

# 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 the February 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, Dr Rachael Adlington illustrates how bloggers can use tags to express ideas within and between posts, and how tags might be used to represent ideational meanings in school-based blogs. In the second article, the authors Ms. Jo Anderson, Dr Jennifer Charteris and Dr Angela Page discuss issues around Inclusive Education. The authors share insights from their research project entitled *Inclusive Education in Innovative Learning Environments (IEILE)* to illustrate how the paradigm of Innovative Learning Environments can bolster new discussions about inclusive education in schools. The third article is a book review by Ms Julie Hayes, a retired principal. The book is co-authored by Dr Bronwyn Parkin from the University of Adelaide and UNE Senior Lecturer in English, Literacies and Languages Education, Dr Helen Harper. The review details how the book can help teachers develop expertise in text selection and analysis in order to offer students literate resources that they can appropriate for use in their own writing. The last "article" featured in this edition is by Dr Marg Rogers and Dr Jo Bird, whose UNE research team is reaching out to our Newsletter readership to contribute ideas for supporting the development of two open-access programs dedicated to assist educators and parents who support 2-5-year olds from defence families.

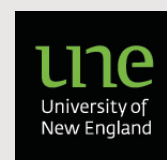
We hope that you find something engaging in this issue. The next issue will be published in August, 2020.

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## Blog co-authorship: using tags to express ideas in classroom blogs

Dr Rachael Adlington (UNE)

In previous editions of *Linking Research to the Practice of Education* (Vol 3, Issues 1 and 2), I discussed how bloggers and their readers co-author blogs through commenting, i.e. enacting interpersonal meanings, and how tags are used to organise meaning. In the final of a three-article series, I explore how bloggers use tags to express ideas within and between posts, and how tags might be used to represent *ideational* meanings in school-based blogs. I use the Australian Curriculum: English (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin, 1994) as my frameworks.

Alongside organising the blog, bloggers use tags to relate ideas within and between posts, thus construing ideational meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Here, I explore the logical relations between ideas as these meanings spread across texts. First, the logical relation of elaboration refers to the unpacking and repacking (summarising/generalising) of ideas that occurs across texts (Martin, 1994). In blogs, content within a post is repacked by a tag: for example, the tag 'school' might summarise the content of a post that recounts a school event. Next, tags may provide new information not otherwise contained within a post, *enhancing* the original ideas of the post. Such tags provide information that qualify circumstances of time, place, cause or condition (Adlington, 2019; cf Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). For instance, a tag like 'Sydney' might tell the reader where the events described in the post occurred, which enhances the content of the post (assuming the post didn't mention

the place). Tags can also relate posts to one another like chapters in a book or poems in an anthology. For example, using a tag such as 'recipes' relates each post to the other as a collection of recipes. The relationship between these posts is one of *extension* (Martin, 1994), where each post extends upon the big idea (or 'field') of *recipes* (Adlington, 2019). Finally, if a post includes multiple tags, then that post may be involved in multiple logical relations (one for each tag), and readers have choice, and thus co-authorship, over which relationship to pursue in reading.

The literacy knowledge needed to use tags for construing the logical relations of ideas within and between posts is included in the Australian Curriculum: English from Year 6, including relations of elaboration, extension and enhancement (or 'explanation' in the Curriculum) (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA). Some content descriptors may stretch to apply to logical relations involving tags and posts, such as:

- 'Investigate how complex sentences can be used in a variety of ways to *elaborate*, *extend* and *explain* ideas' (ACELA 1522)
- 'Understand how different types of texts vary in use of language choices, depending on their purpose and context' (ACELA 1478)

However, these descriptors cannot account for how a single blog post may be part of multiple logical relations. How curriculum might manage this depends on further investigation of the different ways relations are construed as well as how children's knowledge develops throughout the school years and beyond. In the meantime, teachers might still examine logical relations in blogs with their students. To explore *elaboration* relations as blog authors, students might tag posts to generalise the content. For example, imagine a whole class blog in which every student posts a recount of an excursion to the zoo. The class

could agree upon a tag to generalise the ideas of all posts (e.g. 'zoo'). Each student then includes a post title of their own choosing, which elaborates the idea in greater detail than the tag, but in lesser detail than the recount. Regarding *extension* relations, tags might be used in whole class blogs to create anthologies of texts. For example, all students in a class might post poems to the blog, which are then tagged with 'poems'. On individual blogs, students might write chaptered stories across multiple posts, using tags to relate posts by *extension* as belonging to the same story. Finally, students might include tags to qualify circumstances of events within posts (e.g., where, when), and experiment with adding multiple tags to posts to discover the impact that doing this has on meaning for readers.

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## Innovative Learning Environments: Part of a solution to the 'wicked problem' of inclusive education?

Jo Anderson (UNE), Dr Jennifer Charteris (UNE)  
and Dr Angela Page (University of Newcastle)

Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs) are constructed to deliberately challenge traditional ways of 'doing' education, through their creative and adaptive building designs. The 'unwalling' of classrooms has promoted flexibility in spatial practice and signalled a need for educators to reconsider the pedagogies they use in their daily work (Charteris, Smardon & Page, 2018). This necessity to rethink the way education is done in these schools has prompted the claim that ILE's should be robust and supportive places for inclusivity. Yet, evidence suggests that ILEs continue to miss the mark for many students recognised under the broad umbrella of 'disability' (Page & Davies, 2016).



Inclusive education, while part of the educational lexicon for more than 25 years, still eludes schooling systems globally (Anderson & Boyle, In Press). The construct has been described by Armstrong (2017) as a 'wicked problem', and as such,

does not have a single, definable solution. A new building, however innovative, does not necessitate change in policy, practice, attitude or understanding. Yet ILEs provide an opportunity to begin to have new and different discussions around inclusive education - about the construction spaces that work for everyone, a removal of barriers - and afford an opportunity for inclusive policies and pedagogies that has not been present before.

### **Inclusive Education in Innovative Learning Environments (IEILE): A project**

The IEILE project came out of a genuine desire to seize the opportunity of the newly built schools to bolster the discussion about inclusive education in these spaces. Through our research, we are listening to the voices of those engaged in ILEs – the school leaders, teachers, and most importantly, the students. There have been some positive outcomes for students and teachers. Students have talked about an increase in their agency; they now have some control over the way they engage academically and socially, whereas before they did not. Teachers have described the collaboration required to teach in these spaces as providing a level of collegiality not experienced before.

### **Some issues**

While not an exhaustive list, these are some of the issues that have arisen from our research to date.

- *Hyper visibility* – With large, open plan spaces and walls of glass, hyper visibility has been described by students, teachers and school leaders as challenging. Every action, behaviour, is on show, with few (if any) spaces available to get away from the constant gaze of others. For students with a disability, this can be particularly harrowing.
- *Hyper stimulation* – Many students (but especially those with particular types of disability), are hyper sensitive to sensory stimulation. ILEs, by their very design, incorporate large, open spaces that are noisy, visually stimulating places. Bright colours are often incorporated into the interior design, glass walls reflect images, and sound bounces around the large, busy spaces. Access into and out of these spaces is often chaotic, as large numbers of people are funnelled into and out of these spaces through small doors and walkways.
- *Inflexibility* – Despite the notion of flexibility being one of characteristics of ILEs, when it comes to some aspects of design, they are inflexible. Temperature control systems that operate as a single entity throughout entire buildings do not allow for individuals to manage the climate within smaller spaces, an issue for some with specific medical conditions. Materials such as concrete have been placed on the ground in spaces that students with epilepsy and physical disabilities access regularly, and walkways, accessed by students using walkers and in wheelchairs, have been built on uneven surfaces.
- *New buildings, same practices* – While the spaces have changed, practices have not. Some schools are attempting to fit the traditional model of 'doing' education, into spaces designed for collaborative and fluid ways of working. Pedagogies are being utilised that require containment of students on a small patch within a large space, a practice some students with disabilities find confusing, distracting and uncomfortable. A more notable adherence to the status quo is the inclusion (mind the pun) of special education 'units' within the builds of the ILEs.



## Conclusion

The paradigm of ILEs grants an opportunity to not only re-conceptualise the physical space of schools, but also the way education, inclusive education, is enacted within it. Our research has highlighted the need to consider the diversity of students, all students, when doing this, if we are to get close to overcoming the 'wicked problem' that is inclusive education.

If you are interested in this work, or would like assistance with school design with a view to enacting inclusive practices in flexible learning spaces, please contact us. Our contact details are:

Jo Anderson – [jander62@une.edu.au](mailto:jander62@une.edu.au)

Dr. Jennifer Charteris – [jcharte5@une.edu.au](mailto:jcharte5@une.edu.au)

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## Review of *Teaching with Intent 2*, a book about teaching and learning literacy through literacy

**Julie Hayes (Retired principal, formally of Cowandilla Primary School in South Australia)**

**Book Authors: Dr Bronwyn Parkin (University of Adelaide) and Dr Helen Harper (UNE)**

If you want a quick and easy solution to the challenges of teaching English, then this book is not for you.



As teachers you'll be asked to become experts in the narratives you are teaching. This book will help you with text selection and analysis. By using the knowledge and pedagogy detailed in this book you'll be able to use texts that stretch your students and offer them literate resources that they can appropriate for use in their own writing. As experts you'll be expected to reveal the grammar, text structure and vocabulary choices the author has made for particular purposes. For example, you might talk

with your students about how the author has used language to make you like or dislike certain characters, to build suspense, to advance the story through pictures, to foreground twists and turns in the story or how the author uses dialogue and the characters' emotions to connect with the lives of the reader.

This approach asks that you don't make any assumptions about what your students bring to the classroom. It will be your job to take every child along with you as you share your expertise and scaffold students' learning about how the texts under study are working. The aim of the teaching sequence is to incorporate strategies for students to read and identify the language features of the texts, then practice using them. You will learn to select passages for close study that build the literate skills of your students. Over time you will scaffold students to take more and more control of the literate resources in the various texts you study throughout the year.

The measure of your success will be how well your low achieving students are able to use those literate resources in their own written texts. In this approach you are the one with the responsibility of sharing your expertise in ways that take into account the needs of your students. The aim, over time, is to build a repertoire of resources for the students to call upon as they write in English and the other subjects.

The authors of this book have used the theory of language that underpins the Australian Curriculum: English. It's known as Functional Grammar. The Primary English Teaching Association of Australia (PETAA) has resources for you to learn how this powerful grammar can help in your teaching. This grammar is all about how language functions to make meaning. Reading is all about getting meaning from text, and writing is all about making meaning.

So, if you are prepared to do the hard work to understand the teaching sequence (and along the way come to an understanding of the theories that underpin it) then your teaching will produce powerful learners ... and perhaps this book is for you.

PETAA is preparing on-line courses to support teachers to use this pedagogy and to understand the theories it's based upon. Check out the website, [www.petaa.edu.au](http://www.petaa.edu.au)

## **An invitation to contribute ideas to innovative online early childhood programs for supporting defence families**

**Dr Marg Rogers (UNE) and Dr Jo Bird (UNE)**

Our research team, led by Dr Marg Rogers and including Dr Jo Bird, Dr Ingrid Harrington and Associate Professor Pep Serow, IT technical staff and educational developers, will be creating two innovative, research-based, open-access online programs for educators and parents who support 2-5-year olds from Australian Defence Force (ADF) families. The programs aim to give early childhood educators and parents the resources, skills and confidence to reduce the impacts of stress that children from military families may face. These stresses can include: frequent relocations, frequent and lengthy separation from parents due to training and working away on deployment, and sometimes parents returning home with injuries or mental health conditions (Rogers, 2019). [Infograph 1](#) describes the ways young children can respond to parental deployment including [socially](#), [emotionally](#), [cognitively](#) and [physically](#). Ongoing stresses can affect the development, learning and wellbeing of children (Sims, 2014).

Infograph 1. Children's responses to parental deployment





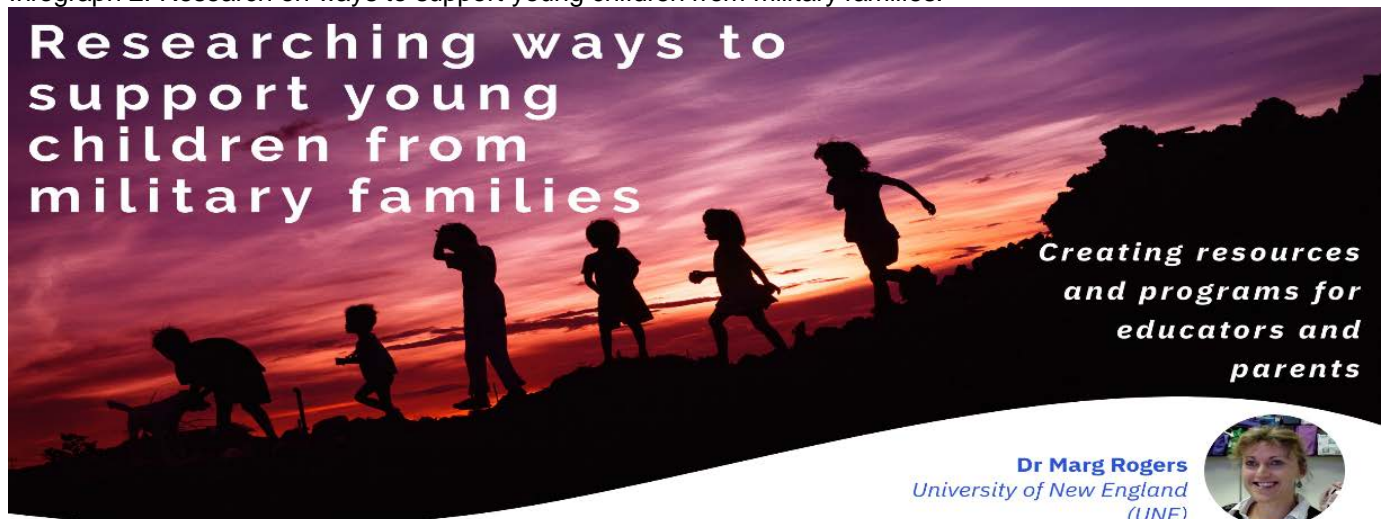
We are seeking ideas from educators and parents who support (or have previously supported) 2-5-year-olds from defence families to develop these early childhood programs. These ideas may include strategies you have found effective in supporting young children whose parents work away, and/or ways to support the whole family.

Your ideas will be anonymous, and used to ensure we provide the best programs and resources possible.

Infograph 2 gives more information about the project and background research. You can find out more through the website [www.ecdefenceprograms.com](http://www.ecdefenceprograms.com), or give your ideas to <https://ecdefenceprograms.com/index.php/contact-us/> or email them to [ecdefenceprograms@une.edu.au](mailto:ecdefenceprograms@une.edu.au)

Please pass this invitation on to other educators or parents who may support children from defence families.

Infograph 2. Research on ways to support young children from military families.



## Why was the first study done?

Studies about children in military families in Australia were rare and used information given by parents about their children. No research had been done with children, meaning the voices of Australian children had not been heard. The studies looked at the problems that families had, rather than ways families coped and got support.

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## 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:

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Graduate Certificate in Education Studies: <https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/GCES/program-of-study-schedule-a.html>

Master of Education: <https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/MED>

Master of Education (Research): <https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/MEDR>

Doctor of Education: <https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/EDD>

PhD: <https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/PHD>

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[www.teach.nsw.edu.au/getpaidtostudy](http://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:

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Bachelor of Education (Secondary Mathematics)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Music)

Bachelor of Education (Secondary Science)

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)

Bachelor of Education (K-12 Teaching)

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