

Updates and information from across the School of Education at UNE, encompassing teaching and research in early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education.



Snapshot

Prof Stephen Tobias, Head of School

It's hard to believe that we are now well into 2016. Winter is on the way, though you wouldn't think so with the mild autumn weather.

We began the year with some significant pressures on our student load. This was largely due to problems with admissions, poor press about teaching as a career and about the additional entry requirements for teacher education courses. The downward trend is likely to prevail for the coming years and the School needs to broaden our focus and become more innovative in the teacher education sector.

In order to achieve to achieve this, we will be analysing our strengths and weaknesses by looking closely at courses and units, investigating new courses including building on our international

programs, particularly in Asia. Clearly we have little choice if we wish to retain our current loads. Initial steps in this direction have been enthusiastically received.

We now have partnerships with the Royal University of Bhutan, Philippines Normal University, Minzu University of China, and we are currently developing agreements with Chifeng University and Sichuan Normal University. The main focus is now on developing action plans that will lead to student and staff exchanges, joint research and hopefully some collaborative grants. Recently there have been several enquiries from overseas academics to come to UNE to collaborate with our staff. I believe this is a healthy sign.

Preparation is well underway for the new Master of Language Education and

the Bachelor of Education (International). Both are in the business planning stage. We have just heard that the Graduate Certificate in Education Studies (Careers and Transition) has been approved by the NSW Department of Education, for teachers wishing to be careers advisors.

Finally, this year has presented many significant issues for the School of Education and I would like to thank everyone who has helped us work through these challenges. It has been very gratifying that there has been so much goodwill, as many of these issues are still unresolved. I look forward to addressing these in the near future.

Best wishes,
Steve

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'Intersections of Knowledge' Inaugural UNE Postgraduate Conference 2016



A unique intersection of UNE research was held on 19 & 20 January this year. The inaugural UNE Postgraduate Conference was a showcase of HDR research shared with UNE staff, students and interested individuals from the wider community. This conference, open to anyone from UNE and the wider community, attracted over 280 registered delegates, with a total of 65 postgraduate research candidates sharing a valuable and fascinating insight into their research areas. Delegate presentations were delivered in-person or video presentation. In addition, a keynote speaker delivered wisdom and insight at the beginning of each day. These presentations included Professor Ray Cooksey, with a talk entitled "Frames and Configurations: Using a Systems Perspective for Social and Behavioural Research" and Professor Robert van Barneveld speaking on "Research in the Commercial World - It's Academic". A number of special sessions, which provided specific advice on a range of research skills, were also very popular and well received. Thanks to the Postgraduate Conference Organising Committee: Solomon Biharie (Chair) Eliza Kent, Grace Jeffery, Lionel Pearce, Kodjo Kondo, Karma Jigyel, Nadiezhda Yakovleva Zitz Ramirez Cabral, Apeh Omede, Vivek Vishnudas Nemane, Sue Gregory, Sami Samiullah, Yve Ahrens and Elizabeth Davies; the UNE Units: Research Services, IT Training, Audio-Visual Support, Marketing and Public Relations, Corporate Communications, Strategic Projects Group, School of Education, VC's Unit, Workforce Strategy and Development Unit; and our Sponsor: University of New England Student Association (UNESA). Finally thank you to the presenters and the attending delegates for your effort and participation.

Planning has begun for the 2017 event; information on the next post graduate research conference will be made available shortly.



UNE Graduation Ceremony Education Awards 2016



The School of Education celebrated the presentation of over 200 degree awards on at the 2016 Graduation Ceremony, held on Friday 29 April. In true New England Autumn style, the gold and red leaves against the brilliant blue sky provided a stunning backdrop for the day. Members of the School of Education showed their support for the graduating students by either participating in the academic procession or attending as an audience member.



Two School-based Higher Degree Research students graduated. Lavenia Tiko (Principal Supervisor: **Prof Margaret Sims**) was awarded a PhD for her thesis, *Indigenous Fijian Notions of Child Development: Understanding Children's Ways of Learning, Knowing, and Doing, and Implications for Policy and Practice in the Early Years of School*; and Wai Sa Ip (Principal Supervisor: **Dr Susan Feez**) was awarded a EdD for her thesis, *University Students' Beliefs about English Learning and their Use of Learning Strategies: A Mixed-Method Study in Macao*.

The Occasional Address was given by Ms Shannon Rosewood, Head of St John's Junior School and UNE graduate. Ms Rosewood gave practical and informed advice to the graduates for their teaching careers. The Response on Behalf of Graduating Students was given by Ms Lavenia Tiko, and her address provided a unique perspective on studying as an international student.



A picnic lunch on the lawns of the Graduates' Walk followed the Ceremony, and with a relaxed atmosphere and live music providing a fitting end to the day.

Pacific Education Graduation in Nauru



The School of Education congratulates its most recent Nauruan graduates. On 14 May, 14 Nauruan teacher education students graduated with an Associate Degree in Teaching (Pacific Focus) at an open-air public ceremony on the island. The Nauru Teacher Education Project

team, led by A/Prof Pep Serow and Prof Neil Taylor, were excited to share this momentous occasion with the first cohort of students who embarked on their journey with UNE at the start of 2014. Mr Trevor Goldstone, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) attended on behalf of Vice-Chancellor Prof Annabelle Duncan, along with educational leaders from the Ministry and Department of Education in Nauru, representatives from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and many proud family and community members.

Mr Goldstone was impressed with the quality of outcomes from the project.

“I had the great pleasure of representing the Vice-Chancellor at the ceremony and presenting the students with their testamurs,” he said.

“The 14 young women who achieved the Associate Diploma in Education (Pacific Focus) have done this despite a range of economic, cultural and family pressures and so their achievement is all the more remarkable. I wish to acknowledge the dedicated work of UNE staff involved in this program, led by Associate Professor Pep Serow – they have done a fabulous job and are justifiably highly regarded by their students, the Nauruan community and both the Nauruan and Australian Governments.”

These students are already applying their new skills and knowledge in Nauruan classrooms, and 12 of the 14 graduates have elected to continue their studies towards a Bachelor of Education (Pacific Focus). The School congratulates the project team: A/Prof Pep Serow, Prof Neil Taylor, Dr Terry Sullivan, Ms Jodana Tarrant, Mr Greg Burnett, Ms Dianne Smardon, Ms Emily Angell and Ms Ellen Nyberg, along with all the members of the School staff who have supported the project.



The School congratulates the Associate Degree in Teaching (Pacific Focus) graduates: Eigoda Aiyunge, Migail Dageago, Loretta Dekarube, Bluenza Depaune, Evalyna Doguape, Chavannah Dowabobo, Twiggy Fritz, Joslyn Gaskell, Elvira Hubert, Janna Itsimaera, Melba Menke, Octavier Menke, Taraina Notte, and Annabelle Scotty.

Higher Education Academy Fellowship

Dr Sue Gregory has been admitted as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

The HEA is the national body in the United Kingdom which champions teaching quality to improve learning outcomes by raising the quality and status of teaching in higher education as an essential driver for student success.

This international recognition of the work of UNE academics further demonstrates the School's and UNE's ongoing commitment to outstanding teaching.

New Colombo Plan Mobility Program 2017

The New Colombo Plan Mobility Program provides funding to Australian universities and consortia to support Australian undergraduate students to participate in short-term study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research in 38 host locations across the Indo-Pacific Region.

In 2017, \$20 million in mobility grants is expected to be awarded to Australian universities. Any academic staff interested in submitting a proposal for funding can contact John McKinnon in the International Office for more information – john.mckinnon@une.edu.au

New Colombo Plan scholarship students visit Bhutan

The first cohort of UNE Education students has just returned from three action-packed weeks in Bhutan. Emma Gilbert, Dylan Bell, Alanna Tobin, Ella Patchett, Brooke Chudleigh and Kahleea Barnes adapted quickly to the cultural nuances of Bhutan, as soon after arrival in Paro each student purchased the traditional Kira (women) or the Cho (men). These garments were subsequently worn on formal occasions as well as to college classes and whilst teaching and observing in either the Early Childhood centre or the Primary schools in Paro town. On the first night of our arrival our students and accompanying staff were well received at a welcoming UNE Alumni dinner, with over twenty-five members of Paro college staff in attendance. The Australians quickly learned about Bhutanese hospitality and the food, with lots of chillies and farmer's cheese, momos (dumplings) and other Bhutanese delicacies including the famous drink, Ara. During the evening the Alumni arranged, for the following weekend, for several local students to escort our students to Taktsung (Tigers nest) Monastery, which is perched on a cliff approximately 3100 metres above sea level. The uphill hike takes about 5-hours return, with those who prepared with fitness training coping better than those of us that didn't!!! Nevertheless, the climb was well worth the effort for the view was amazing, even if the air was a bit thin!



The actual study program consisted of attending lectures at Paro College of Education and interacting with the students and lecturers. Our students were well received by the Bhutanese lecturers and the college students who appreciated the wearing of the Bhutanese traditional cultural dress. The second week was focused on Professional Experience, and Brooke and Kahleea joined a local pre-school at Shari Village whilst Dylan, Emma, Alanna and Ella were located in a primary school. They all quickly took the reins and accepted invitations to teach. It was evident that our students were very impressed

by the standard of education provided at these schools and the enthusiasm and dedication of the Bhutanese teachers. The local school students showed great interest in our UNE pre-service teachers and demonstrated deep respect, by bowing as they passed by. The third week of the program included a cultural tour of historic central Bhutan. This sojourn involved travelling light and being driven 'cross country style' in a small coach from Paro to Punakha, with its outstanding architectural Dzong located between two rivers, via the famous Dochula Pass. We were well schooled by our dedicated guide in the Buddhist history of Bhutan, visiting many other Dzongs and Temples across the middle section of the country. We all experienced, and took in our stride, the hairpin bends, rocky roads, high altitude, incredible scenery and really enjoyed the eventual serenity at the end of the day's travels. We moved from Punakha to overnight at Bumthang, where we visited the temple of the Devine Madman and the burning lake. The following day at Gangtey/Phobjikha valley we all enjoyed a scenic walk in the forest next to where the famous black-necked cranes migrate to each year. The last day of sight seeing, and of course shopping, incorporated the Capital Thimphu, visiting the World's largest Buddha and the nearby preserve for the Bhutanese national animal the Tarkin.



Dr John Haynes and **A/Prof Judy Miller** escorted and supported the students across the three-week study program. John taught the college students a model lesson in Physical Education, addressing the students who are currently enrolled in the Diploma of Sports Studies that he was contracted to develop in 2011. He introduced a Games Sense Pedagogical approach, which was well received. In addition, Judy and John co-presented to the whole college audience, the nuances and structures of Research in Australian universities and potential applicability to the Bhutan College context. Judy also met with the current Vice Chancellor, Dasho Nidup Dorji of Royal University of Bhutan in the Capital city of Thimphu. Productive discussions were conducted to enhance the progress of the Royal University of Bhutan's (RUB) first cohort of Higher Degree Research students. The Education students represented UNE and Australia to the highest level of professionalism. They were brilliant ambassadors and they all were very grateful for the opportunity to travel and study in Bhutan.



There are up to fourteen places made available from the 2016 cohort to travel to RUB in Trimester 2, and a further 20 scholarships for 2017. Thank you to the unit coordinators Dr Genevieve Noon and Dr Vegnes Manium and Keita Takayama who supported the Short Study Program units of study and to the School of Education coordinators who provided flexibility for the students around their other studies. Simon Knight, Ruth Strutt and Anne Carlon provided unparalleled administrative support for this project.

Future Teacher Scholarship winner

School of Education student Hannah Shepherd has been awarded a Teacher's Mutual Bank Future Teachers Scholarship of \$5,000 to assist with her studies.

To qualify for the award, Hannah completed an extensive application process and wrote a 500-word essay on why teaching is "more than a job". She is passionate about teaching as more than just a career path.

"A lot of my friends sort of look at it and think, 'teaching is easy, it's just finger painting and great holidays', but it's more than that. It's not easy, but I really enjoy it," Hannah said.

Hannah will receive the award in two instalments to assist with her study costs across the year. She has already used some of the award to cover her travel costs to attend practicum placements.

"Pracs in Armidale are very hard to get because there's a lot of college people – they're very sought after," she said.

Hannah is working towards graduating next year, and looks forward to her future endeavours.

"I've always known that's what I've wanted to do," she said.

The Teachers Mutual Bank funds several education scholarships, including the NSW Premier's Teachers Mutual Bank New and Emerging Technologies Scholarship and the Harvard Club of Australia Scholarship with the Public Education Foundation.

QuickSmart success in Northern Territory correctional facilities

The Centre for Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) has received excellent feedback from their rollout of the QuickSmart Literacy and Numeracy programs in Northern Territory correctional facilities.

The program was introduced in the Darwin and Alice Spring Correctional Centres in 2014 as a way of reducing recidivism within the inmate population. Minister for Correctional Services, Mr John Elferink, said the QuickSmart program is designed to provide basic education and be relevant to the future needs of the inmate.

"Since [the start of the program], 9,841 lessons have been conducted and provided a direct benefit to the high number of illiterate inmates in the corrections system," he said.

"Inmates who are unable to read and write, many of whom are indigenous, are given a chance to receive a basic education which increases the likelihood of them gaining paid employment."

The ABC's *Lateline* recently covered a story on the outcomes of programs like this in the correction centres. The story can be found here: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4452401.htm>.

Cyber Bullying project examines school students' wellbeing

A pilot study being conducted by Dr Jennifer Charteris, Dr Sue Gregory, and Dr Yvonne Masters from the the School of Education has revealed the challenges faced by Principals liaising with parents whose children have been involved in inappropriate social media activity.

200 school Principals and teachers have so far been surveyed for the study, titled "Cyber Security and Social Media: Securing students' wellbeing".

"What our research is telling us is that Principals are dealing with the outcomes of activities that have happened over a weekend and spilled into the school. They have had to deal with very sensitive material. Schools are concerned that these issues are being blown out of proportion in the media, which is making their job more difficult," said Dr Charteris.

Dr Gregory says the study is focused on the smartphone App, *Snapchat*.

"Unlike previous ways of messaging like Facebook, disappearing data apps like Snapchat have a self-destruct timer, enabling the sender to determine how long their message can be viewed before being automatically deleted. This creates an attention economy where children are immersed in images that require immediate focus."

The research has also highlighted the benefits of social media, such as sharing of good news stories and creative media use. As one Principal commented, "they are curating the images that form the backdrop of their lives".

The study will be completed by 30 June 2016.

Funding Our Universities

Prof Margaret Sims discusses the effect of fee deregulation on the higher education sector.

Much of the talk in higher education politics last year was about fee deregulation. This is a proposal around higher education funding in Australia that is taking place in a context where the federal government is progressively providing less and less funding. This places universities in a position where they have to get additional money from somewhere in order to operate. In many cases that additional funding has to come from student fees, so that Vice Chancellors around the country have been arguing that deregulation of fees (the ability of universities to charge students for their studies) needs to occur. This means the cost of education is being shifted from the state (which is ultimately expected to benefit from a more highly educated population) to the individual (who is claimed to benefit from the increased earning potential a university qualification brings with it).

The argument is that students will borrow to pay these higher fees and will be able to pay back their student loads when they graduate and start earning money. This is done through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) which, when it was first introduced, was based on the assumption that about 30% of the benefit from higher education went to the individual (in earning a higher wage) and 70% to the state (in charging higher taxes to those earning higher wages, and in the benefits from an education population).

The recent Parliamentary Budget Office report on student debt indicates that student debt will increase to \$185 billion by 2026 and that a major cause of such a blow out (a projected increase of 560 per cent in the next decade) is fee deregulation. The government are still talking about what should be done. At present there is a 20 per cent cut to student funding and universities can set their own fees. Should deregulation come back on the agenda (and the Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, is on record as saying he would put plans to deregulate university fees on hold for at least a year; any new funding reforms wouldn't come into effect until 2017 at the earliest) then the Australian higher education sector risks following the American model. Higher education will be accessible only to those who are rich.

Those who do not have the financial resources to pay will access wither vocational education or, through what will develop as the equivalent of community colleges, education that may be of good quality but poorly esteemed which will impact on employment options.

Birmingham is talking about consulting on ways to reform the university sector. Raewyn Connell, Emerita Professor at the University of Sydney, argues that "Australia can afford free higher education and wide-ranging, adventurous research. That requires a public system. It isn't credible, and won't be funded, if it mimics corporate profit-making." Professor Connell also says that in engaging with Birmingham's consultation we need to remember that "it's important to know that the grey corporate orthodoxy of fees, competition and control was never, and is not now, the only possibility for higher education."

Will higher education in Australia go the way of America? Can we fight our way out of the neoliberal orthodoxy and find a way that recaptures the dream of higher education as a tool for public service or are we doomed to become competing firms in the marketplace?

Original article published in the Armidale Express Extra, Wednesday 27 April 2016.

Graduates and staff make significant contribution to book on education in Bhutan

School of Education graduates and affiliates have made contributions to 11 of 15 chapters, plus the Foreword, in the upcoming book titled *Education in Bhutan: Culture, Schooling, and Gross National Happiness*, edited by Matthew J. Schuelka and Tom Maxwell.

Bhutanese doctoral students include Dorji Thinley, Singye Namgyel, Phub Rinchen, Jagar Dorji, Keyzang Sherab, and Tshering Wangmo. Masters students include Pema Thinley and Kinley Seden. Additionally, Rinchen Dorji is a current student. Those who have worked with the members of the School include Zangley Dukpa and Thakur S. Powdyel.

The book is scheduled to be published by Springer in July.

School masters Escher

Staff within the School of Education have patiently and painstakingly completed the world's most difficult* jigsaw.



The puzzle, a print of the Escher artwork, *Relativity*, was gifted to the School by **Dr Eryn Thomas**. Many raised voices could be heard, cursing Dr



Thomas', name over the months it took to complete the piece. It has been framed for posterity and is on display in the Education building.

* anecdotal evidence only

Research @ SOE

Research Grants

Boughton, R., Beetson, J., Taylor, R., Schofield, T., Bartlett, W., Anderson, P. & Barker, L. “Adult Literacy and Aboriginal Community Well-being in Western NSW” – successful in obtaining ARC Linkage funding of \$440,000.

Cuenther, J. & **Boughton, R.** “Enhancing training advantage for remote Indigenous learners” – successful in obtaining NCVER funding of \$16,682.

Brooks, M., Elliott, S., Forrest, R., Noone, G. & Wolodko, B. “Support Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan, to develop a Diploma Programme in Early Childhood Education” – successful in obtaining UNICEF funding of \$197,079.

Gregory, S. “Support the sharing and reuse of virtual world education resources” – successful in obtaining OLT Seed Grant funding of \$50,000.

Masters, Y. & Gregory, S. “Developing Resources for Pre-Service Teachers to Enhance Online Teaching Expertise” – successful in obtaining OLT Seed Grant funding of \$50,000.

Mavropoulou, S. Successful in obtaining AASE funding of \$10,000.

Ngu, B., Phan, H. & Gromik, N. “Asynchronous critiques via video to enable studio collaboration for employability skills in distance education” – successful in obtaining OLT Seed Grant funding of \$40,000.

Prodromou, T. “Investigating the efficacy of progressive pedagogies in mathematics software to promote student learning in difference countries” – successful in obtaining Tony Adams Fund funding of \$3,000.

Hobbs, L., Campbell, C., Vale, C., Tytler, R., Lyons, T., **Quinn, F. & Whannell, R.** “Out-of-field Teaching: Sustaining Quality Practices Across Subjects” – successful in obtaining ARC funding of \$59,845.

Serow, P. & Taylor, N. “Teacher Education on the Republic of Nauru” – successful in obtaining DFAT funding of \$5.6 million.

Serow, P., Boyle, C. & Alter, F. “Enhancing creativity and inclusiveness in Nauruan schools” – successful in obtaining DFAT funding of \$178,500.

Serow, P., Taylor, N. & Usher, K. “Pacific Community Welfare and Wellbeing Education” – successful in obtaining DFAT funding of \$551,350.

Ellis, E. & **Sims, M.** “Bilingualism in the bush: reconceptualising 'speech community' in immigrant family language maintenance in regional Australia” – successful in obtaining ARC Discovery funding of \$278,000.

Lingard, B., Gulson, K., Sellar, S., & **Takayama, K.** “Data in Schools and Systems: An International Study” – successful in obtaining ARC Discovery funding of \$299,000.

Tobias, S., Takayma, K., Jones, T. & Amazan, R. “Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS)” – successful in obtaining DET funding of \$40,000.

Wolodko, B. “Noticing opportunities for mathematical interaction in the preschool classroom” – successful in obtaining SSHRC funding of \$60,572.

Publications

Journal Articles

Serow, P., Taylor, N. & Angell, E. (2016). Pre-service teacher education in Nauru: Where, who, and why. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 26(1), 17-26.

Quinn, F. & Lyons, T. (2016). Rural first year university science students: As engaged, aspirational and motivated as anyone but different sciences ‘choices’ in Year 12 and university. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 26(1), 42-53.

Evans, J. & **Morgan, A.** (2016). Teacher and university educator perspectives on teaching languages in rural settings: A sonata form case study. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 26(1), 67-82.

Nye, A. (2016). ‘Working from the boot of a red falcon’: The impact of major fires in four Australian schools. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 26(1), 83-98.

Nye, A., Clark, J., Bidwell, P., Deschamps, B., Frickman, L. & Green, J. (2016). Writing the (researcher) self: reflective practice and undergraduate research. *Reflective Practice*, 17(3), 257-269.

Charteris, J., Gannon, L., Mayes, E., Nye, A. & Stephenson, L. (2016). Unraveling (in) the emotional knots of academicity: A collective biography of academic subjectivity in higher education spaces. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 35(1), 31-44.

Clark, J. & **Nye, A.** (2016) ‘Surprise Me!’: The (im)possibilities of agency and creativity within the standards framework of history education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1104231>

Reyes, V., Masters, Y., Clary, D., Betlem, E., Jones, M., Charteris, J. Kivunja, C., Rizk, N. & Sigauke, A. (2016). Writing for publication group: professional development situated in the interstices of academia and performativity. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 17(4), 444-455.

Books

Kalantzis, M., Cope, B., **Chan, E.** & Dalley-Trim, L. (2016). Literacies. (2nd ed.). Australia: Cambridge University Press.

Vlaardingerbroek, B. & **Taylor, N.** (Eds.) (2016). Teacher Quality in Upper Secondary Science Education: International Perspectives. USA: Palgrave Macmillan.