

ENCOURAGEMENTS

WITH LITERACY, LITERATURE, AND LANGUAGE



SATURDAY 14 MARCH 2026

St Laurence's College



ENCOUNTERS WITH LITERACY, LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

“At first, I struggled with some of the bigger words, but Kinsella kept his fingernail under each, patiently, until I guessed or half-guessed it and then I did this by myself until I no longer needed to guess, and read on. It was like learning to ride the bike; I felt myself taking off, the freedom of going places I couldn’t have gone before, and it was easy.”

– Foster (2010), Claire Keegan

Teaching and learning in high school English classrooms involve **encounters**: with literacy, with literature, and with language, as well as the human encounters between teachers and students.

Part of the English teacher’s role is to orchestrate productive classroom learning encounters and, metaphorically, to support students to confidently ride their bikes and to take off for places they haven’t been before.

Attendance

ETAQ is committed to providing high quality professional learning for members in rural and regional areas and others who are unable to attend in person on the day. While the March seminar is principally a face-to-face event; we will be live streaming the keynote address and one workshop in each session. One other workshop in each session will be recorded and will be made available once editing of the recording is completed. Decisions on which workshops to stream or record will be based on demand as evidenced in the registrations.

Our regional focus is further enhanced with presenters from the regions: Catherine Hicks from Cairns State High School and Jalen Tamariki from Biloela State High School.

Schedule

Time	Activity
8:00	Registration
8:40- 9:05	AGM
9:10 – 10:15	Keynote – Garth Stahl
10:20 – 10:45	Morning tea, perusal of resources and networking
10:50 – 11:50	Workshop session A
12:00 – 1:00	Workshop session B

Keynote

Rethinking boys and literature: Critiques, provocations, and new directions for educators



Garth Stahl

A/Prof, University of Qld

Abstract

The disengagement of boys and young men from their literacy education is a global issue. Such a phenomenon has led to sensationalistic narratives, deficit thinking and overly simplistic 'magic bullet' solutions. This presentation first captures the current moment in boys' literacy education through highlighting some of the key tensions and debates around the role gender plays in their (dis)engagement in classrooms today. Historic and contemporary international research is set up as a provocation as we collectively consider the complex intersection of masculinity norms, digital literacies, and student identity. Then, in an effort to shift our thinking as educators, the presentation invites participants to engage in critical reflection on their lived experience and their perception of the lifeworlds of boys and young men. In adopting a reflective approach regarding boys and literacy, we consider what is known, what is assumed and where various silences remain. Moving beyond the well-worn crisis narrative, the aim of the presentation is to collectively shift our gaze toward best practices foregrounding where educators are finding positive ways forward, specifically in the areas of rapport-building, fostering of meaningful connection, effective pedagogies and the potential of digital texts. Overall, this keynote does not provide prescriptive answers but instead aims to equip literacy educators with a critical view of the research to date and provide fresh ways of thinking in order to innovate their practice.

Presenter

Garth Stahl is an Associate Professor in Sociology of Education at the University of Queensland, Australia. Stahl's research interests focus on the relationship between education and society, socio-cultural studies of education, student identities, equity/inequality, and social change. Currently, his research projects and publications encompass theoretical and empirical studies of youth, sociology of schooling in a neoliberal age, gendered subjectivities, equity and difference as well as educational reform. Previously he taught in disadvantaged secondary school contexts in London, England and New York, USA.

Registration and Workshop selection

An array of twenty workshops is on offer; half are offered in Session A and the other half in Session B. Which workshops actually run will be determined by your selections. You will be asked to choose a first and second choice for each session.

At this stage, each workshop is offered once only but if there is a significant demand for a particular workshop, we will seek the co-operation of the presenter to repeat it in the other session. The question immediately after workshop selection will be used to determine this demand at registration.

The most popular workshop in each session will be streamed and the second most popular one will be recorded. Links to the recordings will be available for all registrants.

Registration opens Monday 2 February

Registration CLOSES **Friday 6 March**

Cost: \$60 for member for in-person attendance. Other prices are on the website.

Workshop session A

No	Workshop
1	An unexpected encounter? – Teaching grammar and punctuation while working with 'Romeo and Juliet', Garry Collins
2	Words that heal: Cultivating hope through Emotional Understanding in English and literature, Megan Huber
3	Thinking routines and vaulting ambition: Year 10s take on the Scottish Play, Divya Harikrishnan
4	Year 9: Encounters with self and the world, Jeffrey Lewis
5	Effective QLearn feedback strategies, Roslyn Volling
6	Encounters with writing: Combatting AI with writing journals, Natalie Dean
7	Ensuring productive encounters as a newbie, Dr June Balfour
8	Language literature and literacy: Balancing and not juggling, Mel Dixon
9	Productive encounters in senior English: Building independent thinkers in a 'No right answer' classroom, Liz Taylor
10	From guessing to knowing: Visible Thinking Strategies for literary analysis in the English classroom, Kristy Dall

WORKSHOP 1

An unexpected encounter? – Teaching grammar and punctuation while working with ‘Romeo and Juliet’

Abstract

Using support materials related to Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”, this workshop will outline how grammar and punctuation can - and in the presenter’s opinion, should - be taught in the context of classroom work focused on literary texts.

Concepts about grammar to be found in the Australian Curriculum: English reflect both traditional and functional grammar, with the latter derived from systemic functional linguistics (SFL). These SFL-derived understandings about how language works have underpinned English syllabuses in Queensland since the early 1990s and are today evident in the Australian Curriculum: English, mainly in its Language Strand.

The presenter’s contention is that English teachers who lack a reasonable grasp of functional grammar are operating with a deficient pedagogical tool kit.

For those starting from a relatively low base, this workshop will be too short to teach all the functional grammar that properly equipped English teachers need, but it will be able to identify areas that could be addressed in future professional learning. In addition, there will be some take-away ideas that could be used in classrooms in the immediate future, and the materials related to “Romeo and Juliet” could be useful in themselves.

Presenter

Garry Collins taught English for 35 years, mainly as a Head of Department in Queensland state high schools and then spent 8 years as a part-time teacher educator at ACU and The University of Queensland. A

former president of both ETAQ and AATE, he is now busily retired but still enjoys assisting teachers to appreciate the useful grammar in the Australian Curriculum: English and how it can be taught in conjunction with the classroom consideration of literary texts.

WORKSHOP 2

Words that heal: Cultivating hope through Emotional Understanding in English and literature

Abstract

This workshop, "Words that Heal," explores how English classrooms cultivate hope through emotional understanding. Participants will reflect on how literature and writing foster emotional growth, empathy, and resilience. Practical strategies will be shared for building classroom cultures that value vulnerability and connection. By integrating emotional literacy with curriculum goals, English teachers help students become compassionate, critical thinkers prepared for an unpredictable world.

Presenter

Megan Huber is the Curriculum Leader for 7-9 English at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School. She was former Assistant Head of Faculty for Diverse Learning specialising in EAL/D Case Management and the Coordinator - English for EAL Learners at St Laurence's College. She is Chief Confirmer and Subject Matter Expert for English for EAL Learners for QCAA as well as Lead Trainer Marker for the External English Exams. She was also the recipient of the ETAQ Peter Botsman Award for 2025.

Workshop 3

Thinking routines and vaulting ambition: Year 10s take on the Scottish Play

Abstract

The Year 10 English classroom is a complex space. This transitional period in the student's education is wrought with learning from the good, bad, and ugly of Year 9 while inching towards the fun, wild, and scary of the impending Senior Years.

After beginning the year in General or Essential English, Year 10s get the option to shift into Introduction to Literature in semester two.

To alleviate the nerves of entering the world of Literature, students needed to be inspired to join Introduction to Literature and to stick with Literature for Years 11 and 12. What better way to excite (and scare but mostly excite) them about the world of Literature by plunging headfirst into the realm of Shakespeare.

With Macbeth being removed from the EA text list, I chose to do the Scottish play with my Year 10 Introduction to Literature class in Term 3, 2025. I decided that even before getting into the technicalities of analysis, I needed to get my students as excited about Shakespeare as I am. What ensued was (fake) swordplay, (real) thinking routines, (robust) classroom conversations, and (eager) students who did not shy away from Shakespearean English and themes.

Presenter

Divya Harikrishnan is a third-year English teacher at Bellbird Park State Secondary College. She started teaching Senior Literature in 2025 under the guidance of her mentor and has now become the Literature Coordinator for 2026. She is constantly learning and implementing innovative pedagogy in her classrooms to get students thinking about and beyond various interesting and challenging texts. Having taught in the Senior space and in the schools junior English Excellence (Heiss)

class in her second year, Divya has engaged in rigorous curriculum development activities. Her goal is for students to push themselves towards excellence while enjoying their learning.

Workshop 4

Year 9: Encounters with self and the world

Abstract

Year 9 is a critical stage in adolescence, where young people are absorbed with the struggle of forging their own identity while reckoning with an increased awareness of the world around them, with all its beauty and flaws.

This workshop seeks to explore how we've designed our Year 9 English course to respond to these factors, as well as School and system imperatives. Participants will be offered a snapshot of a Year 9 English curriculum and assessment plan, associated assessment instruments, samples of student responses and key learning experiences.

Presenter

Jeffrey Lewis is Assistant Head of English at Brisbane Grammar School. He has previously held positions on the ETAQ Management Committee, including Director of Professional Learning and Secretary. He is an avid reader, amateur playwright, and committed Pokemon fanatic.

Workshop 5

Effective QLearn feedback strategies

Abstract

Feedback is one of the most valuable ways to help students succeed. As we move towards the embedding of QLearn in our schools, how can we ensure that we are using feedback options that are efficient in terms of time while also being meaningful for our students. This

session will focus on three main feedback mechanisms - checkpoints, rubrics and colour coding - that will hopefully maximise impact while minimising workload.

Presenter

Roslyn Volling is an English teacher at Albany Creek State High School. She has taught for thirty years in both regional and metropolitan schools. Roslyn is just over 12 months into her QLearn journey.

Workshop 6

Encounters with writing: Combatting AI with writing journals

Abstract

This session is about the way I use Writing Journals in both Senior and the Middle School, specifically in Year 7 English and Senior Literature. Writing Journals are a great way to build up a culture of writing, and they are an authentication strategy listed in the QCAA Literature Syllabus. We all know students are using AI in their writing, but it can be hard to prove it. Writing Journals in Literature can be a useful way to verify the authenticity of student writing when used appropriately. They are also a great way for Middle School students to have productive encounters with their own writing and turn it into a positive habit.

Presenter

Natalie Dean has been a classroom English teacher for 30 years, and she has taught Literature since its inception in 2019. Her career includes teaching in the State and Catholic sectors, in both regional Queensland and Brisbane. She is a QCAA Confirmer and Marker for Literature. She has also had experience as a Middle Leader, but her true love will always be the classroom.

Workshop 7

Ensuring productive encounters as a newbie

Abstract

Whether you are an early career teacher or an experienced teacher starting at a new school or new phase of your career, building productive and positive relationships with students, parents and staff is the cornerstone to success and achievement. This workshop will give you the tools to build productive and positive relationships and help you to thrive in your career.

Presenter

Dr June Balfour is an experienced teacher, mentor and leader. She is passionate about supporting early career teachers and helping them build longevity in their career. Her doctoral work focussed on the relationships between school leaders and teachers and the impact on teacher identity and well-being.

Workshop 8

Language literature and literacy: Balancing and not juggling

Abstract

By Year 10 students should be aware of 'the aesthetic qualities of texts' as they 'select, vary and experiment with text structures to organise develop and link ideas and representations'. To achieve this requires delicate balancing act, where literature, language and literacy learning are carefully orchestrated to promote an awareness of their interconnection. While we need to be able to identify the elements and understand how they work, it is when we bring these elements together that students come to a fuller appreciation of how language communicates ideas and represents ways of being. In this session we will look at ways that we can integrate language into a literature lesson with an awareness of the literacy that underpins this. We will look at how we can

harness language and literacy through literature to support independent thinking and build a personal writing style, whether this is persuasive, imaginative or analytical.

Presenter

Mel Dixon has taught for over thirty years with ten years as Head of Department. She has a great love of language and literature and values the connection between these. Mel edited the state journals, *Words' Worth* (Qld) and *mETaphor* (NSW). As Education and Publications Officer, NSW, she regularly presented webinars on 'Grammar in Context'. She wrote for *Connecting English* the Cambridge across-the-curriculum 7-10 grammar books. Mel has been consultant and editor for AERO language resources, technical advisor for the new primary curriculum, NSW, and consultant on rewriting the senior English curriculum in the Philippines.

Workshop 9

Productive encounters in senior English: Building independent thinkers in a 'No right answer' classroom

Abstract

This session introduces practical, research-aligned strategies for building independent thinkers in Senior English classrooms. Grounded in contemporary evidence, the session draws on Hattie (2023) and Bishop & Berryman (2021) to emphasise that strong relationships and relational trust are essential for students to feel safe taking intellectual risks. Disciplinary literacy research (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2021; Goldman & Ko, 2022) reinforces that English is an interpretive subject, not a discipline of right and wrong answers. Students learn most effectively when invited to construct meaning, justify ideas, and express their own perspectives.

Participants will explore thinking routines informed by recent metacognition studies (EEF,

2022; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2021), including micro-writing, solo noticing, Notice -- Suggest -- Support, and concise bursts of interpretation. These routines develop self-regulation and independent analytical reasoning.

A key component of the session is culturally relevant intertextualisation, drawing on Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2020, 2024) to connect classical and contemporary texts. Examples such as touch grass, meme culture, and the Drake vs Kendrick feud, help students recognise how cultural assumptions and values evolve across contexts.

Teachers will leave with practical routines, research-backed strategies, and concrete ways to prepare students for QCAA Senior English while preserving their independent voice.

Presenter

Liz Taylor is an experienced Senior Teacher of English at Mabel Park State High School in Logan, where she has taught for nine years in a highly diverse, relationship-centred learning community. She specialises in building independent thinkers through explicit pedagogy, culturally relevant intertextualisation, and strong relational practice. Liz is an experienced QCAA assessor, serving as a Confirmer, Endorser, Lead External Assessment Marker, and Assessment Writer. Passionate about supporting teachers, she leads professional learning in curriculum alignment, moderation, and Senior English strategies that empower students to take ownership of their thinking and voice.

Workshop 10

From guessing to knowing: Visible Thinking Strategies for literary analysis in the English classroom

Abstract

In contemporary English classrooms, students' encounters with literacy, literature, and language are shaped not only by what they read but by how they are guided to think. This presentation explores how Harvard Project Zero thinking routines can support students in developing the confidence, independence, and cognitive agility required for deep literary analysis.

This session will demonstrate practical, classroom-tested ways to embed thinking routines such as See-Think-Wonder, Claim-Support-Question, What Makes You Say That? and The 4C's into the study of novels across Year 7-12. Participants will examine how these routines make students' thinking visible, strengthen their analytical skills, and scaffold the often-complex process of breaking down

characterisation, themes, narrative perspective, and authorial craft. The presentation will also highlight how these routines promote sustained inquiry and richer encounters between students and texts, mirroring the process of learning to 'ride the bike' of independent literary interpretation. Attendees will leave with concrete examples drawn from classroom practice, and strategies for cultivating a culture of visible thinking that empowers students to move confidently through unfamiliar literary terrain.

Presenter

Kristy Dall is a passionate and experienced high school teacher specialising in English and humanities, with over a decade of teaching experience. She has a proven track record of developing and delivering comprehensive curricula aligned with ACARA and QCAA standards for Years 7-12 in subjects including English, Literature, and Geography. Kristy's professional achievements include QCAA senior assessment endorsement and confirmation, the creation of engaging teaching resources, and the development of student-focused exemplars that effectively support and enhance learning.

Workshop Session B

No	Workshop
11	Developing Independent writers: Productive encounters between students, teachers and generative AI, Melissa Jeffries
12	Close encounters of the speculative kind, Jarred Adams
13	Sparking critical thinking through cognitive verbs, Kimberley Costello
14	Mosh Pit to mark book: Festivals as workplaces in 'Language that works', Jalen Tamariki
15	AERO's School Writing Instruction Framework, Christine Jackson
16	Transcending qualification: AO4 as a vehicle for pedagogies of interruption and success beyond the four walls of the classroom, Ryan Anspach
17	The students become the detectives: Gamification and harnessing the creative potential of crime, Catherine Hicks
18	English Extension master class: Gadamer's Hermeneutics, Christopher Boerdam
19	Encounter: Antigone — panel, pedagogy, performance, Grace Loyden and Courtney Stewart
20	"Small Triumphs, Big Reasons": Moments that matter in English classrooms, Amelia Berlin and Sacha Smedley

Workshop 11

Developing independent writers: Productive encounters between students, teachers and generative AI

Abstract

This session centres on a familiar pedagogy: the teacher as model and mentor who guides students to extend their thinking when writing. This session expands this idea by showing how feedback can become more manageable and how students can become more self-directed in the writing process.

Participants will leave with an adaptable thinking approach they can apply in any writing unit, including simple, ethical strategies students can apply with generative AI to improve their writing. In addition, students will learn to articulate their ideas and clarify their intentions through student 'think-alouds', modelled initially by the teacher.

A guided use of generative AI is a key element of this approach. Rather than using AI as a shortcut, teachers model how students, as writers, might use AI to make more informed decisions about structure and direction. The focus remains on student ownership of the drafting and editing process.

This is a literacy session that considers how generative AI might be used to extend feedback and build on the foundational strategies already in the classroom.

Presenter

Melissa Jeffreys is a secondary English teacher with ten years' experience across the Australian Curriculum, senior ATAR English, and the International Baccalaureate (IB). Before teaching, she worked as a freelance writer/journalist and therefore she brings experience-based insight to writing instruction. Her classroom work focuses on helping students become more independent and

thoughtful writers through solid tools based on modelling and visible thinking. She is interested in how teachers can model ethical, purposeful use of AI to support writing.

Workshop 12

Close encounters of the speculative kind

Abstract

Speculative fiction is somewhat of a staple of the English classroom, but it is also one of the best ways to have students encounter deep thoughts about the world around them, and how fiction can represent our values, attitudes, and beliefs in a myriad of ways. This workshop aims to explore ways we can use speculative fiction as a means to explore the boundaries of societal perspectives in the classroom, and how it can help build critical and creative thinking skills.

Presenter

Jarred Adams is a teacher of English to the moderately sized humans at Kedron State High School.

Workshop 13

Sparking critical thinking through cognitive verbs

Abstract

This interactive session introduces activities that ignite curiosity and analytical thinking before applying specific cognitive verbs in writing tasks. Teachers will discover strategies to scaffold higher-order thinking, enabling students to confidently approach these cognitions. This is also a way for teachers to promote hands on learning and chunk content to encourage engagement in the classroom.

Presenter

Kimberley Costello has been working across both the state and independent sectors for 10 years. She is currently working at A.B Paterson College as Head of Faculty for English. Kimberley is very passionate about teaching and learning and mentoring new and beginning teachers.

Workshop 14

Mosh Pit to markbook: Festivals as workplaces in 'Language that works'

Abstract

Unit 1 Language that Works invites students into the world of work, but it can be challenging to design assessment that feels authentic, creative and still satisfies QCAA demands. This workshop shares a complete, classroom-tested concept that reframes the unit through the lens of festivals as workplaces.

Participants will explore how students investigate real Australian festivals, analyse the roles and responsibilities behind the scenes, and then choose a vendor to pitch to festival directors through a persuasive multimodal presentation. The session unpacks how this task aligns with Unit 1 objectives, foregrounding representations of place, identity and concept, as well as workplace health and safety, sustainability and inclusion.

Teachers will experience key learning activities from the student perspective to map festival workplaces, examining work texts (websites, socials, promotional and safety materials), planning vendor proposals and shaping multimodal responses. We will then collaboratively adapt the unit and task for diverse contexts, including regional and remote schools, lower-literacy cohorts and EAL/D learners.

Presenter

Jalen Tamariki is an English and Humanities teacher in regional Central Queensland, deeply committed to teaching, learning and

continually growing in the profession. Jalen is passionate about building strong, authentic connections with students, drawing on their interests, identities and local contexts as the starting point for rich learning. A key focus of Jalen's practice is reimagining assessment, so it feels purposeful and engaging, particularly through creative, work-related multimodal tasks that support diverse learners, honour student voice and align with curriculum demands, while making success feel both achievable and genuinely meaningful.

Workshop 15

AERO's School Writing Instruction Framework

Abstract

Students' ability to write and write well across subjects is important for their success at school. Writing helps students synthesise knowledge, analyse information and develop logical relationships between ideas to express opinions.

The most effective way to improve student writing is to systematically build teachers knowledge and skills in teaching the types of writing that align with the curriculum and support them to apply these in their teaching practice.

This session will help school leaders to consider how to lead an approach to strengthening writing instruction at their schools, using the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)s School Writing Instruction professional learning courses and resources. The 3 writing courses focus on building a writing evidence base, improving teachers' knowledge about grammar, sentence structure and writing assessment that, taken together, will give you and your staff the knowledge and tools to strengthen writing instruction at your school. The courses content can be applied across all subject areas in upper primary and secondary school.

The courses are based on research conducted by AERO and developed in consultation with teachers from across Australia.

Presenter

Christine Jackson is a Principal Researcher at the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), where she leads the School Writing Instruction Framework (SWIF) research project. She has authored reports including, 'Writing Development: What Does a Decade of NAPLAN Data Reveal?' and the recently released SWIF writing resources.

Christine's career began as a secondary English teacher in central west New South Wales, later teaching internationally and in Sydney. She previously worked at the Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education at Australian Catholic University, contributing to research on writing instruction and NAPLANs influence on policy and school practices.

Workshop 16

Transcending qualification: AO4 as a vehicle for pedagogies of interruption and success beyond the four walls of the classroom

Abstract

What's the purpose of an English education? Gert Biesta (2015) posits three purposes of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. Qualification is perhaps the most obvious and an important reason for the existence of what we do – attaining a QCE, ATAR and the like. But what of the other two? Participation in shared forms of life and becoming someone, not only something – socialisation and subjectification respectively – are equally important but easily overlooked in the realm of high-stakes senior school assessment. Similarly, AITSLs APSTs neglect to privilege the affective development of the young people in our care. In this session, we explore the inherent power of the English and Literature syllabuses' assessment objectives, specifically AO4, in unlocking what Gotlieb et al. (2024; see also Immordino-Yang & Damasio,

2007) term transcendent thinking: the field of neuroscience which correlates young people's affective associations of texts to ethical- and system-level implications to improved life outcomes. Practical strategies for classrooms will be offered to facilitate this thinking. In this way, we consider the true purpose of an English education and how we can reconcile the pragmatic curriculum concerns we must attend to while using our subject as a vehicle to fall in love with literature and the world.

Presenter

Ryan Anspach is an English teacher at Hillbrook Anglican School. He is passionate about relational teaching and exploring the purposes of education beyond assessment and qualification. In his spare time, he yearns for the time and mental bandwidth to read more. He's recently started running (which he pretends to love) and, true to being willingly overcommitted, works as a Literature Writing Panel Member, Endorser, Confirmer, and External Assessment Marker for the QCAA in addition to his role at ETAQ.

Workshop 17

The students become the detectives: Gamification and harnessing the creative potential of crime

Abstract

This workshop explores how the popularity of crime stories can be utilised to encourage creative writing in the English classroom. It will focus on two English lessons in a state high school in connection with the school's library collection. The first lesson introduces high school students to the genre of detective stories, employing modelling of creative writing practices to engage students in reading and writing. The second lesson explores the possibilities of gamification in library lessons to enhance engagement and improve digital literacy. The author describes the process of inspiration for short story creation, explains how she used the platform Inklewriter to turn

her short detective story into an interactive story. The response from students was largely positive and the lessons achieved their aim of engaging students in crime stories. This workshop will show teachers how this process could be adapted and used to inspire creativity in the English classroom.

Presenter

Catherine Hicks began her English teaching career in New South Wales, then swiftly needed a sea change, finding herself in Far North Queensland. She primarily teaches English, as well as English & Literature Extension, with experience in Literature as well as working in the library as a Teacher Librarian. Catherine has recently completed a Master of Education in Teacher Librarianship through Charles Sturt University and moonlights as an academic librarian at James Cook University on weekends. Her obsession with detective stories is evident, dressing up as Nancy Drew for book week, and reading any crime story by Anthony Horowitz she can get her hands on.

Workshop 18

English Extension master class:
Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Abstract

English Extension Master Classes are an opportunity for English teachers to deepen their understanding of literary theory by engaging in the critical reading and discussion of specific concepts or arguments. Each session will focus on a single concept or topic from the field of literary theory and will include consideration of a short reading. Each session will involve some background information regarding the set topic followed by a tutorial-style group discussion.

This session will focus on Hans-Georg Gadamer's conception of hermeneutics as outlined in *Truth and Method* (1960). We will explore Gadamer's claim that the humanities disciplines attempting to align their methodology with the sciences has led to a prejudice against prejudice, where readers'

subjective pre-judgements are seen as limiting understanding rather than the means by which understanding can be endlessly expanded. We will also explore his dialogic conception of reading as involving a fusion of horizons the adjustment of the reader's worldview based on the unfamiliar experiences, ideas, and perspectives they encounter in literary texts

Presenter

Christopher Boerdam has been a Head of English in Queensland schools and has been teaching English & Literature Extension for just over twenty years. He was involved in the writing panel for the Literature syllabus and is currently a Lead Endorser (English), Lead Confirmer (Literature), Lead Marker and Chief for External Assessment (English & Literature Extension and Literature). He is interested in literary studies, literary theory, and philosophy, and completed his PhD studies on Slavoj Žižek's dialectical materialism. Christopher currently works as Learning Area Leader of English at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School.

Workshop 19

Encounter: Antigone — panel,
pedagogy, performance

Abstract

This dynamic session brings together Courtney Stewart, Artistic Director of La Boite Theatre Company, and Grace Loyden, Dean of Learning & Teaching at St Laurence's College, to explore how contemporary theatre reimagines classical texts for modern audiences and how English teachers can use these reinterpretations to enrich creative and multimodal learning.

Focusing on La Boite's 2026 production of *Antigone*, the panel examines how a 2,400-year-old tragedy becomes newly urgent through shifts in context, voice, staging, and power. Courtney will offer behind-the-scenes insight into directorial vision, dramaturgical decision-making, and the rehearsal room processes that shape performance. Grace will translate these artistic choices into concrete

classroom applications aligned with QCAA English and Literature, including comparative analysis, imaginative transformations, and the study of perspective, agency, and authority. The session culminates in a live monologue from the production, giving teachers an example of reimagined text-in-performance as a stimulus for practical classroom discussion and assessment.

Participants will leave with renewed inspiration for engaging students with classical texts through contemporary creative encounters.

Presenters

Grace Loyden is the Dean of Teaching and Learning at St Laurence's College, leading curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and professional learning. She serves on the Board of Directors for La Boite Theatre Company and is co-author of the senior English textbooks Nelson English for QCE Units 1 & 2 and Units 3 & 4. A QCAA assessor for Literature, Grace brings expertise in standards, evaluation and evidence-informed practice. Her work focuses on building learning cultures and shaping creative, future-ready learning experiences underpinned by an interest in governance, impact and system leadership.

Courtney Stewart is the Artistic Director of La Boite Theatre Company, a leading Australian company. Courtney is director, dramaturg and cultural leader, she is known for bold, innovative contemporary reinterpretations of classic works and storytelling that interrogates identity, power and community. Courtney has directed and developed new Australian writing across major theatre companies, championing diverse voices and artist-led artistic collaboration. Her practice draws on a rich background in performance, movement and interdisciplinary creation, with a strong belief in theatre as a catalyst for social questioning and connection. Under her leadership, La Boite continues to reimagine canonical texts for modern audiences.

Workshop 20

“Small Triumphs, Big Reasons”: Moments that matter in English classrooms

Abstract

Powerful encounters happen daily between teachers and students in English classrooms, moments that often go unnoticed yet carry the greatest potential for growth. Framed around the idea that “triumphs are the taking off”, this session highlights how small, intentional literacy practices can lift student confidence, engagement, and ownership in reading and writing. Rather than focusing on large-scale initiatives or time-intensive lesson redesigns, this PD showcases **real, classroom-tested micro-practices** that fit seamlessly into existing instruction. Participants will explore **warm-up activities and core lesson strategies** for reading and writing that require minimal planning time but yield significant impact. These practices serve as low-stakes entry points where students feel safe to try, risk, and succeed, often for the first time. Through concrete examples and teacher–student interaction scenarios, the session emphasises how everyday instructional choices—brief writing invitations, quick reading encounters, purposeful talk, and moments of affirmation—create the conditions for literacy confidence. These small triumphs accumulate, allowing students to “take off” as readers and writers while strengthening the relational fabric of the classroom. This affirms that big reasons for student success are often found in the smallest moments and that everyday joy in English classrooms is both intentional and achievable.

Presenters

Amelia Berlin is an experienced high school educator with over two decades of teaching across a broad range of subjects, specialising in English and Humanities. Passionate about mentoring early career teachers, she brings deep classroom expertise, practical insight, and strong time-management skills to her work. Amelia places a strong emphasis on teacher and student wellbeing and enjoys collaborating with colleagues to design

engaging, high-quality resources. She is particularly interested in supporting innovative teaching practices that respond to the evolving demands of education in the digital era.

Sacha Smedley is an experienced high school teacher across the English and Humanities

domains, with ten years teaching experience. With a focus for supporting teachers and student wellbeing, she brings a range of knowledge from past experiences to the ever-evolving nature of teaching in the 21st Century.

Conditions of registration

1. Change of persons registered - sometimes schools may need to substitute one teacher for another on their registrations. If so, please notify the change to the Administration Officer so that we can prepare the appropriate Certificate of Participation 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**. See also the Cancellation Policy below.
3. Many schools are now insisting on an **Order Number** on the invoice. If your school is one of these, please record it in your online registration.
4. **Cancellation Policy** – If you register for face-to-face attendance and have to cancel your physical attendance, the following will apply:
 - a. Cancel your registration by Thursday 5 March and receive a refund of your full registration fee OR transfer over to the online attendance group and receive a refund of the face-to-face component of your registration fee.
 - b. From 6 March to 10 March, you will receive a refund of the face-to-face component of your registration fee.
 - c. From 11 March no refund is possible.
 - d. Cancellation to be by email to adminofficer@etaq.org.au .

Social Media

You can find ETAQ on Instagram [@ETAQld](#) and follow along using the hashtag **#ETAQ2026**

If you are on Facebook, you can join up to the ETAQ group (www.facebook.com/groups/ETAQLD) and/or like the official ETAQ page (www.facebook.com/ETAQLD)

Listen to ETAQ's podcast, **Hoops of Steel**, on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM 2026

Date	Event	Mode
Starting on 2 February	Informal Discussion sessions Principally but not exclusively for early career teachers conducted twice a term	online
21 February 8:30 – 1pm	Essential English – Community of Practice A Community of Practice especially for teachers of Essential English	Face to face Live streamed*
14 March 8:30 – 1pm	March Seminar + AGM – Encounters with literacy, literature and language A keynote presented by A/Prof Garth Stahl supported by a suite of workshops	Face to face Live streamed*
9 May 9:00 – 12:30	Literature online – Community of Practice A Community of Practice especially for teachers of Literature, focussing on internal assessment. Keynote Emeritus Prof Roly Sussex	online
16 May	The Poetry Toolbox Presented by Anne Wood	online
23 May	Grammar workshop Develop understanding of grammar to effectively teach the <i>Australian Curriculum Curriculum (AC:E)</i>	online
1 August 8:30 – 5pm	State Conference - date to be confirmed Our flagship event – 2 keynotes, one an academic and the other an author, supported by a suite of workshops in three sessions. Presentation of award(s) recognising the contribution of member(s) to the profession.	Face to face Live streamed*
6 August	External Assessment Preparation – Teacher and Student Events Materials are completely revised each year to reflect the latest advice from QCAA. Presentations on all additions to the text list are included	Pre-recorded presentations and some Zoom meetings
22 August	'Pass the mic!': Student (and staff) engagement, belonging, and success through hip-hop pedagogy and affinity groups Presented by Charlie Thomson	online
24 October 9:00 – 1:00	Early Career Conference A conference for teachers who are in their first five years of teaching or are new to teaching English presented by early career teachers and more experienced teachers with a special interest in mentoring beginning teachers.	Face to face with selected workshops to be recorded.
14 November	Grammar workshop Develop understanding of grammar to effectively teach the <i>Australian Curriculum Curriculum (AC:E)</i>	online

*Keynotes and one workshop in each session will be livestreamed. Other workshops may be filmed and made available. Further information will be accessible at www.org.au as it becomes available.