, which lays the foundations for empathy.

Empathy is an other-centred disposition which can be nurtured by explicitly engaging with the affective dimensions of texts. One aspect of doing this successfully is to ensure that students are aided to gain, and use, an emotional vocabulary. The ability to verbalise one's own feelings, and imagine the feelings of others, is key here and literature (in particular) is a safe, richly crafted, place to explore feelings, motivations, values and behaviours.

Other traditional aspects of literary studies, such as exploring symbolism, metaphor, analogy and allegory are also potentially useful ways to enhance students' understanding of feelings and perceptions beyond their immediate ambit. This may be particularly powerful if a text is deliberately chosen because it requires students to contemplate life experiences beyond their own, for instance, texts requiring students to

be alert to the values, customs and behavioural codes of exotic cultures. Such reading may offer a portal to a more empathetic world view. Indeed, there is, arguably specific emotional benefits from choosing texts which may offer a counterpoint to dominant peer perceptions. By Socratic inquiry, discussions and even by silence and meditation exercises, students may choose to take up the invitation to place themselves "in the shoes of another".

In real world classrooms all this may be difficult to achieve and it probably assumes sensitivity to others, and considerate and courteous interactions between students and staff, as the highly valued norm. As we all know, such values are not always evident in contemporary society. Perhaps, all the more reason to honour the affective domain in our curriculum.

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THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'

Natalie Fong
Citipointe Christian College

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on"
The Tempest (VI.i.165, 168–169)

September 2012: I am at a teachers' screening of Shakespeare's Globe's 2011 *All's Well That Ends Well* at Palace Barracks cinema in Brisbane, watching Colin Hurley play Lavatch in my favourite theatre. For a long time, I had dreamt of working for the Globe's Education department. Little did I know that seven months later, in April 2013, I would be in London having lunch with Colin in the Green Room (theatre-speak for the lunchroom) while completing an internship at Globe Education. Crazy dreams really do come true!

What followed was a whirlwind six months watching shows, creating teacher resources, being educated by eminent Shakespeareans, even deputy stage managing a production! It is impossible to detail all the wonderful experiences. I will share what may benefit you, and snippets from my diary for your entertainment.



The current Bankside location is close to the original site

"This wooden O" *Henry V* (Prologue.14)

The Globe, on London's Bankside, is a reconstruction of the Elizabethan theatre built by Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599. It was memorably burnt down by a canon used during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* in 1613. The modern



The theatre without a roof © John Trammer

Globe was the vision of the late American actor-director Sam Wanamaker. It was built close to the original site, using authentic craftsmanship and materials (though with better fire precautions!) – thatch, and beautiful oak that darkens over time. As Globe practitioners and guides emphasise, the Globe is not an open air theatre – it is a theatre without a roof. In Shakespeare's time, performances occurred during daylight hours; in the modern Globe, lights used for evening performances are fixed to replicate daylight. A notable feature of the Globe is that during daytime performances, actors can see the audience's faces; thus when Chorus says "within this wooden O" in *Henry V*, you can imagine him on stage inviting the audience to imbibe "the air at Agincourt". These interactions create a truly shared experience.

Seeing Shakespeare staged in its intended space helps us to understand the plays better. References to curtains, for example Hamlet stabbing Polonius behind the arras, make sense as the doors on stage are shielded by curtains.

THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'



The Tempest: Jessie Buckley as Miranda with Roger Allam as Prospero © Marc Brenner

And no guesses where the inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet's* famous balcony scene comes from when you look at the stage. If a character mentions Heaven or Hell they just look up at the painted constellations of the canopy or down at the trapdoor.

No additional technology is used. Where possible, authentic effects are employed – in 2013's *The Tempest*, rolling thunder was produced by actors pushing a cannonball rapidly around the back of the middle gallery, just as Shakespeare's company might have done. Actors are coached to speak clearer rather than louder – in Shakespeare's day this was necessary to be heard over the rabble. Nowadays actors compete with planes and pigeons. Jessie Buckley, Miranda in *The Tempest*, comments: "I really love working in this space... 'cause you just have to be alive to everything around you, to the weather to the audience, to the planes, to your fellow actor, in order to serve the story that people get changed by." In a lecture on "Shakespeare's Storms", Dr Gwilym Jones remarks that Shakespeare's featuring of storms in his plays is "environmental irony" given that they were to be performed in a theatre open to the elements – something which modern Globe audiences would appreciate in rain, hail or shine (or snow). Read his thesis: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/2388/>.

As in Shakespeare's time, the Globe is a democratic theatre. Where once common folk could stand in the yard for a penny, so the Globe has 700 groundlings tickets at £5 for each show. An absolute bargain if you can stand for three hours! Keen regulars queue to secure their

favourite spot with their chins on the stage and the very real danger of being spat on, vomited on, or having a prop dropped (sometimes deliberately) on their noggins.

"How far that little candle throws his beams!"
The Merchant of Venice (V.i.88):
The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (Indoor Jacobean Theatre)

At the end of 2013, the Globe realised Sam Wanamaker's dream of twin theatres with the completion of an indoor Jacobean theatre attached to the Globe, the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. The red brick shell had always co-existed, but it is only now after extensive research (and ongoing fundraising) that the work has been completed. Seating about 340, the intimate venue is entirely lit by beeswax candles, just as winter venues such as the Blackfriars Theatre where Shakespeare's company performed, would have been. I had joined the staff tour once the timbers were in place, and the sheer intimacy was already apparent and breathtaking. I can only guess how it must be now, painted and lit. You can see photos here: <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/the-sam-wanamaker-playhouse>, and YouTube videos: http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2alQNZWKx8NhQ-_434g1BT_keEmJW27x.

Being in both theatres at the Globe makes you aware of the effect that venue has on dramaturgy, and that Shakespeare wrote across both the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

In an enlightening lecture, the Globe's Head of Courses and Research Dr Farah Karim-Cooper explained that Indoor Jacobean theatres were more expensive (6p entrance fee plus 6p for a stool), so

The spectacular new indoor Jacobean theatre, the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse © Pete Le May



THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'

the clientele were wealthier. This influenced the subject matter of plays. *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* may have been written to capitalise on effects specific to indoor theatres – lighting, costumes (particular colours) and music. These would have helped enhance darker themes. Appropriately, the SWP opened with Webster's Jacobean tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi*. While *Macbeth* was not specifically written for the indoors, it is possible that with its references to witches, storms and candles, it would have been most effective indoors, where thunder and lightning could be created with explosives. Hopefully the Globe will test this theory! For modern actors, the space presents different challenges – facial expressions lit only by candles, acting while holding candles, the effect the smoke has on vocal cords. For teachers, seeing Shakespeare's plays staged as they would have been opens up plays, even subtleties like stage directions.



With friends, outside Globe Education

Globe Education: “for the pleasure it once afforded you, when it was presented with the soul of lively action” (John Marston, preface to *The Malcontent*)

The Globe boasts one of the biggest and busiest theatre education departments in the UK. I was research intern for the Learning Projects team, and during my six months observed and participated in several projects. Globe Education also contains rehearsal studios, and it's not every day you work to the strains of Merlin (Colin Morgan) having singing lessons two doors down, or chat with leather-jerkinned

Macbeth (Joseph Millson) at the kitchen sink, or share a bathroom with Wallis Simpson (*The King's Speech's* Eve Best, director of *Macbeth*). And I found Mr Darcy!



A Globe practitioner leads a Lively Action workshop © Shakespeare's Globe

Lively Action

A major component of Globe Education's offerings is the Lively Action workshops. School and college students can enjoy a half-hour tour of the theatre led by an experienced practitioner (often an actor who has performed on the Globe stage), followed by a 60 minute workshop of active approaches to Shakespeare in the rehearsal room. Workshops are very popular, including with school groups from Europe. Students get to be Globe actors for an hour.

Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank

(www.playingshakespeare.org)

Each year, in association with Deutsche Bank, Globe Education stages a 100-minute production of a Shakespeare play especially for secondary students. State secondary schools in London can apply for free tickets. In the project's 7th year, 2014, schools outside London and independent schools can purchase tickets at reduced prices. It is truly amazing to see the Globe packed with screaming teenagers (not unlike an Elizabethan audience!) absolutely loving Shakespeare. Last year, while teaching at a London state school (before interning at the Globe), I accompanied a Year 10 excursion to see Playing Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo danced to One Direction on top of a burnt out car, and the balcony became the teenaged Juliet's bedroom with a giant heart-shaped pink light. The students loved it. The actors experienced being pop stars!

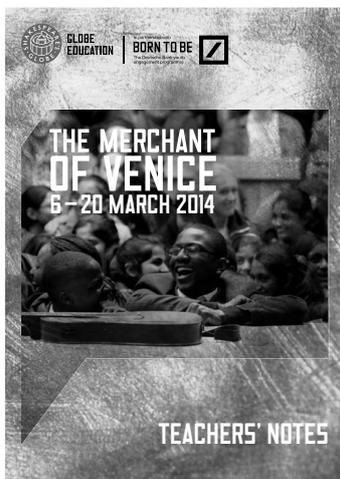
THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'



Romeo hearts Juliet: 2013 Playing Shakespeare.
© Shakespeare's Globe & Hannah Yates

Viewing the production from a teacher's perspective came in handy as I was asked to work on teachers' notes for the 2014 production, *The Merchant of Venice*. I was let loose in the Globe's Library and Archive to research and write material to help teachers introduce the play to their students before coming to a performance. I spent happy hours browsing the book collection, and watching archival footage of every production of *Merchant* that has been staged at the Globe. Watching different interpretations opens up different nuances in the play, and perusing prompt books and production notes gave me a glimpse into the choices made by creative teams. I also built partnerships with the Jewish Museum London and the Pears Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism who assisted. You can find my teachers' notes, co-written with Dr Farah Karim-Cooper, at <http://2014.playingshakespeare.org/teachers-notes>.

Award-winning microsites for this and past productions can be found here: <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/playing-shakespeare>.



Teachers' notes co-written with Dr Farah Karim-Cooper

City of London School for Girls' *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Georghia Ellinas, the enterprising Head of Learning, thought it would be a great experience for me to assist with the Globe's first ever school production, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, staged by the City of London School for Girls. The girls, together with some boys from City of London School for Boys, staged a Globe production from script through to performance, mentored by professionals – director Jo Howarth (also an actor who has performed at the Globe and RSC), assistant director and storyteller extraordinaire Debs Newbold, plus voice, movement and choreography coaches from the Globe. I was Deputy Stage Manager/Company Manager, slightly terrifying considering I had virtually no experience!



First rehearsal on the Globe stage – director Jo Howarth gets the students familiar with the space

What followed was an exhilarating and enriching 4 months participating in a Globe production. I learnt about all aspects of staging: made my first prompt book, scheduled rehearsals, rummaged through Globe costumes and became very familiar with the theatre's nooks and crannies, running between backstage, the groundlings' pit, green room, musicians' balcony and even the shop. Words cannot describe the sensation of being on the stage, with a live audience applauding.

The school has posted photographs here: <http://clsg.web7.devwebsite.co.uk/news/?pid=0&nid=1&storyid=41>

THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'



Performance © Ellie Kurttz

Read Not Dead

One of Globe Education Director Patrick Spottiswoode's ambitions is to stage readings of every play written between 1567 and 1642. Staffed by enthusiastic actors, many Globe faithful, Read Not Dead has become a Sunday afternoon staple for ardent fans, armed with copies of plays. A major attraction is hearing the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries who may have been just as popular but for whom posterity has been less kind. Plays have wonderful titles like *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *Women Pleased*. It is remarkable to see how other writers incorporated similar plots, themes and characterisation as Shakespeare, himself a master of intertextuality. As well, the actors relish the challenge of staging a production with a few hours' preparation, random bits of



With Read Not Dead regular David Oakes, star of *The White Queen* and *The Borgias*. David also played Mr Darcy in Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's 2013 *Pride and Prejudice*.

costume and props, and the occasional ad lib. No Sunday afternoon was complete without Patrick's hearty laugh at some amusing dialogue or plot twist, such as:

Elderly Husband (to audience, dragging young, pretty wife off 'stage' before intermission): "This normally takes 15 minutes!"

Man (in the middle of romantic clinch, while clutching his script): "Err...where are we up to?"

Discovery Space

(<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space>)

Discovery Space is an online treasure trove of resources, including a searchable archive of current and previous productions (useful for comparing), fact sheets and research papers. An invaluable resource is Adopt an Actor, in which select actors are interviewed throughout the creative process. I helped with transcripts, spending afternoons deciphering Billy Boyd's delightful Scottish brogue and Jessie Buckley's winsome Irish one (Jessie has since gone on to play Katharine to Jude Law's Henry V).

Globe to Globe: "All the World's a Stage" *As You Like It* (II.vii.142)

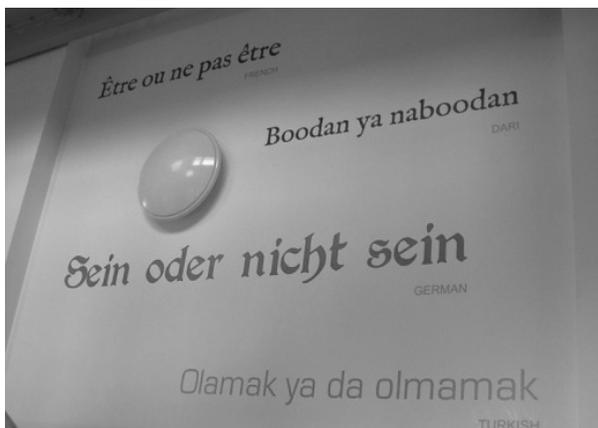
The Globe is not a stuffy Elizabethan museum – they are always finding ways of exploring the universality of Shakespeare's work. During 2012's World Shakespeare Festival, the Globe to Globe initiative, in which Shakespeare's works were performed by different theatre companies from around the world in their native languages, was a huge hit. While researching for *Playing Shakespeare*, I watched a recording of the Israeli Habima National Theatre's *The Merchant of Venice*, performed in Yiddish. For once the story was told from the perspective of the persecuted Jews. You feel for Shylock when he is beaten by youths, and in the court scene, when his Jewish garments are torn from him. Other productions included a Chinese *Richard III* and an Indian *Tempest*. Read more at <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com>. Shakespeare's works are so universal they can be translated into any language and in any country.

THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'

Some popular acts returned in 2013. The award-winning South African Isango Ensemble presented their musical *Venus and Adonis* in English, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, SeSotho, Setswana and Afrikaans (wonderful a capella singing that raised hairs on the backs of necks). Belarus Free Theatre's *King Lear*, performed in Belarusian, with English scene synopses, was also poignant because they are not permitted to perform in their own country.

This year, Globe to Globe is taking on an exciting and ambitious dimension – touring *Hamlet* to 205 countries starting on April 23, Shakespeare's 450th birthday. As well as *Hamlet*'s hometown, Elsinore, they are coming to Australia (2015)! Stay tuned: <http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com>.

I helped with another project relating to Shakespeare's universality – an art installation in the Globe Education building. My task was to locate people to translate "To be or not to be" into 31 languages, including Yoruba, a Nigerian language spoken in London. The colourful results give actors, students and visitors something thought-provoking to look at.



"To be or not to be" art installation

Globe on Screen: "We will draw the curtain and show you the picture" *Twelfth Night* (l.v.234–5)

Having watched some of the Globe's HD recordings of their plays in cinemas in Australia and on DVD, it was surreal to be at the Globe on days when they were filming for 2014's Globe on Screen program. A massive amount of equipment and crew are needed and they film a

few shows over a few days. The closest you can get to being in the Globe, these HD films are also released on DVD – see the Globe's shop or Amazon. They filmed *Macbeth*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, all really excellent productions, so keep your eyes peeled later this year for your nearest screening – <http://onscreen.shakespearesglobe.com>.

What an immense blessing and privilege to fulfil a lifelong dream! It was wonderful to observe firsthand the hard work behind the scenes at the Globe, working with lovely colleagues with a shared passion for Shakespeare and the theatre, and being able to give something back. Not to mention being star struck!

For this incredible experience, thank you to Director of Globe Education Patrick Spottiswoode, Head of Learning Georghia Ellinas, Learning Projects Manager Savitri Patel and the rest of the staff at Globe Education.

"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks." *Twelfth Night* 3.3.14–15

"Our revels now are ended." *The Tempest* 4.1.148

Gigging at The Globe: Interning at the World's Greatest Theatre

16 April

Met the lovely staff today – a dedicated team that achieves so much. Saw a workshop in progress – lots of students running around the studio excited to learn about Shakespeare!

22 April

After 5 years teaching, feels weird having a desk job where you can eat and go to the toilet when you want. Even weirder is seeing actors in real life that I saw on screen last year – Colin Hurley, Claudio (Phil Cumbus) from 2011's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Weirder still – when I walked past Props, they were painting fake crabs and lobsters.

25 April

Me to students on tour: "You just walked past Merlin {Colin Morgan}."

Students: "What?!"

THE ULTIMATE SHAKESPERIENCE PART TWO: 'THE GREAT GLOBE ITSELF'

1 May

Sword fighting workshop with Phil Stafford, who's been in the business 30 years and can tell you everything about fight etiquette in Shakespeare's plays and Hollywood stars he's met: "Christopher Lee said to me...I trained Owen Teale, who's now in *Game of Thrones*..."



Banquo (Billy Boyd) with Macbeth (Joseph Milson)
© Ellie Kurttz

30 May

Chatted to Joseph Milson (Globe's Macbeth, Banquo in *Shakespeare Re:Told Macbeth*).

5 June

A dilemma you don't get every day: there's nowhere to sit in the greenroom because Pippin (Billy Boyd) is stretched out on the couch learning his lines.

4 July

A gentleman and I fight crowds at stage door. Me: "So many autograph hunters!" Him: "We don't get this many for *Macbeth*." Me: "Are you in *Macbeth*?" Him: "I'm the king – Duncan." Me {pause}: "You're Gawn Grainger. Zoe Wanamaker is your wife. She seems lovely." Gawn: "She is."

First day of rehearsals tomorrow for *Merry Wives of Windsor*, of which I am deputy stage manager.

5 July

You know you're in London when the students introduce themselves with: "I'm {name} and both my parents are actors," "I'm {name}, and I've just filmed *The Invisible Woman* with Ralph Fiennes." Last week their drama teacher took them for a 3 hour workshop with Emma Thompson.

6 August

Got a fright when I heard a man roaring. Oberon (John Light) warming up on the balcony. A staff member catches my eye. Mona Lisa smiles.

14 August

Go to box office to collect *Tempest* tickets: "Due to illness Colin Morgan will not be appearing."

Will get to see what happens, as the Globe does not use understudies – only an actor on the stage reading from the script.

Colin recovered and was a great Ariel. Who would've thought *The Tempest* was a feel-good play? The didgeridoo, plus the scene when Caliban is introduced to alcohol, reminded me of British colonisation of Australia. Also the Monster in *Frankenstein* and Caliban have a lot in common – Caliban says the gift of language allows him to curse; in Nick Dear's *Frankenstein* the Monster says "you taught me to lie".

19 September

The daunting but exciting reality of stage managing a production at the Globe hit me when the director saw my script and said, "You need to make a proper Book." She entertains me with stories of working with Kenneth Branagh.

11 October

First rehearsal on the Globe stage. I fulfilled a dream when I stood on the stage and yelled at an obliging audience of pigeons. The students absolutely owned the space!

3 November

The students were not perturbed by the constant flow of tourists watching them rehearse. One commented it was better because they could use the audience's reaction. They are constantly finding new ways of delivering the lines, pausing for effect, etc. Shakespeare will be applauding!

4 November

Living the dream. Thanks to the Globe for the amazing privilege of deputy stage managing a production...A Merry night had by all. Thanks to our amazing cast and crew for their all-round awesomeness. And an appreciative audience!



Colin Morgan as Ariel in The Tempest
© Marc Brenner

EXPLORING SUSTAINABILITY IN LITERATURE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: AN ANNOTATED GUIDE



Anita Jetnikoff and Melissa Kelly, QUT

The Australian Curriculum: English (AC:E) is being implemented in Queensland and asks teachers and curriculum designers to incorporate the cross curriculum priority of Sustainability. This paper examines some texts suitable for inclusion in classroom study and suggests some companion texts that may be studied alongside them, including online resources by the ABC and those developed online for the Australian Curriculum. We also suggest some formative and summative assessment possibilities for responding to the selected works in this guide. We have endeavoured to investigate literature that enable students to explore and produce text types across the three AC:E categories: persuasive, imaginative and informative. The selected texts cover traditional novels, novellas, Sci-fi and speculative fiction, non-fiction, documentary, feature film and animation. Some of the texts reviewed here also cover the other cross curriculum priorities including texts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and some which also include Asian representations. We have also indicated which of the AC:E the general capabilities are addressed in each text.

The AC:E v.5.1 (ACARA, 2013) states:

Across the Australian Curriculum, sustainability will allow all young Australians to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for them to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It will enable individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and

engaging with the world. The Sustainability priority is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

In the Australian Curriculum: English, the priority of sustainability provides rich and engaging contexts for developing students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing.

The Australian Curriculum: English assists students to develop the skills necessary to investigate, analyse and communicate ideas and information related to sustainability, and to advocate, generate and evaluate actions for sustainable futures. The content in the language, literature and literacy strands is key to developing and sharing knowledge about social, economic and ecological systems and world views that promote social justice.

In this learning area, students may interrogate a range of texts to shape their decision making in relation to sustainability. They develop the understanding and skills necessary to act responsibly and create texts that inform and persuade others to take action for sustainable futures.

The selected texts below explore one or more aspects of this description of sustainability in the curriculum and we hope are helpful to teachers wanting to incorporate this CCP into their English work programs and units.

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Exploring Sustainability in Literature for the Australian Curriculum		
Novel: <i>Holes</i> Sachar, Louis (2000)		Year level suitability: Year 7
<p>Synopsis: This easy to read dystopic, futuristic novel is about persistence, and distortions of the truth. The plot revolves around a group of young misfits who have been sent to detention at 'Camp Green Lake' in an American desert populated by venomous lizards. The mindless occupation of digging holes is the punishment meted out to young miscreants. The central character, Stanley Yelnats, quickly learns the power dynamic of the group, and tries to keep a low profile. He discovers something one day in one of the holes of interest to the brutal and treacherous warden of the camp and the consequences of that are personally damaging to him. He escapes into the desert and survives by finding a hill and another 'lost' boy. When he returns to the camp, a 'treasure' chest has been unearthed which leads to the breakdown of the deception that has been controlling the camp. Keeping people, especially children in such inhumane conditions is not sustainable.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Report, enquiry or investigation into the conditions of the camp	AC:E GCs: Ethical understanding, personal and social capability.	Suggested Companion Texts: Film: <i>Holes</i> (adaptation) (Davis, 2003) Novel: <i>The Barrumbi Kids</i> (Norrington, 2002)
Novel: <i>Green Tara</i> Brower, K.H. (2013)		Year level suitability: Year 7
<p>Synopsis: Scientist-in-training and neophyte space pilot, Virginia, lives on a space ship colony permanently floating in space, many generations after the earth has been destroyed. She and her cousin, Gordy, break security to fly into a forbidden zone, to the legendary planet Green Tara, which has a sun and gravity, wildlife and oceans much like Earth.</p> <p>As a teenager she discovers a navigation chart marking her mother's last-known destination. Her Green Tara expedition is motivated by searching for her mother who had left when Virginia was just five years old. She discovers that her mother became lost on a science expedition, illegally searching for a planet where colonists could breathe fresh air and drink clean water.</p> <p>Virginia finds her mother. Unfortunately, her mother's mission to recolonise Earth has passed along her ancestral line, and seems more important to her than bonding with her daughter. Their mission is dogged by security agents of the Triumvirate — unwilling to relinquish control of precious natural resources — who track the party down and threaten the mission and the family's freedom.</p> <p>This is a story about what can happen if we do not look after the planet and the importance of human relationships. <i>Green Tara</i> explores the need for taking informed action and caring for each other as well.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Speculative Fiction Illustrated hand-written journal entries on how to revive the Earth's ecosystem, written in the persona of Virginia's eight times removed great grandmother.	AC:E GCs: Ethical understanding, personal and social capability.	Suggested Companion Texts: Novel: <i>Refuge</i> (French, 2013) Film: <i>Avatar</i> (Cameron, 2010)

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Novel: <i>The Barrumbi Kids</i> Norrington, Leonie (2002)		Year level suitability: Year 7–8.
<p>Synopsis: Norrington’s first young reader’s novel demonstrates the complexities of cross-cultural living in a remote community in Northern Territory. The novel follows the adventures of primary school aged children as they navigate their way through the blended culture of their community, demonstrating their lived social, cultural and sustainable practices; particularly the importance of fire in managing the landscape.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Poetry or journal writing exploring the difference between informed and uninformed action	AC:E GCs: Personal and social capability, intercultural understanding, ethical understanding. <i>Incorporates the CCP of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</i>	Suggested Companion Texts: Film: <i>Avatar</i> (Cameron, 2010); <i>Fire power</i> (ABC, 2013) Novel: <i>Refuge</i> (French, 2013) (See below) Poetry: <i>The Hot Ridge; Fire-Stick Farming</i> , from <i>Fire-stick Farming</i> (O’Connor, 1990)
TV Series and Picture Book: <i>My Place</i> Wheatley, Nadia (ABC3, 2012; Wheatley & Rawlins, 1987)		Year level suitability: Year 7–8.
<p>Synopsis: <i>My Place</i> tells the story of one “place” in Sydney, as experienced and lived in by a succession of children. Told in intervals of ten years, beginning in 2008 and reaching back in time to before the First Fleet arrived in 1788. The stories are told by the children of each time period, as they hide and play in the same fig tree, and illustrates how the “place”, as well as the people who inhabit it, change over time. Themes of sustainability are illustrated by the need to preserve historic trees, and the changing relationship between people and their environment. The series highlights the importance of preserving nature in terms of identity and place, as the tree remains the central character throughout 220 years.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Digital storytelling or podcast about the importance of Place, create a picture book	AC:E GCs: Literacy (cineliteracy), ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.	Suggested Companion Texts: Online resources http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/myplace/ ACMI digital storytelling archive acmi.com.au
Novel: <i>Trash</i> Mulligan, Andy (2010)		Year level suitability: Year 8
<p>Synopsis: Set in Manila on the dumpsite, where young people sift through the trash, this novel is a page turning story of survival. The central characters are the dump kids, little more than street kids, but two of them are literate and find a wallet and a bag whilst sifting through the trash for recyclables. This leads to intrigue which uncovers police and political corruption in Philippines. It encompasses the theme of sustainability in that it is impossible to imagine what the earth will be like if we continue to throw everything away, as if when it is out of sight it is out of mind. If a developing country is drowning in trash, what is our own country doing? Are lifestyles like these sustainable?</p>		

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<p>Assessment possibilities: Imaginative: students create narratives around items discovered in a manufactured “rubbish bin”</p> <p>Motivational speech delivered by one of the characters as adults in the new land.</p> <p>Speculative fiction: archaeological report from the future “what rubbish says about people” at a particular time and place.</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Literacy, intercultural understanding, ethical understanding, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Years 7 to 10 Website: http://e4ac.edu.au/ Four empowering literature-based units of work that pursue imagination and inquiry to develop critical literacy skills and ethical understandings across a range of social media and authentic texts, for the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Film: <i>WALL-E</i> (Animation) (Stanton, 2008); <i>The Age of Stupid</i> (Hybird drama/documentary) (Armstrong, 2009); <i>Trash</i> (adaptation, scheduled for release 2014) (Daldry, 2014)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>Refuge</i> French, Jackie (2013)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 8</p>
<p>Synopsis: This novel is an interesting blend of magical realism, speculative fiction and the stories of refugees. Young readers will learn much about asylum seekers and the tragic circumstances from which they have come. This tale is set on a beach trapped in time and characters from different times and places come together to explore their readiness to leave and join the real world. It explores sustainability in the sense that it explores a ‘socially just world through informed action’. Each of the characters in the refuge must decide to leave to face reality. The way we currently treat asylum seekers in this country is unsustainable.</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities: Memoir for a character – brief biographical or autobiographical extract of their time at the refuge bay.</p> <p>Script of two people from the refuge meeting in the same time zone in the future.</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Intercultural understanding, ethical understanding, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking.</p> <p><i>Incorporates the CCP of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia.</i></p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Novel: <i>Green Tara</i> (Brower, 2013) Play: <i>Monkey Mother</i> (Ta Binh, 2000)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>My Sister Sif</i> Park, Ruth (2009)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 9</p>
<p>Synopsis: This novel borders on speculative fiction, as it deals with a central character Erika; Riko to her family and her sister, Sif. Both sisters grew up on a Pacific island, Rongo. The sisters belong to the ‘water people’ although their father was a ‘landcrab’, from Scandinavia, whilst their mother was part mermaid. Their children inherited more or less of the characteristics of the water people and have the ability to swim well, breathe for longer than usual underwater and communicate with sea creatures, such as dolphins and whales. When a young scientist and shell collector discovers Riko selling a very rare shell, in order to pay for a flight back to Rongo from Melbourne, he discovers her identity and follows her to the Island. On Rongo he develops a relationship with Sif. The Island is subject to volcanic tremors and it transpires that French nuclear testing in the Pacific has damaged the ecosystem and the water creatures begin to suffer sickness, deformities and still births. The story explores the idea that it is unsustainable to carry out such ecologically dangerous activities in the ocean and that there will always be dire consequences of nuclear testing for the people living in these fragile environments.</p>		

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<p>Assessment possibilities: Persuasive speaking about the environment; alternative narrative from the young scientist's POV (eg journal entries/logs of his observations of the water people)</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Intercultural understanding, ethical understanding, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Film: <i>Tank Girl</i> (Talalay, 1995) (See below) Novel: <i>Terrene: The hidden valley</i> (Liu, 2011); <i>Hope Bay</i> (Pluss, 2005)</p>
<p>Film: <i>Tank Girl</i> Talalay, Rachel (1995)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 9</p>
<p>Synopsis: This 1995 Australian, sci-fi comic film derives from a British cult comic-strip. A futuristic tank-riding, feminist, anti-heroine, Tank Girl (Lori Petty) fights a mega-corporation, which controls the world's water supply. This comedy deals satirically with sustainability in terms of what could happen when the world runs out of clean drinking water. The action is set in the year 2033, after an ecological disaster of drought and pollution has ravaged the countryside, and water is at a premium and being hoarded by the Department of Water and Power. Tank Girl and her mutant friends battle the bureaucracy and its villainous chief, Kesslee (Malcolm McDowell). At stake is the world's water supply, which the rebels frequently raid. Rock star Iggy Pop has a cameo as Rat Face, one of the half-human, half-kangaroo Rippers.</p> <p>*This film divided viewers, especially those who were fans of the original comic strip, who reviewed it unfavorably. It however can be critically reviewed as such to examine different media representations of issues.</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities: Create comic strip from an alternative scene Cross over fiction (Tank Girl meets Sif or Virginia from <i>Green Tara</i>) An exposition critically comparing the representations of feminist heroines across genres</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Novel: <i>My Sister Sif</i> (Park, 2009) Comic trade paperbacks: <i>Tank Girl</i> (Hewlett & Martin, 2009) Animation series: <i>Aeon Flux</i> (Chung, 1991-)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>Hope Bay</i> Pluss, Nicole (2005)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 9 or 10</p>
<p>Synopsis: <i>Hope Bay</i> is set primarily on 'Mallee Island' off the southern Coast of Australia, where teenage, Possum and her friend Ben fiercely protect the pristine environment. The narrative sub text explores the backstory of old Olga, an immigrant from war torn Europe, whose affinity with Possum develops through their love of the Island's wildlife. A narrative subtext follows Olga and her sister Stella's escape from Nazi-occupied Holland during the second world war. Olga, having found refuge on this isolated island, can 'call in' the local dolphins. When tourists flock to the Island upsetting the balance of nature Possum goes into overdrive as an ecowarrior. When Olga becomes ill, she passes on a gift to Possum who must rise to the legacy. The book deals with sustainable sea and land practices and the importance of protecting the environment in wild places.</p>		

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<p>Assessment possibilities: Euology Narrative backstory from Olga's first person viewpoint Persuasive speech on protection of wildlife</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: <i>My sister Sif</i> (Park, 2009) <i>What now Tilda B?</i> (Lomer, 2010)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>What now, Tilda B?</i> Lomer, Kathryn (2010)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 9</p>
<p>Synopsis: Tilda Braint is nearly sixteen, restless and having trouble figuring out her next step in life. Living in a small coastal town in Tasmania doesn't seem to offer much opportunity, as everyone knows everyone else, school is full of petty conflict and her family unit has broken down. When a mother elephant seal gives birth to a pup at the local beach and Tilda discovers them, and becomes involved in their care, her life changes irrevocably. Tourists flock to witness the novelty of these marine strangers so far from their usual habitat. The spectacle of the seals unite usually disparate people in the community. We learn along with Tilda that these seals used to populate this beach before they were hunted almost to extinction. Alongside the seal's progress, Tilda's wild best friend, Shell, is forced to make decisions about her future. The importance of friendship and discovering 'who you really are' are central themes of this moving novel.</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities: Fleshing out details of the 'school project' undertaken by Tilda and her classmates An alternative ending or sequel to the novel: or what Tilda does next. A first person account through the POV of the marine biologist Meg A newspaper report featuring the discovery and progress of the seals.</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: <i>My sister Sif</i> (Park, 2009) <i>Hope Bay</i> (Pluss, 2005)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>River Child</i> Logan, Carolyn (1995)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 10</p>
<p>Synopsis: On the ship journey bound for Australia, Sarah's mother and step father have died. Sixteen year old Sarah must fend both for her four year old brother Tommy and herself in the new land. A determined and strong young woman, Sarah soon makes a new life and home on the edge of the wilderness. She takes a position as a servant to the surveyor-general of the colony. Here, beside the river, she finds herself drawn towards the unknown, and into a deep and mysterious relationship with Bilu, an Aboriginal woman, and her son Warlu and with the river upon which they depend. The narrative is interspersed with fragments of diaries and letters of different characters, Sarah's dreams and memories of an unhappy past and the poetic thoughts of Bilu. <i>River Child</i> is an intensely moving story of one colonial woman's adventure, love, tragedy and courage. Like <i>The secret river</i> (Grenville, 2006) and <i>Nanberry</i> (French, 2011), this novel exposes how the early colonists' approach to developing land was unsustainable. River child asks the question how things may have been different if colonists had learnt from Indigenous people and their understanding of, and relationship with, the land instead of viewing both of them as hostile.</p>		

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<p>Assessment possibilities:</p> <p>Extensions of the written diaries from some marginal characters</p> <p>Adapt a scene from the novel as a film or play script</p> <p>Design a digital story or narrative poetry written from the river's point of view</p>	<p>AC:E GCs:</p> <p>Literacy, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.</p> <p><i>Incorporates the CCP of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</i></p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts:</p> <p><i>Novel: The Secret River</i> (Grenville, 2006) – more suitable for senior readers in year 11 or 12, this could be a comparative story; <i>Nanberry: black white brother</i> (French, 2011)</p> <p>Short story: <i>South</i> (Drury, 2001b) from <i>The shaman's quest</i> (Drury, 2001a, pp. 59–103). Set in Central Australia, this describes the quest of Kalu, an Indigenous 'clever man', of the lizard dreaming. The story has intertextual connections with the coming of the 'River child' to Sarah and the importance of people's lives and deaths and spiritual connection to the water and land.</p>
<p>Novel: <i>Riding the Black Cockatoo</i> Danalis, John (2009)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 10</p>
<p>Synopsis: This is the memoir of a creative writing student who returns an Indigenous skull that had been thoughtlessly removed from a midden in South-western Victoria by his relatives. It is also the story of awakening to culture through the return of the skull to its rightful place. Partially set in Queensland University of Technology, Queenslanders will recognise many of the figures in the story. The aspect of sustainability comes into play in the notion of disappearing tribes due in part to genocide and the stealing of land and redirecting of waterways.</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities:</p> <p>Book trailer</p> <p>Short story demonstrating local knowledge</p> <p>Podcast about the local traditional owners</p>	<p>AC:E GCs:</p> <p>Literacy, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.</p> <p><i>Incorporates the CCP of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</i></p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts:</p> <p><i>Novel: Crow Country</i> (Constable, 2011)</p>
<p>Novel: <i>Terrene: The hidden valley</i> Liu, Eric (2011)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 10</p>
<p>Synopsis: <i>Terrene: The hidden valley</i> is a dual-reality fiction set in both the present day/near future, as well as a post-human utopia. A young girl, Flora, seeks answers to what lies beyond the utopic hidden valley. The victim of blackouts she is unable to control, she begins to live two lives: one when awake, and another when she sleeps. From these two existences, she begins to discover clues to the world beyond the valley, and why the last humans settled in Terrene. Selected as a scholar, she journeys to the mysterious Institute, facing challenges along the way, and must combine what she knows about her world, as well as what she learns when asleep, to discover what hope remains for the future of humankind. This novel promotes a focus on protecting the environment and creating an ecologically and socially just world through information action. The novel also explores the theme of unsustainable patterns of living, and the impact on the environment of climate change. A fast paced, action-packed story incorporating current scientific theories makes this novel suitable for a variety of readers.</p>		

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<p>Assessment possibilities: News report Speculative fiction inspired by current events</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Film: <i>The Hunger Games</i> (Collins, 2011); <i>The Age of Stupid (Drama/Documentary)</i> (Armstrong, 2009); <i>WALL-E</i> (Stanton, 2008) Novel: <i>Green Tara</i> (Brower, 2013).</p>
<p>Novel: <i>The Bleeding</i> Wheatley, Nadia (1989)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 10-11</p>
<p>Synopsis: The novel explores the tensions between ecologists and loggers. The central character, Col, echoes these tensions in his own character, as he lies in hospital reflecting on his dual nature as part time gang member and part time ecowarrior. The novel is set in the forest area of NSW where the future of the old growth forest is in jeopardy if it is unsustainably logged. The central character becomes involved in political action to save the forest and discovers some truths about adult life and his own place in the world as part of this reflection.</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities: Persuasive speech representing one or the other side of the issue Script for podcast or talkback radio A memoir of an event from Col or a minor character's point of view</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Novel: <i>Into the woods</i> (Krien, 2012); <i>What now Tilda B?</i> (Lomer, 2010) Film: <i>Ferntree Gully – The Last Rainforest</i> (Animation) (Kroyer, 1992); <i>Princess Mononoke</i> (Animation) (Miyazaki, 2004); <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> (Documentary)(Guggenheim, 2007) See also: TED Talks http://www.ted.com/talks</p>
<p>Novella: <i>The Tea Goddess</i> Dreyer, Dekker (2010)</p>		<p>Year level suitability: Year 11</p>
<p>Synopsis: In the novella that coined the term “ecopunk”, Dreyer presents a dystopic future in which unemployed Remy embraces a peculiar travel invitation to travel from his downtrodden Brooklyn flat to London. Teaming up with mysterious Clint he is soon arrested, before teaming up with wayward heiress Darling Daniels to escape. Themes of Buddhism and reincarnation emerge as Remy and Darling begin to remember past lives, and they are called upon by the followers they left behind to finish what their past selves began. At approximately 90 pages, this novella combines action and suspense with the sustainability themes of informed action and creating an ecologically and socially just world. (Infrequent coarse language).</p>		
<p>Assessment possibilities: Script of a scene exploring what Remy and Darling remember from their past lives Newspaper report or blog entry about a political protest or environmental issue in the novella</p>	<p>AC:E GCs: Critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding.</p>	<p>Suggested Companion Texts: Film: <i>Avatar</i> (Cameron, 2010); <i>Food, Inc</i> (Documentary) (Kenner, 2009) Novel: <i>All Over Creation</i> (Ozeki, 2004)</p>

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Novel: <i>Other Country</i> Scourfield, Stephen (2007)		Year level suitability: Year 11-12
<p>Synopsis: Prequel to the novel <i>As the river runs</i>, Scourfield explores the relationship between two brothers who have been brutally raised by a violent father and developed both the toughness and consummate skills of station ringers. They are helped by a sympathetic landowner who invests them with trust and the responsibility of running a cattle station. The older brother, Ace, wants to keep running things as they were, but the younger brother, Billy, is a visionary and sees that the future of the land must take in other options other than cattle raising if it is to be sustainable in the long term. The personal battle between the brothers echoes the battle between cattle raising and sustainable land use ecotourism involving landcare and Indigenous knowledge. Caution: violence and some sexual content.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Model a book trailer, panel discussion on sustainability and land care	AC:E GCs: Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability. <i>Incorporates the CCP of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</i>	Suggested Companion Texts: Novel: <i>As the Rivers Runs</i> (sequel) (Scourfield, 2013) Film: <i>Food, Inc</i> (Documentary) (Kenner, 2009)
Novel: <i>As The River Runs</i> Scourfield, Stephen (2013)		Year level suitability: Year 10-11
<p>Synopsis: This novel explores the conflict between development on the beautiful and delicate, water-rich, West Australian Kimberly region and the need for water in the capital city. A young eco warrior, Dylan Ward becomes embroiled in the secret plans of a developer Jack Cole and an ambitious politician, Michael Mooney. Dylan accompanies Col and Mooney's smart assistant, Kate Kennedy, on a 'fact finding' mission to the Kimberly. Dylan Ward has positive relationships with the traditional people, as well as the mining industry but finds himself ethically compromised part way through the journey. Kate's ambitions and city life ideals are also challenged as the Kimberly works its magic on her. Positive representations of the Indigenous Kimberly people show that their relationship with the land is still very much intact and alive and that this relationship is both physical and spiritual. The story uncovers political corruption and the possible devastating effects of development when people are not regarded in decisions about developing sensitive environments.</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Film script adapted from a chapter/scene, book trailer, speeches or panel discussions, newspaper reports (eg corruption)	AC:E GCs: Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability. <i>Incorporates the CCP of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</i>	Suggested Companion Texts: TV Series: <i>Two men in a tinnie</i> (Cordell, 2006) Collection of stories: <i>Kimberley Stories</i> (Toussaint, 2012) Novella: <i>The Biologist and The Ethicist</i> (From <i>Unaccountable Hours</i>) (Scourfield, 2012)

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Novel: <i>All over creation</i> Ozeki, Ruth (2004)		Year level suitability: Year 11 or 12
<p>Synopsis: The novel is set in the rural town of Liberty Falls, Idaho. Estranged childhood friends Yumi Fuller and Cassie Unger, have different early memories of this place as home. Yumi, beautiful and talented and pregnant, left early in her teens to escape the claustrophobic small town confines. Meanwhile Cassie who never left is ironically caring for Yumi's aging and ill parents Lloyd and Momoko Fuller. Cassie and her husband stand to inherit both families' farmlands. Cassie tracks Yumi down to ask her to take responsibility for her aging parents and she reluctantly returns to the farm with three children in tow. The plot thickens when Yumi's former teacher and lover, Elliot, also returns to the town with a very different corporate, reactionary, agricultural agenda. Elliot represents the commercial interests of unsustainable farming practices and Yumi finds herself in the middle of a conflict of interests. The subtext of a feral band of eco-activists, 'The Seeds of Resistance' travelling the US in a Winnebago and protesting against genetic modification discover that old Lloyd and Momoko have been assiduously seed saving for decades. They hold them up as trailblazers of sustainability and camp at the farm headquarters trying to carry on the conservation work the Fullers began and caring for the old man. The battle between ecology and monoculture collides and values and friendships and familial relationships are severely tested. (Some sexual references.)</p>		
Assessment possibilities: Persuasive speeches on aspects of seed saving and sustainable agriculture or related issues Drama or film script of the critical show down between farmers and ecowarriors.	AC:E GCs: Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.	Suggested Companion Texts: Documentary film: <i>Food, Inc</i> (Kenner, 2009)
Non fiction: <i>Into the woods</i> Krein, Anna (2012)		Year level suitability: Year 12
<p>Synopsis: An important non-fiction book which explores the issue of conservation of old growth forest in Tasmania. The journalist writer spends time with all the stakeholders in the issue of deforestation in Tasmania. Duplicity, corruption and shady deals surround the issue over successive governments. Krein tries to present a balanced viewpoint by also representing the stories of the loggers as well as the ecowarriors, all of whom have huge emotional stakes in the business of forestry and the huge pulp mill planned for the Tamar Valley. This is a fascinating and shocking read and remains current, in the light of the debate recently revived by the Abbot government's idea to rescind the Gillard government's policy which saw the Styx valley protected and the logging managed sustainably. The economic versus ecological argument is exposed in this book sensitively, although the fall out is often brutal for communities and individuals. It's an important story for Australia as state and federal elections have been fought and won over the issue. It is not an easy book to begin with – there are so many statistics and facts to bamboozle the reader. When Krein starts to focus on individual people with real stories, however, the book becomes riveting and you realise that fiction is sometimes stranger and more brutal than fiction could ever be. Perhaps this could be read in sections in conjunction with other works of fiction, such as those suggested below</p>		

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Assessment possibilities:	AC:E GCs:	Suggested Companion Texts:
<p>Persuasive speeches or panel discussions on aspects sustainable forestry, or industrial encroachments onto agricultural or residential land</p> <p>Persuasive writing covering angles on ecological issues which explore the concept of 'informed action'</p> <p>Create a narrative in the form of a short story or digital story, fictionalising events based on one or more of the story's 'characters'</p> <p>Drama or film script of the critical show down between loggers, politicians, residents and conservationists.</p>	<p>Eco-literacy, Ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability.</p>	<p>Novels: <i>As the river runs</i> (Scourfield, 2013); <i>The bleeding</i> (Wheatley, 1989); <i>What now, Tilda B?</i> (Lomer, 2010)</p> <p>Recent news footage of conflict in the old growth forest of Tasmania</p>

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2013 LITERARY COMPETITION

Winning Entries (Section A – Years 11 & 12)

Section A – Non-fiction Prose

The 2013 winning entry for the Non-Fiction Prose, Years 11 & 12, “Desire; the sole driver of success”, provided a thoughtful and mature response to the role that desire plays in today’s society. The author takes her reader through a careful account of the evolution of language, meaning and context. Using several illustrations, the notion of desire and its interrelationship with success is then cleverly articulated and explained.

DESIRE; THE SOLE DRIVER OF SUCCESS

by Victoria Hardingham, Cloncurry State School

A feature article outlining the effects that desire has on humanity and whether it is the only true driver for human success.

The English language has evolved in many ways over hundreds of years. Each word has a hidden concept or meaning that is sculpted into its history. Out of context, a word is simply a conjunction of letters that creates a recognizable sound. When a word is placed in a sentence or phrase it becomes much more than just letters; it becomes a window that shows the reader exactly what emotion is hidden within. Desire is one of these words that hides its emotions in a mangled maze of letters. It creates an image of longing and painstaking need for an object or subject. This desperation to achieve a desire is the driver that many people have in their lives. Desire is one of the strongest drivers for success in a person’s life because it is personal to that person and their feelings about their achievements.

Desire is a subject that many people do not quite understand. Many create a general idea of the word by using simple words to describe it such as; want, need, wish and dream. The definition of desire, however, creates a much more personal image. Desire is a longing or craving, as for something that brings satisfaction or enjoyment (Dictionary.com, 2009). This definition gives a fundamental understanding to the impact that desire can have on many people’s lives. Desire is a human condition that can be shown in every person’s life at some point. Many films have been able to capture the power of desire and show it to the world.

In 2010 a film by Fox Searchlight Productions was released that truly illustrated the power of desire. This film “Conviction” was a heart exhilarating film that showed the love that a sister had for her convicted brother. The film is based on a true story of a man (Kenny Waters) who was convicted of murder to serve a life sentence. Kenny’s sister; Betty Ann Waters was convinced to her core that her brother was an innocent man and so begins studying a degree at law school in order to fight for her brother’s rights (S. Tobias, 2010). Betty’s determination for justice is her desire. In the movie her desire is personal because it is for the freedom of her brother, but desire for justice is also a human condition and in this case is the sole driver for Betty’s success.

The universal understanding of desire for justice is well known through the profession of lawyers and magistrates. It is, for most of these professionals, the foundation for their drive to enter this line of work. Equal Justice is a demonstration of mankind’s moral nature. Every human craves to be free and equal, in not just some aspects of life, but in all (Institute for Creation Research, 2012).

In history there have been many rights activists who believe that this equal understanding is the answer to peace. Margaret Brown is one incredible woman who fought for rights to

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be equal between, not just men and women, but also wealthy and deprived individuals. Margaret was born in the year 1867, in the town of Hannibal, America. She was not born into wealth; in fact her parents were immigrants and were positioned at the lowest rank in the societal ladder. Despite this, Brown was one of the founders of the Denver Woman's Club which assisted women and children and also worked to begin the first juvenile courts in America. Shortly after this, she attempted to gain a seat in the United States congress, even before women had the right to vote. Her life was devoted to equality and she believed that with desire success could be achieved (Lake Wood Public Library, 2012).

The following quote by famous retired Italian American racing car driver, Mario Andretti outlines perfectly what desire is: "Desire is the key to motivation, it is the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek" (Thinkxist.com, 2013). This quote relates perfectly to the life of Brown, it sums up almost immediately the feelings that she would have towards her need for success. Margaret Brown's drive was not a public outlook but it was her personal desire. She desired to do what was right and this was many a time the only driver she needed to achieve success.

The movie *Conviction* and the story of Margaret Brown both conspire to achieve their ultimate desire. Margaret Brown did not just simply 'want' to have an equal world; she 'craved' an equal world and there was drive within her that pushed her through any obstacles or boundaries that conspired to overcome her. Betty Anne Waters is much the same in her relentless journey; she does not let opinions or judgments diminish her drive. Despite being a woman with no major achievements or a formal year twelve education, she does not stop fighting for seven years in order to study law and free her brother from an unlawful conviction and life sentence.

The connection that must be grasped from these two different women's stories is that even though they come from different centuries and time periods, they both have desire as their sole driver for success.

To not have desire in your life would be like a compass without north; it may move a lot but it will not find a recognizable point or bearing. Without desire a person has no drive and success cannot be achieved. Betty had desire and she achieved what she yearned for most; her brother's freedom. No matter what a person's discourse or understanding, they will have a desire. This is why desire is the sole driver for success because no amount of wisdom, power or experience can get a person to their destination without the desire to get there.

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Section A – Poetry

This poem flows beautifully, and surprises and convinces with its imagery and rhythm. It handles the theme of lost love with feeling and rueful self-knowledge, and in the same clear voice throughout. The poet has mastered the slide between idea and image which is such a fine thing in a poem, and the flowing sentences carry the poem with their blend of meaning and music.

YESTERDAY

By Jess Vandersande, Boonah State High School

Somedays,
I swear she was born
with a piano at her fingertips.
Her life was a melody no one
bothered to write down,
but listened anyway.
I could catch her smile against
the ridges of my palm and
Hold it close, hide it away where
the world could not touch it

And I swear, she could hold *please stay*
with the tip of her tongue and could
Twist it into something
Permanent.

Somedays,
I swear her skin mapped out
the stars of a night-time sky
Her spine, ridged, mimicking the
hollows of the moon, yet,

she was my sunset.
She rose and fell at my horizons
Laying claim to all illuminated by herself.
She was my unspoken forgiveness
My shaking hands and dampened cheeks
My rise and fall of restless lungs
The sinking weight of withheld words;
my love was an understatement, and
one I never failed to mispronounce.

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Somedays, we
planned our future in the past and
forgot that time doesn't need to catch its breath
quite like we do.

Goodbye hit me like a beating and
I'm sorry was a line of bruises, littering
the very parts of me I saved for her,
wrapped in the ribbons of
what could have been
Held close in the fingers that curl over *what was*,
Knuckles white against *one day*, and
Hopes strung against the backdrop of *I promise*.

And I promise
this skin still burns under sunset's touch and
splits under yesterday's broken trust.

And someday,
Her life was a melody I told myself
I could write down, only
I could never hold the notes of her
In a way that truly seemed to matter.

She was my *someday*, left
yesterday.

Section A — Short Story

Congratulations to Georgina Kanoski from the Cathedral School of St Anne and St James, Townsville for her powerful and moving story Disillusion. I felt with her first person narrator as, standing in line about to leave the country where she has been an aid worker for ‘twelve bitter, twisted, awful months’, her memories come flooding back. In her pocket she has a rag doll which she had been given as a protector by Afnan, one of the young boys she meets on arrival. They become inseparable in the months that follow. However, tragically, during a supposed peace march, Afnan is killed by riot police. She holds him in her arms ‘as red petals bloom across his chest’.

Georgina’s conclusion is heartbreaking. The airport security guard confiscates her protector. ‘You can’t take that with you.’ The doll, he says, snatching it. ‘Just as I thought, it’s stuffed with grass.’

Her last sentence says it all.

‘I walk through the gate, taking long, purposeful strides. Behind me, I hear the gentle thud as the little rag-doll is thrown in the bin, just another scrap amid the forgotten items. I don’t look back.’

Moving indeed, and throughout, masterful use of the present tense.

DISILLUSION

By Georgina Kanowski, The Cathedral School

The line for the incoming passengers is appallingly small, as it was when I first arrived a year ago. It’s filled with rich, officious looking men, the occasional foreign representative, and several young people whose bright eyes and nervous excitement give them away as newly appointed aid workers. I once shared their enthusiasm; I thought I could make a difference. That was twelve months ago – twelve bitter, twisted, awful months. Now I know better. My stomach lurches and I feel the urge to run and hide, but there is no hiding from the truth. I could swear that in my pocket, the broken button eyes of the little rag-doll are weeping. Although I fight it, the memories flood through me.

The high, reedy whine of the engine rises to an impossible peak as the tyres of the old jeep spin for traction in the loose, sandy soil. Ahead, the gentle descent through the camp stretches out, a mass of gaudily bright tarpaulins dotting the landscape, like a giant patchwork quilt. Here and there, proper shelters are set up, but our destination is clear. The huge white Humanitarian Aid tent is a spark of civilisation amid the chaos. As soon as I recognise it, my light-hearted mood vanishes, replaced by a burning, fiery determination. This will be my

home for the next year as I help with the aid effort, and I for one, am determined to make a difference.

The line has moved forward again, and I’m getting close to the narrow-eyed customs officer, who glares at us all suspiciously from behind a protective screen. I pat my pockets awkwardly, searching for my passport, and instead find the lump of the rag-doll. I pull it out, and its uneven eyes glare accusingly at me. So much for something that’s meant to be protecting me, I think. Too late, the guilt washes over me and I’m tempted to throw the vile little thing away, but of course I can’t. With the other hand I find my passport, and clutch the doll against my chest.

As I climb out of the car I am overwhelmed by a throng of small, tough boys, who accost me and in rapid-fire, broken English, all start talking at once. One makes his squeaky voice clear above the rest. He is a thin boy with dark, curly hair, framing huge brown eyes.

‘Welcome,’ he says, proffering a grubby hand, which I shake, bemused. ‘This is a protector my sister made to look after you while you’re here.’ He shoves the limp rag-doll into my hand. Leaning forward he appraises me seriously. ‘If anyone bothers you just show it to them and

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they'll back off. They know Afnan means business.' His scrawny chest puffs out boldly and I realise he means himself. Over the following months we become inseparable; Afnan and his friends become my personal assistants, always underfoot and ready to lend a hand. Just as they are that fateful day the news arrives that a Peace Rally is being held in the city.

I sit, but I can't stop the nervous energy and my feet jitter with anticipation. This march is what we've been waiting for, a movement of hundreds of people all hoping for the same thing – peace. A familiar tousle of brown hair pokes its way around the edge of the door, eyes wide and curious. I jump to my feet Afnan, with me. We're going to the march.'

The air whooshes out of my lungs as he charges, wrapping me in a massive bear hug. I pick him up and spin him in a circle and his high voice squeals with excitement. It's the happiest day of his life, he tells me. Today, the whole world is a better place. I try to savour the memory of that march. The way the air was so hot it shimmered, but the hundreds of people didn't seem to care. The way, that with every breath, you could sense the optimism and buzzing excitement; you could feel a broken people strong with hope. The way Afnan laughed at every sight and sound and cheered as loud as any of them, filling the air with his pride. It probably only lasted an hour, but it felt like more.

All of a sudden I become aware of something else creeping into the atmosphere, coasting through the crowd with a doomed sense of inevitability. Around me the jubilant faces begin to darken; in a country like this, they learn young to spot trouble before it rears its ugly head. Even as I grab for his hand, Afnan is glancing up at me, open-mouthed. To our right, people begin to scream. A group of men, armed with savage knives and heavy sticks, is spilling into the midst of the protestors from a side alley. They cry cruel, vicious words, over and over again, drowning out the happy cheers of moments before. The only thing louder is the screaming, as the people nearest turn and run. They push against the crowd, desperate to get away from the brutality. Stumbling, I drag Afnan in the opposite direction, a vice-like grip on his too small hand. I will not lose him, I think ferociously. I will not.

The once-thrilling press of the crowd has become dangerous, swarming angrily about us, with

peril at every turn. My chest feels tight; my head is about to implode from the pressure. I am only nineteen and in a foreign country with a tiny, precious charge. I feel like I might throw up. The crowd is becoming even more violent, thrashing like a wounded animal, liable to strike out at anything in its way. It weaves around us, over us, even through us; that's when I feel the sweaty fingers slip from my grasp. Horror fills me. Where is he? I struggle desperately back, but for every step I take, I am swept two in the wrong direction. People ignore my cries in the chaos. Dust swirls in my eyes and hands tear at my clothes. I choke on the smell of fear and cruelty. Then I see them, the riot police decked out in full gear, converging to my left. They've come to save us, I think. My eyes focus on a small lone figure. There, on the edge of the crowd, stands Afnan, bewildered but unharmed. I could cry with relief. I've only taken one shaky step towards him, when the police raise cold, grey murder to their shoulders, and open fire.

'You can't take that with you.' The harsh voice brings me back. For a moment, his uniform blends with my memories, and it is the same police standing before me, but I blink, and it is just the airport security guard.

'What?' I say stupidly.

'The doll,' he says, snatching. 'Just as I thought, it's stuffed with grass.'

I'm holding him in my arms, his frail body like a delicate flower crushed underfoot, as red petals bloom across his chest.

'It can't go with you.'

I see Afnan's friends' accusing faces, his sister's tears.

'I'm confiscating it,' the guard says loudly and slowly, he thinks me simple. He waves the doll in front of my face.

The work swims in and out of focus as the whole past year comes back to me all at once. Then everything crystallises, and glass has formed around my heart, letting nothing leak out.

'Yes,' I say, and I look straight into the guard's distrustful eyes.

I walk through the gate, taking long, purposeful strides. Behind me, I hear the gentle thud as the little rag-doll is thrown in the bin, just another scrap amid the forgotten items. I don't look back.



ISSUES FACING STUDENTS IN CONCEPTUALISING AND PLANNING BEFORE WRITING

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Introduction

This paper reports on research undertaken to identify the issues facing students in their use of the concept map as a strategy to support conceptual thinking and planning before writing an academic essay. This genre, along with the commentary on an extract or short text, is the key written text type required for the International Baccalaureate English curriculum being studied by Year 11 and 12 students at the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries in Brisbane, Australia. To be successful in the Diploma course, students must master the process of literary analysis and the accompanying construction of a conceptual argument in the written text for the examiner or teacher as reader. The challenge in this course is essentially to create an academic text, therefore, preferably one that gives evidence of individuality. It is in this context that the research took place.

There is previously documented background to this research study, in the form of a Practical Strategies paper published in *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years* (Norton, 2013, p. 103–104). This provides a description of the process, especially the pedagogical steps undertaken by this researcher/teacher, in an implementation of the concept map into the thinking and planning stage of the writing process with a group of Year 10 students in 2012. The concept map was the selected graphic organiser or strategy chosen in this context because (a) it required the articulation of relationships between concepts, sub-concepts and related details, and (b) it was a proven tool for representing and organising knowledge (Novak & Canas, 2008). In addition, it was an appropriate fit for the pedagogical framework of the Academy, within which there was an emphasis on the benefits of graphic organisers, given student access to Apple technology and the Inspiration software on individual laptops.

The February ALEA publication detailed the approach taken to the construction of the concept map by the students: the sequential layers within propositions of concept, sub-concept, elaboration, technique and evidence scaffolded the thinking, while the initial link in each proposition within the concept map was a strong or complex transitive verb. This explicit layering was a disciplined, layered approach to creating a mental representation of conceptual thinking and the development of an argument. It was not, to my knowledge, suggested in the literature, although theorists put emphasis on the underpinning of the strategy by schema theory (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011; Bermann & Nir-Sagiv, 2007; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). Another feature of this published paper was the inclusion of evidence of outcomes in the form of a student-prepared concept map and the written text that followed. It also listed four “errors” identified in the concept maps constructed by students in that year, including

- (a) Too many words in bubbles,
- (b) Lack of strong verbs,
- (c) Insufficient elaboration of what was meant by the core proposition,
- (d) Lack of evidence/examples from the extract/text to support technique identified (Norton, 2013, p.viii).

This list was based on informal evaluation of student work only. During this intervention process, and following its written documentation, I determined to carry out further investigation into the efficacy of the strategy, with an intent to ensure that my pedagogy was adequately supporting students in their growing mastery of the strategy. It was most convenient that in 2013 I was able to do this with a core group of 16 Year 11 students from that 2012 class. My reading of the students’ learning and behaviour indicated

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that the strategy was very effective, leading to generally improved structure and development of argument in written assessment tasks by the students, resulting in improved outcomes. What was needed, however, was more formal evidence about this case of student learning. In what follows I provide first, an explanation of the strategy and its use with the group of students from 2012 to the present, second, a description of the research design and methods, third, the discussion of findings, and finally a Conclusion.

Explanation of the concept map strategy as used in the given context

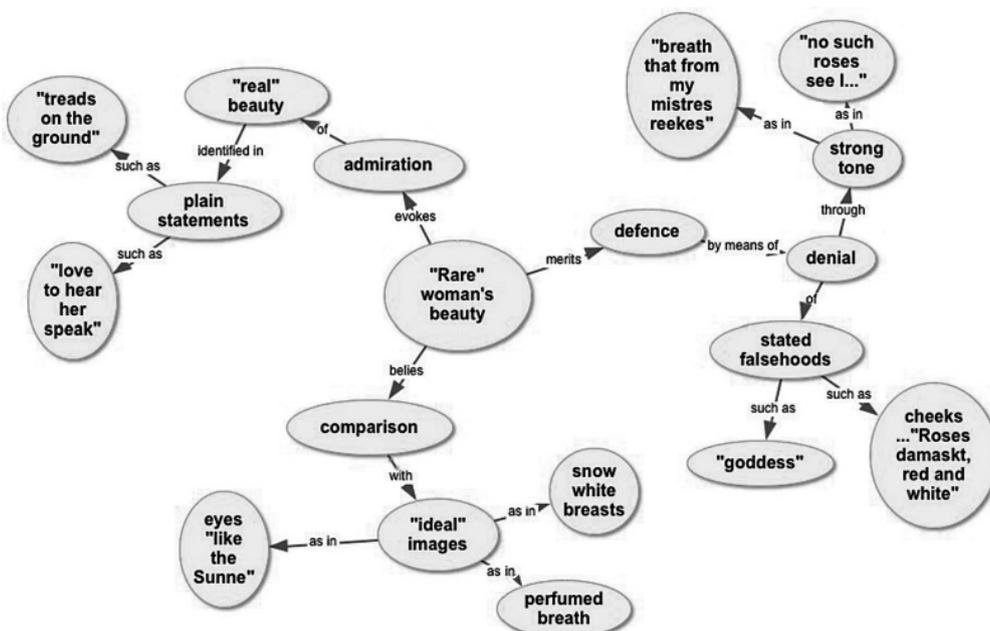
Students were familiar with using a layered approach to constructing three to four propositions in the graphic organiser to support an argument within a 1000 word essay. The genre can be defined for these purposes as a text type that provides a point of view and supporting details for that point of view (Davis & McKay, 1996), to give a representation of structured conceptual knowledge (Dabbagh, 2001, p. 16). Each proposition operates as a grammatically coherent sentence, read from the inside out, with one strong verb linking the key concept in the centre of the map to each sub-concept. The movement from the inside out ideally reflects the “transition from a higher, more abstract and

conceptual level, to a technical and evidentiary level” as Gary, one of the Year 11 students, described it in his reflective statement. He saw each proposition as demonstrating a “trickling down” from a conceptual to a technical level at the periphery of the organiser. Another student was supportive of the way the propositions “streamlined” the process of thinking to “almost create the opening sentences to each of your main paragraphs”

Considerable time was spent in 2012 on making students familiar with the layering of the strategy so that this was a known framework for thinking through an argument. There was particular emphasis on identifying possible strong (as in active and transitive) verbs, with a resultant list of possibilities available to students, as initially the selection of verbs was problematic. Verbs such as the following were on the list:

Suggest, reflects, engages, interweaves, layers, sustains, designs, composes, upholds, proclaims, juxtaposes, synthesizes, determines, focusses.

My reasoning for the emphasis on the strong verb was that such multi-argument verbs with both subject and object relationship increased the cognitive depth of the proposition and supported a higher level of abstraction in



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the first stage of the proposition (Shetreet, Friedmann, & Hadar, 2009; Thompson, Bonakdarpour, & Fix, 2009). The layering followed these steps, with minimal words in each bubble of the concept map:

Concept (verb as link) to **sub-concept** (link) to **elaboration of sub-concept** (link) **technique** (link) to **evidence from text**.

If a question was provided, then the organiser was constructed in response to the question. If not, the students provided a focus question, something as simple as “How does the poet engage the reader and thereby create an effective theme in this poem?” The following concept map provides a model of the layering to support a conceptual argument in response to that question about Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130, a poem most likely to be familiar to most readers. Understanding of the disciplined approach adopted to the layered construction of the organiser is necessary to appreciate the intent of the research study.

Research Design and Data Collection

The aim of the study was to remove uncertainty about the problem (Dewey, 1933) of the students’ use of the strategy using case study methodology, appropriate for a what, how and why problem of curricular work bounded by the classroom context (Merriam, 1988; Orum & Feagin, 1991; Stake, 1983; Yin, 2003). Its intent was to go beyond what was previously known through informal evaluation to obtain clarification of the nature of issues. This knowledge could then guide the adoption or adaption of pedagogy to address these and thereby improve the level of student mastery of the strategy. Although the researcher was in constant communication with colleagues teaching other Year 11 English classes the findings were seen as valid only for the single case of the class group in the study. The intent was to “find out”, in simple terms, more about student learning and how to improve teaching of a specific strategy, an heuristic advantage of case study methodology supported by Eckstein (2000). This was a very small study of a single

case, therefore, within a very closely bounded context, one that targeted the particularities of this instance (Walker, 1989) of a group of 16 selected students in a Creative Industries Academy, which catered for selected students talented in the arts.

Data were collected by two means. The first was the recording of dialogue by three groups of students as they collaborated in constructing concept maps, each organiser intended to support the development of a conceptual argument within a literary analysis of a poem. There was no overt control in the form of instructions given to the groups, as the group interactions were not intended to be part of an obsessively narrow, manipulative, ends-driven endeavour” (Reznitskaya, Kuo, Clark, & Miller, 2009, p.29) that was not part of what was normal in the class. However, the interaction nonetheless demonstrated an argument schema because it was underpinned by the students’ adherence to the layering of the concept map argument. Thus the dialogue illustrated both declarative knowledge of the argument components and procedural knowledge about how to participate in the dialogue (Reznitskaya et al., 2009). The dialogue was intended to engage students in developing the argument in the concept map using prior knowledge about layering of the map as a means to moving from inner concept to peripheral evidence. Group work of this kind was familiar to the students. The recordings were made by the students using the program Quicktime on their Apple Laptops, within approximately two scheduled lessons.

The second was the collection of individual critical reflections written by the students, in response to the request for an articulation of their current thinking regarding problems and successes in using the concept map as a strategy to support conceptual thinking and writing of the essay. The written texts were intended to clarify the data from group recordings as well as to identify individual issues. It is worth noting that this student group had been involved in learning how to write critical reflective texts since Year 10 and were very comfortable with

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articulating individual thinking in this way. Both the explicit instructions given for the written reflection task and their prior experience would account for the fact that the written texts provided more data about issues and the reasons for the issues than the recordings.

Data analysis

An heuristic approach was taken to interpreting both sets of data. Initially analysis of the recordings transferred from student files on Quicktime to a USB focussed on what can be termed stumbling blocks in the dialogue supporting the students' construction of the layers of the concept map using Inspiration software. These stumbling blocks were seen to be evident in:

- (a) questions that were not answered satisfactorily within the group,
- (b) individual statements flagging difficulties with particular layers of the organiser,
- (c) evidence of confusion,
- (d) unresolved differences making collaboration challenging.

Any causal factors for the stumbling blocks that emerged in the conversations were noted.

The reflections written by the students were analysed to identify both the challenges (issues) they identified on an individual basis (as well as, possibly, the reasons for difficulty in using the strategy) and the successes experienced. These were written in response to direct instructions for identification of challenges and successes. Because the reflective texts were more clearly controlled and students were more likely to respond to given explicit instructions, the recorded data were considered first, to avoid the temptation to "see what I wanted to see", rather than engaging in a comparative approach. The data analysis of the two sets of data follows.

Discussion

The recorded dialogue

Data reflecting the collaborative construction of the concept maps was analysed to identify

stumbling blocks of the kind listed above. Reznitskaya et al (2009) suggest that an explicit methodology for mapping student-to-student interaction in dialogue is needed to identify important aspects of argumentative discourse. In hindsight, teacher-student dialogue may have provided more useful data than the student-to-student interaction recorded, because the students' objective was not the same as the teacher-researcher's objective. Although there was equality in the groups, individuals with strong knowledge and understanding tended to assume leadership and to give definitive responses to doubts expressed by others. The avoidance of an ends-driven situation (noted in the Research Design discussion) maintained what was a normal routine approach to collaborative construction of the visual representation of an argument, using Inspiration software. In addition, valuable student learning time was not purloined for the teacher-researcher's purposes. All that was different was that the dialogue of students who had agreed to participate in the research was recorded. All groups were constructing conceptual arguments within the concept map in response to the focus question: What approaches does Neruda take to celebrate the elephant in the poem "Ode to an Elephant"? All agreed to use Neruda, the poet, as the concept or driver from the centre of the map.

It is important to note that the conversations in this context were significantly affected by the fact that talk worked in tandem with changes being made on the screens of the laptops. This was all very interesting because it demonstrated (a) leadership within the groups by a particular student with more confident knowledge; (b) the value of the visual representation of the map to both support and reflect the level of cognitive involvement of the participants; and (c) evidence of considerable ease by all participants engaged in purposeful collaboration within a familiar framework.

Although these observations were interesting, the analysis of the data was intended to identify stumbling blocks, with only two emerging

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from the analysis of the recorded data. These were seen as individual statements flagging difficulties, some of which were addressed by the strong leaders in the groups. The statements were in the form of “thinking aloud” by students or questioning of other students to confirm or deny personal belief. The stumbling blocks included:

Issue No. 1

Identification of a strong verb appropriate to the argument was seen as a difficulty because the verb maintained the conceptual nature of the proposition in the first few layers.

There was an awareness of the need to double-think the nature of the verb, however, rather than an inability to identify an appropriate active, transitive verb, especially given the list compiled over previous months. An interesting but apparently contradictory example of verb selection was given in Group One, where students created a base proposition as follows:

Neruda pays homage through celebration
(display and admiration).

The accompanying discussion indicated that the multi-argument nature of the verb (relation to both subject and object) and the complex nature of the sub-concept “homage” was sufficient to give the verb “pays” the status of a strong verb.

Issue No. 2

Knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the layers, particularly (a) the difference between a sub-concept and a technique and (b) how to phrase the elaboration of the sub-concept. In Group Three, this was evident in the discussion around changes to a proposition and the need to decide whether the ode genre was a technique adopted by the poet, or a sub-concept. The decision was made to state the base proposition as follows:

Neruda frames admiration through story
format using the ode genre.

In this case, the notion of format reflected the students’ way of addressing the three parts of the ode. In this same group, there was discussion

about whether “impressionistic imagery” was a sub-concept or a technique, within the proposition:

Neruda generates impressionistic imagery.

The decision was made that techniques, such as the use of more complex words, and more verbosity, are used to portray the magnitude of the elephant. As one student stated,

Numerous things create imagery.

What was common to all groups was the tendency for the question “Is that a technique or a sub-concept?” to be asked of others, and for individuals to justify their choices in response to the questioning.

The Reflective Texts

Engagement in the process of writing critical reflections was a familiar activity for this group of students, as there had been attention given to this form of writing from Year 10. There had been emphasis on framing reflections using what was termed the DEAL Model – Describe, Examine, Articulate your learning. Reflective texts were part of the IB English syllabus assessment requirements and underpinned the learning in the core subject of Theory of Knowledge. Consequently, the reflections in this study were both very coherent and focussed on the requirements – to identify challenges and successes of the concept map as a strategy for planning a conceptual argument prior to writing an essay. There was also evidence of the use of meta-language, such as comments that the strategy supported high order thinking. Data from these reflective texts provided confirmation that Issue No.1 and 2, identified from the recordings as stumbling blocks, were common issues for students. Further details of what was revealed by the reflective texts follow, along with a brief note about three minor issues that emerged from the written texts.

Issue No. 1 – the verb

The data were characterised by strong, very clearly worded definitions of the strategy,

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indicating that all students were extremely confident about knowing the purpose of the strategy. For example, Mary's description was as follows:

Concept mapping is a technique used to plan an essay or another piece of analytical writing. The activity of constructing a concept is usually done individually, but can also be effective in group situations. It is used to form a few propositions with the structure beginning at the major concept followed by sub-concept, exposition, technique, and finally evidence.

She elaborated on the use of the verb as being difficult but important "as this verb can determine the overall direction of that proposition".

Sara's definition was similar but she also identified the verb as challenging but after rehearsal, do-able

Concept maps are a way of ordering and structuring the essays....there are five layers to the map. ... When going from the main concept to the proposition, it is essential to include a really strong linking verb which will aid us in writing the argument. We have been using and practising these since the start of Grade Ten. The first problem that I encountered was finding an appropriate linking verb ...my verbs were too narrow ... practised using concept maps...finding the connecting verbs became fairly simple.

Those students who commented on the difficulty of selecting the strong verb also acknowledged that it was necessary to take the time to deliberate on choices. Nicky noted that verbs were not only difficult but useful. She perceptively pointed out that "different concepts may work better with certain verbs and vice versa" and that the verbs can act as "triggers" for further thoughts. It appeared from a number of the texts that it was selecting the verb appropriate for the task rather than the actual selection of a strong verb, that was most challenging for most students.

Issue No. 2 – the purpose of the layers, including the difference between sub-concept and technique and how to elaborate on the sub-concept

It appeared from the written data that most students agreed that the application of the disciplined layering approach to the construction of the organiser was the most challenging aspect. They acknowledged that this was necessary to support strong structure in the essay, with the propositions forming topic sentences within paragraphs or sections of an essay. Many referred to this by talking about the "strict structure" of the strategy required.

I feel it hard to confine many of my ideas and phrases to the precise, analytical nature of concept maps. I also struggle to define my sub-concepts and elaborate on them. Due to this, I never reach deep enough analysis...struggle with...the depth required and the definition of sub-concepts.

On the other hand, one student only voiced concerns with the "loose" structure of the strategy, which contradicted the nature of the layered framework. Within concerns about the layering, as with the data from the recordings, it was clear that most students found most difficulty with separating approaches taken by an author, represented by sub-concepts, and techniques. Doug commented that there is "confusion, if, for the main arguments (propositions) the user mixes up approaches within the text with literary techniques".

What was interesting, also, was that a number of students who identified this layering challenge noted that it was more difficult to construct the layers when analysing poetry. Jessie, however, honed in on fact that if the conceptual approach to developing an argument, as represented by layering, was done effectively, it enabled her to demonstrate a conceptual argument in her writing, as opposed to taking a linear approach to identifying techniques one by one from the beginning to the end of the poem. A further notable point derived from the analysis of the reflective texts with regard to this issue

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of layering, especially identifying techniques that supported approaches by the author, was that collaborative group work made the task less challenging. Such perceptive thinking by students pointed to effective pedagogy.

An aspect of the group work that students supported as a positive aspect of pedagogy in the classroom was the high collaboration possible with the focus on the visual construction of the organiser. This helped to overcome individual difficulties, along with utilizing the strengths of the more confident individuals in the groups. An example of that level of confidence and metacognition in operation was seen in Mary's reflection:

Another aspect of the process that presents me with a challenge is getting all of the main arguments to be on the same psychological level ... my three propositions varied between a fairly abstract, conceptual level to those concerned with techniques employed... critiquing my concept map with the class helped me to see where I had gone wrong... proof of how significantly a concept influences the final piece of writing... had to be modified along with the map... the different psychological levels of propositions...need to match in order to make an effective and coherent argument.

Mary identified the pedagogical approach by the teacher of addressing the whole class, and identifying and critiquing this weakness, as well as providing a means of rectifying it, as very helpful. Her experience was a focus of Gary's reflection, where he referred to the class-based intervention, saying:

She (Mary) utilised propositions that were too embedded in the technical, concrete level of analysis; for example, she stated that "Neruda sustains a quick pace...". He does so, but to what effect? ...The proposition was still too technically oriented in the first place.

These two students' comments are illustrative of the metacognitive level of operation in the use of the strategy that enabled these two, in particular, to lead group discussions in such a way that the issues that did arise were to some extent offset by their ability to recognize the problem and deal with it appropriately.

Minor Issues emerging only from the Reflective texts

The first minor issue of note was the repeated comment from students concerning the increased difficulty of working alone in the construction of the concept map, and the benefit of the dialogical thinking in group work. This suggests a continued pedagogical focus on group work supported by Reznitskaya et al (2009, p. 40) who uphold the positive learning about multiple positions in argument and counter argument that can be gained by shifting from monological to dialogical thinking.

A second minor issue was that the construction of the concept map took considerable time, even though individuals noted that they were becoming more efficient and competent, especially as they adhered more determinedly to the framework layering of the strategy.

Conclusion

This small case study of a single case of student learning has focussed on the teacher—researcher's intent to find out more about the issues challenging students in applying the strategy of the concept map to the development of conceptual thinking and planning for essay writing. Doing this would provide grounds for possible pedagogical changes. The 16 Year 11 students in the small class at the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries had worked with the teacher-researcher for the previous 12 months as Year 10 students, during which time the strategy had been implemented and the intervention in what was essentially action research was documented and published. Evidence of improved results by the students

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indicated that the strategy was both valuable and valued in supporting effective academic writing, although the results of the research were not necessarily transferable to other student groups. Analysis of the data from recordings of group dialogue during collaboration to produce jointly constructed concept maps about a Neruda poem, as well as reflective texts written by the students about their individual challenges and successes in using the strategy, resulted in identification of two major issues.

The first was the identification of a strong, active, transitive verb, one appropriate to each proposition within the concept map. Knowledge of the type of verbs was not the problem, but the difficulty in matching the verb to the concept and sub-concept, given its multi-argument role. It was hard work and time-consuming, time being a minor issue identified within the reflections, along with the disciplined approach to layering the steps of the propositions. The second major issue emerged as being more contentious than the first, as it concerned the difficulty in distinguishing between what was a sub-concept or an approach taken by the author, as opposed to a technique. The challenge of doing this was identified in both sets of data.

What the data confirmed was that the students were very confident about applying the layered framework to the construction process, but concerned about the time spent finding a fit between the strong verb and the sub-concept to give a definitive approach taken by an author. This was despite the fact that most appeared to be capable of doing this, particularly in the group context, with the support of peers, and emerging leaders with strong metacognitive capability. This suggested a continued emphasis on the value of collaborative group work, utilising the advantages of the Inspiration software to provide visual reflection of ongoing dialogue. In addition, teacher intervention was seen as a needed response to the lack of confident knowledge about what was a sub-concept or an approach as opposed to a literary technique. One such

intervention, taken informally, and recorded by a student in the reflection, indicated that more of the same approach would be effective in addressing this problem, along with more explicit differentiation between conceptual approach and literary technique.

The research was completed within normal class situations utilising activities that were familiar to students, ones that did not detract from their normal activities. This was an embedded teacher-researcher study or insider-researcher study that was to an extent restricted by adherence to routine activities and the consciousness that students' learning should take precedence at all times. What it is hoped that the study illustrates very clearly is that teacher-researchers can justify the innovations or initiatives taken with learners through the gains to productive pedagogy gained from such a small study. Further, it illustrates that students can improve their metacognitive abilities by being partners with the teacher in this kind of research. In the IB context, also, where students engage in mandated academic research, such a study models for students aspects of authentic research.

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