

Linking Research to the Practice of Education

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

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Editorial

Welcome to this edition of *Linking Research to the Practice of Education*, a UNE School of Education research newsletter for all educators.

Four articles are presented in this issue. First, Adele Nye and Jennifer Clark present their research on child abandonment in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. The authors put forward novel perspectives on how students can benefit from visiting museums. The second article is by Kishore Mongar who describes whether and how the implementation of an environmental science subject empowered Bhutanese students to commit to sustainable environmental conservation. In the third article, the authors Sue Gregory, Jennifer Charteris, Joanna Anderson and Genevieve Thraves introduce the High-Ability Toolkit, a free online resource that they developed in partnership with the DET Victoria. In addition, the authors draw on their collective expertise to present ten top tips for teachers and principals wishing to support the needs of their high-ability students. The last article in this issue is by Marg Rogers. The author describes some of the ongoing challenges that Directors of Early Childhood and Childcare Centres have to address to mitigate the risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This issue also features two opportunities for our audience members to participate in research in our School of Education.

We hope that you find something engaging in this issue. The next issue will be published in February, 2022.

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Doing history differently: Exploring the histories of Foundling Homes and child abandonment

Dr Adele Nye (UNE) and Dr Jennifer Clark (University of Adelaide)

Child abandonment is rare in contemporary times but this has not always been the case. During the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, many thousands of babies were given up to institutions due to extreme poverty and the absence of welfare support systems. For example, in one year alone in Italy, it was estimated that 35,000 children were placed in Foundling Homes in the mid-19th century (Kertzer, 1991, p.5). In England, the figures were also grim. Our research centers around gaining an insight into the sorrowful stories of the women and children as well as visiting the sites that once housed these Foundling homes. Two are now well-established museums, The Museo degli Innocenti in Florence (Figure 1) and the London Foundling Hospital. There are, however, many sites that are unmarked and re-purposed, and with those transformations, their stories and histories lost.

Our research focuses on visiting these sites and seeking the residues of their sad history. We first immersed ourselves in the traditional forms of historical texts and then began an exploratory and experimental approach by slow walking, observing and immersing ourselves in the places. In some cases, the sites were difficult to find while others were more obvious. In one part of our research, we talk about two foundling home sites, in Berlin and Florence. In the Berlin site, the traces of the past were shrouded by the sounds of young children at a nearby child care centre, walkers (prams) in the large riverside park, apartment complexes, and house boats on the river. We eventually found the

heritage signs citing not only the founding home's existence on the site but also indicating that there had been a workhouse and later a prison in close proximity. The experience proved to be a rich encounter with the multiple layers of evidence imagined, found and surmised. We later sifted through our journals, travel notes, maps (old and current), photographs and our traditional research to build a narrative of the complex.

Figure 1

Admissions Window at Museo degli Innocenti (Nye 2019)

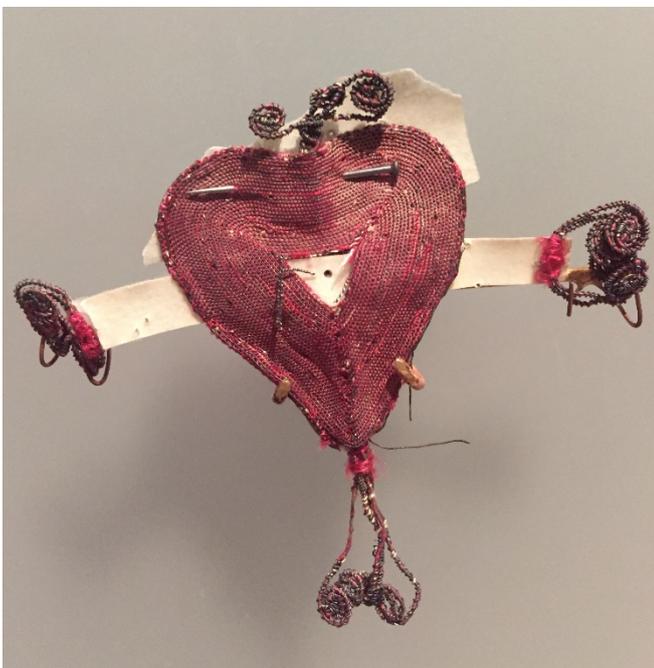


Just as the remnant sites of Berlin were heavy with tragic pasts, the museums in London and Florence had a deep and profound impact on us. Many children died in these places with records indicating that up to two-thirds did not survive. The foundling homes often

had a baby wheel / ruota where women could anonymously place their baby. In many cases, a small token would be placed with the child (Figure 2). Sometimes it would be cut in half. The idea being that when circumstances improved the mother could return to reclaim their child by presenting their half token. Life in mid eighteenth-century London was grim and in a twenty-year period only 152 children were reclaimed of the 16,282 (Styles, 2010, p.9-14). There are subsequently thousands of tokens still held in both museums. Their preservation and current presentation in the museums is remarkable. In Florence, a beautifully crafted room has been designed with drawers that illuminate their tragic contents when opened. As historians and educators, we were struck by the ruptures of time, where forlorn lives are now given light, their names made clear and visitors to the museum can acknowledge a previously shrouded history.

Figure 2

Token held in the Foundling Museum, London (Nye 2019)



Our research continues as we consider how students and teachers visiting museums and sites of historical significance can explore history differently. This interdisciplinary approach draws on the work of traditional history, social history, museology, tourism studies, dark histories and post-qualitative educational practices. We build on our earlier collaborative work which culminated in two edited books *Teaching the Discipline of History in an Age of Standards* (2018) and *Teaching History for the Contemporary World* (2021). Both texts are collegial efforts with historians from across Australia as well as the United Kingdom, Sweden, the US, and Colombia. The most recent includes chapters covering a range of areas taught in the history discipline including environmental history, war and genocide, citizenship, gender, digital histories as well as chapters focusing on employability, student perspectives, foregrounding difference, decolonising the curriculum and Aboriginal identity. It also includes the chapter on our experimental work looking at child abandonment and Foundling homes in Europe (Nye & Clark, 2021, p.117-134)

If you would like to know more about this research, please contact Adele Nye via anye@une.edu.au.

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The Implementation of Environmental Science in Bhutanese Schools

Dr Kishore Mongar (UNE Graduate, 2021)

Bhutan is a small developing nation in the Himalayas, bordered to the north by China, and to the south by India. The nation is facing environmental sustainability challenges while striving to balance socioeconomic growth and environmental protection to achieve Gross National Happiness (GNH). Education is recognised as one of the crucial instruments to respond to these challenges as stated in the Bhutanese Constitution. This echoes the visions and aspirations of His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan are that:

“We can dream of a nation of environmental conservation, GNH, a strong economy, a vibrant democracy and yet none are possible or sustainable if we have not already toiled and sweated in the building of a strong education system.” (Royal Education Council, 2012, p. 4)

In 2009, the Bhutanese Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced the policy Education for GNH to infuse GNH principles and values into the school curriculum at all grade levels. The policy was intended to embed GNH principles and values deeply into the consciousness of Bhutanese youth and citizens. The MoE expects every graduating student to possess the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to face real-world challenges and commit to sustainable environmental conservation. In this policy context, a new optional Environmental Science subject was introduced into Bhutanese schools in 2015, with the overarching goal to educate youth to engage in environmental conservation in the pursuit of

GNH. In my research, I examined how Environmental Science (ES) was implemented in secondary schools located in the southern Samtse region of Bhutan.



I adopted the Education for Sustainable Development framework in my study because of its alignment with the overall objectives of the national Environmental Science Curriculum Framework and other Bhutanese education policy documents. Using a mix of document analysis, classroom observations, interviews and surveys over a three month period in Bhutan, my goal was to represent the perspectives of students, teachers and principals on the ways ES was being implemented in the secondary schools.

Somewhat surprising was that very few participants identified climate change as a sustainability issue for Bhutan despite its grave impact on the country's ecological and socio-economic sustainability. The predominant anthropocentric worldviews in the ES textbooks and among the research participants suggest the need for more emphasis on eco-or bio-centrism and critical eco-pedagogy. The strong environmental knowledge focus in the ES textbooks and examinations, plus the high prevalence of transmissive teacher pedagogies with little community engagement or action-orientations could limit student's attainment of transformational objectives. For example, developing action competence to address environmental

sustainability as a key tenet of Education for Sustainable Development. However, the participants praised the notion of taking action to address environmental issues. These findings suggest the need for teacher preparation in Education for Sustainable Development, both pre-service and in-service, to explore more transformative action-orientated pedagogies. Such preparation may lead to pedagogical modifications in an already valued ES subject; and in turn, the greater realisation of Bhutan's ambitions and aspirations for sustainable environmental protection and GNH.



If you are interested in learning about how this research can help your school improve the delivery of environmental science, please contact Dr Kishore Mongar via kthapa05@gmail.com.

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Ten top tips for supporting the needs of high ability students in your school

Professor Sue Gregory (UNE), Associate Professor Jennifer Charteris (UNE), Dr Joanna Anderson (UNE) and Dr Genevieve Thraves (UNE)

Do you have high-ability (gifted and talented) students in your school who you think are underserved? Do you wonder about the approaches you can use to work proactively with these students? The University of New England (UNE) high-ability team have proven expertise in this area! In 2021, UNE academics Professor Sue Gregory, Associate Professor Jennifer Charteris, Dr Joanna Anderson and Dr Genevieve Thraves worked with the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) to produce an online High-Ability Toolkit: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/Pages/high-ability-toolkit.aspx>.

The Toolkit provides “guidance for primary and secondary school leaders and teachers on identifying and supporting high-ability students” defined as those “[...] whose ability is more advanced than that of similar aged peers in intellectual, physical, creative, and social domains” (DET, 2021, online). The Toolkit comprises easily digestible text-based information about high-ability, instructional videos, case study videos, professional learning modules, and downloadable resources that teachers can use in their classrooms.

The notion of ‘high-ability’ that underpins the Toolkit resources, draws on the same research base that considers the needs of gifted and/or talented students. Therefore, much of the content within the Toolkit has relevance for teachers across Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Here are ten top tips for supporting the needs of high-ability students in your school.

Tip 1: Know the learning characteristics for each domain of high-ability. Each domain of high-ability (intellectual, physical, creative and social) is associated with particular learning characteristics. For example, high-ability in the intellectual domain is linked with a rapid rate of learning, whereas high-ability in the creative domain is associated with flexibility of thinking. These characteristics will need to be considered in lesson design, but they are also useful for identifying high-ability. This is particularly the case where high-ability is masked.

Tip 2: Use multiple measures when identifying high-ability in the intellectual domain. It is important to remember that students may underachieve in typical forms of assessment for a variety of reasons. Adopting a multiple measures approach can help unmask potential where it might otherwise remain hidden. Multiple measures may include standardised tests; classroom observations; checklists; and parental nomination.

Call for Participation in Research: Sharing your stories of outdoor play and learning in primary schools

In 2020, Play Australia, the peak national advocacy organisation for PLAY, established a NSW Play Australia Branch to complement other state-based branches. Overall, Play Australia supports outdoor play by way of inspiration, advice, access to information and professional services. Play Australia is also a member and the Secretariat for Australia of the International Play Association. This organisation upholds the rights of all children to play, as recognised within Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. For further information, please see <https://www.playaustralia.org.au/>

As committee members of the fledgling NSW Play Australia Branch, we share a keen interest in outdoor play across all sectors. We suggest the potential for outdoor play and learning in NSW primary school settings has not been fully realised. The branch has charged us to find out what is happening in NSW primary schools and locate examples of best practice in outdoor play and learning. We do have some anecdotal insights about schools doing great things and the many benefits this brings for children and their learning, but there may be schools, yet to be recognised.

We are calling for primary school teachers or principals to contact us as potential case studies for showcasing their stories of playing and learning outdoors. For example, this might involve new playground designs or outdoor learning spaces, class time for outdoor learning across the Key Learning Areas, different outdoor pedagogical approaches or broader community engagement outdoors. At this stage, we are seeking expressions of interest in sharing your school case studies with others via the Play Australia website, but with limited outdoor school-based Australian research, later formal research studies might be possible.

We look forward to your responses and working with you, this as an opportunity to build professional engagement and shared expertise about outdoors.

Dr Helen Little, Senior Lecturer and Associate Course Director (Early Childhood). Macquarie University. Email: helen.little@mq.edu.au

Dr Sue Elliott, Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education, University of New England. Email: sue.elliott@une.edu.au

Tip 3: Create an aspirational culture at your school by normalising high-ability in the intellectual domain. Often, adolescents will grapple with a choice between ‘fitting in’ with their peers and achieving academically. This is known as the ‘forced choice dilemma’. Tackling the ‘forced choice dilemma’ is best achieved by creating an aspirational learning culture. This can be realised by normalising high-ability through a process of celebrating and expecting learning growth for all students.

Tip 4: Create success pathways for all domains of high-ability. It is important that all domains of high-ability are supported at school. This means schools need to create pathways for success for all four domains. Having a strong specialist program with connections to communities of practice beyond the school can ensure appropriate pathways are nurtured.



Tip 5: Differentiate in each high-ability domain based on students’ readiness, interest and learning profile. Students will come to learning with different readiness, interests and learning profile. This is true across all four domains. Teachers will best support their high-ability students if they take these three factors into account when planning.

Tip 6: Differentiate in each high-ability domain by co-constructing challenging goals with high-ability students. Goal setting is one of the most powerful tools to support high-ability students. Goals must be set at an appropriate level of challenge, and they work by making clear to students their current levels of performance in relation to their desired levels of performance. Goals are most effective when students and teachers develop them together.

Tip 7: Differentiate for high-ability in the intellectual domain by adding depth and complexity to the learning. Students with high-ability in the intellectual domain benefit from tasks with added depth and complexity. One way to achieve this is by focusing on higher-order thinking. Strategies that target higher levels of thinking include posing provocative questions, posing problems with no single solution, and posing paradoxes for students to consider.

Tip 8: Understand that high-ability can co-exist with additional needs. High-ability in the intellectual domain can co-exist with additional needs. This is often referred to as twice-exceptionality. Often, teachers can become over-focused on the twice-exceptional (2e) student’s area of need. These students need the same type of provision adjustments in areas of strength as other high-ability students.

Tip 9: Know the social-emotional characteristics associated with each domain of high-ability, and how these might impact progress. There are a number of social-emotional characteristics associated with each of the domains of high-ability. These traits can impact upon student learning and progress. For example, students with high-ability in the intellectual domain may develop unhealthy perfectionism. This often occurs when high-ability students are not

challenged and therefore not given the opportunity to develop the skills of learning.

Tip 10: Recognise all students are entitled to challenging learning experiences each and every day. Finally, and most importantly, high-ability students are entitled to be challenged every day. This is true across all four domains of high-ability.

If you would like to discuss the notion of high ability or partner with us to undertake research in this field, please contact Dr Genevieve Thraves gthraves@une.edu.au

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This Project is a collaboration between the University of New England and the Victorian Department of Education and Training



New publication: Early Years Learning in Australian Natural Environments

Dr Fran Hughes (UNE), Dr Sue Elliott (UNE), Ms Karen Anderson (Balnarring Preschool) and Dr Barbara Chancellor (Federation University)

We are pleased to share a new joint Oxford publication venture, the first publication about Australian nature play programs co-authored by Dr Fran Hughes (UNE), Dr Sue Elliott (UNE), Ms Karen Anderson (Balnarring Preschool, Victoria) and Dr Barbara Chancellor (Federation University). The authors bring together researcher and practitioner insights to deepen understandings about the potential of Immersive Nature Play Programs (INPPs) in Australian landscapes.

The number of INPPs has grown significantly in the last decade and such programs are offered in various guises by early childhood services, schools and private providers of holiday programs and playgroups. The text provides both pre-service and practising teachers with the knowledge and skills to connect children with nature through outdoor play and learning. Rich with contemporary theory, research, practical guidance and provocations, this text addresses a range of topics related to INPPs in the early years. These include the benefits of learning in natural spaces, First Nations People's perspectives, community engagement, understandings about pedagogical interactions and policies, and education for sustainability and risk management. More details can be found on <https://www.oup.com.au/books/higher-education/education/9780190325671-early-years-learning-in-australian-natural-environments-ebook>

Early childhood directors still affected by pandemic hyper-vigilance

Dr Marg Rogers (UNE), Associate Professor Wendy Boyd (Southern Cross University) and Professor Margaret Sims (Macquarie University)

The pandemic has caused major disruption in most workplaces. As frontline workers, early childhood educators have faced enormous challenges before, during and after lockdowns. We conducted interviews with Early Childhood Center (ECC) directors to get insights into the challenges they experienced as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. Findings from interview data revealed that educators are still feeling the effects of hypervigilance, despite experiencing no outbreaks in their community for over a year. In this article, we outline some of the challenges that our interviewees shared with us.

During the national lockdown in March 2020, enrolments in the participants' ECCs fell to around 10-15%, which led to casual educators losing their jobs (Hogan, 2020). Directors were worried that their casual workforce may be lost for good by the time the bulk of their families returned. While some centres were able to eventually access Jobkeeper, others did not qualify because they were part of larger organisations (Craig, 2020). Childcare Centres and ECCs were also the first to lose Jobkeeper. To mitigate the financial burdens, directors were trying to manage staff welfare as many of them had to wait a long time for Jobkeeper or Jobseeker welfare payments from Centrelink. For example, during the initial lockdown, one director with a supportive managing board gave permanent educators each one paid day at home each week. During this day, they were to work on professional development for half a day and

to rest for half a day for their wellbeing as essential workers (Dunn, 2020).

Directors found themselves withdrawing from teaching to write work safety plans and other workplace plans to keep their permanent staff employed. They felt pressured to constantly show governing bodies and boards what the staff were doing in terms of working with children face to face and online, taking part in professional development and developing online resources for families and children. Directors reported that parents were very appreciative of what the educators did for the children online via video conferencing, websites and apps. Some even offered to pay fees when their children were not attending if it meant the service would stay open when the service was losing money.



Directors expressed that they often felt exhausted during the pandemic. They said they were still constantly checking websites and felt hyper-vigilant. Parents were sharing their fears about the virus and asking directors for advice about whether they should keep their children at home. Directors felt they didn't have the information they needed to answer this, because the situation was constantly changing, and medical advice was shifting. Directors reported spending enormous amounts of time checking state

government websites and departmental education websites for up-to-date health information. Interestingly, the department responsible for their accreditation would only send out information well after it was available on the other two websites.

Compounding this, the announcement made by the Australian Government that all childcare would be free for some time meant a large and sudden influx of new families who normally did not access childcare. The services needed the enrolments to stay afloat. This meant staff had to suddenly get to know families, increasing educator's fears. They were frightened of where the families had come from and if they had been in contact with the virus. The new children were also unsettled because they were not used to childcare. Directors suddenly needed to have huge contact lists on their phones to reach all families, staff, cleaning staff, departments, board members or management bodies and other government bodies to let them know if an outbreak occurred. One director said she had moments where she felt 'panicked if I didn't have everyone's numbers with me wherever I went'. Furthermore, there was a difference in what parents seemed to want in terms of how often they engaged with the service. Educators were suddenly expected to learn how to use novel technology to communicate with families, and even with each other in socially distant staff meetings. Interestingly, some of these practices have stayed in place.

After the major lockdown, families and children gradually returned to the centres. Directors noted how the new changes for security and social distancing took some time for families to get used to. Some parents were fearful of the new families because they were unsure if they had come from areas where there were virus outbreaks. Educators had to assure parents the

new families were known to the staff and were local. In one particular centre, children returning were excited to see each other but took some time to play with each other again. They had become used to playing by themselves, so it took educator scaffolding to support joint play episodes. Directors reported being proud of the way their families and educators adapted to the changes. They said they were proud to be part of the early childhood education and care, and felt a greater urgency to speak up for the sector. They were pleased that the families let them know how much they were appreciated after having the children at home for so long.

There are many lessons to be learned from directors of ECEs who have and continue to grapple with the pandemic after-effects. If you want to share your experience or discuss your challenges with the authors, feel free to contact Marg Rogers on mbaber@une.edu.au.

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Call for Participation in Research: Test driving resources to assist children from defence families

Dr Marg Rogers (UNE), Dr Jo Bird (UNE), Dr Amy Johnson (CQU), Dr Ingrid Harrington (UNE), Professor Pep Serow (UNE), and Dr Vanessa Bible (UNE)

Do you want to test drive resources to assist children from defence families?

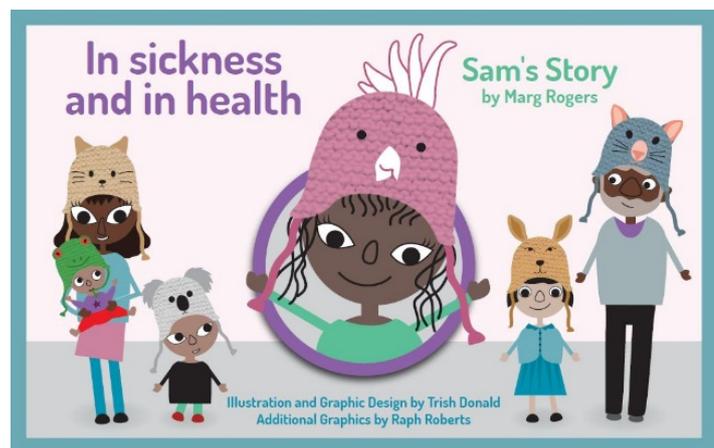
The Early Childhood Defence Program provides free, online, Australian, research-based resources for young children from defence families. The development of the program is funded by The Ian Potter Foundation and the University of New England. Until now, Australian resources for young children from defence families (current and veteran) has been very scarce. Our resources have been created with input from our Steering Committee, which includes educators, professionals, parents, researchers and organisations who have many years' experience supporting children from defence families.



Our resources are ready for testing in our control trials. If you work with young children from defence families, then we would like to invite you to register for our trials to try our online resources:

<https://ecdefenceprograms.com/index.php/registration-control-trials/>

The resources online resources are aimed at children (2-8 years), parents, educators and family workers. Some of our resources extend to older primary school-age children. Children will get the most out of the resources if they are also being used at home with their parents, so please also invite them to register.



The resources include research-based eBooks (downloadable, printable), interactive eBooks, activity books, support resources, educational activities (puppets, puzzles, games, board games, sequencing activities, sight words). The eBooks explore topics relevant to those in defence families as they deal with deployment, training episodes where a parent works away, frequent relocations, and commemorative days (e.g. ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day). Other eBooks are specifically targeted to families who have experienced service-related injuries, medical conditions and mental health conditions.

To check if you are eligible to register for the control trials please go to our website: <https://ecdefenceprograms.com/index.php/registration-control-trials/>

Are your students or staff interested in studying Early Childhood Education?

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 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,
- to start in Trimester 1 and 2 each year.

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching)



This degree is designed to meet the Australian Government's requirements for Early Childhood Education and to qualify graduates as four-year trained Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) for children aged birth to 5 years. Students are offered 2 years credit into the degree, if they have a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care or equivalent, plus a year of work experience in an early childhood setting.

This course is available:

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

Interested in further study in education?

Do you want to return to study? Do you want to know more? 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 some of the links below:

[School of Education Postgraduate Study](#)

[Graduate Certificate in Education Studies](#)

[Master of Education](#)

[Master of Education \(Research\)](#)

[Doctor of Education](#)

[PhD](#)

Interested in Becoming 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

UNE has developed undergraduate courses in Early Childhood and 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 Teaching)

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)

Bachelor of Special and Inclusive Education (Primary)

Bachelor of Education (K-6 Teaching)

Bachelor of Education (K-12 Teaching)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Arts)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Music)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Mathematics)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Science)

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

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.

Try our online 'Teaching Solution Finder' at www.becomeateacher.com.au, which makes it easy to understand the entry requirements of our Early Childhood Education and Initial Teacher Education degrees, and design a study pathway based on your personal circumstances.

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](#)