

# THINKER

ISSUE 02 | THINKING ABOUT TEACHING

Do They Belong? | Imagining Futures: Creativity | Differentiation as a  
Mindset | The Consciousness of Critical Teaching | Book Reviews

**TABOR**  
COLLEGE  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
FOR A BETTER WORLD



<b>THINKER</b>	ISSUE 2
<b>TABOR COLLEGE</b>	

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## DEAN'S WELCOME



A warm hello from our education community to yours.

**Thinker's** aim is to support our school colleagues and families as you share our heart for excellent Christian schooling and transformational learnings for students.

**Thinker 1st edition** focused on Thinking about Thinking, and how critical thinking can positively influence transformational teaching and learning. To follow that, our Teacher Education faculty lecturing staff have specifically carved out space to create this **2nd edition of Thinker**. There's something for everyone in Thinking about Teaching, and we hope you enjoy this opportunity to think about some of the aspects of teaching the various articles cover.

You'll find topics such as belonging, indigenous ways of teaching, creativity and differentiation, the research and teaching connection, and the idea of consciousness and critical pedagogy. There are some book reviews, introductions to some of our staff, and some snapshots into what's happening and available to you at Tabor.

Did you know that Tabor provides a pathway for Professional Development and micro-credentialing that can lead to a Master of Education or a Master of Leadership? Tabor Ascend offers various topics, including Neuroscience for Engaged Learning and PeRL Original - a publication on Tabor's Pedagogies that enable Redemptive Learning. You may have come across the version of this publication we released with CSA. Additionally, keep an eye out for the 3rd edition of Thinker, which will expand on this original material. Please refer to the information provided within for Tabor Ascend, which will be offered later in the year.

Enjoy reading – and please contact us if there are ways in which our Tabor community can serve you.

Dr Tracey Price

*Dean of the Faculty of Education*



## DO THEY BELONG?

**BRENT WILLSMORE**

Director, Partnerships and Professional Experience

*It is fair to say that many students enjoy or at least manage well at school, but this is not the case for all, and I have always been taken aback by those students who make the bold statement 'I hate school'. As an educator who has found meaning and value in learning, such sentiment disturbs my own sense of purpose. It upsets my sense of justice to have students be ungrateful for their educational opportunities in a world where the majority would sacrifice all to be given a fraction of the educational opportunity we have.*

*Why might such a statement be made? Is it just a naive juvenile response they will grow out of; is it just a cliché that rolls off the tongue they picked up in the yard, or is there good reason for such a statement? I honestly think the latter is what we should consider and ask why.*

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2018) has identified that in Australia between 2003 -2015, Australian students' sense of belonging has declined significantly and is lower than in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. This is a sobering statistic, but if students do not feel they belong, they will not enjoy school (De Bortoli, 2018). PISA defines a sense of belonging as “feelings of being accepted and valued by their peers, and by others at their school” (cited in Willms, 2003, p. 11).

As Hugh MacKay (2014, p. 288) reminds us, “For most of us, life’s richest meanings spring from our personal relationships and connections. That is why the desire to belong is a throbbing urge that will not be stilled until our hearts find safe lodgings.”

**EVEN THOUGH THEY  
MAY PUSH US AWAY,  
OUR STUDENTS STILL  
DESIRE TO CONNECT**

Are our school and classrooms places where students find real safety? Even though they may push us away, our students still desire to connect. Schools have a unique opportunity to create a place where children connect and belong positively. As students look to connect and find a place of belonging, we must not lose sight of the intrinsic longing to seek connection.

Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us. Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval, which are hollow substitutes for belonging but often barriers to it (Brown, 2012, p. 145).

What if some of the desires for success and academic excellence are partly grounded not in the perfect combination of resources and facilities but in a student’s sense of connection and belonging in school? Improved belonging impacts academic motivation; improves mental health and relationship; creates positive identity formation; and increases students’ sense of significance in adolescence. All this assists young people to transition into adulthood (Allen et al., 2018). The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) (2022) has also identified human connectedness and belonging as a central pillar of learning, acknowledging that academics are more than just an accumulation of knowledge if we want to thrive.

To develop belongingness, Baumeister and Learey (1995) proposed two key features to consider:

First, people need frequent personal contacts or interactions with the other person. Ideally, these interactions would be affectively positive or pleasant, but it is mainly important that the majority be free from conflict and negative affect. Second, people need to perceive that there is an “interpersonal bond or relationship marked by stability, affective concern, and continuation into the foreseeable future” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500).

Psychological ‘Belongingness’ theories have identified the significance of the need to connect and “...the error has not been to deny the existence of such a motive so much as to underappreciate it” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 522).

The evidence says belonging is in decline in Australian schools, so the challenge is to consider what happens in our classes and be prepared to discern and ask the students on our watch if they belong. Our further challenge is to see belonging not just as an added benefit to students’ success but as a foundation to many of the goals to which any school aspires.

Our classrooms reflect many choices about what we value and hold up as significant. Our acceptance of students and their sense of belonging is tied in closely to those values. The vision and compassion of Urie Bronfenbrenner in relation to his belief that every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her (Brendtro, 2006) remains true today.

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## INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

**A Reflection and an Invitation**

SAMUEL GRIEGER | Lecturer

*If I was to join Bear Grylls on an adventure, I would likely tap out somewhere between the parachute drop and eating anything with six legs. If I did last more than a week, the cameraman would be dragging my starved body to the nearest and greasiest fast-food restaurant the poor soul could find. Because, while I was taught to read, write, multiply and divide, I was not taught to thrive in the natural environment. Imagine if we were. Imagine if our schools and universities turned their capabilities towards the mountains, trees, and rivers. We would find a world swimming with subtlety and limitless in intricacy. To master this landscape would require serious education. It would require teachers with deep knowledge and profound teaching skill.*

It would require years of dedicated learning, effective teaching, and hours of practice. This, I believe, is the appropriate lens for considering the learning and teaching of Australia's First Nations Cultures and individuals.

Traditionally, Indigenous Australians lived in a unique context. The Australian Landscape can be brutal, and we should not assume that the social and spiritual world of Traditional Australia were any less nuanced than today's. In the face of these realities, this article considers the education a young Kurna boy or Narindjeri girl might have experienced to allow them to survive and flourish. If we were to lean into this style of education, we might create more space for the gifts of Indigenous Australians to enhance our culture today. Further, we might create more opportunity for First Nation Australians to continue to thrive and flourish in our modern society.

IF WE WERE TO LEAN INTO THIS STYLE OF EDUCATION, WE MIGHT CREATE MORE SPACE FOR THE GIFTS OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS TO ENHANCE OUR CULTURE TODAY.

Learning in Traditional Indigenous Australian culture is and was profoundly relational. When a young girl is taught how to forage, track an animal or the rites of womanhood, she is instructed by a handful of aunties and community members she has known since she was born. Indeed, it would likely be the same women who attended her birth, who nurtured her (and maybe even her mother) as an infant. These women are pillars of her community and transmit the big and small lessons of life through a deeply established relational connection. Contrastingly, a modern Australian student might experience over a dozen teachers in a school year, each of whom she may know very little about beyond the four walls of the classroom.

There is nothing wrong with this. However, we must realise it is only one style of education. A style reflecting a modern, western worldview where education is compartmentalised, removed from everyday life, and outsourced to professionals.

This is not necessarily better or worse than a Traditional First Nation approach to education, but it is different. The differences may become problematic, however, when we consider how important it is for students to perceive their teachers as credible and the important role relationship plays in education. If a First Nation student is used to deep and long-lasting relationships in education but is confronted with four different and anonymous teachers before lunch time, we might not be surprised when she is a little confused or uncomfortable with the style of education she is experiencing.

Further, education for traditional First Nation Australians was immediately relevant and meaningful. When a young man was taught to carve a spear or craft poisons and medicines from the Australian bush, they were taught skills that kept them and their family alive, healthy, and happy. The eternal question of "when we will ever use this" was answered by the hand-made fire warming the camp, the meat roasting on the coals and the song lines directing the group to a spring in the desert. In this context, learning was successful, or your family would not survive to the next generation. Thus, education among the First Nations peoples was fire-hardened and selected to precisely match the world the youth inhabited. There is no room for second chances when a brown snake bites, when a bush fire comes or when you fail to notice the crocodile in the shallows. Learning, therefore, had a direct relationship to success in the 'real world'.

At its best, Western education also achieves this. At its worst, it does not. If a young Anangu boy fresh from Yalata arrives in an Adelaide school expecting their lessons to serve the same practical function, we can sympathise when the lessons on spelling and fractions do not satisfy their desire to deeply understand and succeed in the Western world. This is not to say these lessons are not important: they are. However, there are many steps between being taught percentages and this knowledge having a direct ability on success or failure in the practical and economic world. There are very few steps, however, between learning how to find water, and its benefit. It may be this less immediate connection to success and practicality that causes some First Nation people to question the relevance of Western education (Trudgen, 2017).

When considering the relational, practical nature of First Nation Traditional education, I believe we should respond in at least two ways. Firstly, as advocates of education, we should admire its success. Education in Indigenous Australian language groups was developed over many generations to brilliantly address the needs of the culture. If it were not successful, the Yolngu, the Anangu, and the Ngarrindjeri would not be the oldest surviving cultures in the world. Let us admire and be proud of Traditional Australian Education, pioneered by our First Nation Peoples.

Secondly, we should view this style of education as an invitation to critique mainstream teaching and learning. There is much quality writing and discussion on how to provide education to best serve the needs of our First Nation students. I believe a path forward lies at the heart of Indigenous Australian teaching and learning. I believe if we angle our education towards deep and quality relationships and learning that truly answers the question of 'how do I succeed in the modern world?' Australian education would be enhanced, and we would see improved outcomes for our First Nation students.

This is not to say there are many technical strategies a teacher might adopt when teaching an Indigenous Australian student, such as use of narrative, learning on country and involving the community. However, I believe a positive path forward lies a layer deeper, a layer more universally human. As teachers, let's nurture relationships that can meet the deep relational expectations of First Nation education and culture. As schools and educators, let's remember our First Nation students expect education to be as nourishing and beneficial as a lesson on fire building on a cold night, or fishing in the creeks of the Adelaide Hills. From this place of admiration, authenticity and relationship, all students, First Nation or otherwise, will have every chance at a holistic, meaningful, and fulfilling education.

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## IMAGINING FUTURES: CREATIVITY

**KATE OSBORNE**

Head of Program (Primary)

*Imagining futures is partly about using creativity in teaching.*

*Imagine yourself at the back of a class, watching a lesson unfold. The teacher circulates the room, an encouraging presence. The students, gathered in groups around colourful tables, are alight, energetically calling out words to each other and hurriedly scribbling them out in coloured texta over a large sheet of butcher's paper. The electricity of each new idea causes students to leap out of their chair with pointed fingers in the air, calling: "I know, I know!", "what about...?!" "what if...?!". The timer on the TV screen runs down to zero and is met with a disappointed "awww!" followed by quiet from the class.*

*The teacher asks, what type of thinking did we just practice?*

*We were brainstorming!*

*Yes, and what does that mean? What kind of thinking do we do when we brainstorm?*

*We shared our ideas*

*We came up with lots of ideas*

*We bounced off each other*

*Why did we use brainstorming today?*

*We needed to think of ideas for our project*

The teacher continues to prompt:

*What was helpful about doing a brainstorm as a group?*

*Why is it important to think of more than one idea, rather than going with our first idea that pops into our heads?*

*Could we have approached this task differently today?*

*When else could we use brainstorming to help us?*

*Can you think of a job where a professional might use brainstorming?*

As a tertiary lecturer with preservice teachers, when I set out to write this article on *creativity in teaching and learning*, I wondered if academic rigour, strict conventions, and course regulations were getting in the way of our preservice teachers' freedom to be creative.

However, the more I thought about it, the more I realised that in fact, our Tabor preservice teachers are constantly exercising their imagination. Just as we created a mental image of the classroom described above, and the students in that classroom imagined solutions to a problem, our preservice teachers are constantly operating in a space of their imagined futures.

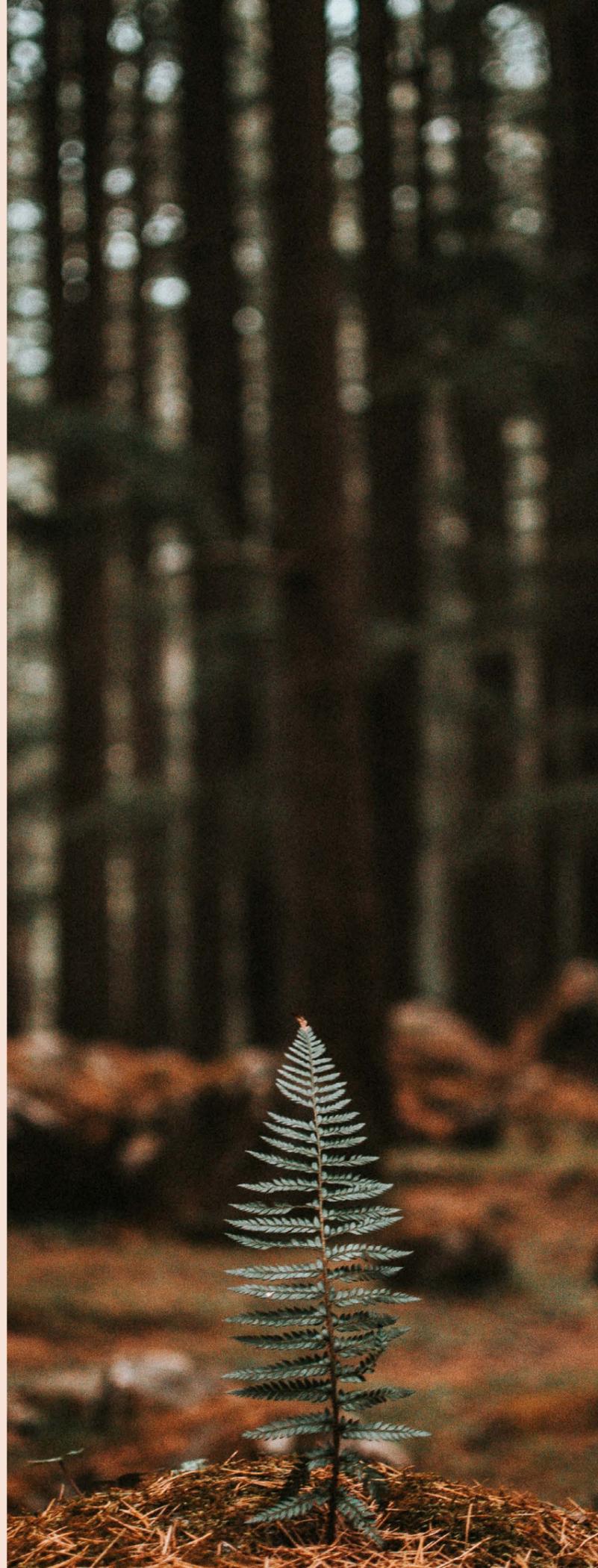
In its simplest form, to imagine is to visualise, or to “form...a mental picture” (Cambridge University Press, 2022). People can powerfully use their imagination to “represent possibilities other than the actual, to represent times other than the present, and to represent perspectives other than [their] own” (Liao & Gendler, 2020).

Preservice teachers imagine interactions with students, parents and colleagues, stepping into their shoes to understand perspectives that are different from their own. They jostle with moral dilemmas and conflict resolution in imagined role-plays. They imagine the impact of their teaching on student academic and affective outcomes. They imagine how they will operate in hypothetical classrooms, with fictional resources. They read documents and imagine the many possibilities for breathing life into the curriculum and pastoral care. Preservice teachers reflect on things that happened in their previous placement and imagine other ways of differentiating the lessons or managing behaviour.

This kind of reflective imagining is a central process for learning. John Dewey (cited in Chambliss, 1991, p. 40) went as far as to say that “all learning is carried on through the medium of imagery”, as we engage in a continuous cycle of imagining and taking action to bring the imagined possibilities into reality (Chambliss, 1991).

Of course, when planning for our ‘future classrooms’, we defer to research - there are steps, processes, models, frameworks, and policies to follow. In Tabor’s praxis model, we use reason to determine the most logical path based on research and evidence, and we use our memories of what has worked well in the past or what we have observed in the classroom. Perhaps more importantly, we recognise that there is no fixed path, rather an array of solutions. Teachers who can imagine varied solutions will indeed be knowledgeable and effective practitioners.

The uniqueness of Tabor’s education courses is in the emphasis on personal formation, of imagining the self amid the theories and structures, because, as it



is recognised in research, the quality of the teacher is the single greatest source of influence on student success at school (Hattie, 2003). Drawing inspiration from Parker Palmer’s (2017, p. 2) concept that “we teach who we are”, Tabor preservice teachers ask the challenging questions - not just ‘how might such and such recommend that you act in this scenario?’ but, ‘how could I respond to this scenario in a way that is authentic?’, ‘how might I operate with integrity within this system?’, ‘in this context would my belief system create a just or an unjust outcome?’

Describing this as *imagining a mental picture* of hypothetical classroom environments does not quite capture the richness of the learning that occurs from such deep reflection. Perhaps it would be better described using the Old French, *imager*, meaning to “sculpt, carve, paint; decorate, embellish” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2022). Preservice teachers are artists, imaginatively sculpting their future classrooms, spending the time to embellish them with layers of purposeful detail.

Like the teacher in the opening story, by making imagination more explicit in our vocabulary, preservice teachers will be able to name when they are using their imagination, thus building their metacognitive skills, and enabling them to teach this to their own students.

**IN TABOR’S PRAXIS MODEL, WE USE REASON TO DETERMINE THE MOST LOGICAL PATH BASED ON RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE**

Teachers, be encouraged – as we make space for students to be creative, allow time for imagining, for idea generation, for percolation, for group discussion, so students, irrespective of their age or discipline, will be enabled to meaningful learning and action.

“The question is not whether we possess the ability to imagine; it is to find ways of enlarging the scope in which our imagination plays and works and to make more substantial the actualities that our imagination makes possible.” (Chambliss, 1991, p. 43)

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## DIFFERENTIATION AS A MINDSET

**DR VICTORIA WARREN**

Director, Undergraduate ITE Programs

*Research tells us that the practices of curriculum and pedagogy are more positively driven by a teacher's mindset of differentiation. As Christian teachers, differentiation is a pedagogical act of service.*

*When teaching is effective it can encourage, empower, and equip. A powerful aspect of such effective pedagogy is differentiation. Differentiation means anticipating the differences in students' readiness, interests and learning profiles, to create different learning pathways so that all students may learn effectively (Tomlinson, 2014). Differentiation is linked to pedagogy because it is a mindset rather than a set of skills. It can be viewed firstly as an act of thinking and then as an act of planning and is a continuous process.*

*Even though teachers are required to meet the learning needs of all their students the thought of differentiation can seem overwhelming. Catering for the differences of all students can seem impossible. This is where a 'differentiation mindset' can really help.*

Differentiation is not about the seemingly impossible task of creating individual approaches for a classful of diverse students. It is important to think of differentiation as a mindset - effective differentiation comes from a philosophy of inclusion and responsive teaching (Tomlinson, 2014). This mindset stems from the principle that all students can learn and progress. Beliefs that point to a differentiated mindset begin with the central premise of knowing the students and understanding their needs and potential. The mindset of differentiation centres upon offering dignity and respect to all learners, seeing diversity as positive, and creating equity of access to learning so that each student has opportunity to reach their maximum capacity. It begins then, for example, with knowing the profile of a class.

To learn more richly, many students will need differentiated approaches to content delivery, learning processes and task types. There are two key questions that teachers should ask, not just at the start of their planning, but throughout teaching episodes; What are students supposed to be learning? And are all students mastering it? (Marshall, 2016). It is safe to say that students do not always learn what we teach, no matter how well constructed our lessons seem to be!

A useful framework for approaching differentiation is the Maker Model (1981) which suggests looking at differentiation in four ways:

- Adjusting **delivery of content** by using different modes – visual (photos, YouTube clips), verbal (explaining and demonstrating), through handouts, kinaesthetic (role play, human timelines, and interactive models). This way, each student accesses content through more than one mode.
- **Processing of content** through various formative assessment activities, which may include reading, writing, researching, discussing, performing, and creating.
- **Producing content for assessment** by offering different options (research pages, creative responses, dioramas, mockumentaries, blogs etc.) with each having equal rigour, and
- **Adjusting learning environments** whether through grouping dynamics, classroom set-up or specific goal focussed expectations.

When considering differentiation there are three key principles to remember for every student – clear objectives, high standards, and frequent checks for understanding linked to adaptation of instruction. Again, knowing the students is the key beginning point. The approaches above can be used to plan for differentiation which can be incorporated into unit plans. Simply adding a column for differentiation to unit plans and lesson plans is an effective way to encourage a differentiation mindset that is student-centred.

Managing differentiation so that it is efficient and effective needs consideration – especially if common pitfalls of overthinking individualised instruction and disjointed community learning are to be avoided. Planning for differentiation in unit plans (as above) offers a way to build in a variety of ways of learning, and difficulty levels can then be adjusted too. Within lessons, research has identified that helping too much can stifle independent learning and problem-solving capabilities. So, Doubet and Hockett (2017) suggest a ‘1-2-3-me’ approach – 1 minute to read or listen to instructions, 2 minutes to discuss with a partner or group, and 3 minutes to plan an approach to a task before asking questions of the teacher. Providing instructions to the whole class and then refining them for smaller groups encourages cohesion while catering for differences.



**DIFFERENTIATION...  
IS PLACING  
OURSELVES IN  
THE SHOES OF  
OUR STUDENTS  
TO MEET  
THEIR NEEDS**

From a Christian perspective differentiation is an act of service - it is placing ourselves in the shoes of our students to meet their needs – essentially, it is loving our neighbour as ourselves. When we adopt a ‘differentiation mindset’ it instils in us an awareness of what is needed that can be built into our planning. If we extend our act of service to include positive classroom environments, and lesson delivery that is based upon sensitive awareness, then differentiation forms part of an interactive positive teaching dynamic that can empower students in their learning.

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## THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF CRITICAL TEACHING

**DR TRACEY PRICE**

Dean of Faculty

*This article began its life with the idea of writing about ways in which a teacher who has developed criticality of thinking can teach critically to transform their students for good. This is arguably the aim of every Christian teacher who has experienced the goodness of God and desires the same for their students.*

*Before I tackled this little reflection on the benefit of criticality in pedagogy, I looked up synonyms for criticality and did not quite get the result I wanted – top of the synonym list was desperation, closely followed by seriousness, necessity, and pressure - oh dear!*

*I was hoping for synonyms that linked criticality to ethics, to concepts about critical thinking and reflective thinking, which of course are precursors to ethical thinking, and to living the 'good'. These are the things that concern all educators; those of us whose vocation and work are directly concerned with an outcome of developing and enabling the next generation to live meaningfully and well.*

Rather than those negative synonyms I found, there are two angles on criticality I prefer to focus on. The first angle is concerned with the importance and immediacy of criticality, and the second angle is concerned with the attitude and skill of criticality.

Why do we need criticality? Some say that, given the myriad injustices and inhumane acts that seem to appear in every corner of our world, this is a crucial time, a critical time, to be people who think well, who think ethically, who are inspired to be transformed and to transform for the better. In such a time it is even more important and timely that educators form educational practices that enable learners to practice careful thought, open and respectful discussions, gratefulness, and genuine acceptance of the other.

The skill of criticality, like anything most useful or meaningful, does not seem to come naturally, or sometimes easily; it comes to those who prepare the ground for its presence, and then requires tending to grow and be most effective. C. S. Lewis reminded us of Aristotle's similar idea that "only those who have been well brought up can usefully study ethics" (2017,

p. 165). If we are to understand the complexity of ethics and the nuance of criticality, we need a certain level of acumen to begin at a useful starting point; to access the benefit of such. This acumen can come through various ways such as intellectual and practical knowledge, a wide range of skills, emotional intelligence, life experience, resilience, literacy, and numeracy levels. And the compound effect of combining a range of these things can strengthen our understandings of, and ability to enact, ethics and criticality in our lives. In this light, criticality is a concept that can make us better humans. Criticality can make us better teachers and better learners.

**CONSCIOUSNESS  
IS DESCRIBED  
AS AWARENESS,  
RECOGNITION,  
SENSIBILITY,  
CAREFULNESS,  
MINDFULNESS.**

Developing the skills of criticality first require an attitude of criticality, or at least an attitude that seeks the benefit of criticality and is willing to put some effort in to learning about what criticality can do for us personally and for our teaching. Aristotle encouraged humans to seek happiness as a basis of a good life. This idea can be easily dismissed in modern society by those who desire something deeper than the superficial and fleeting, but Aristotle's (1976) idea of happiness was actually eudemonia, deep joy; authentic joy and gratefulness for who we are, what we have and how we can relate. As Gray (2013, p. 212) described it 'living rationally or intelligently [as] the natural end or function of a human being [that leads to a state of] eudaimonia [which means] human flourishing'.

Because meaningful things and authentic happiness (eudemonia) can be best understood and loved and enjoyed as we live our best lives, this underscores the importance of teachers developing such qualities to impact their teaching, and the importance of teachers enacting pedagogy that allows students to access such qualities; as we all seek to live the 'good' in and through our lives.

In the absence of a more useful synonym for this reflection, I will create my own.

#### **Criticality is Consciousness.**

Consciousness is described as awareness, recognition, sensibility, carefulness, mindfulness.

In relation to the root word conscience, C. S. Lewis (2005, p.11) reminds us that we are either morally sighted or morally blind depending on whether or not we obey our conscience:

Disobedience to conscience makes conscience blind...The moral blindness consequent on being a bad [person] must therefore fall on everyone who is not a good [person].

A critical educator then is conscious of what is the 'good' and God from who it comes, aware of their micro-picture self in the context of the big picture, cognisant of their assumptions and presuppositions, balanced and sensible in their ideas, mindful of what is meaningful and ethical, and careful with the precious existence of all creation. A critical educator is acutely conscious of the responsibility to use their capacity to enable their students to the same.

Stephen Brookfield (2017, p. 13) shares that:

Every good teacher wants to change the world for the better. At a minimum we want to leave students more curious, smarter, more knowledgeable, and more skilful than before we taught them. [Our] best teaching is to help students act towards each other, and to their environment, with compassion, understanding and fairness. Teaching creates the conditions for learning [that] increases their knowledge, deepen[s] their understanding, builds[s] new skills, broaden[s] their perspectives, and enhances their self-confidence. They see the world in new ways and are more likely to feel ready to shape some part of it in whatever direction they desire [or are called].

Someone somewhere coined the phrase that 'nothing good comes easy'. Criticality is in that 'good' category. So, there are no simple tips or tricks for me to now share to enable any of us to suddenly become expert critical pedagogues.

Perhaps allowing this reflection to inspire the start of, or a deeper continuation of, such a journey is enough. May we read, think, question, collaborate, and pray on that journey.

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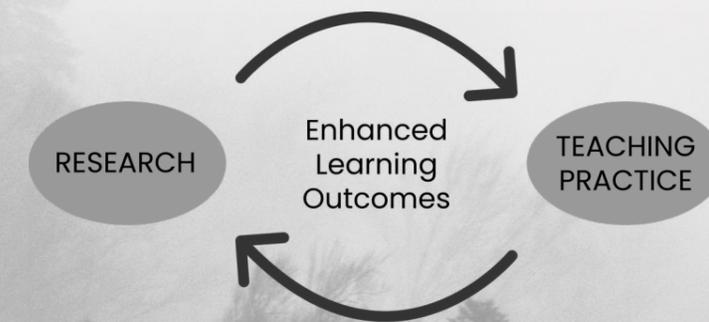
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## THE TEACHING PRACTICE AND RESEARCH LOOP: CREATING BETTER LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

**DR FRANCIS BEN**

Director, Postgraduate Programs and Research

*The 'research – teaching practice loop' (Figure 1) is a simple diagram but forms the basis for enhanced educational practices to produce better learning experiences and outcomes. This article shows ways in which schoolteachers can easily engage in research, particularly action research, to inform their practice, and to also contribute to the knowledge of the wider Education community. Tabor can assist teachers with data gathering and analysis, and application and publication of their research.*



### Why is research needed?

Research studies of the philosophies behind great educational thinkers such as Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Freire have explored and evaluated the base philosophical ideas of their pedagogy theories. As a result, we now have much better understanding of base learning theories such as constructivism, inquiry-based learning, discovery learning, experiential learning, cooperative learning, differentiated teaching approaches, and critical pedagogies.

Contemporary research continues to explore, for example, the intricacies of the constructivist theory of learning. Recent explorations include that of Guthrie and McCracken (2010) who studied Reflective Pedagogy and how it is implemented in online learning environments – critically useful in current times where education systems across the world deal with a pandemic that disrupted traditional (face-to-face) delivery of curricula. More recent examples of research-based pedagogies (so called ‘Innovative Pedagogies of the Future’) that have emerged from a better understanding of the science of learning have been developed and evaluated by Herodotou et al. (2019). These include formative analytics, teachback, place-based learning, learning with drones, learning with robots, and citizen inquiry.

**TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS ARE IN A PERFECT POSITION TO ENGAGE IN REAL-LIFE RESEARCH AS THEY PRACTICE TEACHING MOST DAYS OF THEIR WORK YEAR**

### Teachers as Researchers

Thankfully, research into teaching practice is not exclusive to Education ‘experts’ or university academics. Teachers in schools are in a perfect position to engage in real-life research as they practice teaching most days of their work year. A common hurdle to research is of course the daily workload demands (teaching, and extra-curricular activities). There is also a common perception that conducting research is so time consuming on top of the usual teaching demands, that simply thinking about it is off-putting. That may be true for traditional (formal) research. However, teachers can engage in a form of research which aligns more directly with their practice, and therefore can be conducted at the same time as their teaching practice. Action Research consists of four main stages of an on-going cyclic process: reflect – plan – act – observe (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

### Researching Real Practices

Action Research focuses on immediate application (practice) and not on the development of theory (Abdullayeva et al., 2019). Action research can be undertaken by teachers individually or in small groups. Think of it as research done by teachers for themselves (Mertler, 2014). Broad areas in education where action research may be undertaken include teaching practices (methodologies), curriculum development, and educational leadership. More specific areas of action research could include literacy & numeracy learning, wellbeing, investigation of creativity or differentiation, and evaluating strategies for engagement in learning (managing student behaviours).

Citing a range of educational research papers on action research, Hine and Lavery (2014) outline the following benefits of Education-based Action Research:

1. It can be used to fill the gap between theory and practice.
2. It helps teachers to develop new knowledge directly related to their classrooms.
3. It facilitates teacher empowerment when they are allowed to collect their own data to use in making decisions about their school and classroom.
4. It is an effective and worthwhile means of professional growth and development.

Hine and Lavery note that action research provides teachers with the technical skills and specialised knowledge to be transformative within their professional domain, thus allowing them to be innovative in their professional lives.

Action research does NOT require extensive training and is akin to the thinking processes of any teacher. Having both a broad and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the processes of research would of course be advantageous to enhance teachers’ problem-solving capabilities. But doing action research enhances teachers’ reflexive skills and research understandings. For example, a teacher who undertakes action research that focuses on enhancing the relational aspects of learning online (one of the major challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic) could utilise data to quickly identify strategies that worked most effectively and thus modify their practice, and through the action research process the teacher is also learning more about and practicing research skills.

### Developing Research Skills

Teachers wanting to get involved in action research or who are already involved in research-led teaching can further develop their research skills. Tabor’s postgraduate Master of Education and the Master of Leadership programs include significant research knowledge and skills development components.

These postgraduate programs in Education include action research as a core element as it holds significant value to improving practice within classrooms, in schools, and the broader community (Hine, 2013). As lifelong learners committed to continuing development and improvement of the quality of education learners receive, teachers are increasingly expected to combine teaching and researching skills, not only to cope with the changing demands of education, but also to contribute to the dynamic knowledge about ways that learning could positively contribute to society.

Teachers, educators and leaders are warmly invited to partner with Tabor to develop their educational or leadership qualifications, to learn more about traditional and action research, or to collaborate in undertaking classroom-based action research.

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## BOOK REVIEW CHARACTER REBORN: A PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BY JAMES PIETSCH\*

**FRANCES HASTINGS**

Faculty Administration Manager

*In relation to the more than one million students in Australia who attend schools founded by churches and other Christian organisations, James Pietsch importantly asks ‘what is it that should set these schools apart?’*

*One reviewer described Character Reborn as:*

*An excellent book and compulsory reading for Christian school educators [which] challenges some long held approaches to Christian schooling by offering a third object to consider - educating for being who we are becoming.*

*Pietsch successfully draws key aspects of theology and education together to both uphold the teacher as a role model and focus on how pedagogy can enable modern students to learn within a Christian environment.*

*Through his focus on pedagogy Pietsch considers how Christian educators might best use their faith in preparing students to practice education within a biblical narrative of the kingdom of God. He asks if it is possible, even necessary, for educational practice within a faith-based community to encourage in students an open mind, critical thinking, and development of new ways of understanding the world. Pietsch uses practical examples and this, together with a wide range of materials and references, draw the reader to the conclusion that the answer is ‘yes.’*

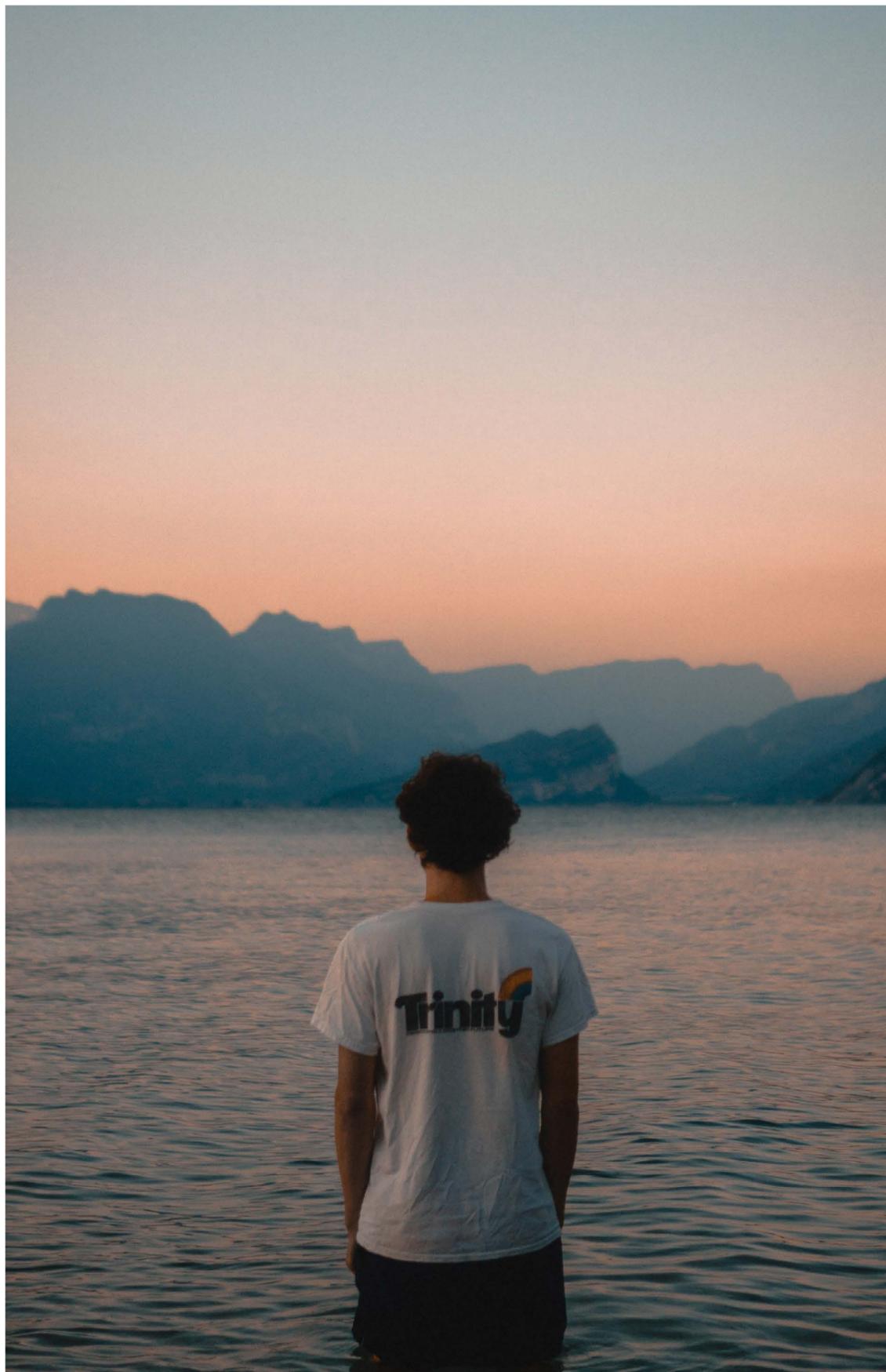
*Character Reborn emphasises that education, as Piaget noted, is primarily about the shaping of people. Education’s main aim is to create people who can do new things, not simply repeat what other generations have done – people who are creative, inventive, and discoverers, who have minds which can be critical, can verify, and not simply accept everything they are offered.*

*Pietsch examines what it means to be human in Christian education terms. School can be a place where students have myriad opportunity to engage in broader society – not just through their jobs but also as citizens, family members and members of their local community.*

*I encourage any educator concerned with enabling students to be better people as well as better learners, to be encouraged and assisted by Pietsch’s, Character Reborn.*

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\*Pietsch, J. (2018). Character Reborn: A Philosophy of Christian Education. Acorn Press.



## BOOK REVIEW BECOMING A CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE TEACHER BY STEPHEN BROOKFIELD\*

**JENNY COX**

Professional Experience Administrator (Primary)

*Stephen Brookfield's Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher will appeal to any teacher who wishes to "create conditions under which each person is respected, valued and heard" (1995 p. 27) within the setting of a democratic classroom.*

*Brookfield's basic premise is that "We teach to change the world" (p. 1). His work is a positive challenge to teachers to consider how they can do this, and an encouragement to teachers by providing a framework for how to effectively use critical reflection to achieve it.*

*Brookfield defines reflection that is critical as having two components. Firstly, having an understanding that "considerations of power undergird, frame and distort educational processes and interactions" and secondly, a questioning of "assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own long-term interests" (p. 8).*

*He highlights that we should reflect upon our self as a teacher and learn to know ourselves so that as teachers we will have an "authentic voice" (p. 46). Critically reflective teachers research themselves, their students and their teaching. This begins with teachers examining their own assumptions, using autobiographical self-reflection. Knowing ourselves can come through several means, such as acknowledging and analysing our autobiographical experiences and assumptions; understanding our students and classroom dynamics by using tools such as a critical incident questionnaire method and student learning journals; and having conversations with peers about our teaching that are intentionally critical.*

*As a practical assistance to teachers who choose such critical teaching reflection, Brookfield describes a process he created and uses himself – the Good Practices*

*Audit (GPA). The GPA assists teachers to solve problems collaboratively. It involves a three-phase process. The first phase is the formulation of the problem. The second phase is where the problem is analysed by searching "their individual experiences as learners and teachers for clues as to how the problem can be dealt with" (p 162) individually and then collectively. In the final stage, teachers work "collaboratively to analyse their individually completed matrices, so as to generate useful responses to the problems identified" (p. 170). Brookfield then provides examples of how this process has worked.*

*To assist teachers in their efforts to be critically reflective, Brookfield also outlines the importance of broadly reading "the literature of critical reflection" (p. 207) and of developing the skill of reading literature critically. He makes the point, of course, that, although the risks can be mitigated (and Brookfield offers some ideas here), there are risks associated with being critically reflective teachers. These risks may include the need to change our minds upon learning new concepts, or marginalisation by colleagues who prefer to do things as they have always been done. But, whatever the risks to being critically literate, and teaching critically, Brookfield's text clearly shows they are risks worth taking considering the positive learning outcomes for students. Where we create a critically inspired and democratic learning space, we enable each student to be "respected, valued and heard" (p. 27).*

*I highly recommend Brookfield's Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher as a professional encouragement and help to teachers to develop criticality and reflection as a person and a teacher.*

\*Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. Jossey-Bass.



## KATRINA RYAN - CHANGING STAGES

### TABOR TEACHER GRADUATE AND ADJUNCT LECTURER IN MUSIC

*If you haven't heard of Katrina Ryan, there's a good chance you have heard her. And been very impressed.*

*'Throughout my life I've always sung,' she says, 'I started off as a professional singer. And I did a Bachelor of Music Performance and jazz voice at the Adelaide University. I was in my twenties and thirties.' This led her into a highly productive music career which saw her voice front the hugely popular E-Type Jazz, a vehicle that drove her across the world performing at jazz festivals globally and included a stint representing the nation at the G'Day USA promotional events. But the life of a world class professional jazz performer was just the beginning. In 2017 Katrina began turning her meaningful music career into a meaningful teaching career.*

*'I think that I've always really valued what music education brings to the lives of young children in particular... how the arts develop a critical thinker and a creative thinker, and also develops those life skills of persistence and resilience. I think learning to perform and learning to express yourself and communicate as best you possibly can as a singer or as a musician is perhaps one of the greatest skills.' The passion that is evident as she speaks is not just focussed on children. She operates Katrina Ryan Vocal Studio and is Co-Director of Vocal Hub Enterprises where she shares her joy and her massive experience with everyone.*

*The understanding that every person has a unique voice and a unique self to present to the world is central to what has driven her from the stage to the class room. 'One of my greatest passions is about trying to help people find their own unique path to self-expression,*

*which is really reflective of them and what they are, how they want to communicate and how they want to be seen in the world.' So the move from performer to teacher was natural for her. But, as a Mum, wife, and business owner, it wasn't easy. 'I did my degree, my Masters of Teaching over four years and it really was hard at some point, it's a real marathon. I really wanted to give up quite a lot of the time because it's really hard.'*

*But her personal passion to do what she loved was met by the Tabor environment to carry her through. 'I looked into Tabor and I just really liked the personal nature of it. I have loved that it's a very nurturing environment, even for someone who, I perceived, wouldn't need a lot of nurturing, but... you know.' She grins and continues. 'So it's a really nurturing environment and one which absolutely does form and enable you to transition spiritually and physically, in and into a new life purpose.'*

*So from the global stage to the personal connection with her students, Katrina has been able to pursue her dream of developing a professional life, teaching more than just singing and vocal performance. And that matters to her. 'Because in my life, even though I'm in my late 40s, there's probably never been anything in my life that I've had to work that hard for ever.'*

*Now even more equipped to help her students become so much more, Katrina Ryan is changing lives, not just her own, and living out her passion. Or, as she puts it;*

*'I think, my true purpose is to empower all voice users to find their own unique and authentic path to self-expression.'*

\*Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. Jossey-Bass.

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 NOT FOR  
 OURSELVES ALONE  
 ARE WE BORN

Marcus Tullius Cicero



2022 EDUCATION GRADUAND CEREMONY

*The term graduand describes a student who is about to graduate from an academic award. On Thursday the 29th of September 2022 we held our highly anticipated annual Graduand Twilight Ceremony, which celebrated the achievement of students who have completed their course requirements and are about to graduate with a Bachelor of Education or Master of Teaching.*

*It was a lot of fun planning this event, which this year we held at the Sporting Car Club at Unley - a lovely venue with a beautiful garden backdrop, made even prettier by being candle-lit.*

*Dr Victoria Warren opened the event. She is the Director of Initial Teacher Education and Head of Program - Secondary. Dr Tracey Price, our Dean of Education, delivered the key address.*



Following this, we had a time for our graduands to share about their time at Tabor and tell stories about their educational journey. Many shared about the uniqueness of Tabor, and their strong connection and sense of community with their fellow students and lecturers. Some brave graduands' families also shared how proud they were of their loved one and showed their gratitude for the way the Tabor Education staff valued and supported every student.

Dr Tracey Price then presented some awards acknowledging the graduands' achievements. The Dean's Award was presented to Jake Jaensch, Rachele Hannemann and Evelyne Adefusi in recognition of their hard work and reliability shown throughout their course.

After this, Mark Ryan - the South Australian Executive Officer at Christian Schools Australia (CSA) - presented the Christian Schools Australia-sponsored academic-based Integrity in Scholarship Awards to Rebecca Schubert, Jesse McDonald, Isabel Richards and Alexandra Brown, and the Professional Communication Award to Ian Wenas. Mark also gave a few words about the CSA association.

The evening finished with a toast to the graduands led by Kate Osborne (Head of Program - Primary), followed by a prayer by Taryn Gough (Professional Experience Administrator - Secondary) on behalf of Education faculty staff, and then a prayer by graduand Timothy Smith on behalf of the graduands.

These students will have their official graduation in April 2023, but this night was a great way to celebrate their achievements immediately after they have finished their studies.

We wish this years' graduands all the best and we know that they will go on to be exceptional teachers who will personify Tabor's values in all that they do!



# ALREADY KNOW YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

## TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR APPLICATION FOR TABOR EARLY ENTRY (TEE)

Tabor Early Entry (TEE) is a tertiary entry pathway option for students in Year 11, 12 or 13 who already know they want to change the world and don't want to wait for an ATAR to secure their place with Australia's #1 Tertiary Provider.\*

### HOW DO I APPLY FOR TEE?

Gaining early entry is simple! If you are currently enrolled in studies in year 11, 12 or 13, you can apply directly to Tabor by phoning 8373 8777 to seek a provisional place in the undergraduate program of your choice.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA?

Once approved, provisional places are offered to students regardless of ATAR achieved, subject to the following 3 criteria\*\*:

1. Provision of a completed referee report signed by your school Year Level Coordinator;
2. Achievement of a B grade average across all subjects in Year 12; and
3. If applying for an Education Degree (Primary or Secondary Teaching), achievement of a minimum B grade for one Mathematics and/or one English subject.

*\*\*Please note, additional non-academic requirements exist for some courses in order to gain entry.*

### SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

VISIT: [HTTPS://NEWS.TABOR.EDU.AU/TABOR-EARLY-ENTRY](https://news.tabor.edu.au/tabor-early-entry)

\*QILT Course Experience Questionnaire 2020





# TABOR

COLLEGE

**TEACHER EDUCATION  
TOP IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

QILT STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2021

Includes all Universities and Non-University Higher Education Institutions.

## INTRODUCING ANGIE

Hello! My name is Angie Hicks.



As the Education Faculty Administrator at Tabor, I provide various assistance to staff and students, mainly working with new applicant and existing student pathways and enrolments, and planning timetables.

Outside of work, I have many interests including hiking, playing netball, west coast swing dancing, and playing music – especially playing in bands on my flute...and I also love travelling and have been to 33 different countries (so far)! In my spare time I love going to wineries or the beach.

I'm also very lucky to have a big loving family and I spend a lot of time with my three siblings, two siblings in law, my parents, grandparents, and very cute three-year-old nephew

However, what really defines me is my hope and faith! Here at Tabor, I've found that hope and faith are sprinkled through what we do every day.

Before I started at Tabor, I worked as a funeral director. This may seem an unusual job choice for a young person, but I found it very rewarding, and it helped strengthen my hope and faith. I was involved in taking that first phone call from sometimes shocked relatives, informing us that their loved one had passed away, and then I met with families to talk them through planning every step of the funeral. I conducted the funeral service and arranged the burial or cremation. My job didn't end there – there were also follow up calls to not only complete legal paperwork but check in on how families were dealing with their grief.

It was a job that required all the care and compassion I could give at every step...which was sometimes quite draining and challenging – from that first phone call – to the farewell – to the cards that I sent them on the first Christmas without their loved one.

I've conducted funerals in churches, at footy ovals, in pubs, at the beach, in backyards – and for all types of communities, for Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists. The interesting thing I found was that the people who coped best were those that had hope and faith – those who saw that death was not the final step – that there was something beyond their grief – something bigger than us. This was different for different people – but for me it's my hope and my faith in God.

Here at Tabor, we may not deal with death every day, as I used to, but we deal more at the opposite end of the spectrum – educating new teachers who will nurture young people and equip them to deal with whatever life throws at them. We give students hope – hope for a bright future where they can be instruments of change in others.

The hope that underpins the philosophy here at Tabor is expressed in 2 Thessalonians 2v16-17: Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God the Father, loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and a good hope. May he encourage your hearts and give you strength in every good thing you do or say.

## INTRODUCING FRAN

Hello there, my name is Frances Hastings, otherwise known as Fran.



Q: What is your role at Tabor?

A: I am the Faculty Administration Manager at Tabor supporting both staff and students and my job is to ensure each semester runs smoothly.

Q: What's the best thing about the Faculty of Education?

A: The people. The passion, experience, hard work but most importantly the friendship that each and every one of our team bring to work every day is nothing but remarkable.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself?

A: I am the youngest of 6 and I was born in Lancashire, Northern England to a Welsh mother and a Nigerian father. I have two daughters aged 18 and 22 who are both attending University in the Health Sector.

Q: How long have you lived in Australia?

A: We moved to Adelaide, South Australia because of my husband's job about 10 years ago and we have never looked back.

Q: What do you like to do outside of work?

A: I enjoy running, beach walks with my dog and generally hanging out with my family and friends. Now that my children are grown up and I have more time, I have also found I enjoy cooking.

Q: What do you think is the most valuable thing about faith?

A: I came across a quote once which said, "Faith matters because it reminds us that there's good in the world and meaning to every life; and that the things that make us human are worth fighting for".

Q: What's your favourite book?

A: Without doubt it has to be the timeless classic, To Kill a Mockingbird.

Q: Have you always been an administrator?

A: I have always worked in the world of administration in one way or another, apart from in the UK where I worked in an American Bank for 11 years as an Underwriter and then a Project Manager. The bank had a sign above every door which read "Think of yourself as a customer" and they ensured each staff member did just that. This is something I believe in and motivates me to ensure I provide great customer service at Tabor.

Q: Why do you like working at Tabor?

A: Tabor is more than just a workplace. Tabor is more about a sense of community for students and staff alike and this shines through every day. One of the aspects of my job which I really love is talking to potential new students about Tabor and giving them a tour of our beautiful campus. I love to see the joy in their faces when they hear about the quality of education we have here and how we support our students throughout their journey to becoming a teacher.

I am very passionate about working with the next generation of teachers and I feel very lucky to be part of this beautiful community.

Q: How did you find yourself working at Tabor?

A: I was at a friend's house for dinner and as I was about to leave, she asked how work was, I told her I was currently applying for jobs in schools and that is when she told me there was a job going where she worked at Tabor! I knew as soon as I walked into the courtyard for my interview and stared up into that beautiful tree, this was where I was meant to be.

# TABOR ASCEND

PD WORKSHOPS

## A DIFFERENT TAKE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tabor Ascend PD Workshops are different because they have been developed with **flexible attendance options** to allow you to decide what **YOU** want out of your PD. Whether you are simply looking for quality Professional Development; seeking ways to **develop your CV**; or desire to work towards your **Masters Degree**, we have options to suit you. Attendees can attend workshops for the purposes of:



## ABOUT THE TABOR ASCEND PROGRAM

- Workshop topics selected based on community feedback to ensure real world application
- New workshop dates constantly being released (visit our website for dates)
- Designed to support the ongoing growth and development of those involved in education, counselling, chaplaincy, youth work, ministry, leadership, community services or the not-for-profit sector
- Centres on the provision of relevant, meaningful and practical PD.

VISIT: [HTTPS://LP.TABOR.EDU.AU/TABOR-ASCEND](https://lp.tabor.edu.au/tabor-ascend)

## MASTER OF EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL EDUCATORS

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO START YOUR MASTERS!

**SAVE YEARS OF STUDY BY USING  
YOUR CURRENT DEGREE (ADVANCED STANDING)  
AND/OR RPL (RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING)**

### MED COURSE STRUCTURE

**Total number of credit points (cps) required to obtain the degree: 96**

12 cps x 4 elective units

12 cps x 1 Integrating Spirituality, Justice and Education core unit

12 cps x 1 Educational Research core unit

12 cps x 1 Research Project in Education Part A

12 cps x 1 Research Project in Education Part B

### ADVANCED STANDING

**Applicants with a Bachelor of Education / Master of Teaching (or equivalent TRB registerable) degree will receive 24 cps of advanced standing towards the Master of Education degree.**

### RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

**Applicants may also apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)\***

Granting of RPL is in line with Tabor's RPL Policy. Prior learning can be from one of the following:

- Recognised tertiary education provider
- TAFE or other recognised VET provider
- Professional body, enterprise, private educational institution, or similar body
- Work/life experience

By way of example, if you have completed units for a Graduate Certificate in Education (Catholic Education) from UniSA, you may apply for RPL using these units, where two Graduate Certificate units may be granted one MEd elective unit.

Application of RPL using work/life experience will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the expected graduate outcomes for the course. By way of example, you may be granted Block Credit for an elective unit using the professional development certificates and related evidence that they used to apply for AITSL Highly Accomplished teaching level. These will need to be accompanied by a written justification from the you and/or a letter of certification from their employer.

\*Only a maximum of 48 cps (or 50% of the MEd's total number of cps) can be granted to an RPL applicant, with the 24 cps of advanced standing already included.