



Linking Research to the Practice of Education is a publication of the School of Education (SoE), UNE, for all educators: early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. It introduces research, conducted by SoE staff, applicable to educational settings.

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## Editorial

In our first edition of the year, we begin with a reflective article by Jane Boyle about her journey from school student to a university student and, later, into teaching. In the second article, Dr Adam Ren provides insight into the challenges Mandarin-speaking children face when tested with English screening scales. In our third article, Dr Nathan Lowien explores ways videogame design grammar can teach us about standardised assessment. Our fourth article, written by Associate Professor Helen Harper and Dr Bronwyn Parkin examine the use of grammar in children's literature. In the fifth article, Dr Majida Mehana explains how early childhood educators can benefit from effective early intervention programs for vulnerable children. In the sixth article, Dr Sally Larsen asks whether NAPLAN reporting should be used to identify 'top schools'. The seventh article, by Master's students (Liz Theodoulou and Coralie Graham), Master's graduate (Tamlyn-Jane Marafiotte) and their supervisor (Professor Huy Phan), examines the use of positive psychology to support trauma-informed students. In the eighth article, Dr Tammy Williams explores child-educator ratios in early childhood education. In the ninth article, Associate Professor Marg Rogers and colleagues discuss various approaches to supporting community collaboration in projects. The last article by Kat Murphy examines an Indigenous student's journey into teaching.

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## From east Gippsland to educational research: A journey of learning and leading

Jane Boyle | [jane.boyle@une.edu.au](mailto:jane.boyle@une.edu.au) | Education

Growing up in East Gippsland as the daughter of a farmer and a primary school teacher, I learned early about the value of education and the importance of opportunity.

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**My path from a regional upbringing to secondary school teacher, university lecturer and researcher has been shaped by a deep commitment to advocate for individuals who face adversity and may not have been given opportunities to advance their education.**

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From an early age, my mother encouraged me to read widely. As a family we were often at the local library borrowing books to read and this love of reading continued throughout my life. The early exposure to literacy developed my confidence across all walks of my life including my teaching and research career as well as now when raising my own family. My mother's awareness of the importance of literacy arose from her own experience as an educator and driven by the lack of opportunities she experienced. Not all women in regional Victoria of that age had been to university, and she was keen to encourage her own children to take up such an opportunity in the future.

My mother often reflected on the lack of opportunities she experienced when considering higher education. At the time my mother attended university, it was either a teaching degree or nothing. Options were extremely limiting for females who were expected to get married and begin raising a family at that time.

My mother grew up in Fernbank, a small town over four hours outside of Melbourne with a population of 15. A degree in education was free and realistically the only option for her (and many others) given the distance from Melbourne. Upon graduating she returned to Bairnsdale and worked in one of the schools where she met my father, a farmer. When she married, she was asked, "When are you going to leave work?". Working and being married were incompatible at that time. Continuing to work after having four children was unusual but it provided us with opportunities to play every sport we wanted to and for us in turn, to go off to university.

When I began considering attending university a generation later, the landscape had shifted. The range of options was broad. Courses were not limited in style or type, rather it was more about affording rent given the distance from Melbourne. I enrolled, committed to the HECs debt from the course and began the hustle of part time work with juggling study. I worked several jobs throughout university (delicatessen worker through to swim school instructor), often foregoing time to study and prepare for examinations or assessments to pay for groceries. These challenges are still in existence for many of our students who currently work to pay for their studies or where they reside.

At the conclusion of my bachelor’s degree, my mother suggested supplementing the degree with a graduate diploma in education; “How about working as a teacher?”. Given post-degree uncertainty and a lack of mentoring from my previous university regarding next steps, this option seemed stable, interesting, and familiar.

The range of school experiences over the years, as well as the various leadership roles I have held, provided numerous opportunities for growth as an educator. Working in wellbeing across a variety of school settings established the need for strong connections between the student, family and teacher. And in reflection, knowing how to support students and foster success comes from knowing the student in front of you and understanding their drivers. The growing understanding of what truly motivates students led me to undertake a [Master of Education \(Research\)](#) at UNE. Here I began exploring how behaviour is perceived in the classroom using a combined conceptual approach of [Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory \(1995\)](#) and [Amartya Sen’s Capability Theory \(1997\)](#). It represented much of my journey through my life in learning and teaching, identifying circles of influence that shape our future. It is these opportunities that we have at our disposal that we can use. For many, they don’t have such opportunities.

Upon completion of this research, I began working at UNE with pre-service teachers. In this role, I bring my

experiences and knowledge to many students who are returning to study after extended time away, changing careers, or studying from regional locations. As a recent student myself, I understand the complexities of studying, working and receiving feedback.

In continuing my quest to understand my students and what motivates them in the classroom, I began a PhD in March 2024 investigating how psychosocial interventions motivate secondary students in STEM subjects. My research aims to encourage female participation in STEM with a focus on students in regional locations. The ideas here circle back to what I saw as a student in regional Victoria and the opportunities I was given. I am working with six schools across Victoria with a program that features female role models working in STEM subjects with students making goals for their future in STEM.

For current teachers wishing to undertake research and further study to enhance your professional opportunities and expand your knowledge personally, the opportunities abound for yourself and for your students. Understanding how to obtain evidence through research from our students provides us with knowledge and opportunity. Offering our time in the classroom to researchers, informs our practice but also contributes to our knowledge in education regarding programs. It also gives our students accessible, equitable education.



Bairnsdale Library, Victoria, Australia.



Fernbank, Victoria, Australia.



## Typical errors made by Mandarin-speaking children on Preschool Language Scales

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There are currently 1.5 million Chinese people residing in Australia (5.5% of the Australian population). Therefore, we need to understand the specific challenges Mandarin-speaking children face when learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

This paper reports on my study of the typical errors made by Mandarin-speaking children, as measured by the Preschool Language Scales – Version 5 (PLS-5) Screening Test, and discusses the implications for educators.

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The primary goal of this paper is to raise early childhood educators' language awareness when working with Mandarin-speaking children to reduce the risk of over-referral associated with the use of the PLS-5 Screening Test.

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### Participants and measures

Ninety-six children aged from 36 to 69 months, who spoke Mandarin as a first language at home, were recruited from 15 English-speaking childcare centres located in Sydney. The PLS-5 Screening Test was used. The test is a quick, 5-to-10-minute assessment tool

for children aged birth to 7 years 11 months to identify potential language delays or disorders. Participants were divided into groups of 3, 4, and 5-year-olds, as required by the PLS-5 Screening Test.

### Results and discussion

The most noticeable difficulties Mandarin-speaking children displayed were on word final consonants that do not occur in Mandarin, plurals, personal pronouns, and items embedded with autonomy (i.e., children's self-serving skills). For example, when producing a word final consonant that does not occur in Mandarin, children typically used deletion or substitution. In the 3-year-olds, the final consonant /g/ in *dog* is deleted, i.e., /dɔg/ is produced as /dɔ/. The reason for this is that in Mandarin, words do not end with a consonant sound. In the 5-year-olds, the final consonant of *teeth* is substituted with /s/ (*tees*), i.e., /ti:θ/ is produced as /ti:s/. This is because there is no /θ/ sound in Mandarin.

Regarding the difficulties with plurals, while typically developing English monolingual children have mastered plural morphology by three years of age, only 8% of the 3-year-olds in this study demonstrated mastery. For instance, instead of saying *two apples*, the 3-year-old said *two apple*. Likewise, *four cars* became *four car*. The low score may be due to pronunciation variations in the plurals measured. The PLS-5 Screening Test used three allomorphs in testing plurals: /z/ (*babies*), /s/ (*cats*) and /əz/ (*horses*). Different plural allomorphs may have

increased difficulties for Mandarin-speaking children, whose first language does not use inflectional grammar to mark plurals.

Understanding and use of personal pronouns also proved to be challenging for the Mandarin-speaking children. The difficulties were reflected in the language tasks that directly measured personal pronouns. Instead of using pronouns such as *his* or *her/hers*, the children used *boy/boy's* or *girl/girl's* when performing the task of *using possessive pronouns*. Third-person pronouns were difficult for children because third-person pronouns represent someone else out of the speech situations.

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### Difficulties with language items related to behaviours that encourage autonomy were demonstrated by large percentages of children who failed to answer self-care language tasks.

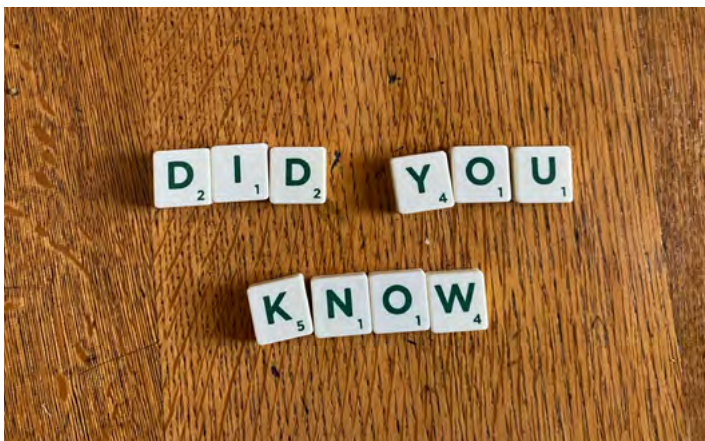
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More than 60% of the 4-year-olds could not answer what they could do with a *coat, towel, or cup*. Nearly 50% of children could not correctly answer the questions about *what they would do if they felt sick*, and more than 60% of the 3-year-olds could not correctly name *scissors* and a *fridge*. Chinese children are rarely encouraged to do self-care or family-care tasks such as putting on a coat, opening a fridge, taking medicine or going to bed when being sick. As a result, they may not have rich or in-depth language experience in these terms and hence were unable to answer the questions.

### Implications

There are three implications.

1. Early childhood educators and psychologists need to be mindful of the potential for over-referral of Mandarin-speaking children when using an English test to measure their English proficiency. Although the majority of the children in this study did not pass the PLS-5 Screening Test, the interpretation of typical errors suggests that the problems were primarily associated with interference from their first language and for cultural bias in the test.
2. It is recommended that early childhood educators and psychologists using the PLS-5 Screening Test with children from a Mandarin-speaking background need to check error patterns and consider whether they are consistent with the typical errors reported here when interpreting the test results. If referral is made for additional speech and language assessment, it is recommended that the full test results, not just the Screening Summary (which only shows a pass or a fail) be provided.
3. It was observed that some Chinese children were timid and needed their educators' presence during testing. This was in contrast to many Euro-Australian children who can sit alone for a language assessment. We recommend additional time for building rapport when using an English test with Mandarin-speaking children.



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## What can videogame design grammar teach us about high-stakes standardised assessment?

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Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students are required to demonstrate that their literacy and numeracy skills are within the top 30% of the Australian adult population by completing the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE). In 2011, [Australian Ministers of Education](#) agreed to the development and implementation of LANTITE to focus on improving students' literacy and numeracy achievement, as measured by the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The Ministers focused on LANTITE to ensure the quality of teachers' literacy and numeracy skills and improve the educational achievements of school students. The [LANTITE framework](#) and pool of questions were developed by the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) and were first implemented in 2016. Since its development, LANTITE has been a requirement of ITE for the past 10 years.

ITE students are required to attempt LANTITE in their first year of full-time study. [Academic research](#) reports that ITE students experience: test anxiety, frustration with the time it takes to receive their LANTITE results, and a need for more specific assessment feedback. Moreover, [Australian news sites](#) report ITE students experience concerns such as how the test is administered, the cost of registration and private tutoring for preparation, and the impact on their course progression and graduation.

In response to these concerns, from 2024, [ACER changed how LANTITE results were reported](#) to students to provide more targeted feedback on areas that may require improvement. Overall, governance

requirements mandating that ITE students complete LANTITE to graduate require universities to support ITE students' preparation for the external, high-stakes assessment.

### Computer-based assessment and Serious Gaming

[LANTITE is a computer-based assessment](#) administered to participants at a point in time. [The Literacy component of the test can be completed](#) using computers at a test centre or through remote proctoring. Participants are permitted to have a bottle of water, scratch paper and a pen. Remote proctoring participants must have a clear water bottle and only 2 pieces of scratch paper. The test requires participants to read print-based texts displayed on a computer screen. The print texts are not interactive with dynamic moving pictures. [ACER](#) further state that the texts do not include "multi-layered digital texts", but what is meant by this is not elaborated.

What is missing from this definition of a computer-based assessment is that participants must know how to use a keyboard and mouse to answer the questions, and that some questions use hyperlinks that direct participants to specific paragraphs relevant to answering the question. Other interactive features of the computer-based assessment include a countdown timer and a navigation taskbar that indicates whether questions have been answered or remain unanswered.

Given that LANTITE is delivered as a computer-based assessment, it makes sense to consider how [Technological Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) approaches can support students' preparation. [Serious Gaming](#) is a

TEL approach with the potential to yield new theoretical insights that can support students' preparation. Over the past 20 years, [Serious Gaming](#) has been used to inform literacy learning in primary and secondary educational settings and to understand how [the design of videogames can shape students' learning and literacy practices](#). [Game-based quizzes](#) have also been used in vocational higher education settings to support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students. More recently, [post-digital perspectives](#) have yielded new insights into how games can be used for learning. Also, [emerging social semiotic understandings of videogames](#) have been used to inform students' [English curriculum learning experiences](#) and how [educational games sequence and evaluate student learning](#). Emerging social semiotic understandings of videogames offer apt theoretical tools for examining how the LANTITE computer-based assessment is gamified through [a quiz format in which a question is initiated, participants respond, and responses are evaluated](#).

**A videogame design grammar for computer-based assessment**

Videogame social semiotic understandings of the LANTITE computer-based assessment can illuminate new insights into how ITE students can prepare for the Literacy component of the assessment. Figure 1 represents a basic framework for a videogame design grammar for computer-based assessment. First, the framework considers the cultural and situational context surrounding the LANTITE. The cultural context includes

the quiz game format of the assessment and the text types used in different community and institutional contexts, such as [personal and community, school and teaching, and further education and professional learning](#). The situational context includes the assessed subject knowledge concerning [reading processes and technical skills of writing](#). The roles and relationships enacted during the computer-based assessment, as well as the communication channels, such as the assessment interface and written communication. Second, the framework draws on [social semiotic functional grammar tools for language](#), as well as [visual and emerging videogame design tools](#). Using these tools enables a critical interrogation of the LANTITE text types and test questions. This approach to interrogating LANTITE aims to offer new insights into how the assessment evaluates a participant's literacy skills to be in the top 30% of the Australian adult population. Moreover, text types and test questions can be identified by their difficulty level. Resources for the explicit teaching of these literacy concepts can be developed to support ITE students in preparing for LANTITE.

Computer-based assessments are becoming increasingly more common throughout educational and professional learning communities. TEL approaches, such as the emerging social semiotic videogame design grammar, offer innovative research tools for critically interrogating these assessment applications and for developing new teaching and learning approaches that further support students' learning during the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.




<p><b>Cultural Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz game format</li> <li>• Contexts: personal and community, school and teaching, and further education and professional learning</li> <li>• Text types and text formats</li> </ul> <p><b>Situational Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Subject knowledge:</b> Reading processes or Technical skills of writing</li> <li>• <b>Roles and relationships:</b> Test participant and computer assessment. An unequal power relationship exists between the participant and the computer assessment. The computer assessment holds the evaluative authority. There is limited involvement and contact between the participant and computer assessment.</li> <li>• <b>Communication channels:</b> Computer-based assessment interface and written communication</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Language</b></p> 	<p><b>Visual</b></p> 	<p><b>Game Design</b></p> 
<p><i>Language grammar resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole text level</li> <li>- Paragraph</li> <li>- Sentences</li> <li>- Clauses</li> <li>- Word groups</li> <li>- Words</li> <li>- Morphemes</li> <li>- Phoneme/graphemes</li> </ul>	<p><i>Visual grammar resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tabular information</li> <li>- Colour</li> <li>- Design and Layout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Participants</i> e.g. participant, Computer-based assessment application</li> <li>- <i>Actions</i> e.g. possible actions of the Test participant and computer application</li> <li>- <i>Circumstances</i> e.g. Count down timer, navigation panels, difficulty levels of assessment questions</li> <li>- <i>Orientation and negotiation roles</i></li> <li>- <i>Exchange structures</i></li> </ul>

Figure 1. Basic framework for a videogame design grammar for computer-based assessment



## Children's literature is important – and so is grammar!

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Here's a no-brainer: reading literature with children – picture books, short stories, novels – is important.

Of course, children's literature is an essential part of the primary English curriculum. Literature teaches us about the world and brings us pleasure. And with a good mentor text, a teacher can show students how skilled writers use language to engage young readers in their story worlds.

Effective story writing begins with an intention, an idea of a story world, the characters in that world, their actions, and the messages that the author wants to convey through those characters, and the events that take place. But then the author needs some 'tools' – in the form of language knowledge – to bring the story to life.

When we think of 'writing like an author', we might typically think of metaphors and similes: the literary bits and bobs we learned about in school ourselves. We probably don't think so much about grammar. For many of us, grammar suggests sets of rules and decontextualised exercises, the opposite of storytelling.

But learning about grammar doesn't have to be about underlining verbs and adjectives, or joining short sentences together to make longer ones for no apparent reason.

In fact, grammar is exactly what we need to understand how writers work.

### We'll take our grammar with meaning, thanks

Our book, *Teaching with Intent 3: Grammar, vocabulary and literary techniques in mentor texts*, brings literature and grammar together. A key idea is that grammar is not an arcane set of rules. Instead, grammar is a system of choices that we make - about words and how we arrange them in sentences, paragraphs and whole texts - to suit our purposes and our intentions. Research has demonstrated that this perspective – of language as a system of choices for making meaning – can be used to improve students' literacy and English language knowledge across many educational settings.

When applied to literature, grammar is about knowing how to organise words in ways that make a story engage the reader.

To write our book, we took time to analyse how authors of children's literature organise their language. We wanted to know: How do Jackie French and Nerrida McMullin create historical worlds in which young readers have a sense, not just of the physical landscapes, but also how characters moved, felt and thought within those times and spaces? What makes Roald Dahl's character descriptions so effective that we

genuinely dislike them? How does [Paul Jennings](#) build suspense in his scary stories, so that even reluctant readers have to keep on reading? And how does [Tim Winton](#) describe a fish – its colours, its movement, its presence – so vividly that we believe it to be the most exquisite thing?

Our study led us to notice how authors carefully choose verbs to give us a clear idea of how their characters move, feel, talk and think. We noticed how authors build imagery, not simply by adding more adjectives, but through their thoughtful choice of nouns, and by the way they ‘frontload’ them with carefully chosen adjectives, and elaborate with adjectival phrases and relative clauses.

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**We noticed the words and phrases that tell us ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’, ‘why’, and ‘who with’, and the order in which they place them in the sentence. These words are essential to building the detail necessary for creating rich story worlds.**

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We noticed the organisation of larger groups of words too. For example, we noticed when authors used short, simple sentences, or even incomplete sentences, to increase the pace, build suspense or bring about a quick change of focus. We thought about why authors use longer, complex sentences: sometimes to slow down the pace, to allow for more description, or to build logical connections between ideas.

**Grammar is part of literature**

Literature and grammar are not at all at odds with each other. The implication for primary English teachers is that we can find ways to bring these elements of the English curriculum together. Since our [human brains are hardwired](#) to be [interested in stories](#), let’s leverage this in teaching students about how written stories are organised.

Understanding how skilled authors craft their stories is tremendously empowering for young writers, particularly for those who may lack easy access to books at home, and for those who struggle with reading and writing. When we explicitly teach authors’ ways of using grammar, we can then better support students to experiment in using language for themselves, with purpose and intent.





## How can educators use effective early intervention programs for vulnerable children?

[Dr Majida Mehana](#) | [mmehana@une.edu.au](mailto:mmehana@une.edu.au) | Early Childhood Education

Early childhood educators need to provide quality learning opportunities and engage with children from diverse backgrounds who have different strengths, needs, and vulnerabilities. This article explores how educators can be informed by specialised early intervention programs that are available to some children who need them.

### Understanding vulnerability

A child's developmental trajectory is influenced by their family's socioeconomic status. [Factors](#) such as income, wealth, employment status, educational level, and occupational prestige impact a family's home environment and access to resources, quality healthcare, education, and social opportunities.

Limited access to quality resources leads to inequities among children that are both avoidable and preventable. Those disparities can translate into underachievement across domains such as physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language development and cognitive skills, or communication skills and general knowledge ([Commonwealth of Australia, 2023](#)).

As educators might not be equipped to plan adequately for vulnerable children, it is beneficial to draw on evidence-based, effective [early intervention programs](#). These programs offer families of young children strategies to support their parenting and their children's developmental needs and strengths. Programs may focus on parents, children, or parent-child interactions. [Early intervention programs](#) such

as the [Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters \(HIPPY\)](#) and the [Positive Parenting Program \(Triple P\)](#) have [benefited](#) children and their families. The HIPPY program has been implemented in [15 countries](#) including over [100 communities](#) in Australia alone.

The next section explores strategies educators can implement to support vulnerable children in early education and care settings, using the HIPPY program as an example.

### The HIPPY Program

In the HIPPY Program, packs of play-based educational activities are provided to families weekly or fortnightly. A tutor supports the parents in sharing the activities with the children. Parents implement the activities and look for opportunities to transfer them to other contexts and family members. HIPPY uses the term 'Everywhere Learning' to label this process.

For educators to positively influence children's lives, they need to attend to the child, the family, the community, and their own professional development. The strategies outlined below would be beneficial to all children, but especially for those with vulnerabilities.

### Empowering the home environment

Drawing on the HIPPY program, educators can ensure that families are informed about the child's progress at school and the curriculum being implemented, including the stories and learning experiences shared. Early childhood centres can also prepare home literacy

bags for families to borrow. These bags might include storybooks, games, songs, and props for children’s play. Resources could be created at the centre in collaboration with the parents, and storybooks may be sourced through donations. The aim is to circulate materials that families can enjoy using together at home.

Sharing practical guidance about effective communication with the child would also help the parents. A monthly newsletter could provide examples of developmentally appropriate practices.

A common element in effective intervention programs is partnership with families. At this stage of development, the child remains heavily dependent on the family for basic needs, emotional support, and socialisation practices.

**Stacking services**

Educators, especially when providing care for vulnerable children, cannot operate in silos. They need to be aware of local services and available community hubs. Such knowledge allows them to direct resources to children and families and connect them with those hubs. This facilitates the integration of health services, parent education programs, and family support programs (Tham et al., 2025).

**Financial, structural, communication and emotional support**

Although it is not the responsibility of educators to provide financial support to families, they could create a compilation of resources and referral services in the community.

Educators are well positioned to model effective communication practices with children. [The Belonging, Being & Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#) highlights the need for educators to attend to children’s emotional needs and to provide a secure base for children. This can be achieved by listening to children, observing their high and low moments, and guiding them to accept their emotions. Using eye-to-eye contact, being at the child’s level, and acknowledging children’s feelings are supportive behaviours that can be shared with parents.

**Shared reading**

Reading to the child has been related to children’s school performance in reading and numeracy across many year levels (Tham et al., 2025). Educators could invite parents to observe story-reading sessions in the childcare setting and offer tips on effective strategies for [reading with children](#).

**Educators’ wellbeing**

It is pivotal for educators to maintain their own wellbeing by adopting protective strategies such as participating in professional development and having group sharing sessions with like-minded educators.

**Conclusion**

Educators are one piece of the puzzle in helping children fulfill their full potential. By drawing on successful initiatives such as early intervention programs, educators can strengthen their capacity to support children in sustainable and practical ways. In collaboration with families, educators can also support children to develop life skills such as emotional competence, resilience, empathy, and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. By strengthening those outcomes, children could have an equitable chance to thrive.



Figure 1. Benefits of the HIPPY Program

Note: The author sourced the benefits from the HIPPY website and used the AI Image Model “Nano Banana Pro” (Gemini 3 Pro) to generate the Infographic design.



## Is the focus on NAPLAN's 'top' schools a good idea?

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On Wednesday, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [released](#) the school-level results for this year's NAPLAN tests. This reporting includes scores for years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across literacy and numeracy.

Parents received children's [individual reports](#) in July. Now we can see how individual schools performed.

Parents and the community can see how schools performed in absolute terms and how their students performed compared to other students with a similar background. They can also see how a school's student cohort has progressed compared to other children with similar starting scores and similar backgrounds.

Media outlets have published stories about "[top performing](#)" schools and those "[punching above their weight](#)".

It is a refreshing change to see positive stories of school improvement and student progress rather than the relentless doom-and-gloom of the last few years. However we should still be careful to acknowledge there is no silver bullet when it comes to improving students' reading and numeracy.

### It's hard to pinpoint the exact cause

Looking at the news coverage about NAPLAN, it's clear different stakeholders have different explanations about why some schools make more progress than others.

Some attribute NAPLAN success to [explicit teaching](#) methods – where teachers clearly explain and demonstrate what students need to learn. Others talk

about community [support for parents](#), [wraparound services](#) for students who need extra help, or intensive language learning support for students learning English as an additional language.

These are all positive approaches and all of them likely support students' academic success in different ways, depending on the school context and the specific needs of their students. But it is difficult to identify any one of these programs or approaches as the definitive cause of a school's NAPLAN growth.

For example, explicit teaching is [mandated](#) in NSW public schools. But not every public school is making above average progress. Many schools outside of the NSW public system have also made above-average progress without the explicit teaching mandate.

### What about other schools?

We also need to be careful about holding up exemplar or "top" schools, particularly when there might be many other schools following the same practices but not seeing the same NAPLAN results.

The good news stories remind us principals and teachers in these schools are clearly doing a wonderful job. But there are other principals and teachers at other schools doing equally good work, but not seeing those same results. Some schools might see above average progress one year, but average progress the next.

We risk making school leaders and teachers feel disillusioned if they are doing the same things but not seeing the same results.

### A more complex picture

The NAPLAN coverage makes creating academically successful schools seem straightforward, when the research tells us this is [complex to achieve](#) and can take time.

Many things contribute to academic success. These include students feeling a [sense of belonging](#), being able to [engage in their studies](#) and [attending school](#) consistently.

Schools understand the needs of their unique student groups, but providing support, programs and the teaching approaches they need is a continually evolving project.

### Staffing and resources

Meanwhile, funding continues to be patchy across Australian schools. Public schools in some states will not be fully funded [until 2034](#).

Specialised supports, programs and staff all cost money. Some schools [also find it very difficult](#) to find the teachers they need.

Principals may have a great vision. But if they don't have enough teachers it is extremely challenging to implement new ideas or embark on a program of school improvement.

### What if your school has performed below average?

Remember the numbers reported on the [MySchool](#) website are school year-level averages. These tell us something about the group of students at the school each year, but not a lot about individual students.

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**NAPLAN results on their own are not necessarily going to tell you whether any school is best for your child or family.**

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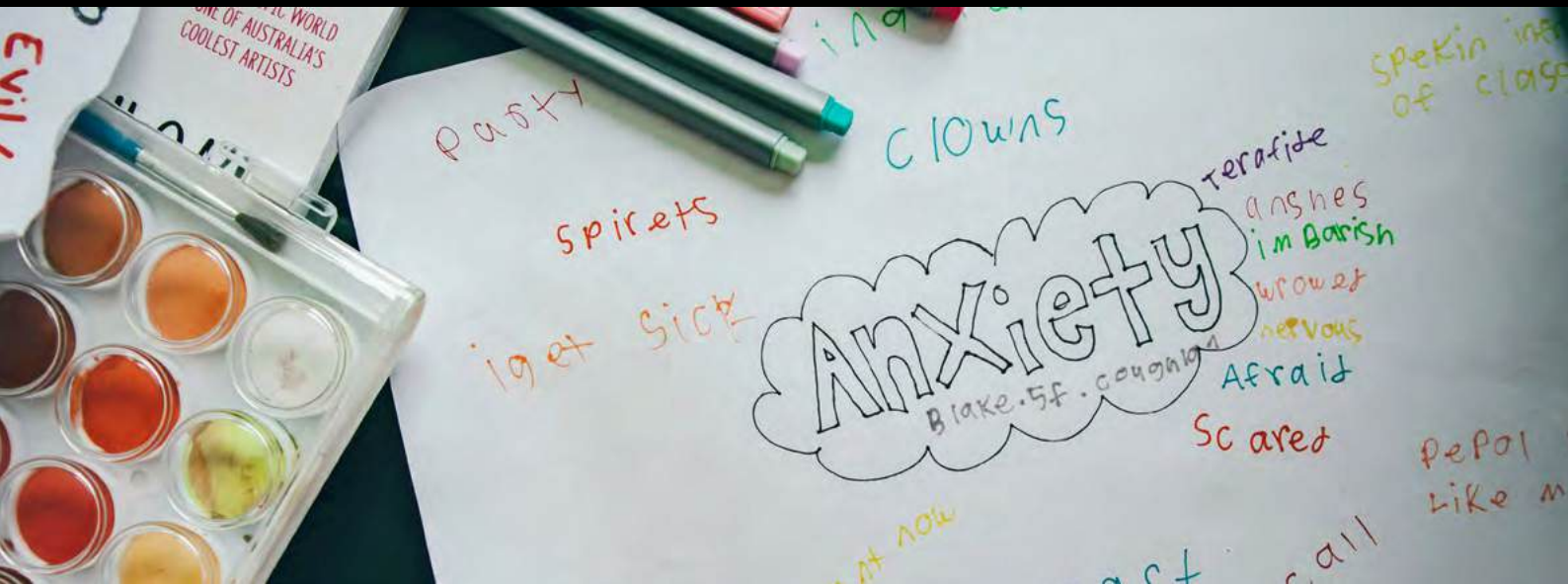
So don't be alarmed if you don't see your school making above-average progress this year. That's only one aspect of what a school is doing. It's more important to look at whether your child is being supported to learn, enjoy school and progress academically.

## THE CONVERSATION

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You can read the [original article here](#).





## Using positive psychology to support trauma-affected students

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Positive psychology focuses on enhancing wellbeing, resilience, and strengths – helping people not just recover, but flourish. In schools, this approach is especially valuable for students who have experienced trauma. [The Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment \(PERMA\) model](#) provides a practical, strengths-based framework for promoting positive development and long-term success.

### Impact of trauma on children’s learning and development

Trauma can stem from abuse, neglect, bullying, or exposure to domestic violence, among other issues. It often has profound, [lasting effects on a child’s development](#). These experiences impact brain structures such as the [amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex](#), which are essential for emotional regulation, memory, and decision-making. In classrooms, these impacts might appear as:

- Inattention
- Withdrawal
- Emotional outbursts
- Aggression
- Hyperactivity
- Language delays
- Inconsistent school attendance.

These behaviours are often survival responses, rather than signs of [defiance or disinterest](#). While trauma-informed practices have gained traction, much focus is still on managing deficits.

### Positive psychology provides a different path, helping students move beyond recovery towards thriving.

#### Optimal functioning and readiness to learn

Optimal functioning goes beyond the absence of dysfunction; it means reaching one’s [emotional, cognitive, and social potential](#). According to the [neurobiological model](#), emotional security supports cognitive skills like attention, problem-solving, and executive functioning.

This has important implications for schools: learning environments that intentionally support emotional wellbeing can significantly boost academic and social outcomes, especially for trauma-affected students. Safety, trust, and meaningful participation become foundational to learning.

## A framework for wellbeing

The [PERMA model](#) outlines five core elements of wellbeing:

- *Positive Emotions*: Cultivating joy, gratitude, and hope.
- *Engagement*: Creating flow through meaningful, focused activities.
- *Relationships*: Building safe, supportive connections.
- *Meaning*: Helping students connect learning to purpose.
- *Accomplishment*: Supporting goal setting and celebrating progress.

In school contexts, these domains help rebuild psychological strengths like trust, motivation, and confidence, especially in students who've experienced trauma. [PERMA can be measured](#) and implemented in the educational milieu.

Crucially, PERMA-based strategies can be used without major changes to systems. They can be applied through consistent relationships, strengths-based feedback, and routines that affirm student agency and competence.

## The scope and stakes of childhood trauma

Approximately [22% of Australian children](#) are estimated to experience trauma or adverse childhood experiences by mid-adolescence. [Unresolved trauma](#) is linked to long-term risks such as reduced educational attainment, mental health struggles, and economic hardship.

Given the stakes, schools play a critical role in early intervention. Educators can offer protective factors like stability, emotional safety, and encouragement. This supports both academic performance and life outcomes.

## Creating conditions for growth

Teachers can be the most consistent adults in a student's life. [Trauma-affected students may benefit from:](#)

- Trusting relationships
- Emotional responsiveness
- Strengths-based feedback

While PERMA offers a roadmap to wellbeing, it depends on foundational conditions like psychological safety and self-regulation. [Trauma-informed practice must come first](#), creating the base on which PERMA can build.

For example, a child in a Hyper-aroused state may not benefit from goal setting until they feel safe and regulated. Educators must carefully sequence their supports – meeting immediate emotional needs

before introducing flourishing strategies.

## Practical applications in the classroom

Schools can use the PERMA model to inform both whole-school and individual strategies. Examples include:

- Daily greetings and check-ins to build emotional connection
- Mindfulness and brain breaks to support regulation
- Positive language and celebration of effort to nurture self-worth
- Student-led projects to promote meaning and agency
- Goal setting and reflection to encourage accomplishment

Tools like the [PERMA Profiler](#) can support Individual Education Plans (IEPs), helping educators assess wellbeing domains and tailor interventions.

These small, consistent practices build emotional safety, trust, and engagement – laying the groundwork for learning and long-term development.

## Limitations and considerations

While the PERMA model is promising, it has limitations:

- It assumes a baseline level of psychological safety not all trauma-affected students possess
- It may require adaptation for culturally and linguistically diverse learners
- More research is needed on PERMA's direct impact on trauma recovery in school settings

It has been recommended [best practice to contextualise the model](#) to reflect students' backgrounds and needs. Used thoughtfully alongside trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice, PERMA becomes a flexible, strengths-based tool.

## Conclusion

The PERMA model provides a practical, evidence-based framework for supporting trauma-affected students in schools. It reminds us that flourishing is possible – not just for students who are already doing well, but for those who've faced significant adversity.

By intentionally fostering positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, educators can help create classrooms where all students feel safe, valued, and capable of thriving – emotionally, socially, and academically.



## Minimum ratios don't keep infants, toddlers and children safe

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Ratios need to be higher than the current minimum standards to ensure child safety. The [safety and well-being of children](#) must be the first and overriding priority in every early childhood education and care service. My [PhD](#) study examined the effect of government policy on educators and how early childhood professionals responded to top-down policy mandates. Findings demonstrated that the educator-to-child ratio was a key concern for early childhood professionals. Unsafe staffing levels undermine children's rights to safety and to high-quality early childhood education and care. Recent public reporting, including from [Australian academics](#), continues to highlight growing concerns in [safety](#), [supervision](#), and regulatory [oversight](#) across the sector.

### Changes in January 2026

From January 2026, updates to the [National Quality Standard](#) (NQS) make child safety expectations explicit across [Quality Areas 2.2.3, 7.1 and 7.2](#), strengthening expectations around staff responsibilities and governance. However, stronger mandates do not resolve the practical reality that supervision depends on adequate staffing ratios, not policy wording alone. Even with the recent reforms announced, child safety will still depend on operators going beyond regulatory [minimum standards](#). Closing any '[loopholes](#)' is essential to reduce ongoing [supervision failures](#) and to drive real change.

### Where safer staffing mandates fall short

While the Education and Care Services [National Law & Regulations](#) specify supervision, ratios, and governance, they do not explain how educators can realistically maintain continuous supervision. Educators are often

taken off the floor for [cleaning](#), [sanitation](#), and [child illness](#) responsibilities. These tasks still require educators to maintain [active supervision](#), with staff to be physically present, attentive, and able to see and hear children across all areas of the service. Adequate supervision, as per [National Law](#), cannot be achieved due to competing demands.

### Staff-to-child 'under-roof' ratios

[Educator-to-child ratios](#) are [unrealistic](#). Educator-to-child ratios set the minimum legal staffing requirements and allow an 'average' across the whole service. In my doctoral research, Ava (a corporate long-day care educator) explained how '[under-roof ratios](#)' (re)distribute children across rooms, increasing workload and reducing supervision.

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I don't even know if it's a policy, but they have this under-roof ratio; how do they do that? I hate it. I feel like it's not very fair. There are times when you have three or two children over in your room, but they fit in another room, which I don't understand .... It puts so much more stress on the people in that room, but it's okay? I don't even get why that is allowed.

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### Burnout and attrition in the sector

Ratios are not just policy numbers; they are lived conditions that create stress, burnout and unsafe conditions. Vanessa explains that ongoing issues with inadequate ratios force educators to stay back to cover gaps, which are leading to issues such as [time and wage theft](#). These tensions, combined with low pay and poor working conditions, are a major driver of the sector's [attrition cycles](#). The expectation that educators remain beyond their paid hours to meet staffing ratios reframes compliance as an educator's burden. [Vanessa, an early childhood teacher in my PhD study, said bluntly,](#)

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Pay these poor girls more money! They do a hard job. They earn peanuts. Ratios, half the time, are not right. They got to stay an hour more just to fill in ratios. They can't have a life after a weekday and a weekend to go to the doctor or the hairdresser. I see the frustration, and I just feel sorry for them. The turnover is shocking.

---

The demands of the work placed on early childhood professionals are leaving educators feeling overwhelmed and burnt out. Child safety can't rely on educators doing more; it requires more educators in the room. [Recent Australian research](#) found that many educators spend a significant amount of time working away from children and experience frequent distractions and interruptions across the day. Pressure on early childhood professionals is rising, and the workforce



shortage deepens. Australia needs over [21,000](#) more educators. So, who is supporting the educators caring for our youngest children when so many are [quitting](#)?

### A call to action

There are [many actions needed](#) to address these issues. These include:

- Minimum ratios set educators up to fail. Increase staffing.
- Governance reform must abolish 'under roof ratios' and enforce real-time, room-based ratio compliance
- Real- world workforce investment that increases staffing ratios, reduces stress, and stabilises the workforce

### What can educators do?

- **Document risk and escalate concerns**  
Record any risks, including unpaid overtime. Frame them as child safety compliance issues, not operational inconveniences or staffing failures.
- **Reporting**  
Seek guidance from the [NSW Regulatory Authority](#) and workplace safety advice from [SafeWork NSW](#)
- **Industrial advice and advocacy**  
For advice on workload and safety conditions, contact the [United Workers Union, Early Education](#), or the [Independent Education Union NSW/ACT](#).

### Where to from here?

Children must be protected through proper supervision. Parents have the right to expect their children to be safe from harm. Educators also deserve our advocacy, supported by staffing levels that make safe, high-quality care possible every day.





The friends we make in service communities can be special. This is how I met Rachael. I hope we stay friends for ever. I now have something in common with other service families everywhere in the world.

## All the Great Things About Being in a Service Family: Caleb and Rachael's Story

Story, concept and design by Marg Rogers  
 Co-authors: Michèle L. Hébert, Emily Small, Tegan Kanard, Margaret Sims, Amy Johnson, Philip Siebler, Michelle Gossner, Adam Ren and Einar Thorsteinsson  
 Illustrations by Tanya Cooper



## Understanding co-creation for community projects: Examples for supporting service families

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[Professor Margaret Sims](mailto:margaret.sims@mq.edu.au) | [margaret.sims@mq.edu.au](mailto:margaret.sims@mq.edu.au) | Honorary Professor Macquarie University  
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This article explores what co-creation is all about and how it can be helpful in community projects. Two examples are given to illustrate these complex processes involved in co-creation.

### Why is co-creation important for community projects?

**Co-creation** is a collaborative process in which community members, partners, and organisations work together as equal partners to design, develop, and implement solutions, services, resources or policies. It is the opposite of top-down approaches, providing shared ownership by leveraging lived experience and collective knowledge to deliver effective, equitable outcomes for a specific setting or group.

Co-creation is part of a continuum that begins at the lowest level of community participation: consultation. Further community involvement may lead to co-design, but the gold standard is co-creation, where the community is involved in every part of the solution or resource creation. This is a time-consuming process that involves many voices to include and manage. However, it can lead to increased trust, more relevant and effective solutions, and the elevation and empowerment of potentially unheard voices.

Co-production is also a term used in community solutions. It involves community members by implementing “a previously agreed solution (strategy) to a previously agreed problem and focuses on how to allocate resources and assets ... to achieve better outcomes” ([Vargas et al., 2022, p. 2](#)).

Sometimes, research teams will also apply other frameworks to their work, such as a trauma-informed framework, as our team does. [Such approaches](#) are more difficult to implement and require greater effort. However, this approach can support potentially vulnerable participants to be involved in such projects or participate in usability testing of the end product. It can mean they can participate, but avoid being re-traumatised.

So, what does that look like when creating free resources for children from specific groups?

### 1. Exploring the benefits of service family life through co-created resources

As we experience a typical Australian summer, with bushfires and floods, we are grateful to the first responders and Defence personnel who work hard to keep us safe. Little thought is often given to their children, who may be missing their parent who is working away or worried about the danger their parent is facing.

#### Strengths and benefits

Despite these challenges, it is important to recognise the strengths of these families and the benefits of growing up in them. Understanding this can help their parents, educators, support workers, and clinicians draw on those strengths and coping strategies to support them. These are also called [protective factors](#) that can [reduce the risk](#) of poor outcomes and even [mental illness](#).

The UNE-led [Child and Family Resilience Programs](#) team is an interdisciplinary group that co-creates free online resources with families, service providers, clinicians, educators, international researchers, and community organisations. The international team is made up of Australian, Canadian and UK members.

This team are co-creating a free e-storybook to help children and families explore these protective factors and opportunities that come from growing up in these families. The e-storybook is suitable for all children and aimed at ages 5-8. It aims to build a sense of belonging for children from service families.

The book weaves together lived experience narratives from family members, along with findings from the research. It explores benefits such as:

1. A steady income and employment,
2. Potential support with housing,
3. Opportunities to live in different communities,
4. Potential opportunities to live overseas and learn about new cultures and languages,
5. A sense of pride in their parent’s service roles,
6. A sense of community within the organisation,
7. Learning to rely on themselves and help out when their parents are unavailable,
8. Learning to use a range of digital communication tools to stay in touch with their parent when they work away.

**E-storybook and modules**

The Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research is providing funding to develop this resource so it can be made available online for families under a Creative Commons Licence. This means the e-storybook can be updated, adapted and translated freely to support children worldwide for years to come.

The e-storybook has been illustrated and is in its final draft stage. The team is now seeking anonymous feedback from community members to help improve the resource before it is released for free online. Please test drive it [here](#).

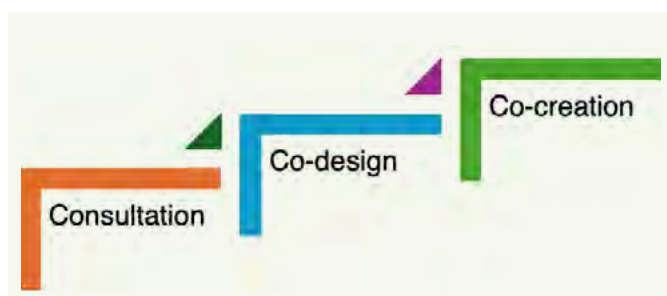


Figure 1: The increasing involvement of affected communities and partners in projects

Accompanying the e-storybook will be a suite of free online modules for parents, educators, clinicians and support workers to better understand the benefits of service family life.

**2. Exploring parental complex-PTSD through co-created resources**

In 2025, our team co-created free resources to support school counsellors, therapists and parents in supporting children whose parents have complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD). This involved a partnership between the University of New England (UNE), Central Queensland University, Combat Stress, Kings College London, and Buds in Bloom (Canada).

The new resources include a [bibliotherapy e-storybook](#) based on real-life narratives from people who grew up with parents living with C-PTSD (designed for one-to-one [bibliotherapy](#)). This book is for therapy situations only; it is not for group or classroom readings with other children. The e-storybook includes resources to help parents, support workers, and clinicians better understand the unique experiences of these families.

While the project focused on service families, C-PTSD affects other families, including those impacted by childhood abuse, domestic violence, neglect, attachment trauma, human trafficking, war, imprisonment, and cultural displacement.

The team have already created 14 free, research-based [children’s e-storybooks](#), each with downloadable [educational activities](#), including puzzles, puppets, board and card games, numeracy tasks, storytelling and sequencing exercises, and sight words. Interactive storybooks are also freely accessible online. The accompanying three suites of resources support [parents, educators, support workers and clinicians](#) to better assist these children.

**Conclusion**

Overall, community collaboration, in whatever form, helps keep research projects relevant and impactful.





## Education degree – a dream come true

Kat Murphy | [media@une.edu.au](mailto:media@une.edu.au) | UNE Media

### Graduation spotlight: Louise Luu, Bachelor of Education K-12 Teaching

Nicknamed ‘101 questions’ as a child for her “insatiable thirst for knowledge,” Louise Luu always had big aspirations for her education. But her journey to attaining a teaching degree has not been easy.

“I was the eldest of seven children to a mother who had me at 14 years old. Going to school was more of a babysitting situation, so I did not develop the foundational blocks required to navigate a university degree,” Louise says.

But Louise’s determination to make something more of herself paid off, after a few false starts with university studies.

“For my first attempt straight after high school, I failed miserably. So I tried again, and again I failed. I simply didn’t have the perseverance, resilience and strategies to keep going. I attempted my first year three times and failed until I finally started at UNE in November 2019.

Also a mother of a young child, Louise wanted to study flexibly, and found UNE through a friend.

“A friend mentioned to me that UNE was the leading online university in Australia at the time. Everything was extremely user-friendly and easy to understand. There were great support systems in place, and they had extensive resources.”

Starting slowly, Louise found her feet.

*As I was nervous about failing, I started with one unit to test how I would go, and I ended up getting an HD. The following trimester I increased it to two units, then three until I had the confidence to study fulltime. It was a long process, but I learnt to love the journey.*

While riding the highs and lows, Louise found the tools, support and strategies she needed to succeed.

“There were points where I had to accept that my best wasn’t as good as other days and there were times when I surprised myself and found I had more in me than I thought. One of the biggest lessons I learnt was how I studied best.

“I also learnt to chip away at everything. One or two hours of study each day worked way better for me than to procrastinate and have to tackle a mountain in one go.

“My favourite saying became, ‘How do you eat an elephant? – one bite at a time.’”

As a Wangkangurru Yarluyandi and Gunditjmara woman, Louise valued the community at UNE’s Oorala Centre, as well as all the support available at UNE.

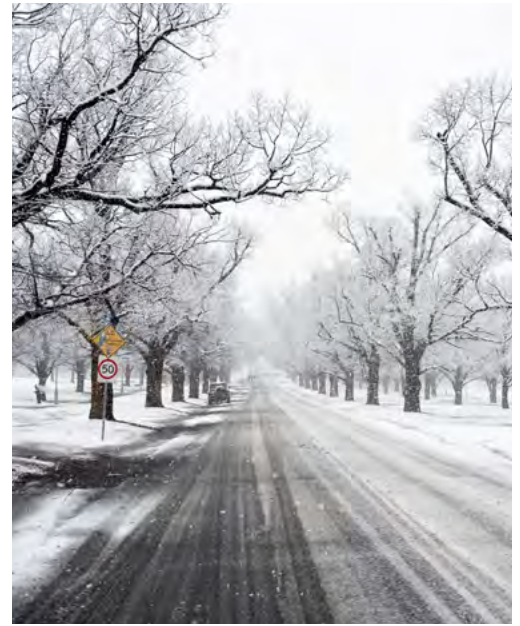
“I learnt to utilise the resources well, including the tutors at Oorala, the PASS program, and the wellness centre and I learnt to build relationships with the unit coordinators.

*The highlights of my experience at UNE were definitely the Orientation weeks when Oorala would get everyone together for a few days. I loved being amongst mob who truly cared about my success.*

“Secondly, it was an honour to be a part of the PASS team. They helped me grow in so many ways. I will always be grateful for how many opportunities they gave me throughout my time at UNE.”

With determination and support, Louise has achieved her long-held dream of obtaining a degree and becoming a teacher, just starting a position teaching VCE English in Melbourne.

“Graduating, to me, means being the first person in my family to attain a university degree. It means I made one of my lifelong dreams come true. It means breaking cycles and setting a new standard for my son. It means I invested in myself, and I saw it through to the end.”





## Future Teacher Scholarships

The School of Education at UNE is offering scholarships for students in Years 11 and 12 to support them in completing up to two Education units available in Education and Teaching degrees, delivered as part of the HSC University Pathways program.

### The available units are:

- EDEE100 English Language in Use;
- EDME146 Primary Mathematics 1: Numeracy;
- EDEC102 Young Children’s Resilience;
- EDEC104 Children’s Spaces and Places.

### You need to meet all of the following entry requirements:

- You are a student in a registered secondary school or are currently registered for home schooling;
- If you are under 17 years of age, you have the consent of your parent/guardian; and
- If you are enrolled in a registered school, you have been recommended by the school Principal.



If interested and want to find out more information, please contact [Head of School, Education](#).

If you are ready to apply, please [complete the application form](#).

Please note that Scholarships only apply to the units listed in bold above from the UNE School of Education.

## Are your students or staff interested in studying early childhood?

[Explore the UNE Course Handbook](#)

Studying early childhood education has many benefits, including:

- making a difference in the most important years of a child’s life,
- the ability to build on children’s interests and strengths,
- being able to place children at the centre of their education,
- being part of a growing and important field,
- being in demand (there is a shortage of degree-qualified early childhood teachers in Australia),
- working closely with families to support children’s learning, and access to a variety of work options



*There are two different early childhood education courses offered at UNE.*

### **Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)**

This is a unique teacher education course that offers two career options for graduates. The course allows employment flexibility across schools and early childhood services to suit graduates’ opportunities and circumstances.

It is an initial-teacher education qualification that encompasses working with children from birth to age 12 in both early childhood and primary school settings.

This course is available:

- full time or part time,
- on-campus or online,
- with a Trimester 1, 2 and 3 start each year.



### **Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education and Care)**

Graduates are qualified to teach children aged birth to 5 years and there are multiple entry pathways.

Students commencing in Year 1 of the degree choose four subjects from a wide range of options relevant to contemporary early childhood teaching, leadership and business such as Dinosaurs!, Introduction to Literature: Children’s Books, Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Introduction to Legal Studies, and Introduction to Management Accounting and more. The four electives are completed in the first two years of the course. Students starting in Year 1 will also have more professional placement days than the minimum requirement.

Students with a diploma in early childhood education and care (or equivalent) will start at Year 3 of the degree. In Years 3 and 4, students complete subjects, with flexibility in terms of the order subjects are completed. Most placements can be completed in a student’s own workplace allowing for new knowledge to be put into practice.

This course is available:

- full-time or part-time,
- online
- with a Trimester 1, 2 and 3 start each year.



## Are you interested in further study?

You can find out about our UNE Education courses via the [Handbook](#).

The University of New England offers a wide variety of programs to assist teachers to upgrade their skills. Within many courses, you can specialise in the area in which you are interested.

### For more information, visit:

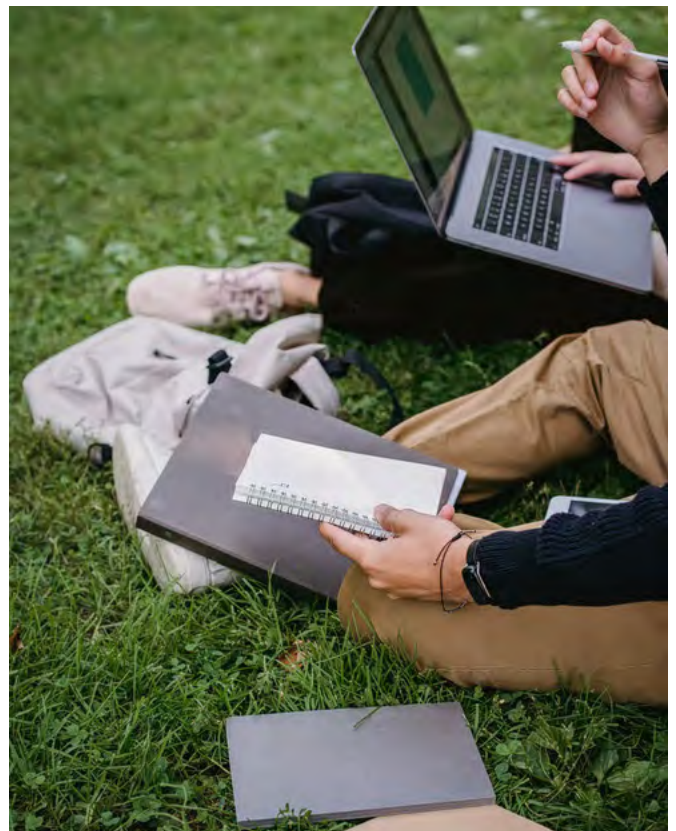
[School of Education Postgraduate Study](#),  
[Graduate Certificate in Education Studies](#),  
[Master of Education \(Research\)](#),  
[PhD](#)

### Scholarships, prizes and awards

UNE offers many [scholarships, prizes and awards](#) to support our students with their studies. Many of these go unused because students do not apply believing they would not be eligible. It is worth spending the time to apply.

### Other undergraduate teaching degrees

Discover our wide range of undergraduate pre-service teaching degrees (early childhood, primary, secondary) and conversion [degrees here](#).



### Want to stay informed about our School activities?

Join our UNE School of Education community on Facebook to keep up with our news and happenings in research, teaching and learning [Facebook/UNEeducation](#)



## Are you wanting to become a teacher?

**The career opportunities for education graduates are increasing every year, especially in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.**

By studying at UNE, you will be well equipped to perform in these often-demanding contexts, plus you'll be more likely to obtain a permanent teaching position if you work in an area of teacher shortage. The NSW Government even offers a variety of targeted scholarships to help you study and gain employment: [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/getpaidtostudy](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/getpaidtostudy)

UNE has developed undergraduate courses in Early Childhood, Primary, Early Childhood/Primary, and K-12 Teaching to expand employment prospects by qualifying you to teach across two sectors.

### What Teaching Courses are Available?

UNE offers a number of [undergraduate Education courses](#) including:

- Bachelor of Education
  - Early Childhood Education and Care
  - Early Childhood and Primary
  - K-6 Teaching
  - K-12 Teaching
  - Secondary Arts
  - Secondary STEM
  - In-service conversion (for teachers who might be thinking of retraining)
- Bachelor of Special and Inclusive Education (Primary)
- Master of Teaching (Primary)
- Master of Teaching (Secondary)

### Worried About the “Three Band Five” Requirements?

Many of our Initial Teacher Education courses are structured to include one year of “discipline studies” (i.e. subject/s that you will go on to teach in schools) in the first year of study. Successful completion of this first year also gives all students, irrespective of their educational backgrounds, the opportunity to demonstrate they meet the Government’s academic standards for studying teaching.

**You can find out more about becoming a teacher [here](#).**

### Want to stay informed about our School activities?

Join our UNE School of Education community on Facebook to keep up with our news and happenings in research, teaching and learning [Facebook/UNEEducation](https://www.facebook.com/UNEEducation)





## Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, courses and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia. We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal community and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future.

Artwork: Warwick Keen "Always was, always will be" 2008. Gifted by the artist to UNE in 2008