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EDITORIAL

Stewart Riddle
University of Southern Queensland

Well, what a year it has been. Since our last edition of Words'Worth we have had the national conference in Canberra, the state conference in Brisbane and the joys that come from powering through the second semester as we race towards a well-deserved summer break. The national conference was a really productive few days of sharing the joys and frustrations of teaching English across the country, as well as some interesting keynotes from folk such as Peter Freebody, Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope. The program was intense, with lots of networking and conviviality packed between workshops, research papers, seminars and fireside chats. We have a few reports to share in this issue from our sponsored attendees, which give some further reflections on the conference.

Our annual state conference, held at Lourdes Hill College on Saturday 15 August, was (in my humble opinion) a fantastic day. We had a crowd of over 330 English teachers come together for a day of feasting and sharing of stories and experience. The two keynotes were very different, yet quite complementary: Professor Bev Derewianka gave a delightful foray into functional grammar, literature and cats, while John Marsden regaled us with tales from the trenches as an English teacher and author, as well as providing some interesting writing activities to try out in the classroom. The accompanying workshops were of an exceptional standard and the feedback that we received from participants reflected the high quality professional development that ETAQ continues to offer its members.

Our other professional development activities for the year, including the March and May seminars, Beginning Teachers’ Day, Garry Collins’ Grammar Workshops, and the Spring Breakfast, have been well-attended and seen hundreds of English teachers around the state sharing English teaching expertise. Don’t forget to renew your membership for 2016 as you won’t want to miss out on the jam-packed calendar of PD opportunities that are currently being put together.

In this issue of Words’Worth, we have a number of contributions to share, including: further literary competition winning entries from junior English students; a vale for much-loved English teacher, John Livingston; a Year 10 Romeo and Juliet transformed unit plan; an essay advocating for a multiliteracies pedagogy in the English classroom; and an article on the philosophy of a 21st century English teacher. We also have this year’s Botsman Award recipients, a few reflections on the national conference and some book reviews to round off this issue.

I would like to take the opportunity to declare the absolute debt I owe to Trish Purcell, our Administration Officer and Treasurer, as well as Deb Peden, Management Committee member and Literary Competition Organiser. Both Trish and Deb offer their proofreading excellence, patience and humour to the process of putting each issue of Words’Worth together, and I thank them very much for their amazing work.

Finally, please do consider sending in your unit plans, lesson ideas, book reviews, opinion pieces and other offerings for the journal. We welcome the opportunity to share the experiences and expertise of English teachers across the state; after all, that’s why this journal exists. You might like to take on the challenge of putting something together as a bit of a summer vacation project...something to while away those long hours when you’re not sure what to do with yourself!

stewart.riddle@usq.edu.au
Dear ETAQ members,

In thinking about this issue of *Words’Worth*, and the range of matters facing English currently, I asked a colleague, also involved in Teacher Education in English, what she thought the most pressing issues facing Queensland English teachers today might be.

Instantly she responded, recalling a conversation she had had that same day with a Master teacher/Senior English teacher at the school where she used to teach. This teacher, my colleague reported, had been telling her about the tightrope she felt teachers are currently walking in answering to system requirements and ensuring they are “addressing the data” (read NAPLAN) whilst creating engaging, relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for students. She suggested there was a strong need to talk about the importance of not letting what she called the numerification of education eat away at/erode the joy and/or moral purpose of teaching English.

It’s such a familiar theme, and a challenge that won’t go away. Interviewing teachers in Queensland and Victoria recently, this concern came through repeatedly. It’s particularly pressing in the NAPLAN years, but in senior years too, the huge importance of the OP, and the measures taken to arrive there, cast their shadow over what is nonetheless still a relatively open set of possibilities. Mastery of the language, together with critical and creative understandings continue to be crucial; and a large part of our responsibility of course is to help students become as confident and competent as possible, in their knowledge and use of language and of the way meaning is made in print, digital and multimodal forms. However, it’s so important to also hold onto that ‘what more?’

There have been a number of events over the last few weeks, at the time of writing, that in different ways remind us of the huge importance of English and its place in the curriculum - the joy, and moral purpose – that the subject allows like no other. One was International Literacy Day, celebrated on September 8th. The theme this year was ‘Literacy and sustainable societies’, and it emphasized the inextricable links between literacy, social justice and society. Our sister organisation, the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA) celebrated this day as it always does, through its Babies and Books campaign, where ALEA ‘ambassadors’ take armfuls of books to local hospitals for mothers and their newborn babies.

Other current events, less celebratory, underline the dire need to teach young people – and all of us – to think clearly and act well. Foremost amongst these events, most recently have been such profoundly challenging matters as the refugee crisis, and domestic violence. The pressing, urgent presence and visibility of such matters remind us of the central importance of those broader elements of English, that help students learn to think, to read, view and listen critically and carefully; to think through questions of values and morality’; to see things through others’ eyes in the way that literature, film, social media and multiple other platforms and forms of text allow; to develop critical perspectives, self-awareness and clarity; understanding and response.

Gunther Kress describes English as a subject with ‘deep purposes’. If ever such dimensions of our subject were important, as they are, they are certainly needed now.

Catherine
When I first arrived at Shailer Park State High School, John had just left to take up his first principal position at Miles State High School. However, everyone spoke highly of him and he had made a big impact on many of the English teachers. His larger-than-life personality and ability to generate enthusiasm for literature were legendary. He loved reading poetry aloud and was, of course, co-author of one of the most influential poetry books for secondary schools, *Form and Feeling*.

Through my now-wife, I was fortunate to become a personal friend of John’s. He was a terrific host and I will fondly remember long dinners, the air sparkling with convivial conversation. For quite a few years, contact with John was limited to the occasional phone call. However, in recent years I began a long-term association with Kirwan State High School where he was still Executive Principal at the time of his death. My plane would arrive late at night, but John was always waiting up, ready for a wine and a long talk – he was overflowing with proud stories of his students’ successes, sometimes long after they had left the school.

More importantly, he was determined to provide the very best education he could for disadvantaged students. More than any other principal I have met, he was genuinely committed to equal opportunity for all, giving his students 110% and expecting the same from them and his staff. Both John and the school have won many awards over the years, and it is a wonderful school to work in as a literacy consultant: there is a strong culture of collaboration and his staff are eager to improve their teaching of reading and writing.

Annual speech nights at Kirwan were theatrical celebrations of his school and, more importantly, his students. Every year, my wife received a copy of his principal’s speech that inevitably focused on an inspiring tale of endurance, persistence and success. The stories were drawn from the large number of biographies he read; indeed, in his house, books were everywhere and a quick perusal revealed the breadth of his interests. Moreover, they were concrete evidence of his abiding love of language.

Like any good hero, John had his flaws, but he was a great educator and friend. Unfortunately, at 65 years old he was taken at the peak of his powers by an inoperable brain tumour: raging against the ‘dying of the light’ proved ultimately futile. His funeral in Townsville attracted well over a thousand people and is the biggest I am ever likely to attend. It was a testament to the love, trust and admiration that he inspired.

Goodbye Mr 110%. You were loved by many and you will be greatly missed.
KATHLEEN HANNANT

Award Citation

Kathleen Hannant is Head of Department English and International Studies at Centenary Heights State High School, Toowoomba. Over the past 10 years in particular, Kathleen has contributed enormously to improving the quality of English and Literacy teaching on the Darling Downs and beyond. She is a regular contributor at local ETAQ and ALEA events, at state conferences as well as being accepted to present at the upcoming ASFLA national conference. Kathleen has also been on the executive of the Darling Downs branch of ETAQ.

She is a trained tutor in the language program “Language and Literacy – Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar” and has regularly given her time to present this course in her school and to the Darling Downs teaching fraternity, the latter at weekends. Her training as a tutor in How Language Works and First Steps Reading is also reflected in her practice at Centenary Heights State High School where her leadership of literacy teaching has resulted in strong improvements in literacy achievement. Kathleen’s colleagues and principal praise her ability to take challenging concepts about language, literature and literacy teaching and develop teaching resources to assist students and teachers to grasp these concepts as well as her ability to engage teachers. Her work as a literacy coach has meant she has worked with teachers across 3 campuses and across a wide range of KLA areas to develop their ability to teach literacy, all the time using her dry sense of humour and her gracious approach to engage her audience.

Kathleen’s skills as an outstanding presenter and teacher are such that she was encouraged to enrol for her masters, her thesis focussing on Curriculum Literacies in Science, History and English. It was so highly regarded that it returned from the examiners; one asking for no changes and the other recommending she publish a paper in Literacy Learning: the Middle Years in the recent Nea Stewart Dore special edition. Acknowledged as a brilliant teacher researcher, she managed her masters, her role as English HOD and literacy coach of her school Centenary Heights as well as being a wife to Paul and mother to 4 school aged children.

Kathleen’s work has been recognised for its excellence in a range of ways. Films of her English teaching and her literacy work across the curriculum were used in the recent EQ Literacy Training, she is a valued member of the Downs District Review panel for English, her work has been used as exemplar for pre-service teachers at QUT and she has given guest lectures to fourth year students. In all this her colleagues explain that her generosity of spirit, keen intellect and passion shine from her. Kathleen is a worthy recipient for the Peter Botsman award.
2015 PETER BOTSMA AWARD

Kathleen Hannant
Reply to presentation of Botsman Award

I would like to humbly accept this acknowledgement, which represents some experiences and opportunities I have been given throughout my career.

Teaching in rural and remote areas has been a significant influence on my development as a practitioner. My first appointment was to what was then known as the College of the South West in Roma, a Senior College/TAFE, in 1988. Outside of the Head of Department, the most experienced teachers in the English department were two second year teachers. My "Wake in Fright" moment occurred when I read the slip of paper with the subject codes I would be teaching – I remember turning to someone and saying "What is F & TV?" During the next year, I cursed Film and Television many times in its abbreviated form as I carted home cameras, portapaks, and unwieldy tripods trying to stay one step ahead of the students. That learning proved invaluable when Syllabus changes required a broader focus on media and everyday texts within English. I really did not have an understanding of literacy until I went to Thursday Island State High and learned it is as much about social justice as it is about student achievement. Through teaching in rural and remote areas, you also take on subject area responsibilities, perhaps earlier than you expect.

One thing I have appreciated throughout my career, is that professional development is integral to professional growth. Systemically, we have been fortunate to access an array of professional development opportunities, although I think sometimes there has not been enough attention devoted to implementation and teacher buy-in, as well as long-term sustenance. Working as a panelist on District Review panels is still one of the best PDs around. The Rainbow Syllabus, which introduced us to the context-text model, is still a landmark series of documents, although I have to admit I have only understood some parts of it in more recent years after being exposed to Systemic Functional Linguistics. New understandings of what it means to be literate have been particularly influential, evident in publications such as the Literate Futures Report and Literacy the Key to Learning Teacher professional development. In recent years, knowledge of Systemic Functional Linguistics has strengthened my understanding of how language is used to create meaning in texts, giving me scope to be more explicit in the classroom. We have been fortunate to have a strong intersection between the tertiary and school sectors; where these initiatives have been developed with the assistance of academics who are world-leaders in their fields. Membership of ETAQ, particularly our local branch on the Darling Downs, has afforded opportunities to establish strong networks with other schools and across sectors. To Office Bearers and committee members of our professional organisations like ETAQ and ALEA, and to the many practitioners and researchers who have shared their work with others – I would just like presenters over the years to know that I have given you the greatest acknowledgement that can be given – I have tried to follow in your footsteps in the classroom.

I would also like to acknowledge three key mentors for me who were responsible for this nomination – Annette Curnow, Dr Anita Jetnikoff and my Principal Maryanne Walsh. I’m supported by a great staff, who strive for improvement and are always willing to learn. At home I’m supported by my husband Paul and our four children, who have always encouraged me in my learning even when it has impacted on family time.

It is a privilege to accept an award for something I love doing – I love teaching; I love learning, and I love learning to be a better teacher.

Thank you.
Award Citation

Simon is an English teacher who, on every level of his practice, leads by example. His relationship with imaginative literary expression is wide ranging and authentic.

In school, Simon has helped to develop innovative curriculum opportunities for students to develop their literary voice (both written and performative). He has spearheaded a poetry slam at his school, Kelvin Grove State College, as well as leading the integration of slam poetry into the curriculum at his school, including facilitating regular collaboration with artists from across Australia and overseas. As such he has developed ways to publicly celebrate the worth of the student voice. At his school, he has brought his teaching colleagues along with him on this journey and a shared enthusiasm for poetry has been a most welcome outcome.

Beyond the school, Simon is the MC of Speedpoets, Brisbane’s longest running performance poetry event, and he has published three poetry collections in the last two years. Simon has shared his passion at English teacher conferences at both state and national levels, and routinely works to support young writers as they transition from the schooling context into the broader arts community.

In 2014, Simon negotiated and delivered the Queensland Poetry Festival’s first showcase of student poetry and in 2015 is coordinating Brisbane’s first inter-school youth poetry slam, involving schools across the public and private schooling sectors, and across education districts.

In these ways and many more, Simon is routinely integrating his teaching of English into the broader arts community, and helping students to further appreciate the real-world value of the literary arts. His innovative practice, deep commitment to the literary art of poetry, and professional initiative are having a significant impact on the education landscape and, as such, he is a worthy recipient of the Peter Botsman Award.
I’d like to start by thanking ETAQ for this honour and of course acknowledge the previous recipients whom I’ve had the privilege of working with at various points in my career including Ray McGuire, Ted Kent, Mary Swayne, Kay Elsden and the late Paul Sherman. I also owe a deep gratitude to my Head of Department Adam Davy. Adam and I have been working together for a number of years now on the very projects that I take it have been the reason I’ve been recognised with this award so I feel that a great deal of the credit for that goes to him. So thank you Adam, my friend and comrade.

I understand it’s the work I’ve been doing at Kelvin Grove State College and in the broader community to promote poetry that filled the CV that Adam submitted with my nomination so I’d like to talk briefly about that if you would indulge me. And I suppose I am speaking here with two voices, one of a poet, and one of a teacher, both of which are two of the oddest ways of being human.

If we are to believe the common discourse, then we ought to conclude that poetry is a dead art. We hear that all the great poetry has already been written, that teachers don’t teach it properly if at all, that no one reads it anymore, let alone pays for it. Most of this is garbage but as poets we don’t really care either way. But it is true that poetry serves no purpose, at least as purpose is defined under capitalism. Poets know this and frankly, we don’t care about that either. Those of us who run open-mics, who operate small presses, who collate and promote journals and the like are all running at a financial loss. We know that it’s true that it costs more to publish poetry than the ‘market’ is willing to pay for it. We know all too well that poetry is an economic failure, but we do it anyway and this is why it is miraculous.

Poetry is always in a state of failure but it is the best kind of failure. It is willing failure. It paints a target across its own heart then asks only that we shoot straight. Poetry murders itself elegantly, then rises Lazarus-like again and again. If poetry is a dead art, then poets are proof resurrection, proof perhaps of miracle.

Under capitalism, the brute and wretched machine in which a body is named only for its labour, to be a poet is to be proof of something else, of some other possibility, some other way of being. In schools, our poets sit in science classes, and are taught about gravity but decide that for them, obedience to gravity is optional. Or if it applies to them, it is only ever as a metaphor for something else. Our poets sit the QCS test and wonder why the writing task tells them they can write in any genre other than poetry and they laugh, because they know that everything is poetry. And they know that nothing is poetry. So it doesn’t matter anyway. It matters as much as the world weighs, which is everything, and nothing at all. Our poets see the world and they carry it all. They stand on the edge of it, watch the water spreading out beyond what they can see and they choose to walk across it anyway because they know, as Judy Grahn says, that people who cannot walk on water are phonies, or dead.

So Adam and I put our heads together a few years ago and decided we would teach our students to walk on water. But what we discovered is that they already know how. What I have come to understand is that poetry lives in us and in the young people we call students. What we at Kelvin Grove have done is simply create a space in which fires can be lit. And then we fanned them. Our programs to promote poetry, including slams, guest poets, poet in residence programs, and even the great Frankenstein of SlammED, an 8 school high school slam at this year’s Queensland Poetry Festival, these are just ways of fanning flames that were always already there. So I feel a little bit of a phony myself for receiving an award for that. But thank you anyway. I am grateful for it. And I am grateful that it should have anything to do with poetry. One thought that has stuck with me throughout this whole process of promoting poetry in schools is this – that we ought to get out of the way. That we should create spaces for our students to be poets then let them write. And so with that said, I’d just like to remind you that at the morning tea break, we will have poets stalking you, say thank you once again, then quietly, get out of the way.
As the clock inches closer to midnight, my exhausted body refuses to surrender to sleep, as my mind jumps and dances from thought to thought, creating a dilemma for me. How can I write about all the wonderful workshops and discussions I have seen and heard at the National Literacy Conference, in just a couple of pages? I think it might be an impossible task, because I like to write and analyse and justify and elaborate. However, my task is no different to those I set for my students – the limits are there for a reason and I need to stick to them. So for now, that is my dilemma and as words rush through my head, I feel I must put pen to paper and quickly...

Now Canberra is a beautiful city, but in winter when the cold winds blow up from the Snowy Mountains, it is bitterly cold. It’s very lucky then, that the hospitality of those inside Canberra’s National Convention Centre filled me with warmth and excitement, as I embraced all things English for the three days of the literacy conference. To add to that warmth, I met some amazing teachers such as Margaret from Port Fairy, Gloria from Melbourne, Melissa from Canberra and Erika from Tasmania. As we swapped stories and experiences about teaching and engaging our students, I couldn’t help but feel privileged to be a part of something so amazing and rewarding. They were as keen as I was, to leave our footprint on the land of the Ngunnawal people and over the following days, that is exactly what we did. The theme of curiosity and inquiring minds followed me into every workshop as I heard over and over again, “It’s all about our kids.”

I loved Misty Adoniou’s keynote, “What do teachers do? The importance of speaking up, speaking out and speaking loudly” piqued my interest especially when she said, “Teachers should become risk takers on behalf of their students.” As a senior lecturer in Language Literacy and TESL at the University of Canberra, this quiet unassuming educator is passionate about teaching, education and says we as teachers have the capacity to make huge differences in the lives of children. To ensure they have the best opportunities available to them, she urges teachers not to be afraid to learn new things, while at the same time, shedding old practices to guarantee students stay engaged with learning.

Since returning to the classroom, I have followed her advice and ‘shed old practices’ and become a bit of a ‘risk taker’ and am enjoying the results I am seeing. In my junior secondary class, the students can’t wait to get to class to play our ‘fun’ spelling games and the look on Mary’s face as she realised she had spelt a word correctly for the first time in a long time. It showed me that I had made the correct decision to take a risk and change the way spelling is taught. For this student, in particular, who has been deemed to have low literacy capabilities, she felt a sense of achievement and it showed in the smile she gave me. It was pure gold and I have noticed that she is now walking a bit taller.

Experienced teacher author and lecturer, Kate Murdoch, titled her keynote presentation “The sky is inside us: Cultivating curiosity on the classroom.” This passionate and feisty educator believes that through great inquiry, teachers encourage curiosity, enabling students to seek answers for themselves. However, it was her final words that had the most powerful effect on me, as she said, “Don’t extinguish the light of curiosity. Teach with your heart and maintain an emotional connection. For students to be curious, they must feel worthy.” Students have an unlimited ocean of inquiry within them, so as teachers we must ensure the gate of engagement doesn’t slam shut, stopping our learners from having the opportunity to feed their curiosity.

‘The Two Sisters,’ Joan Moser and Gail Boushey...
are engaging educators from the USA, who entertained their audiences with a range of strategies to accelerate and improve literacy and learning in the classroom. In both their ‘Daily 5’ and their ‘CAFÉ’ workshops, they spoke openly of their teaching experiences, and how they have taught students to be independent by allowing them to set achievable goals to develop independence. Lessons should be broken up into tasks of about 10 minutes each to keep students engaged and on task. Reflect on lessons and as the teacher ask yourself the same question over and over; “what are you teaching and how are you teaching it?” Align curriculum with students needs and remember that teaching does not have to be fancy; it needs to be plain, simple and explicit to ensure learners build on their skills and knowledge.

For all the fabulous workshops I attended, there were just as many wonderful workshops I missed. I wished I could have split myself into three, so I could attend them all. It is impossible for me to write about all the committed and passionate educators whose workshops I attended and the wonderful advice they gave. In the workshop titled “Boy, oh boy, Let’s write,” I felt encouraged by the work of Canberra teachers, Jo, Malvina and Vicki who have worked on capitalizing on the curiosity of their students and nurturing their inquiring minds to improve student outcomes in writing. Sheena Cameron, Louise Dempsey and ‘The Writing Book’ offered practical advice and strategies for writing.

Cindy Lau from the Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School, six hours from Perth, showcased the important work she and her colleagues are doing in teaching students to read and improve literacy outcomes. Associate Professor Peter O’Connor and his keynote speech titled “Asking Better Questions: The Power of Wondering,” believes that the way to become a better teacher and engage our students is to ask better questions. Tongue in cheek, he suggested that when the teacher asks a question, they should keep silent allowing the students time to process and answer. I know I have been guilty, at times, of not allowing a student enough time to formulate their answer, so I felt like he set me a challenge.

Again, since returning to the classroom, I have put into practice many of the ideas that were showcased and already I can see some encouraging signs. I believe I need to be the change I want my students to be, as I encourage them to be inquiring and curious. Continuity and connectedness is paramount to success. I need to continue to engage my students in extensive interactive learning to develop depth and a complexity of understanding and differentiate for those who need extra support. For me this means connecting with all students including those who try to be invisible. I know the steps I have put into place will succeed over time. Teachers can make huge differences in children’s lives and as such, I feel a great responsibility to nurture their inquiring minds and capitalize on their curiosity.

Thank you Canberra, ALEA and AATE for a wonderful three days of learning, laughter and giving me the opportunity to enrich my soul and my passions to improve my teaching and more importantly the learning outcomes for my students.

Julie Burton

CAPITALISING ON CURIOSITY
CURIOSITY IGNITED: AATE AND ALEA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Dana Ellis
Columba Catholic College, Charters Towers

Why is curiosity so important?’ rang in my ears after hearing the wise words of Kate Murdoch. I left the AATE and ALEA National Conference with my curiosity ignited and, as an English teacher, passionately to seek an answer to the question, ‘How can I ignite the curiosity of my students?’

As a second year teacher acting in a Head of Department role at Columba Catholic College, a regional Catholic school in North Queensland, sometimes attempting to plan dynamic and inquiry based lessons on top of leading a department can result in feelings of isolation. Being a member of ETAQ and a recipient of a Scholarship to attend the National Conference certainly reminded me that I am a part of an innovative and passionate group of literacy teachers. Through participation in workshops, both keynotes and plenary, I was able to reflect on the importance of curiosity, both within myself as an educator and within the minds of my students. The theme of the conference was ‘Capitalising on Curiosity’ and I left with my curiosity for dynamic and meaningful literacy teaching ablaze.

In the keynote speech by Peter O’Connor, he linked the importance of ‘asking questions’ to meaningful learning. He challenged us, as teachers, to reconsider the concept of successful teaching. He posited that successful teaching depends on planning less and teaching more, on testing less and teaching more. He challenged us, as educators, to ask genuine questions that neither we nor others necessarily knew the answers to but could discover together as a class. The question that he asked us to frame all learning experiences with was, ‘Do students do things in classrooms that truly matter? And in doing that, do they discover that they matter too?’ In that session I was reminded that I – and I’m sure many teachers can relate to this – can easily get caught up in the assessment, reporting and administration side of the profession and neglect the real learning that happens in classrooms. I was reminded that not only are we literacy teachers but we are also nurturers of children’s curiosity. Our classrooms are to be places that encourage, promote and cultivate curiosity: places that allow students to question, enquire and discover that they truly matter. Peter O’Connor ended his keynote with the powerful statement that teaching is an artwork; not just a science. Teaching is the art of making humans more fully human.

I left Peter O’Connor’s valuable session and made my way to another session, buoyed by the reminder that teaching is a profession that truly matters. I attended the keynote by Kate Murdoch entitled ‘The Sky is Inside Us: cultivating curiosity in the classroom’ and I was not disappointed. She began with the sobering message that despite curiosity being the gateway to learning, the day-to-day lived experience of teachers shows that students can have that gate firmly shut after starting school. She explained the focus on curriculum and assessment can firstly diminish a student’s natural curiosity, and then curtail it altogether. Kate Murdoch posited that, as inquiry teachers, we must remain committed to keeping that gate open; that we need to continually and forcefully push back against forces beyond us, such as a ‘back-to-basics’ approach that seeks to keep that gate closed. I began to wonder, ‘Why keep that gate open? Why is curiosity so important?’ Kate Murdoch outlined the recent research that promotes curiosity as helping learning to ‘stick’. Curiosity grows valuable 21st century skills particularly critical thinking. So how do we keep curiosity alive in schools when dominant practices wish to supplant it with more orderly and regimented experiences? Kate Murdoch encouraged teachers to model curious behaviours and to use a language of wonder in the classroom. She challenged us to plan for spontaneity, to slow down and cultivate a classroom environment that values curiosity and student questions. She left me pondering her final point that for students to feel curious, they must first feel worthy of seeking, entitled to ask...
CURIOSITY IGNITED: AATE AND ALEA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

and encouraged to explore. Again, I realised the powerful potential we have, as literacy teachers, to cultivate curiosity and show students that they matter.

With my curiosity aroused, I attended a workshop entitled ‘Nurturing Future Wordsmiths: a focus on vocabulary’ run by the brilliant Dr Noella Mackenzie. This workshop offered many practical vocabulary teaching strategies. As a secondary English teacher, I am constantly reminded of the importance of students being able to access the meanings of words in both verbal and written texts in order to learn. Dr Noella Mackenzie reminded her willing listeners that the teaching of vocabulary is an equity issue and deserving of every teacher’s time and energy. She outlined that knowing words is multi-faceted and for students to learn new words they need to encounter them in many ways. She provided a plethora of meaningful vocabulary-learning experiences in addition to strongly encouraging all teachers from Prep to Year 12 to be reading to their students. She provided the sobering statement that if students are not read to in class then the reality is they may never hear what it is like to be a fluent reader.

I left the conference reminded that teaching is a profession that truly matters. I am responsible for pushing back against forces that seek to control and curtail curiosity. I am responsible for encouraging and cultivating curiosity within my students, my classroom and, importantly, myself. But in order to do that I must first show students that they matter. I must show students they are valued contributors to knowledge. I must show students they are worthy of wonder.

Thank you to ETAQ for the support to attend this conference. As a second year teacher I found the experience to be engaging, encouraging and filled with excitement. I left with my curiosity and passion for literacy teaching inflamed. I left, driven to ignite an inferno of curiosity within my classroom and the hearts of my students. I left with my own heart ablaze with curiosity.
When I first received the email from ETAQ saying that I was being sponsored to go to the AATE/ALEA National English Literacy Conference in our nation's capital, to say that I was excited would be putting it mildly. As preservice teachers, we don't usually get a lot of experience in what is working in real world classrooms outside of our placements, and even then the whirlwind of placement for most of us is a general panicked frenzy of trying to get everything ready on time. This leaves us very little time to actually sit down and have a chat to other teachers to get their opinions of the art of being an English teacher.

Arriving in the brisk and picturesque city of Canberra, I immediately embraced the theme of the conference of *Capitalising on Curiosity: To Look and Ask Why*. Being a preservice teacher at a conference of fully qualified and practising educators is daunting to say the least, but I was extremely grateful for the astounding array of teachers from around the country that I met while at the conference, who not only accepted me as a preservice teacher in their midst, but also provided me with some extremely helpful tips and tricks that have helped me see English teaching in new and exciting ways.

Not only did I get to hear from brilliant keynotes like Peter Freebody, Doug Fisher and Anita Heiss, but I also attended a range of workshops and sessions hosted by teachers from around the country that I met while at the conference, who not only accepted me as a preservice teacher in their midst, but also provided me with some extremely helpful tips and tricks that have helped me see English teaching in new and exciting ways.

The resources that were presented and provided at the conference were absolutely spectacular, and I found myself amazed at how other teachers and publishing companies were willing to share their resources and recommend different texts that they found were really helpful in targeting particular areas of literacy and language and topics in today’s world. Having an array of people who were willing to help point in the direction of what they have found works well in their own teaching experiences really reinforces my belief that I’ve chosen the right profession. I should also probably mention that thanks to the wonderful staff at the book stalls from the multitude of publishing companies who turned out for the conference, I’ve also come away with my to read list of novels being significantly longer than it was before I left the warm weather of sunny Queensland!

All in all, the experiences that I had at the National Conference were ones that I’ll take with me heading into my graduation and first years of teaching, and I’m so thankful for the opportunity that Fiona Laing and ETAQ gave me in providing a scholarship to such an amazing and inspiring event.
The fundamental purpose of education is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to fully participate in public, community and economic life. With education considered one of the key sources for social equity, our approaches to teaching in the 21st century must be reflective of the cultural and linguistic diversity in society today (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Literacy teaching can no longer be viewed as the transmission of a particular set of skills, but rather the development of students’ knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable them to use language purposefully and skillfully in many social situations (Matthewman, Blight & Davies, 2004). Literacy practices are embedded in our everyday lives and are no longer limited to isolated bits of knowledge such as grammar and spelling. Students must now be equipped with a repertoire of strategies to confidently engage with a variety of texts including traditional and new communication multimedia (Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdahl, Holliday, 2013).

The Australian Curriculum strand of English is central to the learning and development of all young Australians, and is responsible for developing the attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia’s future (ACARA, 2015). It will therefore be argued, that in order to equip students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed in the 21st century, our pedagogical practice must include more than the traditional literacy pedagogy that favours learning to read and write within restrictions of formalised, monolingual, monocultural, and rule governed forms of language; 21st century Educators must move to incorporate the 21st century model of Multiliteracies Pedagogy in our everyday teaching (The New London Group, 1996).

The New London Group was formed in 1994 to rethink the fundamental premises of literacy pedagogy in order to influence practices that would give students the skills and knowledge they needed to achieve their aspirations (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). A concept that evolved in response to concerns about how literacy teaching can equip students for the changing world in which they live, Multiliteracies Pedagogy focuses on modes of representation much greater than language alone (Anstey & Bull, 2006; The New London Group, 1996). The foundation of Multiliteracies Pedagogy includes teaching and learning to include a multiplicity of discourses that are culturally and linguistically diverse, representative of a globalised society, and exposes students to the burgeoning variety of texts associated with information and communication technologies (The New London Group, 1996). The incorporation of this pedagogical practice aims to design innovative learning environments that engage all students in an expanded range of literacy processes by integrating text-based and multimedia practices (Taylor, Bernhard, Gard & Cummings, 2008).

In order for students to have the knowledge and skills to engage with a variety a written, visual, aural and multi-modal texts, they need to understand the elements of design that are used within these texts (Wing Jan, 2009). The design elements of the meaning making process known as the five semiotic systems comprise the linguistic meaning, visual meaning, audio meaning, gestural meaning and spatial meaning; and the Multimodal patterns of the meaning that relate the semiotic systems to each other (The New London Group, 1996). Furthermore, for students to fully understand the meaning of a text within its linguistic, social and cultural context, they must employ the semiotic systems (mode) along with the genre (the shape a text has), and the discourse (the shape meaning making takes in a social institution) (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). The pedagogy of multiliteracies is therefore characteristically transformative, as it builds on notions of design and meaning.
by recognising that the process of design is in fact a transformative process of redesign. The transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies integrates four major components; situated practice draws on the experience of meaning-making in life worlds; overt instruction involves teacher interventions to scaffold learning and develop students’ explicit metalanguage of design; critical framing whereby learners interpret the historical, cultural, political and ideological contexts of learning, and the purpose of designs of meaning; and transformed practice where learners implement new understandings through reflective practice in other contexts as meaning-makers thereby becoming designers of social futures (The New London Group, 1996; Cumming-Potvin, 2009). These ideas have since been reframed and translated to more immediately recognisable pedagogical processes of experiencing, conceptualising, analysing, and applying (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). The knowledge, skills and dispositions acquired by students through mastering these meaning-making strategies foster the critical engagement necessary for students to design their social futures and achieve their aspirations through fulfilling employment (The New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Schools have always played a critical role in determining students’ life opportunities. For students to engage successfully with global and local communities, it is imperative that educators embrace the multiplicity of communication channels and increased cultural and linguistic diversity (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). Cultural and linguistic diversity are now central and critical issues of our times: the world is changing and so too should the way in which we approach literacy teaching and learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Literacy teaching is no longer just about skills and competence, but rather creating a person who is an active designer of meaning. A multiliterate person is someone who is flexible and strategic in literacy, and is able to understand and use literacy and literate practices with a range of texts and technologies (Anstey & Bull, 2006). Additionally, a multiliterate person is someone who can critically analyse texts to identify their origins and authenticity, and understand how they have been constructed in order to perceive their gaps, silences and biases. Furthermore, a multiliterate person is someone who engages in literacy in a socially responsible way, within a socially, culturally and linguistically diverse world, and who participates in life as an active and informed citizen.

To provide students with the opportunity to become multiliterate members of society, teachers must provide students with a more flexible and less prescriptive classroom environment (Tan & McWilliam, 2009). This environment must provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skill sets relevant to the 21st century, including digital technologies, communicative competence, and the ability to lead and work in teams. In doing so, teachers are fundamentally creating conditions for learning that support personal growth and students who are comfortable with themselves and are flexible enough to collaborate and negotiate with others that are unlike themselves to forge a common interest (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

The implementation of Multiliteracies Pedagogy within the classroom is not without its challenges. Teachers who are predominately mature adults with traditional Anglo Saxon educational backgrounds have a tendency to struggle with new technologies and how they operate, and struggle further with how to incorporate such technologies into their pedagogical framework (Tan & McWilliam, 2009). A multitude of teachers perceive their students to be digital natives whilst viewing themselves as digital immigrants and subsequently use this as an excuse to ignore new technologies and in turn new literacies. Educational institutions are finding it difficult to come to terms with the shift from an industrial age to a globalised conceptual age and as a consequence educators in today’s classrooms are lacking the professional development associated with implementing new technologies and literacies into the classroom (Tan & McWilliam, 2009). Therefore, it becomes apparent that to provide students with a 21st
The importance of multiliteracies pedagogy in the English curriculum

century classroom, we must also provide them with 21st century teachers. Educators of today must take professional development into their own hands to develop their “Technological pedagogical content knowledge” (TPCK) to create a learning environment whereby our 21st century multiliterate learners are provided with opportunities to consume all five semiotic systems in a multitude of texts (Hicks & Reed, 2007).

In conclusion, we are living through a period of dramatic global economic change and our education system must be reflective of the futures awaiting our students. The fundamental purpose of education is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to fully participate in public, community and economic life. Whilst the traditional approaches to literacy pedagogy have their place in education today, they must be used in conjunction with the pedagogy of multiliteracies to provide students with the knowledge and skill sets relevant to the 21st century. Educational institutions must overcome the limitations of traditional pedagogical approaches and foster the critical engagement that Multiliteracies Pedagogy provides. Teaching English seems fruitless if it is not about teaching the literacy needed for the digital world of the 21st century. The inclusion of Multiliteracies Pedagogy in the English curriculum creates innovative learning environments that engage all students in an expanded range of literacy practices. By incorporating the pedagogy of multiliteracies into the classroom, teachers are providing students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design their social futures and gain success through fulfilling employment.

References


I shall accept the groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them. (Foucault, 1972, p. 29)

The above epigraph points to the central theme that underscores my philosophy of English teaching. Essentially, that the concepts that form the basis of the subject English today should not only be based on the historical ideas of what constituted English. As Foucault suggests in this statement, it is important to always interrogate and break down historical groupings of ideas in order to ascertain whether they are still relevant in the current time and place. It is only by questioning these historical groupings rather than accepting them outright that we can truly understand how they are/should be constructed today.

This debate about what should constitute the teaching of English in schools today has actually been around for decades and is not only limited to the subject of English. Poulson (1998) states that the political rhetoric around opposing ideas in education has been going on since the 1980s and 1990s in Britain while our own ‘History wars’ and ‘Reading wars’ have been at the forefront of education in the media since the beginning of John Howard’s prime ministerial reign (Mitchell, 2013). Fundamentally, the debate around the nature of the English curriculum today centres around notions of ‘traditional’ or ‘literary’ texts and approaches versus contemporary ones. It is in this way that Foucault’s statement is quite apt for beginning to unravel my own philosophy of English education, as it is important to question the traditional ideas of English to ensure they are relevant to the circumstances under which I teach English today.

Creating my own philosophy of education particularly in relation to English teaching is a difficult but necessary process. Foucault (1997) suggests that philosophy is a way of reflecting on our own relationship with truth by examining what has historically been accepted as true and finding our own ideas. This should be conducted by firstly engaging in the historical context but ensuring that our philosophy is rooted firmly in what is happening right now (O’Farrell, 2005, p. 147). Thus, building my philosophy of English teaching has required me to examine how English has been constructed as a discourse in the past, yet also look at my own experiences of the subject situated within the circumstances within which I teach the subject today.

This is my fourth year as an English teacher and it has only been twelve years since I was a high school student myself. I am of the generation that has grown up with the internet and social media and whilst I have always had a deep love of the literary classics I also spend a good deal of my time reading blogs, twitter, and other online media. Therefore, my own experiences of texts straddle both the traditional and contemporary. In my own classroom I have always enabled my students to study both the literary classics and newer multimodal texts without stopping to question how my choice of texts might actually be situated within a wider debate of the subject English. However, since I began my teaching career there have been a number of articles in the media questioning the current Australian English curriculum and particularly the resources and texts used to teach it. Again this...
is not a new debate; O’Farrell (2006) discusses a “long standing campaign in *The Australian* against the evils of postmodernity and programs of ‘critical literacy’ in schools (p. 184). Similarly, it is the same publication still espousing the same rhetoric of educational standards (Bantick, 2013; Donnelly, 2013; Ferrari, 2013; Mitchell, 2013). It is this continuing debate over what should constitute the focus of the subject English and the types of texts that educators should teach which the discovery of my own philosophy of English teaching is situated in.

Before examining the specific ideas that constitute the subject of English, it is important to understand that as a subject it is created to serve a purpose within the institutional framework that is a secondary school. Foucault calls these places where rules are created and imposed, such as schools and prisons (although they do not necessarily have to be institutions) ‘regimes of practice’. It is important to analyse ‘regimes of practice’ as they are “programmes of conduct which have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done… and codifying effects regarding what is to be known” (Foucault, 1991, p. 75). Schools are important ‘regimes of practice’ to analyse specifically because of their status as places where knowledge is created and dispersed. It is institutional structures such as this that shape the disciplines such as English (Hatlen, 1988, p. 786) and therefore affect what is to be known within this discipline.

Of course, as disciplines such as English are created by ‘regimes of practice’ their categorization exists within the historical circumstances of those institutions. Foucault (1972) suggests that these divisions (for example: literature, philosophy, politics, science) are always reflexive categories (p. 25). They are discourses that need to be analysed as their characteristics are not “intrinsic, autochthonous, and universally recognizable” (Foucault, 1972, p. 25). They are not static and absolute but divisions created to serve a purpose in a particular time and place. Therefore, it is important to examine what has defined the subject of English both historically and today.

Hatlen (1988) contends that the subject English is more of an administrative convenience than a unified discourse (p. 787) and that it is really not one but several different discourses. Specifically, he refers to literary criticism, literary history and creative writing that are situated within the subject of English in university faculties but this could also refer to the study of multimodal texts, media analysis, and creating texts for public audiences that also come under the study of English in contemporary high school syllabuses. However, Foucault (1972) suggests that discourses that are different in form and from different times form a group if they refer to the same ideas (p. 35). Thus, the historical grouping of these studies under the single institutional idea of English suggests that they do have something in common: namely, the study of the way language is used to communicate ideas.

Yet, despite this obvious commonality the legitimacy of those subsets of English that do not seem to have much in common with ‘traditional’ literature are continually called into question. It is important to investigate this obsession our society has with attempting to prescribe what our students learn when they study English. Particularly, as Poulson (1998) suggests that:

> The differences in assumptions and values informing English teaching are complex. Furthermore, they are not always related solely to the subject. There are deeper underlying concerns which relate to wider social and political issues. At times of rapid social change, which frequently undermines and challenges old certainties and traditions, language tends to become a particular focus for concern because it is a key means through which people construct and represent social, cultural, ethnic and natural identity. (p. 5)

In this way, it can be seen that attempts to control the type of learning that occurs within the English classroom are actually a broader attempt to control the way that people construct ideas through the use of language. Holbrook (2013) agrees with this claim as he suggests that it is through language that thoughts are able to come into being. The advancing of propositions,
the expression of feelings, the holding of beliefs is all accomplished through language, through words that give them a public reality (p. 80-81). This control of the knowledge of language warrants further investigation particularly in relation to the current debates regarding the Australian Curriculum: English.

Poulson (1998) contends that the central issue in the current education debate is English's purpose (p. 8). She delineates between two opposing ideas behind why students are taught English in educational institutions: functional development and intellectual development. Those that work outside of education seem to favour the functional model for teaching English, mainly to prepare young people for roles as citizens and employees by learning the basic skills of reading, writing and grammar. Those within educational institutions (such as myself), however, are more likely to advocate a more intellectual development of students’ abilities including their emotional and imaginative expression and the cultivation of their moral, cultural and aesthetic values. A more radical interpretation of this is to assist students to understand the society and culture in which they live, and to be able to identify how they might have a role in shaping and changing it (Poulson, 1998, p. 8). This empowering of students’ own agency through the study of English is easily identifiable as a cause of concern by those that wish to control the ideas disseminated in society.

However, in seeming contradiction to the above polarities, those that wish for students to have a functional model of English education are usually the same that advocate the study of ‘traditional’ literature from the canon of usually European classics. Thus, the current debate does not centre so much around whether English should consist of language or literature but the kinds of language and literature and the particular emphasis within them (Poulson, 1998, p. 13). Traditionalists are of the view that modern and accessible texts are inferior whereas the more progressive educationalists see literature as something more flexible and subject to change. This ideology is readily apparent in the media debates around the Australian Curriculum English where according to Donnelly (2013) “even when the literary classics are included, their moral and aesthetic value is undermined by forcing students to deconstruct texts using politically correct perspectives.”

Systematically, English has devalued non-literary discourses in favour of literature (Hatlan, 1998, p. 798), but much research is demonstrating that the learning students are doing outside of the classroom is changing and students are finding that the opportunities they are being offered outside of the classroom are more relevant and engaging than those within it (Goodwyn, 2011, p. 59). The failure of educational institutions is that of recognizing that modern forms of communication involve more than one form and is increasingly transmitted digitally (Cumming, Kimber & Wyatt-Smith, 2011, p. 43). Educators need to be examining how the use of language and communication is changing in the outside world and educational institutions need to change with it. However, the current saturation of the pages of The Australian with those espousing the traditionalist approach shows that the historical notions of English are beginning to change to suit the times that our students are operating in.

The current Australian Curriculum: English developed under the Labor government by a body of education professionals puts multimodal texts alongside traditional literature in order to provide students with the skills they will require for communication and employment in the 21st century (Cumming et al., 2011, p.45). One of the four aims of the English curriculum is that students “learn to listen, to read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a range of contexts” (ACARA, Aims) and another is “develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature” (ACARA, Aims). It seems that both parties (the ‘traditionalists’ and the ‘progressives’) should be satisfied that students will be exposed to a variety of forms and ideas including both literary classics and more contemporary texts.
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However, when the change of government occurred, the traditionalists came out in force in an effort to persuade the new government to re-examine the focus of English education in Australia including: “The ALP-inspired national curriculum embraces a postmodern definition of literature that places multimodal texts... on the same footing as Shakespeare, Jane Austen and David Malouf” (Donnelly, 2013) and “superficial and undemanding gimmickry masquerading as a substantial curriculum... This is a craven abrogation of the responsibility to teach significant and demanding literature” (Bantick, 2013). This rhetoric seemed to work as the current Education Minister Christopher Pyne introduced a review of the Australian Curriculum that, effectively, took away the responsibility the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and the many education professionals it employs, for deciding what should and should not be taught in Australian schools (Hurst, 2013).

It seems astounding that the government should assume it knows what is best for students rather than those working within educational institutions but apparently this is not a new phenomenon. Poulson (1998) asserts that much of the political rhetoric of the 1980s and 1990s contributed to this divide through a concern for the maintenance of educational standards which was set in opposition to what was “dismissively labeled as permissive, progressive and trendy teaching methods” (p. 15). Central to this divide has been the view that teachers’ attitudes and beliefs have not been completely synonymous with those in government, whereas the government claimed that their views were the same as those of the parents. This claim has contributed to the prevailing educational discourse where education is seen as a commodity with schools the producers and parents as the consumers (Poulson, 1998, p. 15). This discourse can be seen in today’s media debate about educational standards in English where the media claims, “frustrated parents have confronted teachers about bad spelling and grammar left uncorrected... Billions of dollars have been wasted, standards have fallen, including those of our best students” (Mitchell, 2013). Poulson (1998) claims this dilemma is really about a struggle for authority (p. 130). While there are no real determinant authorities in the education debate there are many claimants to authority, and the denigration of the ideas and beliefs that challenge those claims is a way that alternative views can be excluded. In this way, the ideas of ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive’ education are seen as polarities, an either/or debate, rather than ideas that can be seen to coexist in educational discourse.

It seems that the importance of keeping the status quo for traditionalists has to do more with the control of knowledge rather than simply an impassioned ideology. Holbrook (2013) puts this best when he says:

To use English to its full extent is to attain a certain, admittedly limited, freedom from all those forces that seek to determine, control, manipulate us. English teachers are nothing less than teachers of freedom. It is they who enable young people to become who they might be, who help them make language a tool rather than a prison. (p. 82)

It is this enabling of freedom of students that sits in contrast to the aims of institutional education. Foucault (1971) contends that the first function of institutional education is one of exclusion (p. 193). While Foucault is mainly describing university education, it is easy to see how his ideas can be transcribed to the secondary education sector. He describes how students are removed from society to be placed on a campus and then transmitted knowledge that is not directly tied to the needs of the society of the day in order to prevent them from participating socially and politically. In this way, it can be seen how ‘traditionalists’ operate: by providing students with the basic skills and morals they will need to operate in society without giving them the tools in order to be enactors of change in society. They can be, according to Foucault (1971), 'integrated' back into society having been given “the desirable models of behaviour” (p. 193). However, society has changed much quicker than the ‘traditionalists’ might realise or desire and students today are not as isolated as they may have been in the past. If students
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are not able to learn to use the ‘new’ methods of digital and multimodal communication in school then they will learn it elsewhere. Paradoxically, this may work in opposition to the idea of controlling the way students are given and use knowledge. Instead of schools instilling in their students their moral and societal obligations as digital citizens, students will have to make up their own minds about the right and wrong way to behave giving them a lot more power and agency over their ideas and actions than perhaps those that argue for a traditional curriculum might be aware.

 Personally, as most teachers probably do, I see the value in students being exposed to both traditional and more contemporary texts as this is what will best set them up for their lives in an increasingly changing way that our society uses language to communicate. While I understand the value and weight that traditionalists place on the literary classics and the basic skills of reading and writing, for me the frustration stems from the idea that this needs to be an either/or debate. Foucault (1972) seems to support this view when he contends that pre-existing forms should not be rejected outright, but nor should they be accepted outright either (p. 28). The rules that construct our discourses should always be examined and scrutinized and the conditions under which they exist, namely time and place, need to also be taken into account to ensure that it suits the society we live in today. I hope that both sides of this divide are able to set aside the rhetoric and be able to see the value in bringing together the ideas and values inherent in traditional texts with the more modern methods of communication available today. For the idea of education, no matter what side one is on, should be about enabling our students to participate either as workers, or activators of change in the society they live in.

I began this philosophy with a quote from Foucault in order to explain my reasons for embarking on this thought process and similarly I would like to finish with one, but this time in order to show those who potentially have different views to mine why it is important to always question both our own and others’ views of the world.

But then, what is philosophy today... if it is not the critical work of thought on itself? And if it does not consist in the endeavor of knowing how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, rather than legitimating what is already known? There is always something ludicrous in philosophical discourse when it tries, from the outside, to dictate to others, to tell them where their truth is and how to find it, or when it presumes to give them naively positivistic instruction. But is it’s right to explore what might be changed, in its own thought, through the practice of knowledge that is foreign to it (Foucault, 1992, p. 8-9).

We must not simply change for the sake of change but nor should we stagnate in traditional approaches for their own sake. It is ludicrous that outside authorities should dictate how teachers of English should do their jobs. While we have not yet seen the changes to Australian Curriculum that Christopher Pyne’s review has recommended, we are in a state of change. This is especially so in Queensland where the changes to university entrance and the introduction of external assessments in English will greatly affect what we teach in the classroom. It is important that we all engage in these debates to ensure our voices are heard and that we have agency over our profession. We must together explore what might be changed and why and how for the good of those that will be the citizens of tomorrow.

References


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# Romeo and Juliet Transformed: Year 10 English Unit

Jacqui Watson, Sharon Moller and Snjezana Bobic  
University of Southern Queensland pre-service teachers

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<tr>
<th>School Name: XYZ State Secondary High School</th>
<th>Unit title: Romeo and Juliet Transformed</th>
<th>KLA(s): English</th>
<th>Year level(s): 10</th>
<th>Duration: 4 weeks/12 lessons (70 mins)</th>
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## School Context

XYZ State High School is a suburban government co-educational secondary school within 7 kilometres of Brisbane city, with 1200 students enrolled in 2014. The school's ICSEA value is 1126, above the average. Most students are from comfortable, middle class families with professional, full time working parents. The school has a large number of extra-curricular activities and events, including sport, drama, music and arts; which are well supported by students and parents.

## Classroom Context

The Year 10 English class has 3 x 70 minute lessons per week and has 24 students. The lesson sequence was planned with consideration for contextual factors such as, students’ middle to high socio-economic status, good attendance and accessibility to technological resources, including a 1:1 laptop program. Students are capable of reading, comprehension and use of digital technologies (MS Publisher, Power Point, Word, Internet Search), and multimedia programs. This is the second half of a Shakespearean unit. Students were introduced to Shakespeare’s life and works and studied two Romeo and Juliet films. In the previous study, students were required to write an analytical exposition, comparing and contrasting the themes and representations within Romeo and Juliet.

## Classroom Diversity

The student ratio in this class is 14 females and 10 males. Five students require additional support for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and need engaging strategies to keep on task. The majority of students are well behaved, with four high achievers and six low level learners.

## Pedagogical Approach:

The Four Resources Model and Multiliteracies approach were used as the framework for this unit overview. Strategies are designed to engage students to learn the content while focusing on approaches that will improve the literacy aspects of their learning, taking into consideration their diverse and individual learning needs.
# ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT

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<th>Unit Outline</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<td>Shakespeare was a master of using language to construct representations of themes, characters and ideas in his plays, which have been performed for hundreds of years. In this unit, students will be engaged in reading and understanding Shakespeare's <em>Romeo and Juliet</em>. Students will analyse plot and characters to identify how they develop through dialogue and imagery, and they will learn about the way we can “read” a character or interpret a script. Students will explore the features of monologues in the play, to develop understanding of their role and apply skills to write monologues. Students will identify features of different genres and learn how they can transform a monologue text into a different genre, and make creative decisions about vocabulary, syntax and language conventions. A comprehensive understanding of the original text is necessary to complete the transformation, as students will creatively develop a narrative viewpoint and transform a scene from the play into a different genre of their choice.</td>
<td><strong>Formative</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Weekly homework questions and activities.&lt;br&gt;• Group and pair activities practising writing monologues and transforming scenes into different genres.&lt;br&gt;• Individual journal entries collected every Friday.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Summative</strong>: Written task transforming a scene or part thereof from <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> into a script for a different genre. Script must include a monologue which demonstrates understanding of a character’s actions or decisions and personal context. Students will be given two weeks to complete including a minimum 3 lessons class time.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Real life task</strong>: Students to take on role of script writer to re-write scene for Warner Bros new movie for summative task.</td>
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<th>Content Descriptions/Curriculum Objectives</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Literature</th>
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<td>In Years 9 and 10, students interact with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments. They experience learning in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, including local community, vocational and global contexts. Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They interpret, create, evaluate, discuss and perform a wide range of literary texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts, including newspapers, film and digital texts, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, dramatic performances and multimodal texts, with themes and issues involving levels of abstraction, higher order reasoning and intertextual references. Students develop critical understanding of the contemporary media, and the differences between media texts.</td>
<td><strong>Compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary texts in different media</strong> (ACELA1566)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images</strong> (ACELA1572)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Understand how to use knowledge of the spelling system to spell unusual and technical words accurately, for example those based on uncommon Greek and Latin roots</strong> (ACELA1573)</td>
<td><strong>Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts</strong> (ACELT1639)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Analyze and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response</strong> (ACELT1641)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literary texts that support and extend students in Years 9 and 10 as independent readers are drawn from a range of genres and involve complex, challenging and unpredictable plot sequences and hybrid structures that may serve multiple purposes. These texts explore themes of human experience and cultural significance, interpersonal relationships, and ethical and global dilemmas within real-world and fictional settings and represent a variety of perspectives. Informative texts represent a synthesis of technical and abstract information (from credible/verifiable sources) about a wide range of specialised topics. Text structures are more complex including chapters, headings and subheadings, tables of contents, indexes and glossaries. Language features include successive complex sentences with embedded clauses, a high proportion of unfamiliar and technical vocabulary, figurative and rhetorical language, and dense information supported by various types of graphics and images. Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, discussions, literary analyses, transformations of texts and reviews.

Receptive modes (listening, reading and viewing): By the end of Year 10, students evaluate how text structures can be used in innovative ways by different authors. They explain how the choice of language features, images and vocabulary contributes to the development of individual style.

They develop and justify their own interpretations of texts. They evaluate other interpretations, analysing the evidence used to support them. They listen for ways features within texts can be manipulated to achieve particular effects.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australian Curriculum v6.0 English for Foundation–10, www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/English/Curriculum/F-10

Create imaginative texts that make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1644)

Literacy

Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY1749)

Identify and explore the purposes and effects of different text structures and language features of spoken texts, and use this knowledge to create purposeful texts that inform, persuade and engage (ACELY1750)

Choose a reading technique and reading path appropriate for the type of text, to retrieve and connect ideas within and between texts (ACELY1753).

Use organisation patterns, voice and language conventions to present a point of view on a subject, speaking clearly, coherently and with effect, using logic, imagery and rhetorical devices to engage audiences (ACELY1813)

Productive modes (speaking, writing and creating): Students show how the selection of language features can achieve precision and stylistic effect. They explain different viewpoints, attitudes and perspectives through the development of cohesive and logical arguments. They develop their own style by experimenting with language features, stylistic devices, text structures and images. Students create a wide range of texts to articulate complex ideas. They make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, building on others’ ideas, solving problems, justifying opinions and developing and expanding arguments. They demonstrate understanding of grammar, vary vocabulary choices for impact, and accurately use spelling and punctuation when creating and editing texts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning experiences and teaching strategies</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong>: stimulates recall of characters, plot, setting and genre. <strong>S</strong>: connect prior knowledge to unit objectives.</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> uses KWL strategy on whiteboard to promote student recall from previous unit on R&amp;J with <strong>S</strong> in groups to brainstorm, then share as a class. <strong>S</strong> write KWL in workbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> introduces new words to add to glossary. <strong>T</strong> uses class discussion and questions to summarise plot. <strong>Jigsaw activity</strong>: <strong>S</strong> in groups to write plot development points. Share with class.</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> shows YouTube of Zefferelli’s interpretation of scene and concept/character map on whiteboard to prepare for reading the scene. <strong>T</strong> shows PowerPoint of today’s glossary words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> draws character map outline on whiteboard. <strong>S</strong>: Think/pair/share to recall characters and relationships and fill in map. Concluding: <strong>S</strong> complete 321:RIQ focus on play genre.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> skim read Spark Notes version to identify characters for map. <strong>S</strong> update map and glossary in workbook. <strong>T</strong> explains purpose of reading, leads to uninterrupted focus reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> introduces symbols, moods, styles, themes and genres. <strong>S</strong> impact on audience perception and interpretation providing examples from films and genre identification</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> reflects on character and plot summaries from Lesson 1 and 2. <strong>S</strong> read out their monologue analyses from Lesson 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong> body moulding activity with considerations for sculpting their character. <strong>T</strong> Draws up comparison table on whiteboard <strong>S</strong> called on for responses.</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> introduces symbols, moods, styles, themes and genres. <strong>S</strong> impact on audience perception and interpretation providing examples from films and genre identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> shows YouTube presentations. <strong>S</strong> maintain journal notes and share responses. <strong>T</strong> collects journal notes before end of class.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> read and listen to Classic Literature YouTube Traditional Scene. <strong>T</strong> re-reads and explains chunks of traditional scene and identifies monologues. <strong>S</strong> do cloze activity of summary of scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> Q&amp;A multiple choice on Act 1 Scene 5.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> in groups, complete compare/contrast sheet: modern parties vs scene from traditional play. Share with class. Discuss similarities and differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson 3–T** Introduces alternative interpretations. **S** learns to write for different genres.

- **T** reflects on character and plot summaries from Lesson 1 and 2. **S** read out their monologue analyses from Lesson 2.
- **T** introduces symbols, moods, styles, themes and genres. **S** impact on audience perception and interpretation providing examples from films and genre identification.
- **S** body moulding activity with considerations for sculpting their character. **T** Draws up comparison table on whiteboard **S** called on for responses.
- **T** shows YouTube presentations. **S** maintain journal notes and share responses. **T** collects journal notes before end of class.
- **T** Q&A multiple choice on Act 1 Scene 5.
### Learning experiences and teaching strategies

**Lesson 4** – T teaches how the use of emotive language in a drama text positions the audience. S analyse how descriptive language, imagery and dialogue effects the audience’s feelings towards characters, and consider how this would change if the genre is changed. Based on Act 1 Scene 5

- S Jigsaw journal notes in groups to fill in missing information. Class discussion about elements of genres discussed so far and what S have learned.
- T shows YouTube *If All Movies had Cellphones*. S class discussion on flow on effects. S Four Corners strategy for positioning. T reiterates perception as aligned with genre.
- T KWL Act 1 Scene 5 for imagery and figurative language. T PowerPoint.
- T models transforming scene into a gangster genre highlighting conventions and vocabulary but deliberately omits an important feature. S critique.
- S In groups of three nominate one scene and then transform genre with 20 min to adapt into the new genre. S act out new genre then explain and justify their changes.

**Lesson 5** – Students will learn how interacting with others helps them identify and explore purposes and effects of different text structures and language features of spoken texts, and how they can use this knowledge to create purposeful texts that inform, persuade and engage.

- T models the Concept Map. S identify ONE character they understand. S construct a concept map about the character and answer questions; T and S will pick a scene, and make a mind map of what they could say about the scene, the characters and what happens.
- S will brainstorm in groups, pairs, threes or fours and answer the “What just happened” questions.
- When S know which character they want to write about, and which scene they want to do, they will have to start the “YOU DO” section of the lesson plan, where S will give a detailed description of their scene, character/emotions, and how they can change it into a different genre - writing down what genre they plan on transforming the scene into, e.g. Sci-fi.

**Lesson 6** – Reading Act 3 Scene 1. T uses DRTA to teach scene and re-write monologue for alternative genres. S to make new text connections with prior learning.

- T uses class discussion and questions for S to recall plot summary of Act 3 Scene 1. T writes plot summary on whiteboard and updates glossary. S to copy in their workbooks.
- T explains purpose of reading: to learn language features, characters, monologues and alternative genres for the scene, leading to uninterrupted focus reading.
- S read and listen to Classic Literature YouTube of scene. T re-reads and identifies monologues from scene while S follow on copy with Spark Notes and traditional versions side by side.
- S: Hot potato in groups to brainstorm alternative genres for scene. T models transforming genre of monologue. In groups, S transform monologue into new genre and perform for class.

### Resources

- Baz Luhrmann The Fight Scene https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czlHRjvJ9kU
- College Humour, If all movies had cell phones https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH2B9F-GPm0
- Alternative genre slide show: http://my.xfinity.com/slideshow/entertainment-romeojuliet/1/
# Romeo and Juliet Transformed: Year 10 English Unit

## Learning experiences and teaching strategies

**Lesson 7** – T uses visual texts to demonstrate alternative genres of play. S to use prior knowledge of text, genres and ICT to create new movie promotional material.
- T shows slide show of promo posters for 17 movie adaptions of Romeo and Juliet. T questions S to recall knowledge on the movies. T models writing a promo blurb for one adaption.
- In groups, S choose a scene from Romeo and Juliet, then research and choose a suitable alternative genre for that scene. T provides research suggestions and scaffold for next activity.
- Groups create promo flyer using MS Publisher for a movie from that genre, and write a 100 word promotional blurb for the movie. T: prints and displays flyers and blurbs in classroom.

**Lesson 8** – Reading Act 4 Scene 5. T uses DRTA to teach scene and generate ideas for alternative genres. S use prior knowledge and new text to transform scene and genre.
- T shows YouTube clip of school play of scene. T uses class discussion and questions to summarise plot of scene. T writes summary and updates glossary. S copy in their workbooks.
- T explains purpose of reading to learn about language features, characters, monologues and consider alternative genres for the scene, leading to uninterrupted focus reading.
- S read on their copy while T reads scene to class. T nominates S to re-read selected chunks of scene and others follow on their copy with Spark Notes and traditional versions side by side.
- T identifies monologues for S (in groups) to research alternative genres. Groups create PowerPoint presentation demonstrating scene transformed to alternative genre.

**Lesson 9** – T teaches how to write a script for alternative genre to prepare for assignment. S practise creating alternative genre script.
- T demonstrates how the character analysis sheet and genre transformation brainstorming and practice has helped with S understanding what they have learnt about their character.
- T guides S through modelling and examples, to independently write a brief excerpt from a monologue from lesson 8’s genre transformation activity, and to memorise and perform it for class audience.
- T checks individual S comprehension (does S understand the text?), memorisation (how well can S remember their monologues?), characterisation (has S developed the character fully to be believable?) during the class performances.

**Lesson 10** – Assignment handed out: T explains and scaffolds task. S use prior knowledge to plan their assessment task.
- T hands out assignment and scaffold plan. T reads assignment with S following. T uses overhead to display scaffold onto whiteboard, and writes explanations for each section.
- S start work on their scaffold plan while T monitors student progress. T provides additional explanation for ADHD and low level students. T writes timing expectations on whiteboard.
## Learning experiences and teaching strategies

Lessons 11 and 12 – T supports students. S use prior knowledge and plan to create movie script with alternative genre of play for their assessment task.

- T expectation reminder. Demonstrates problem areas in assignment for past S. T writes timeline on whiteboard showing expectation of what S should complete in this lesson.

## Adjustments for needs of learners:

To differentiate for the ADHD students, seating and group arrangements have been designed to ensure there is flexible support for students, making adjustments to suit the activity. For active group work, abilities are mixed to provide peer learning support, however, ADHD students are grouped together for desk work so that the teacher can provide more support. Each lesson contains a variety of strategies, with short content delivery and frequent activities to assist ADHD students retain focus and attention. Overt instruction of reading and writing are delivered in clear and concise language and instructions are explicit, repeated and supported with graphic organisers, examples, scaffolding and text variety including written, visual and oral, as needed. The summative assessment was developed to appeal to the needs of both ADHD and non ADHD students through popular culture of genre studies, linking historical literature with modern and real life drama. The real life task in which students take on the role of a modern movie script writer will provide authenticity to the summative task.
ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT

LESSON PLAN — Jacqui Watson

Year Level: 10 Date: 1/6/15 (Week 1/Lesson 2) Learning area (subject): English
Unit: Romeo and Juliet Transformed Duration: 70 mins

Learning experience / focus of the learning from the unit for this lesson

Australian Curriculum: Year 10 English
Receptive modes: Students evaluate how text structures in plays can be used in innovative ways by authors, and understand how the choice of language features, images and vocabulary contributes to the development of audience viewpoint.
Productive modes: Students explain different viewpoints, attitudes and perspectives through the development of creative texts, and experiment with language features, stylistic devices, text structures and images.
ACELY1753: Choose a reading technique and reading path appropriate for the type of text, to retrieve and connect ideas within and between texts.
ACELT1641: Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response.

Lesson Objective:
Students will learn to read and understand the language and text structure of Act 1, Scene 5 from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (the “party” scene, when Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time). They will apply that understanding to identify monologues within the scene and develop skills to complete a plot summary and write a character analysis from a monologue. Students will begin to make connections between old themes/ideas and new themes/ideas to prepare students for genre transformations in later lessons.

Know and Do:
Students need to know how to read and understand Shakespearean language, characters, plot and monologues from a scene from the traditional Romeo and Juliet play.

Students need to be able to use that knowledge and understanding to interpret a plot summary from the scene, analyse a monologue to identify character personality, and compare and contrast old and new themes and ideas.

Evaluation/Monitoring and Assessment:

Prior Knowledge:
Note: This is the second part of a larger unit which focuses on learning about one of Shakespeare's plays: Romeo and Juliet.
- Think/pair/share activity to predict genre characteristics based on last lesson's 321:RIQ activity which introduced genre concepts, and will assess student understanding of the genre of the play.

Formative Assessment: Class discussion through questioning, creation of concept/character map and glossary update to gauge general class understanding.
Teacher will monitor student progress of cloze activity of scene summary, written character analysis and compare/contrast of theme, and note areas that need re-teaching or follow up with individual students to check understanding.

Summative Assessment: Act 1, Scene 5 is one of three scenes from which students will choose to transform into an alternative genre for their summative assessment task.
**ROMEOD AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT**

**LESSON PLAN — Jacqui Watson**

**Evaluation/Monitoring and Assessment: (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept/character map will be created from student recall about Act 1, Scene 5 (the party scene/Romeo meets Juliet) through class discussion and questioning to connect student learning with their prior knowledge.</th>
<th>Teacher will focus on ADHD students particularly during monitoring to remind them of expectations and ensure they understand the activities.</th>
<th>Students will become familiar with the DRTA strategies used in today’s lesson to read this scene, which they will use again in a further two scenes in later lessons. Through the DRTA strategies, students will learn the links between reading, vocabulary, spelling, writing and transforming texts. This lesson will prepare students for their summative assessment by establishing knowledge and understanding of the scene, and make connections to modern themes which will be built upon in subsequent lessons leading to transforming a scene from Romeo and Juliet into a movie script for another genre.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources needed:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube clip of Zefferelli’s interpretation of Act 1, Scene 5: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nYG_wQMheg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nYG_wQMheg</a>;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube Classic Literature of scene reading: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UY5HUbvWb0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UY5HUbvWb0</a> (start at 32:30mins – finish at 41:20mins);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed copy of Act 1, Scene 5 with traditional play and Spark Notes/No Fear Shakespeare translation (25 copies);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint with DRTA reminders and today’s glossary words, Scene summary cloze activity sheets (25 copies);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare/contrast sheets (25 copies).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT

### LESSON PLAN — Jacqui Watson

### TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING STEPS

#### Introduction.
(Time allocation: 7 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers will:</th>
<th>Adjustments for learners:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Respond to questions from previous lesson's 321:RIQ concluding activity. Expand on explanation of play genre. Question students and write dot points on whiteboard of key genre characteristics from play.</td>
<td>Teacher to check ADHD students are writing down genre dot points. Pair students of different abilities for think/pair/share activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Facilitate students in quick 2 minute think/pair/share activity: What genre characteristics will we find when we read Act 1, Scene 5 – the party scene – when Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Lesson body.
(Time allocation: 56 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers will:</th>
<th>Adjustments for learners:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach students to read Act 1, Scene 5 following Directed Reading Thinking Approach (DRTA) steps (see Appendix):</td>
<td>Teacher to seat ADHD students along back row of room and assist them to identify characters in Spark Notes version while they follow on their copy (1.5). Teacher to monitor ADHD students during reading of scene to ensure they stay focused and quiet. Assist low level and ADHD students with completion of cloze by providing additional examples of answers. Write example of character analysis in a table on the whiteboard as a graphic organizer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Prepare: 1. Show and explain DRTA guide on PowerPoint. 2. Guide students through questioning to recall plot of the scene. 3. While writing today’s glossary words on whiteboard, show students Zefferelli’s film interpretation of Romeo and Juliet of the scene (YouTube clip 5:37 mins). 4. Students to update glossary from board. 5. Students skim read Spark Notes version of scene to identify characters for concept/character map. Draw concept/character map of scene on whiteboard from student answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Purpose: Teach students the purpose of the reading exercise by explaining a broad outline of the assessment task. Reading this scene will help students understand written language features of Shakespeare’s plays and how monologues position audience to view characters’ personalities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Focus: Play Classic Literature YouTube reading of scene (32:30mins – 41:20mins), uninterrupted, sustained reading. Check students are following on the overhead.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1 Read DRTA guide.
1.2 Recall plot of the scene from memory of earlier study.
1.3 Watch Zefferelli’s interpretation of scene to recall detail.
1.4 Update glossary with today’s words.
1.5 Skim read Spark Notes version of scene and identify characters for map. Contribute to character map.
2. Understand purpose of reading strategies.
3. Focus and listen to YouTube reading of scene while reading and following text on overhead.
4. Listen and read text on printed copy of scene as guided by the teacher.
# TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING STEPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson body. (continued)</th>
<th>Teachers will:</th>
<th>Adjustments for learners:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Demonstrate understanding of characters, plot and theme by answering questions and participating in class discussion.</strong></td>
<td>4. Redo: 1. Teacher re-reads chunks of text from traditional version of scene. 2. Question students for understanding, while explaining characters, plot and theme. 3. Model how to identify monologues from the play.</td>
<td>Write scaffold on whiteboard for student character analysis. Choose an obvious character from the play for low level and ADHD students to analyse and provide sentence starters and prompts. Early finishers will work on a second character analysis or assist low level learners as directed by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3 Identify monologues in script as modelled by the teacher.</strong></td>
<td>5. Post: 1. Facilitate students to complete cloze activity of summary of scene. 2. Teach students how monologues influence audience views about characters’ personalities and provide examples by drawing a table on the whiteboard with the character analysis in one column and the information used from the monologue to create the analysis in the other. Guide students to write an analysis of another character from one of the identified monologues within the scene. Students can choose a character or the teacher will suggest an obvious character for low level learners. Teacher to check student progress and assist where needed. Direct students to finish for homework ready to share with the class next lesson.</td>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong> Teachers will: Adjustments for learners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1 Demonstrate understanding of scene plot by completing cloze activity of plot summary.</strong></td>
<td>5.2 Transform knowledge by choosing a character to analyse from one of the identified monologues from the scene. Write up character analysis in a table as modelled by the teacher. Students to finish the analysis for homework ready to share with the class next lesson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.2 Transform knowledge by choosing a character to analyse from one of the identified monologues from the scene. Write up character analysis in a table as modelled by the teacher. Students to finish the analysis for homework ready to share with the class next lesson.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Conclusion

**Students will:**

- In groups, synthesise today’s learning and prepare for next lesson through activity comparing/contrasting modern parties with that described in the traditional script.
- Share ideas with the class and discuss similarities and differences. Write ideas in workbook for later reference.

**Teachers will:**

Provide opportunity for students to synthesise their learning from today’s lesson and prepare for the next lesson by connecting themes and ideas from the traditional scene (the past) to the present through comparing/contrasting the Capulet party as described in the scene with features of a modern party. Group activity to provide peer learning support and generate ideas. Write ideas on whiteboard from student discussion for students to copy into their workbook for later reference.

**Adjustments for learners:**

Group mixed abilities for peer support for low level learners. Task kept short to maintain ADHD student attention. Teacher issues time reminders, shares examples from groups during the activity.
**ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT**

**LESSON PLAN — Sharon Moller**

**IMAGINE THAT — PLAYING AROUND WITH GENRES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level/s: 10</th>
<th>Date: 13/6/15 (Week 1/Lesson 2)</th>
<th>Learning area: English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>Duration: 70 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Curriculum descriptor / Outcomes / Learning or Skills: What is the broad educational goal in terms of the curriculum, syllabus or framework?**

**Curriculum Intent—**

- Compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary texts in different media (ACELA1566)
- Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639)
- Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images (ACELA1572)
- Understand how to use knowledge of the spelling system to spell unusual and technical words accurately, for example those based on uncommon Greek and Latin roots (ACELA1573)
- Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response (ACELT1641)
- Create imaginative texts that make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1644)
- Identify and explore the purposes and effects of different text structures and language features of spoken texts, and use this knowledge to create purposeful texts that inform, persuade and engage (ACELY1750)

**Lesson Objective: What specific part of this broad goal does this lesson aim to develop?**

A good objective must indicate “Given what, Do what, How well?”

- Students will gain a deeper understanding of Romeo and Juliet by reading the play and watching video versions presented in various genres.
- Students will increase their knowledge of how the structure of a text can create certain effects.
- Students will analyse figurative language to understand how word and style choices can influence tone and audience perception.
- Students will examine the differences between the same text told in four different genres and how each style influences how the story is understood by the audience.
- As Students are watching the videos, they will be keeping detailed journals of notes/comments/questions enabling them to investigate the unfamiliar to increase their understanding.

**Know and Do: By the end of the lesson, what knowledge (content and understanding) and skills (processes) do students need to develop?**

**Students need to know …**

- How to identify and use symbols, moods, styles and themes
- Affects that change audience perceptions and interpretations
- What text, visual and tone elements are aligned with each genre

**Students need to be able to …**

- Identify how text and symbolism is used to manipulate audience perception and interpretation
- Interpret the impact of character relationships
- Transform genres while retaining authenticity of vocabulary and characters
# ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT

## LESSON PLAN — Sharon Moller

### Evaluation/Monitoring and Assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Knowledge: (How will I find out what the students know and/or remember?):</th>
<th>Formative Assessment: (How will I monitor student understanding along the way?):</th>
<th>Summative Assessment: (How will I provide concrete evidence of student learning?):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past movie experiences as an audience. Brainstorm Iconography, Mood, Cinematic Styles and Narrative Themes Genre identification of pictures Emotive body sculpturing Video Journals Group activity analysing and debating genres</td>
<td>Individual Questions Video Journal notes Q&amp;A of 8 multiple-choice questions relating to Act 1 Scene 5</td>
<td>Written task transforming a scene or part thereof from Romeo and Juliet, into a script for a different genre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources needed:

### Safety Concerns:
- General classroom safety
- Ensure floor is free of school bags
- Sufficient room for students to move about

### LEARNING STEPS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to say</th>
<th>Organisation/Resources</th>
<th>Individualised learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> – key learnings and how they will be achieved (consider strategies, relevance, individual / group work, clarify student understandings of task, student voice, student choice etc.)</td>
<td>What key messages will I convey?</td>
<td>How can I make adjustments to meet individual student needs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Time Allocation: 10 minutes | How will I organise learning activities and utilise resources? | • Scaffold new learning
• Monitor with take-up time
• Clear and concise instructions
• Group activities to provide peer assisted learning
• Visual and linguistic directions and instructions to cater for learning styles
• Journal sheets with blanks for required responses |
| **What key messages will I convey?** | • School rules compliance.
• Sense of student responsibility for output during periods of reduced supervision | |
| **How will I organise learning activities and utilise resources?** | • Uniform class entry to reduce transition times
• IWB will be used to jot down key student learning details, create a comparison matrix, display power points and videos | |
| **How can I make adjustments to meet individual student needs?** | | |

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# Romeo and Juliet Transformed: Year 10 English Unit

## Lesson Plan — Sharon Moller

### Learning Steps and Teaching Strategies

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<th>What to say</th>
<th>Organisation/Resources</th>
<th>Individualised Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Body</strong> — step by step outline of learning experience sequence (consider HOTS tasks, monitoring understandings, provision and use of resources, general student responsibilities etc.)</td>
<td><strong>Time Allocation:</strong> 50 minutes</td>
<td><strong>How will I know if students are achieving the learning objectives?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What questions will I ask?</strong> Check for prior knowledge of Iconography, Mood, Styles and Narrative Themes.</td>
<td><strong>How will I handle the transitions between activities?</strong> Randomly call on students who are not engaging</td>
<td><strong>Individual responses to activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What elements would you expect to see in a film for your genre?</strong></td>
<td>Discuss concepts as presentation is being opened. Allocate student to change slides.</td>
<td>Examples represent concepts that could impact on their perceptions and interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will I know if students are achieving the learning objectives?</strong> Individual responses to activity</td>
<td>Allocate students to a group where delays. Monitor and re-engage students where nil responses are noticed. Provide take-up time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time Allocation:** 50 minutes

- T Expand on Lesson 1 and 2 by introducing Iconography, Mood, Cinematic Styles and Narrative Themes.
- S Discuss their prior knowledge by responding to question.
- T Show the PowerPoint presentation on symbols, moods, styles and themes.
- S Discuss some changes they would expect to see in a Gangster, Musical, Crime or Sci-Fi film.
- T Using a matrix, write headings of Iconography, Mood, Style and Themes across the top of the whiteboard and the Gangster, Musical, Crime, Sci-Fi down the side.
- S Four corner strategy - choose one genre and move to the corner showing your genre to form a group. T 5 minutes to brainstorm responses. 1 minute notification.
- S Write one response on the whiteboard when called on.
- S Class discussion on how these impact on audience perception and interpretation.
- T Show the PowerPoint presentation on Genres of gangster, musical, crime and Sci-fi.
- T Write key elements from slides on whiteboard. S Discuss and/or add to before copying into work book.
# ROMEO AND JULIET TRANSFORMED: YEAR 10 ENGLISH UNIT

**LESSON PLAN — Sharon Moller**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING STEPS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES</th>
<th>What to say</th>
<th>Organisation/Resources</th>
<th>Individualised learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Body – step by step outline of learning experience sequence (continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• S Discuss examples from films they have watched and how their perceptions were impacted. T Hand out genre photos. S Genre identification task. Students form into groups of three to establish the genre for their photo (considering key elements on the whiteboard) and evidence for their decision. Each photo will have two group interpretations for its genre. T Allocate 5 minutes then students will show their photo to the class and provide evidence for decision. S 5 minutes to debate differing outcomes if required but students are to provide support for their difference.</td>
<td>Provide some examples from films you have recently watched and how they impacted your perception or interpretation. Considering the key elements on the whiteboard, analyse elements of your picture to establish the genre and provide evidence to support your decision.</td>
<td>Strength of data accurately supports stance taken on genre. Strength of data provided to oppose the original interpretations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• T Clarify that there is no right or wrong as this all comes down to audience perception and interpretation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• T Body sculpting activity - Move outdoors (nominate area) for body sculpting activity. S Form into pairs then form a circle in their pairs. T Inner circle (define inner circle students) are lumps of clay and outer circle (define outer circle) are sculptors. You have 1 minute for each activity. Sculptors you are to sculpt your clay into a dancer at Capulet’s party as per the play rendition but take note of considerations you are making each time. S Display understanding of genre transformation through body sculpting. T Now reverse the roles and new sculptors are to sculpt your clay into the same dancer but R&amp;J is now a gangster genre. Reverse roles again and sculpt your clay as a dancer in a crime genre.</td>
<td>How did genre changes impact on your character’s features?</td>
<td>Ensure respect for responses is upheld. Model’s features, stances, characteristics represent the genre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEARNING STEPS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES | What to say | Organisation/Resources | Individualised learning
---|---|---|---
Lesson Body – step by step outline of learning experience sequence (continued)

- S Move back inside. T Rule up a comparison table on the whiteboard. Randomly call on students for responses and write in table. S Provide interpretations of the comparison. T Extend questions to draw on HOTS.
- T Four short Video presentations: allocate student to hand out journals. Guided instruction for note taking and model examples of how to take notes on the whiteboard. (Hand out partly prepared sheets with blanks for required responses to ADHD students). S Watch and analyse 4 presentations, writing down anything they think might provide a clue in their journals. Write these while watching as we won't have time after the films. S On conclusion of the last presentation form into pairs to compare journal notes.

While watching the videos take particular note of the characters, vocabulary, actions, symbols, moods, styles and themes you have covered so far and the genre they represent. Write down what you see, feel, predict, perceive and what result these interpretations have led to.

Focus on noise levels to reduce interruptions to other classes.

Randomly call on students who are off-task.

Provide overview of videos while preparing them to be shown.

Review journal entries.

Conclusion – reviewing learning / summarising / articulating where to next (Strategies to capture learning that occurred and move thinking forward.)

Time Allocation: 10 minutes

- T Reflect on audience perception and genre transformation
- S Questions from lesson to reinforce understanding
- T Overview of next lesson examining the use of emotive and figurative language and transforming Act 1 Scene 5 into another genre
- S Fill out the Q&A of 8 multiple-choice questions relating to Act 1 Scene 5.
- T When you have completed the answers ensure your name is on the sheet and hand it to me with your video journal.
- T Students having difficulty with the multiple choice questions re-read Act 1 Scene 5 for homework.
- S With remaining time stack up the chairs against the walls for the cleaners.

What plans are in place for those who finish early or need more time?

All activities for this lesson are pair/group activities and involve continued participation until the time is expired whether it be continued responses or continued modelling.
2014 LITERARY COMPETITION

JUDGE’S REPORT
Section C – Short Story, Year 8
Judge: Deb Peden

GENERAL COMMENTS:
Each year the contributions – both qualitatively and quantitatively – increase. The 2014 entries have been no exception. The fantasy genre was by far the most popular form of short story writing and while there were a number of engaging stories in this genre, it is nevertheless one that is quite demanding, requiring the writer to create credible, original and distinctive characters and plot lines. The dramatic genre was more successfully responded to, with writers very effectively pitting characters against others, themselves or circumstances. What captivated me with the place getters was their ability to engage the reader from the opening lines and to maintain that relationship: a decisive or appealing narrative hook is essential for good short story writing. I also recognised in these winning entries, effective use of economy wherein the writer is able to convey a sense of place, character and conflict within the word limit and sometimes most powerfully with just a single word.

PLACE WINNERS:
First Place: A Coin’s Desire
Greed is the major theme within this short story with a single gold coin the conduit for greed’s expression through a range of different characters. These characters acquire or happen upon the coin as it makes its way from one clenched hand to another. Greed is described as something evil: “it is present, ominous... malicious and inexplicable”. The coin itself takes on the qualities of a ‘thing’ that is possessed then lost: it witnesses and experiences weak-souled individuals and their downfalls when acquiring the golden coin. What I particularly liked about this story was the writer’s ability to use language and storyline very provocatively creating tension and anticipation for the reader. This is a well written piece and I encourage the writer to continue their craft: they have a good writing future ahead of them.

Second Place: A Dream or a Nightmare?
While the title may sound a little clichéd, the storyline itself is very captivating. I was impressed not only with the figurative language that expressed so beautifully the time and place, but also the compact nature of the story (it is only 515 words) and the writer’s ability to convey their story within this word limit. Personification is used very effectively throughout: it opens with a golden sunrise that moves “slowly over a cobalt blue sky illuminating the soft mist that casts its gentle fingers over the valley”, and later the female character, Isobel, is caught in a storm with “lightning flashes [piercing a] bruised purple sky [and] thunder rumbles menacingly in the distance”. Finally it is up to the reader to determine whether Isobel has succumbed to the dark underworld forces. A beautifully crafted story which I very much enjoyed reading.

Third Place: 51 Minutes
It was the title that first drew me to this story, suggesting that the plot and character would be put under some form of time constraint. What emerged however was a character with an obsessive anxiety disorder, encountered in this instance in a library. Hunter Bartholomew Brown has his rigid 36 minute book reading time frame and book selection process, thrown into chaos by someone sitting in his chair. What unfolds is an engaging encounter with
2014 LITERARY COMPETITION

the mysterious savant Ruby Sparks. 51 minutes later he has partly read and enjoyed Ruby’s book selection. Great dialogue and character construction with an intriguing conclusion, and one that leaves the reader wanting more.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Awakening:
We are transported to the year 2175 in this captivating fantasy. Ryah has been cryogenically frozen for two hundred years and awakes to discover the reason for her preservation: she belongs to a rare and ancient race with telekinetic powers. It is a fantastical story, and one in which the writer has been able to convey their creative imagination plausibly and with distinctive characterization.

The Decision:
This story reflects shades of the British-American film “Sliding Doors” in which the central character must choose to catch a train (or not) to determine their fate. The central character in The Decision must choose between her best friend and a potentially fame-filled career: she chooses her friend. With the benefit of a wise sage, Kirra is given a glimpse of the future should she have chosen differently. The writer has an easy writing style, providing a new twist in the fantasy.

Valedictorian:
Valedictorian is a lively story about a graduate named Kyle, written from Kyle’s point of view as he awaits his award. What unfolds is a choice between friendship and being the best. Lots of good tension and internal dialogue with an unexpected outcome in the denouement. Well written and engaging.

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
OF QUEENSLAND INC.

Grammar Day in Townsville
8.40am – 2.15pm, Saturday 31 October

A follow-up day to develop understandings in Grammar for the Australian Curriculum: English will be presented at Town High School Theatre J, in Townsville.

Revisit and reinforce basic understandings about the approach to grammar underpinning the Language Strand of the Australian Curriculum: English (AC: E) that were addressed in the one-day course at Town High on 28 March. From that base, we’ll work on further developing those understandings in working with a range of authentic texts suitable for English classrooms.

Planning will endeavour to ensure that:
(a) the day will be worthwhile for those who attended the session in March; and
(b) those who couldn’t make it in March will not be lost.

For further details and online registration go to – http://www.etaq.org.au/event/event/detail/event/40918
For information about the program, email Heather Fraser – heather@chandlergroup.com.au
For queries relating to registration, email Trish Purcell – trish.purcell@bigpond.com
2014 LITERARY COMPETITION

A COIN’S DESIRE

by Khushi Shelat,
Brisbane State High School, South Brisbane

Greed.

It’s stuck to every inch of the human’s skin.
Held selfishly within the prison-like fist of the human, the coin could feel the greed.

It couldn’t be seen, or touched, or smelt, or heard, or tasted.
Nevertheless, it was present, ominous and inescapable, malicious and inexplicable...
Evil.

Without uttering a whisper, without lifting a finger, it can hardwire humans to forget about others and do only for themselves, it causes them to do terrible, terrible things. The scary thing is: it’s always there, hanging silently in the darkness, invisible and unnoticed.

Greed controls humans.
Every single one.

The golden surface of the coin was pressed tightly against the human’s hand, which was, though calloused in immeasurable amounts of greed, well-soaped and therefore soft to touch.

Long, curled fingers serves as prison bars, trapping the coin in, without giving it the power to get out.

Until now.

Suddenly, the fist, slowly, hesitantly, begins to straighten and unfurl into a palm, although the fingers remain slightly upturned – the human was unwilling to give up his small, golden fortune. Carefully, the hand flips over, twisting at the wrist, then places the large coin in the centre of another palm, which hastily closes over it once again.

This second hand had skin that was bathed in greed every day and every night. But it almost felt different; a different kind of greed.
Perhaps it was the desperation.

Desperation had been non-existent with the previous human, only voluminous amount of pure pride.

Desperation is stronger, that is certain.

The coin was lowered by the second human, just as hurriedly as the coin had been grasped.

One last feeling of the unexplainably pungent mix of greed and desperation, a split-second contact with the old, weathered denim of the second human’s pocket and then...

... a strange sensation of free-falling through the musty, unclean air of an ancient-looking antique shop.

The second human’s fingers had gone too hastily.
The coin had slipped away...
A victorious ring is emitted from the collision as the coin slams bodily into the weary-looking concrete floor of the tiny store, lined heavily with scar-like cracks and wrinkles. The coin rolled towards the door of the shop, which had been left wide open in the hope to welcome more customers inside the building and perhaps gain enough to pay off the building’s rent. Under the false impression that he would now be able to afford that and much, much more with the small, profitable contents in his pocket, the old shopkeeper had not yet noticed to coin’s disappearance.

He realised only when a glint of reflected light caught his eye. The man saw the coin rolling out onto the night-drowned street outside, leaving his pocket now empty. Anger started flames in his mind, anger at the sheer unfairness of it all. Desperate, the shopkeeper sprinted towards the open door. Maybe it was fate – perhaps simply luck – that a gust of wind blew the weak door closed that night.

The man screamed in frustration.

The man forced the door open.

The tired old door groaned almost audibly as it felt that ice-cold palm press against the skin on its back, which was cruelly tattooed in strange, painfully carved patterns. Its arthritic joints cringed in the prospect of opening once more, only to fall back closed again.

However, the human persisted stubbornly and eventually pushed the door open, slamming it carelessly into the poor, withered wall of the tiny store.

The atmosphere was almost foreboding...threatening, even. Rickety buildings towered haphazardly on either side of the back street. They seems to almost bend over the road like huge, endless archways, enclosing the gloomy street within. The ominous tunnel-like setting was one that could cause claustrophobia to claw at the minds of travellers, awakening fear within them and making their hearts beat a million miles per hour.

But the coin felt no such fear.

It was free.

Free from the frugal fists of humans that were moulded by greed, but carved with the hands of pure selfishness.

Free from all that the coin had once wanted gone.

Now it’s finally gone.

The coin had discovered freedom, it wasn’t ready to let it go just yet.

But a coin – any coin – doesn’t have a choice.

Coins are very much as controlled by greed as humans are.

Coins are victims of greed.

Humans are followers of greed.

The sudden taste of joyous freedom that the coin had experienced was dampened as the golden object felt yet another pair of greed filled eyes set on its glinting surface.

All hope of freedom was lost immediately.

The coin was lost in a swirling mix of undecipherable emotions: Anger. Hate. Sadness. Despair.

Uneven footsteps rang behind the coin, chasing it.

Grimly, the coin continued, even with full knowledge on who would be victorious in this desperate chase.
The footsteps grew louder, closer. The coin twisted another turn. The footsteps sounded from a metre behind. The coin got no further. A brown, wrinkled hand reached for the coin. The small object braced itself, waiting. But the fingers didn’t curl over it. The palm didn’t become a fist. This human’s skin felt light and papery. It was almost stretched over his arthritic bones. He held the coin gingerly on the flat of his palm.

Greed?
A tinge, a tiny sparkle of greed. There was no desperation, simply want. There was no pride, the hand was a humble one. There was a hint of something though, something that the coin had never found in a previous human hand. Hope. Unimaginable, immeasurable, unthinkable volumes of hope.

His face was lined and deeply tanned from rigorous work in the sun. His lips were cracked and grey, hardly a hint of moisture remaining within them. The old man – for there was no doubt that he was old – had roughly cut salt-and-pepper hair. Streaks of hair, wet with sweat, fell over his forehead and touched his crinkled eyelashes. Small brown eyes looked down at the coin, seemingly intrigued by its obvious weight and golden shine.

Slowly though, his eyes widened in surprise and triumph as he realised the coin’s value. Greed, once hardly noticeable in his wrinkled hands, now was buzzing within his very veins. Then, his hands closed into a fist. Despair filled the coin. It had thought it was free!

But a coin is never free, never really. Always, tiny episodic tastes of freedom will come ... but never would they evolve into the divine plateful that every coin has a yearning for. A businessman, a shopkeeper, a homeless person, a dog, a child, a mother, a doctor ...

The coin was held by all these hands. Every palm closed eventually into a fist. Every fist opened momentarily into a fleeting taste of freedom.

In every hand greed was present. In some hands less than others.

1160 words
2014 LITERARY COMPETITION

JUDGE’S REPORT

Section D — Poem, Years 6 & 7
Judge: Cindy Keong

This year’s entries spanned an array of topics from perspectives of soldiers and war, nature and natural disasters, fantasy worlds and tributes to animals and loved ones. This category is often predominately rhyming poems however, this year an increase in experimentation with other forms of poetry was noted e.g. diamante, haiku and free verse. The prize winning poems stood apart from other entries in that the authors developed their ideas through patterns of description to create the imagery in their pieces. If any advice could be offered it would be to encourage when writing a poem to choose topics one has a personal connection with to assist the development of ideas and description. Also, if choosing to write using a rhyming scheme be careful not to forsake meaning just to get a poem to rhyme.

PRIZE WINNING ENTRIES

1st Prize: Haunted
This poem is a well-crafted piece in that from its opening lines the poet successfully takes you with them on a return journey through the decimated streets of a hometown. Through careful use of poetic devices and succinct work choices the images remain strong throughout and evokes a strong sense of loss and haunting the poet I suspect intended.

2nd Prize: The Man of All Days

3rd Prize: Lost

HIGHLY COMMENDED ENTRIES

1st HC: Terrifying Earthquake
2nd HC: Books
3rd HC: Snake
HAUNTED

by Olivia Trempus,
St Pius School, Banyo

The broken streets crumble under my bare feet
Run-down houses speak to me with distant memories
An abandoned graveyard sends shivers over my rigid body
All the people are now, long gone.

Familiar places now lay bare, while only memories endure
The tree whose trunk has withered with age from a time long
forgotten
Remembering the smell of the sweet summer rain
As it washed away my fears of an uncertain forever

Rows of vehicles disintegrated into piles of rust and debris
Secrets that remain, never to be retold
An old antique shop stands lifeless and deceased
While above, the clouds are heavy and filled with darkness

Rusted roofs creak and moan with the slightest movement
Shutters, cracked and rotten tell stories of dreams long ago
Far-away voices linger like ghosts in abandoned mansions
My old town, no longer tranquil but faded and fractured

Everything is wrong, I shouldn’t have come here
The past torments me
This town is a silhouette of my past, and there it shall remain
I am forever haunted…
Greetings from the tropical savannah of PNG where I am working with teachers and teacher educators. My long term colleague and an esteemed teacher, Dr Linda Willis, has kindly made herself available to deliver this report on my behalf.

This year the number of entries in Section D burgeoned and I think Deb was almost apologetic about the size of the bundle that was shipped to me. Despite the volume, it was indeed a pleasure to see so many young writers sweat over every word choice and finally hand over their work for public consumption. I'd like to think there was a home and classroom celebration to mark the completion of each and every story. Writing your first short story for public consumption is a marvellous undertaking and achieving that task is worthy of a public celebration. This year 3 prize winners and 4 highly commended awards have been given in Section D Short Story for Years 6 & 7.

- 4th Highly Commended: ‘Cuckoo Clock’ — A bizarre topic about two cuckoo clock birds who start out as foes but end up as friends provided a most satisfying read. This young writer resisted the urge to magnify emotions, instead showing a remarkable observance of everyday social interactions. I sense that this writer could make any topic interesting.
- 3rd Highly Commended: ‘A Better Life’ — This young author showcased the benefits of undertaking some research of the context and content. Set in Afghanistan during a period of intense conflict, the young female protagonist inches her way across the border to Pakistan with the help of an unlikely accomplice. This piece would benefit from a title that creates anticipation rather than one that gives away the plot. Nevertheless, ‘A Better Life’ is a gripping read and most deserving of being listed as a highly commended awardee for 2014.
- 2nd Highly Commended: ‘And then Disaster Struck’ — The hallmark of this young author’s work is what can be achieved with a simple but carefully planned plot. This author’s sense of humour shines through as household shenanigans are documented in graphic detail but with comedic timing. I winced through every plan and the ensuing mishaps. The belly laugh moment was the thought of a human body coated in custard, powder and feathers. Andy Griffiths and Paul Jennings would have been immensely proud of this work had they conceived it!
- 1st Highly Commended: ‘The Box’ — This young author knows how to develop rouge but likable characters through intense description and short but essential monologues that confirm the credibility of the character. This young author also offered remarkable observations about people’s differing life circumstances. I was captured by the sentence which showed maturity beyond the author’s young years: ‘But the living was cheap’. The unpredictable but not unreasonable ending left me wanting to know what this character did with his unexpected windfall. It’s a sign of a good story when readers ache to know the next instalment.
**2014 LITERARY COMPETITION**

- 3rd place winner: ‘Ring of Fairy Tales’ – I’ve not read anything quite like this before and I’ve not seen anything like this explored in class either. Although ‘Ring of Fairy Tales’ had shades of Jon Scieszka’s ‘The Stinky Cheeseman and other Fairly Stupid Tales’, it was still in a realm of its own. In the space of 800 words, this author pulled off the seemingly impossible - introducing an array of fairy tale characters to a plot completely removed from the oft-used fairy tale setting and certainly outside the domain of the fairy tale genre. This sophisticated use of intertextuality served to give the multiple characters more depth and thus made their actions and dialogue more credible. I can only but imagine the brainstorming and multiple re-drafts that had to take place with this short story; it’s a credit to the author that it came together in the final version.

- 2nd place winner: ‘The Return’ – This short story transcends historical and future time and earthly and intergalactic place. Shifting temporal and spatial relations are extremely difficult to manage and quite risky in the confines of a 725 word short story, but this young author achieved such an undertaking. I was also struck by this author’s apt vocabulary for describing feelings and characters’ responses to the issues of being displaced and assuming identities as intergalactic refugees, a result of being complacent with environmental conservation on Earth. Although not for open discussion in the story, the moral themes were handled with a maturity not often showcased in the writing of young authors. I appreciated the way the author’s cautionary vision of a future life stayed in my consciousness for days on end.

- 1st place winner: ‘The Demon’ – As undesirable as tautology is, I would have to say that this short story about a demon that tortures and bottles human souls to feed the Master’s whim is simply delicious. The expansive emotional vocabulary and the syncopation of pithy sentences against complex and highly descriptive sentences worked a treat. I appreciated the author wanted to build some mystery around the demon, making reference in the third-person singular neuter pronoun of ‘it’, but use of ‘it’ to refer to the bottle, for example, created unnecessary ambiguity. This relatively minor comment should not detract from what is essentially a sophisticated piece of writing that begs for a future instalment for those who have the guts to read on.
THE DEMON

by Dana Pavlovic, Beachmere State School

It smiled. Large jagged crimson stained teeth were shown. The man before it cowered in utter terror.

"P-please... have mercy..." he whimpered. Its smile broadened. A withered grey skeletal hand drew from beneath its black cloak. The man started to sob uncontrollably.

Pathetic, it thought as it swiped the air in front of it in one smooth motion. He screamed soundlessly, his eyes turning pearly and blank, staring up at the sky that he could not see. It bent low over the lifeless and cold body and pinched the air above the man’s gaping mouth. Between its fingers it conjured a liquid—like strand that swirled gracefully. A tiny bottle appeared out of nowhere. It uncorked it and the strand slithered inside and swirled like liquidized light.

“Another soul claimed,” its soft, ghostly spinechilling voice made the trees and animals draw back and shiver.

It placed the bottle carefully into its pocket and glided away into the disturbingly silent night.

****

A sudden chill settled over the village it was approaching. Dreams were clouded with dark thoughts and terrifying memories were relived. Children huddled into their parent’s arms, crying fearfully.

No one knew why the night had turned so cold and remorseless, why the gentle gaze of the moon had become ominous and foreboding.

No one knew what fate had awaiting them.

No one knew that it was coming, hungry for their souls.

It drew back its hood. An ashen skull was revealed in the rays of moonlight. Eyes like empty black caves with sinister glowing crimson slits surveyed the village before it. It absorbed the surrounding air, relishing the feeling of despair the atmosphere was now tainted with. An eerie fog crept behind it as it stalked closer, slithering around the village like wolves cornering prey.

****

It stopped. The fog swirled around the house in a sinister way. The family inside clutched each other tighter as they stared dumbfounded at the fog that now clouded their windows. A shadow heightened in the moonlight, they tensed. There was a knock on the door. It twisted the door handle. The door swung slowly open with an echoless groaning creak. The family drew back, shuddering fearfully.

“Time to die,” it purred silkily. With a sharp intake of breath, the adults collapsed on the cold timber floor with a muffled thump, leaving two terrified children. Oh how it loved the soul of children, still young and alive, still innocent to the world. It smiled, once again showing its large, sharp and bloodstained fangs, which glinted, dully in the feeble rays of moonlight that streaked through the windows. One child fainted while the other sat agape, mouth opening and closing, too scared and panicked to move. Her body was then wracked with sobs.
“Please don't hurt us!” the child wailed, burying her face into her hands. It laughed. It was an insane high, cold out-of-control sound. Its usual soft and vague voice was replaced with a laughter that raised the hair on your neck.

It was humourless. It was terrifying. It sealed your death warrant.

The child's eyes filled with tears that instantly slide down her face. She screamed. But before she could stop screaming, it had moved towards her with unearthly speed and sank its needle sharp teeth into her throat.

It felt the strangely deliciously satisfying taste of blood burst in its mouth, and shuddered with pleasure. Her scream cut off with an agonized gurgle and crimson dribbled down her chin, into the gory and pulpy mess her throat was now reduced to. It drew back, teeth now freshly stained. It put its hood back on, the cowl hiding its skull of a face. Its red slits in its eyes pulsed more ominous and red as ever. It summoned four bottles that appeared out of thin air. Their souls spiralled gracefully past their white lips and snaked, swirling and mysterious into the bottles, which it placed carefully into its pocket.

“Master will be pleased…” it hissed as the sky started to blossom into a creamy pink. “…He will be very pleased indeed…”

It hung its head, eyes now pulsing an evil magenta. It murmured something inaudible under its breath and in a wisp of black smoke, it returned to the netherworld, its reign of terror completed for the night.
**BOOK REVIEW**

*Guarding Eden*

Reviewer: Deborah Peden


What do a vet, a teacher, insurance broker, nurse, psychologist and a fire-fighter turned entrepreneur all have in common? This group of Australians, among several others, hold the view that our planet is under serious threat from global warming due to flagrant disregard and exploitation by corporations and communities of our natural world. *Guarding Eden* is aptly titled with Deborah Hart presenting 12 perspectives from a range of ‘direct action’ activists who have challenged the advocates of fossil-fuel exploitation in order to save the planet. Their argument is clear: the current dramatic and traumatic climate change events here in Australia and around the world are directly correlated to severe flooding events, equally devastating droughts, bush fires and acid seas – and severely threaten the future viability of our ecosystem.

While their points of view may not be new knowledge to the reader, Hart presents their stories in a captivating and sometimes gripping manner and structures her authors’ arguments in an easy-to-read way. The book opens with an overview of what each of these climate activists are doing and how they’re challenged by the mega corporations and how they are given mere lip-service by government agencies. Hart’s book is very much structured as a David and Goliath metaphor – the weak (climate activists) striving against a much stronger adversary (governments and big business).

Within each chapter, the reader is given insight and background into these climate activists: how their story began, what inspired them to action, the tactics and strategies they have employed to effect change or raise awareness, and the outcomes – sometimes leading to arrest and, occasionally, applause. (In one story, the police arrest a group of activists for breaking into an industrial compound and displaying a giant banner decrying the use of fossil fuels, only to be discreetly congratulated by these same officers.) Hart also embeds a fact sheet within each chapter. For example, under Paul Mahony’s ‘Speaking up for the Animals’ chapter, the reader is given a brief overview on how methane gas from ruminant animals such as cows and sheep is 85 times more potent that carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. The author claims that the animal agriculture industry is responsible for at least 15 percent of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Each of the stories is passionate, emotive and inspiring: ordinary people doing extraordinary things to challenge and prevent big business and politics privileging their interests over environmental protection. That aside, Hart falls short of referencing her material and sources well enough. The arguments she promotes here are both telling and compelling but would have been given greater credence had they been more explicitly linked to credible sources. Perhaps, too, Hart could have explored more fully the positive effects of the actions taken. One is sometimes left with the feeling that this David and Goliath battle is one in which Goliath will ultimately triumph. Or perhaps that is the impression Hart intended. In the closing pages, she quotes Vote Climate campaigners who argue that “there is no time left to be content with what is politically feasible. Slow incremental change will leave our children with an unliveable planet”. The ominous tone here might just be a way of getting the readers to recognize that we are each responsible for guarding Eden if we want future generations to enjoy our planet. At the very least, this book will have its readers reflecting on the need for action to protect our piece of Paradise.
BOOK REVIEW
Phyllis Wong and the Waking of the Wizard
Reviewer: Isabella Winch
Corinda State High School Year 7 Student

Phyllis Wong and the Waking of the Wizard is a fictitious mystery novel about a young magician named Phyllis Wong, whose great-grandfather—Wallace Wong—is on a quest to track down ‘history’s greatest magician’. He transits through time to find Phyllis and together they embark on a quest to find this magician. Transiting through thousands of miles and hundreds of years, Phyllis and Wallace Wong fail to realise the vile man following their every transit. He is bent on bringing forth The Great Whimpering, but...what is it?

In this novel, Geoffrey McSkimming creates characters that you can easily fall in love with. An example, Clement—though he is a side character—is easily my favourite character in this book, as he is the perfect mix of funny and smart. McSkimming wrote the majority of the scenes beautifully, with perfect suspense and spacing of main events. His writing never felt as if he were dragging along sentences for the sake of words. Though this book is written beautifully, there were some aspects I didn’t like, such as the fact that you can barely decipher what Mrs. Zepple says half the time. But, this book is most enjoyable when you get far enough through. I think it would suit children around ages 11 to 15 who like magic, fantasy and mysteries.

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.

Literary Breakfast – Saturday 17 October 2015
8.00 to 10.30am at Eves on the River, 53 Vernon Terrace, Teneriffe
www.evesontheriver.com

Our guest speaker is Sally Browne, a features journalist at The Courier-Mail and Sunday Mail in Brisbane, where she interviews artistic types for a living. She has interviewed many celebrities as well as “ordinary” people doing creative and inspiring things. She is also a comics creator, an occasional columnist, a sometime poet, a rare stand-up comic, a lazy blogger and a wannabe novelist.

Sally Browne will speak about her love of words, etymology, the influence of her teachers and why she thought a life of writing would be cool.

Cost: ETAQ members $35; non-members $40
For further details and online registration go to – www.etaq.org.au
BOOK REVIEW

Molly and Pim and the Millions of Stars
by Martine Murray (2015)

Reviewer: Grace Winterscheidt
An avid reader

*Molly and Pim and the Millions of Stars* is a book about acceptance and belonging. The story is told from the perspective of Molly and the narrative has a whimsical, lyrical quality with rich imagery.

When we first meet Molly she worries about being unlike the other kids at school, thinking that ‘what she wanted most of all was not to stand out one bit’. She perceives her weirdness particularly in contrast to her best friend Ellen, who has a normal family and normal house, while Molly lives in a house that feels like a gypsy caravan with a mother who collects herbs at dawn for magical potions. Ellen also has ‘a father who could fix shelves and a brother with a footy’ while Molly’s father is, reportedly, lost in Cuba.

When her mother accidentally turns herself into a tree, Molly goes to Pim, an odd, inquisitive boy with ‘outer-space dreams’ from school who doesn’t care what other people think, for help to change her back. This becomes especially urgent when Molly’s neighbours, Prudence and Earnst Grimshaw, threaten to cut the tree down because its branches overhang their property and ‘make a mess’ in the sky. The narrow-minded views and nasty, intolerant behaviour of both Prudence and Earnst are the antithesis of the gentle nature of Molly and her mother and they are the active antagonists of the story.

While Molly is working to save her mother, Ellen is bitten by a brown snake. When Molly visits she and Ellen realise they both had similar fears; while Molly thought she was too weird for Ellen, Ellen thought Molly found her boring. This helps Molly realise that ‘we’re all like little stars, shining as hard as we can, with our own particular kind of light.’ The central theme of the book is finding a place you naturally fit rather than changing shape to be like everyone else. It’s about learning to trust yourself, having courage and seeing the wonder in the world.