

Working out what works

24 August 2019

Brighton Grammar School

researchED
Melbourne 2019

Our aims and values

1

To raise the research literacy of educators, in order for them to possess the critical skills necessary to challenge and understand the quality of research they encounter.

2

To bring together as many parties affected by educational research - e.g. teachers, academics, researchers, policy makers, teacher-trainers - in order to establish healthy relationships where field-specific expertise is pooled usefully.

3

To promote collaboration between research-users and research-creators so that educators become more involved in the questions posed for research to answer, the data generated in that process, and in the consideration of the meaning of that data.

4

To help educators become as aware as possible of significant obstacles - e.g. biases - in their own understanding of learning and education, and to locate the best methods of empirical enquiry and analysis in those fields.

5

To promote, where possible, research of any discipline that has been shown to have significant evidence of impact in education, and to challenge research that lacks integrity, or has been shown to be based on doubtful methodologies.

6

To explore 'what works' in the field of education, and to explore what the concepts contained in that statement might mean, as well as to consider the limitations of scientific enquiry in this area as well as the opportunities.

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Welcome

As Headmaster of Brighton Grammar School, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the third researchED, Melbourne conference. Our organisation has proudly sponsored this conference in the effort to bring together academics and educators from around the world to share their expertise in putting good research into practice. We strongly believe that evidence-informed decision processes and high impact teaching strategies are a core element of quality education.

The popularity of the conference and how it has grown is a testament to the movement towards evidence based teaching. It is pleasing to see so many people willing to give up their time to be part of this movement. It is our hope that this conference will aid in strengthening and expanding the education research community in Melbourne and beyond.



Program

Saturday 24 August 2019

9:00 AM – 9:35 AM

Registration

9:35 AM – 10:00 AM

Welcome to country, and welcome Greg Ashman & BC representation

10:05 AM – 10:50 AM


Session 1 – Keynote

 **Australian Curriculum and 21st Century Skills** with
David deCarvalho – CEO ACARA

11:50 AM – 12:30 PM

Session 2

 **MULTILIT presentation on results of Minilit trial** with
Nicola Bell, Kevin and Robyn Wheldall

 **Remediating adolescent literacy using Corrective Reading and Spelling Mastery programs (Grades 7-10)** with
Jessica Colleu Terradas

 **Australian literacy in freefall: averting a hard landing** with
Dr. Deirdre Clary and Dr. Fiona Mueller

 **Researcher ACU - improving school attendance in remote Aboriginal communities**
with Anthony Dillon

11:50 PM – 12:30 PM

Session 3

Where are we going with the National Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment Initiative? with Jenny Donovan

An evidence based approach to Staff Development with Mark Dowley

Motivation in foreign language learning with Olivier Elzingre

Turning the tanker: a case study in how to rescue an academic programme with Ben Evans

12:30 PM – 1:10 PM

Lunch

1:10 PM – 1:50 PM

Session 4

High performing disadvantaged schools with Blaise Joseph

Educational Podcaster with Ollie Lovell

Speech pathologist – Research on teacher with Emina McLean

NAPLAN Online: What could possibly go wrong? with Rob Monk

2:00 PM – 2:40 PM

Session 5

**The Power of Daily Reviews
- Spaced and Interleaved
Practice** with David
Morkunas

**Learning difficulties and
21st century learning skills ...
should we be worried?** with
Mandy Nayton

**Improving Written
Expression: “An Intervention
for Struggling Writers in
Years 7 and 8”** with Kate Reid

**Towards Quality Use of
Evidence in Schools** with
Mark Rickinson (and team)

2:40 PM – 3:00 PM

Coffee

3:00 PM – 3:40 PM

Session 6

**Not just “I reckon”: Using the
Phonics Screening Check
to inform instruction** with
Reid Smith

**Psychologist & Speech
pathologist. Developmental
Language Disorder and
the classroom teacher**
with Pamela Snow

**An interview with General
Manager of Evidence
& Impact at AITSL** with
Zhi Soon

**School Education Fellow,
Grattan Institute (Think Tank)**
with Julie Sonnemann

3:50 PM – 4:30 PM

Session 7

**What works best:
evidence-based practices
to help improve student
performance in NSW** with
Kelly Stephens

**High Quality Literacy
Instruction** with Lyn Stone

**An interview with Journalist
at The Australian** with
Rebecca Urban

**Rapid decline and gender
disparities in the NAPLAN
writing data** with Damon
Thomas

4:35 PM – 4:45 PM

Farewell, Greg Ashman

Sessions

Explicit Direct Instruction teaching approach using Corrective Reading and Spelling Mastery

Jessica Colleu

Since 2013, Como Secondary College has adopted an explicit Direct Instruction teaching approach using Corrective Reading and Spelling Mastery because these specific instructional programs incorporate the principles of effective teaching and have been shown to be highly effective in long scale evaluations such as Project Follow Through.

Research findings indicate that students learn best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to reading that explicitly and systematically teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension (Rowe, 2006). The programs' focus is to get the students to experience success and achieve much higher rates of progress than they have previously achieved to the extent that they are conscious of their own improvement.

In addition to PAT, a wide range of formative assessments is used to track student progress and teaching effectiveness. Since its implementation, the SAER program at the College has gained a reputation for achieving outstanding improvement in students struggling with literacy and numeracy. A number of students have successfully transitioned into mainstream classes and have gone onto pass the WA Online Literacy and Numeracy Test required for secondary graduation. Our goal is to have students at educational risk achieve a functional level of literacy in the modern workplace.

Where are we going with the National Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment Initiative?

Jenny Donovan

In 2018 Education Ministers agreed that learning progressions and formative assessment should be considered national priorities and committed to investigate the initiatives as a joint project.

A discovery phase has been active since May and plans to report to Ministers in December, with findings and recommendations for potential subsequent phases of work. This presentation describes the approach being taken in the discovery phase and explores some of the early findings.

Motivation in foreign language learning

Olivier Elzingre

Language education in Australia is somewhat lackluster, and tends to encourage extrinsic motivation rather than to foster an interest in the language learning. This presentation explores two cases of motivated students and their trajectories from primary school to the end of secondary.

In one case, the student began with very low interest in language learning, though became increasingly motivated to learn it. In the second case, the student began with a early passion for a language she only began learning in secondary school. These case studies are part of a larger population sample that formed the data used in my doctoral research.

The aim is to discuss what motivation in foreign language learning is and how it develops. I will be looking at dynamics between the school, classroom and personal/family contexts to gain some insights into this very fluid phenomenon of motivation. Finally, I will show what research in this field has so far come up with in terms of models and how we may apply them in classes.

Turning the tanker: a case study in how to rescue an academic programme

Ben Evans

Our three-year journey to build a rigorous academic programme, concentrating on sound educative principles and process. The trials, tribulations, successes, failures and results of that journey and the next stage of our development.

I will touch upon the problems concerning Australian education in a wider sense and how we need to move beyond ideology and pragmatism to encourage children to take responsibility for a world that is not of their making.

NAPLAN Online: What could possibly go wrong?

Rob Monk

Delivery of NAPLAN, Australia's National Literacy and Numeracy Testing program is being moved from a pen and paper format to an online test. This session will share the experiences of a large rural government school in delivering the Naplan test online. We have done the online assessment for the past two years.

This will be a “warts and all” walkthrough of the good, the bad and the ugly of NAPLAN online. The session will also look at some in-house research on how to prepare students for the online assessment of writing.

The Power of Daily Reviews - Spaced and Interleaved Practice

David Morkunas

There is a strong evidence base in favour of providing students with regular opportunities to review previously-taught knowledge and skills, but what does this look like in practice? Cognitive scientists advocate the use of spaced and interleaved practice in order to enhance the retention of learned content, but it can be unclear at a glance as to how this works in a classroom.

At Bentleigh West Primary School, we use daily review sessions in both Mathematics and English in order to expose our students to the benefits of spaced and interleaved practice. These quick and engaging lessons ensure that students transfer their knowledge and skills into long-term memory, and we firmly believe that they are a significant factor driving our school's recent growth.

This presentation will link the current evidence in support of spaced and interleaved practice to our instructional strategy, provide examples of daily reviews in practice, and offer guidance for those wishing to begin using this highly-effective approach in their own classrooms.

Como Secondary College (CSC) has implemented a successful intervention for struggling writers in Years 7 and 8. Using SRA Direct Instruction programs (Spelling Mastery and Expressive Writing) combined with daily creative writing, oral repetition and shared writing, CSC has seen significant growth in writing skills, confidence and motivation for our most at risk writers.

Improving Written Expression: “An Intervention for Struggling Writers in Years 7 and 8”

Kate Reid

Como Secondary College (CSC) has implemented a successful intervention for struggling writers in Years 7 and 8. Using SRA Direct Instruction programs (Spelling Mastery and Expressive Writing) combined with daily creative writing, oral repetition and shared writing, CSC has seen significant growth in writing skills, confidence and motivation for our most at risk writers.

Students are identified as having writing difficulties through standardised and diagnostic testing. Students completing the writing program achieve an average of two years spelling growth in 1 year of instructional input, with many students achieving 4 to 5 years growth. Their sentence level structural errors are halved, and they demonstrate a five-fold decrease in punctuation errors. Most significantly, they re-shape the image of themselves as writers. They willingly engage in regular “readings”, celebrate their own creative writing and learn from the writing successes of others.

Participants in this workshop will share in the research based principles underpinning CSC's practical approach (Gambrell, 2011; Brown, 2007; Jennings

and Haynes, 2006). They will explore how a systematic, fast paced, and explicit model of instruction, implemented with fidelity, is critical to accelerate struggling students in secondary school. The daily practices of the writing intervention classes will be shared, and participants will experience what this approach can look like in an upper primary to lower secondary context.

Towards Quality Use of Evidence in Schools

Mark Rickinson (and team)

There is a growing expectation that school leaders and school teachers will use research evidence to underpin and inform their improvement efforts. But what does it mean to use research evidence well as an educator or a leader? And how can we move from a focus on the quality of the evidence to a focus on the quality of the use?

This session will share early ideas from the Q Project, a new 5-year initiative that is specifically focused on 'Quality Use of Evidence Driving Quality Education'. A partnership between Monash University and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Q Project aims to improve the use of research evidence in Australian schools and school systems. It will involve working closely with 100 schools across four states (QLD, SA, NSW, VIC) to better understand what high-quality use of research evidence looks like in varied contexts and how it can be developed through professional learning.

This session will be a chance to reflect on your use of evidence, to learn more about the Q Project and to provide feedback on some of its early ideas about quality evidence use.

Not just “I reckon”: Using the Phonics Screening Check to inform instruction

Reid Smith

The ability to decode is a crucial component of reading competence. Discussions around the ways in which decoding can be taught, and the relative place of decoding in literacy instruction, are highly visible in current public education discourse.

The proposed Australian Phonics Screening Check presents an opportunity for Australian teachers to gain valuable information about their students' progress against an external standard as well as receive feedback about the effectiveness of their instruction.

This session argues for the utility of the Screening Check as a tool for both screening for difficulties in decoding and identifying effective teaching practices. It contends that teachers working in teams with common goals and practices can use assessment data, like the Phonics Screening Check, to share good practice and develop agency in the learning of their students.

What works best: evidence-based practices to help improve student performance in NSW

Kelly Stephens

What works best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance is the landmark publication by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) in NSW. Published in October 2014, What works best is about to turn 5. This presentation takes the opportunity to revisit the effective, evidence-based practices highlighted in the document – high expectations, explicit teaching, effective feedback, use of data to inform practice, classroom management, wellbeing and collaboration – and confirm their ongoing relevance today.

The presentation will also explore how the themes have shaped CESE's work program over the years, strengthening our understanding not only of what works, but how, as well as our understanding of what it takes to start embedding this knowledge at school and systemic levels. The presentation will include insights from longitudinal analysis of student survey and achievement data, as well as case studies that show how schools are using evidence-based practice on the ground.

Rapid decline and gender disparities in the NAPLAN writing data

Damon Thomas

The rapid decline in Australian students' performance on the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) writing test has been described as an issue of national concern.

This paper presents the first investigation into patterns of achievement and progress on the NAPLAN writing test across the tested year levels (3, 5, 7, and 9) between 2011 and 2018, with a focus on gender differences. The findings reveal a considerable decline in writing performance for both genders over time; with a major disparity of up to two years of learning in test outcomes between males and females.

Whilst female performance exceeded year level standards when averaged over the eight years, the average male performance was consistently below standards, with males falling further behind females across the school years. Yet average scores for both genders have declined significantly since 2011.

Drawing on current international research into the teaching of writing and standardised testing, the paper considers two possible and contrasting causes for this decline that are often communicated by education stakeholders: ineffective writing instruction; and issues with the design and implementation of the NAPLAN writing test. The paper calls for a national conversation about how we might effectively teach and assess writing.

National Education Correspondent at the Australian **Rebecca Urban**

The interview will explore how Rebecca came to be an education journalist and the different perspective that journalists bring to the education debate. How do educators who have a story to tell do so in a media friendly way?

General Manager, evidence and impact at AITSL **Zhi Soon**

The interview will examine the Zhi's role and how he views the relationship between evidence and education. What are the obstacles to overcome and how does this relate to the professional status of teachers?

Notes

