



# Early Career Conference

A Spring in Our Step: planting the seeds of  
growth to allow early career teachers to  
blossom.



Saturday 21 October, 2023  
Wynnum State High School  
25 Peel Street, Manly



**The English Teachers  
Association of Queensland Inc.**

Providing professional support  
and advocacy for English teachers

# EARLY CAREER CONFERENCE

Saturday, 21 October 2023

## Context

Now in its thirteenth year, the Early Career Teachers Conference provides high quality professional development specifically tailored to the needs of English teachers in their first five years of practice and those who may be experienced teachers but are new to teaching English. One of the secondary aims of the day is to provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to boost their professional profile through seminar presentations. As such, this year's program features sessions covering a range of professional and curriculum-related issues, presented by beginning teachers, and experienced English teachers.

This professional development opportunity offers new-to-English, beginning and pre-service teachers the chance to extend their professional network, whilst attending workshops that offer practical strategies and ideas relating to the teaching of English

## Registration

Register at [www.etaq.org.au](http://www.etaq.org.au)

**Cost:** members of ETAQ and pre-service teachers \$45, non-members \$67 for face-to-face participation. Online participation: members \$30; non-members \$45

1. **Change of persons registered** Sometimes schools may need to substitute one teacher for another on their registrations. This is fine but please notify the change to the Administration Officer so that we can prepare the appropriate Certificate of Participation, name tag and Individual program.
2. Many schools prefer to receive an invoice for registrations and pay on that rather than pay at the time of registration. We are happy to offer this convenience, but it must be recognised that **registration commits you to payment.**
3. **Cancellation Policy** If you register and later have to cancel, the following will apply:
  - a. Cancel your registration by 14 October, you will receive a full refund of your registration fee
  - b. Cancel between 15 October and 17 October, you will receive a refund of 50% of your registration fee
  - c. From 18 October no refund is possible.

**This program constitutes 3.25 hours of CPD**

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# Program

Time	Activity	Presenter/s
8:30 – 9:00	Registration	
9:00 am	Introduction and welcome	Lindsay Williams, President
9:15 – 10:05am	<b>Session 1:</b> 1a: Inspiring Budding Writers – Tips on Teaching Imaginative Writing 1b: A Poem a Day Keeps the Ennui Away: Adaptable Poetry Activities for Modern Teachers in Modern Classrooms. 1c: Re-storying ‘Bad Kids’ 1d: Get Lit with Literacy Strategies	Donna Braithwaite Karina Hepner Bridget Pearce Elizabeth Lavarch & Stacey Martini
10.05 – 10.50am	<b>Session 2:</b> 2a: Game On! Boosting English Classroom Engagement through Gamification 2b: Leading Reading 2c: Refreshing our Approach to Shakespeare 2d: Keeping that Spring in Your Step: Surviving the First Five Years	Amy Griffin & Kate Collins Rachel Walsh Oliver Macpherson Kelly Whiteway
10:50 – 11:25am	<b>Morning tea, book sales and networking</b>	
11.25am- 12.10pm	<b>Session 3:</b> 3a: Using AI to Reduce Your Workload and Engage Your Students. 3b: How to be a Sponge. 3c: I Hate English: Hands on Pedagogical Approaches to Writing. 3d: Underneath the poet tree / Come and rest a while with me.	Luzanna Henseleit Kristy Burton Ella Brennan Juliette Holmes
12.10 - 12.30pm	<b>Session 4:</b> Q&A Panel	Donna Braithwaite, Elyse Smallacombe, Kelly Whiteway & Cate Wilson
12.30pm	Conference Close	Naomi Russell & Elyse Smallacombe



# Details of Workshops

## Session 1

### A. Inspiring Budding Writers – Tips on Teaching Imaginative Writing.

#### Abstract

‘Creativity is intelligence having fun.’ - Albert Einstein

Creative writing is an important part of the English syllabus, both in the Australian Curriculum and in Senior English and Literature, and one of the joys of teaching English is inspiring our students to write short stories and other imaginative texts. But for many students, imaginative writing seems pointless and difficult, particularly if they are reluctant readers and writers. So how can we help and inspire our students to write interesting and engaging narratives? How can we nurture and grow the seeds of creativity that already exists in our students? And how can we explain what ‘show don’t tell’ really means?

Within this workshop I will share some activities and resources that can be used with students from year 7 to year 12, including some short story examples, some tips on writing a story that is a ‘moment in time’, rather than a Lord of the Rings style epic, and some activities to help them ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’.

#### Presenter

**Donna Braithwaite** is currently Assistant Head of English at St Laurence’s College. She has been a classroom English teacher and Head of Faculty for more than 30 years in the State and Catholic sectors and has a particular interest in imaginative writing. Donna also has a Graduate Diploma in Writing, Editing and Publishing, and is (still!) working on her own novel.

### B. “A Poem a Day Keeps the Ennui Away: Adaptable Poetry Activities for Modern Teachers in Modern Classrooms.”

#### Abstract

If Samuel Taylor Coleridge was correct about poetry, that is, poetry is the best words in the best order, then why the aversion to it in classrooms? UK researchers, Dymoke, Lambirth and Wilson, in their erudite conclusions in *Making Poetry Matter* suggest there has been a ‘woeful neglect’ in poetry teaching, removing the possibilities of ‘unique stimulating challenges’ for students (2013). Poetry can be energising, engaging, and exciting. This practical session on poetry teaching has two goals: to provide teachers with a collection of fresh activities for junior or senior English units and, above all, to dismantle the pedagogic barriers to poetry for twenty-first century classrooms.

#### Presenter

**Karina Hepner** currently teaches at Centenary Heights State High School and has taught for nearly three decades in several educational settings, nationally and internationally. She has an MA (English Literature) and is currently working towards her MPhil in Australian colonial poetry.

### C. Re-storying ‘Bad Kids’ Abstract

“What do you wish your teachers knew about you?”

It’s the last question on my script for consulting students with disabilities.

I typed his response.

“I don’t mean to be a bad kid”.

In 2010, Michael Jellinek, a Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics at Harvard, estimated students with ADHD could receive 20,000 corrective or negative comments by age 10. It was an arbitrary number, based on the idea that a teacher might address behaviours such as fidgeting, calling out, and wandering around the room an average of 3 times an hour, 6 hours a day, 180 days a year.

Although we can’t put too much stock in the 20,000-figure given the above methodology, we can accept that, on average, students with

ADHD cop more corrections than their peers. This bleeds into the way they characterise themselves in the stories that they use to make meaning of the world.

This presentation will cover:

- The profound influence teachers have on the stories that students craft about themselves
- What ADHD looks like in English/Literacy classrooms and reasonable adjustments

Empowering students to re-story themselves as nuanced heroes instead of 'Bad Kids'

## Presenter

**Bridget Pearce** A decade of teaching and leading in an alternative education setting has laser-focused Bridget's vision for more inclusive schools, workplaces, and societies. Bridget studies Inclusive Education at Queensland University of Technology and serves as a Senior English Teacher and Inclusive Educator at Brisbane Grammar School. She is interested in diversity, neuroscience, psychology, universal design for learning, and relationships built on care and candour.

## D. Get Lit with Literacy Strategies

### Abstract

This engaging workshop aims to provide early career teachers with a comprehensive suite of high-impact literacy activities to enhance their students' literacy skills, fostering a strong foundation for lifelong learning by exploring the five key areas of a learning sequence. Participants will be introduced to a curated collection of literacy activities that have proven to yield significant results in the classroom.

The five key areas are:

- Activating prior knowledge
- Bridging gaps
- Surface learning
- Deep learning
- Transfer learning

Benefits:

Early career teachers will gain a deep understanding of the important role they play in fostering literacy skills. This workshop will allow early career teachers to

- Acquire a repertoire of effective literacy activities that can be applied in a classroom setting immediately
- Learn to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
- Enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.
- Foster a supportive peer network for ongoing professional growth.

We believe this session will empower early career teachers with practical tools and insights to elevate their teaching practice and, ultimately, positively impact their students' literacy journey.

## Presenters

**Elizabeth Lavarch** is a senior teacher of English and Humanities at Indooroopilly State High School, and **Stacey Martini** is an English subject expert at Corinda State High School. Both spent their formative years in Ipswich in a low-socio economic environment where the majority of students sat below the national minimum standard for literacy. This invaluable experience ignited their fervent passion for curriculum development and literacy enhancement. Recognising the transformative power of engaging literacy activities, they wholeheartedly believe in empowering learners with essential skills that are fundamental to every literacy learner, and transferable to every student.

## Session 2

### A. Game On! Boosting English Classroom Engagement through Gamification.

#### Abstract

In an era where digital-native learners are at the forefront, how can early-career teachers effectively capture their attention and immerse them in the world of English? The solution lies in gamification. This workshop seeks to uncover the transformative potential of integrating game elements into the English pedagogy. Attendees will be introduced to innovative strategies and tools specifically designed for the modern classroom, ensuring student engagement reaches its pinnacle.

As we navigate through real-life examples and hands-on activities, we will unravel how gamification not only sustains students' interest



but also accentuates the depth of their learning. Prepare to elevate your teaching approach, ensuring that every lesson feels like an engaging quest for knowledge. Through gamification, let's redefine the dynamics of the English classroom and inspire a genuine passion for learning.

## Presenters

**Kate Collins** and **Amy Griffin** are early-career teachers at John Paul College in Daisy Hill. Together, they represent a unique fusion of expertise and modern innovation in English education. Amy, with a knack for curriculum innovation, seamlessly integrates modern tech tools into traditional teaching paradigms. Meanwhile, Kate, with a background in innovative classroom design, uses gamified learning experiences and quest-based learning successfully within her lessons. Together, they represent the vibrant future of English education, combining fresh insights with the enthusiasm of the digital generation.

## B. Leading Reading

### Abstract

Teaching reading to twenty-first-century learners immersed in the digital age can be difficult. We, as English teachers, need to think about how we engage our learners to promote enjoyment of and for reading. In this workshop, we will explore a range of strategies that have been tried and tested in my English classroom to lead reading. We will discuss promoting reading for pleasure alongside how to actively engage students when completing novel studies. From 'First Chapter Fridays' to reading for analysis; this workshop will provide you with strategies, and ideas to promote a passion for reading in the English classroom. Let's work together to authentically build a love for reading!

### Presenter

**Rachel Walsh** is in her sixth year of teaching and is an English and Dance teacher at Ryan Catholic College in Townsville, where she teaches years 7-12 English. From an early age, Rachel loved to read. However, through her first few years of teaching, she quickly realised that many of her students did not share this passion, and therefore had to find ways to

engage them. Rachel, as a young teacher herself, is passionate about mentoring early-career teachers and loves using professional development opportunities to connect and share experiences.

## C. Refreshing our Approach to Shakespeare.

### Abstract

With so many barriers for learners in our curriculum already, our units around Shakespeare's plays can seem like quite the challenge (for both us and our students). There is already so much learning required to understand the context of each play and the seemingly simple act of reading these in class often becomes an exercise in translation instead of appreciation.

This workshop aims to share some of the tools that reinvigorate these texts in order to focus on the ideas we want to cultivate in our units. These include:

- Dramatic techniques for appreciating a performative text
- Iambic pentameter and how it affects meaning
- Identifying familiar aesthetic elements
- Recognising familiar concepts despite unfamiliar contexts

We will also discuss ways to liven up reading in class, strategies to speed up or slow down the unit to navigate inevitable disruption, as well as possible class activities and assessment tasks to track student progress.

### Presenter

**Oliver Macpherson** has been teaching English and the Arts since 2015 and is currently working at Indooroopilly State High School. He organises a range of extra-curricular English programs including collaborative storytelling, creative writing groups and publication opportunities for student voice. This year, he has studied *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Year 8, *Romeo and Juliet* with Year 10, *Hamlet* with Year 10 English Extension and *Macbeth* with Year 12 English

## D. Keeping that Spring in Your Step: Surviving the First Five Years.

### Abstract

It's common knowledge these days that teaching is a difficult and complex profession, with many graduates leaving it in their first five years in the classroom. This workshop will explore practical strategies to assist new graduates in building resilience, maintaining motivation, and overcoming obstacles. Wisdom will be drawn from research, professionals and experienced teachers, and attendees will come away from the workshop with tips to improve wellbeing and manage stress. This workshop will also focus on relationship-building with students and colleagues.

### Presenter

**Kelly Whiteway** has considered leaving teaching many times in her 15 years in the classroom. But it's her love of learning, her relationships with her students and colleagues, and passion for everything English, that keeps her in the profession. So, to keep herself mostly sane, she's sought out many strategies to balance the workload and uses them on a daily basis.

## Session 3

### A. Using AI to Reduce Your Workload and Engage Your Students

#### Abstract

The use of AI has pervaded our professional conversations over the last nine months. While these discussions have rightfully touched on whether students should be using it, how to catch them plagiarising work and how to teach them the ethics of such programs, many teachers question how they can use AI to help improve their own practice. In a world where teachers workloads are growing seemingly by the day and the rate of burnout has been arguably worsened by this fact, this workshop aims to provide concrete examples of how you can use a variety of free AI programs to save time, improve your practice and engage your students. This workshop is for teachers

who are just starting out and for those who are already playing in this space. You will leave this workshop with tools you can use the next time you sit down to plan, or walk in the classroom.

### Presenter

**Luxanna Henseleit** is a second-year teacher with a passion for creative classrooms. She is interested in how the AI Revolution intersects with teaching. Luxanna is an advocate of preparing students for a workforce where the use of AI as a tool will be a perquisite for many careers. As an early adopter, she has implemented a variety of AI tools to reduce teacher workload, whilst increasing student engagement, and access to feedback.

### B. How to be a Sponge

#### Abstract

Being a teacher is easy. It's like riding a bike. Except, the bike is on fire, you're on fire, it's 2km to the nearest extinguisher and you must draw the map there. Research that informs teaching practice is ever changing and evolving, requiring teachers to learn and adapt daily. We are inundated with new strategies and texts, amidst curriculum re-writes, and in the context of increasingly diverse learners. So, how do we build our teaching capacity when we are at capacity?

In this workshop, I will guide you through a three-phase method to navigate new and complex but necessary professional learning without cognitive overload. Rather, you will build your own teaching and learning capacity in a meaningful yet sustainable way. Phase one will ensure a strengths-based approach, where you reinforce your purpose for learning. Phase two will equip you with strategies to be a smart learner, an effective note-taker and an efficient processor of content. And, in the final phase, I will support you to purposefully reflect and prioritise, because the last thing you need is to repair a tyre puncture 10m from the finish line. This workshop will guide you to not only manage to safely stay on the bike, but complete the triathlon, with confidence.

### Presenter

**Kristy Burton** is nearing her 7th year of teaching and has spent this time as an English and Creative Arts Teacher, Year Level Coordinator and Creative Arts Coordinator in State High Schools from both ends of Queensland. She has been a teacher, in every capacity, since she was a young girl, playing 'school' with her neighbours and tutoring her classmates before exams, always with an ever-growing thirst for knowledge and learning. Kristy continues to refine her pedagogical repertoire as an Expert Teacher and Mentor at her current school on the Gold Coast. She is deeply passionate about teaching English and Literacy and fostering Creativity; building capacity within students to become strong communicators, to share their voice and continue their own learning journeys. Kristy is particularly passionate about growth coaching and working with beginning and early career teachers to support them in building sustainable, authentic and life-long careers in education.

### **C. I Hate English: Hands on Pedagogical Approaches to Writing**

#### **Abstract**

This workshop will encompass ways to engage learners in an interactive and hands-on way to develop creative and persuasive tasks. It is important that, as teachers, we are creating lessons that are innovative and catered towards our student's needs, therefore we need to have a range of activities beyond power writes. The focus of this workshop will be delivering a range of pedagogical practices to take back to your classroom that have been tried and tested to encourage our students to write a range of texts.

#### **Presenter**

**Ella Brennan** is a fourth-year teacher in a Catholic school setting and has taught in a range of schools, specialising in Middle Years (7-9) English. As a published writer, she understands the importance of valuing unique ideas and knowing that some ideas just might

not make the cut. Subsequently, Ella trials a range of differentiated teaching strategies to engage students at all levels of English, and experiments with ways to help students recognise that English is more than just reading and writing.

### **D. Underneath the poet tree / Come and rest a while with me.**

#### **Abstract**

In this workshop we will explore a variety of ways of bringing poetry into your English classrooms, including ideas that can be used across the 7-12 English curriculum.

We will:

1. look at how and when you choose and teach poetry now.
2. consider what prevents you from integrating poetry into your work more frequently.
3. learn how poetry can diversify your classroom.

I will share practical ideas for using poetry:

- for stand-alone literacy activities.
- to examine values, attitudes and beliefs.
- to teach close reading and analysis.
- as stimulus and model for creative writing; and
- just for the joy of reading a cracking poem that moves you and your students to laugh or cry.

You will go away with a pile of poems, a stack of strategies and lashings of lesson ideas.

#### **Presenter**

**Juliette Holmes** is not a poetry expert! She is originally from the UK and has been living and teaching in Queensland for nearly ten years, currently at Indooroopilly SHS. Passionate about creative thinking in the English classroom, she enjoys sneaking poetry into the curriculum wherever possible. Strategies for helping students learn to enjoy poetry and use it to develop their close reading and creative writing is what she is constantly tinkering with and trying to get better at...