National Institute for Christian Education

Educating for Hope in this Cultural Moment ^{18 JULY 2024}

Research Symposium 2024 Contents

Welcome	3
Program	4
Strand Sessions	5
Plenary Speakers	6
Strand Speakers & Abstracts	8
FAQs	19



Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to the National Institute's annual Research Symposium, a gathering of Christian education scholars from across Australia and beyond. This year, our symposium takes place in the beautiful city of Perth, WA, immediately following the International Transforming Education Conference (ITEC), Nova Diem/A New Day. As we convene for a full day of inperson collaboration, we anticipate a rich exchange of scholarly research, insights, and innovations aimed at fostering the growth and flourishing of the Christian education sector.



The theme for our 2024 Symposium, Educating for Hope in this Cultural Moment, comes at a time when the educational landscape is undergoing rapid transformations. These changes bring a host of new complexities and challenges that span education policy and practice, generational shifts in social imaginaries, and the widening social and demographic divides. Amid these dynamics, our symposium serves as a hopeful platform for examining how our scholarship can navigate these realities and challenges, while grounding our perspectives in the enduring source of hope reflected in the Psalms:

We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. Psalm 33: 20-22 (NIV, 2011)

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the scholars, educators, and participants who have joined us. Your contributions are invaluable to advancing the discourse on Christian education and to fostering a community dedicated to educational excellence and innovation. Together, we hope to cultivate insights that will empower and inspire, ensuring that our Christian education sector not only meets the challenges of today but thrives in the face of them.

May our time together be filled with meaningful dialogue, inspiring discoveries, and a renewed sense of hope for the future of research in Christian education.

PROGRAM

NICE 2024 Annual Research Symposium Perth WA

Time	RiverView Room	
8.30 am	Registrations open	
9.00am	WELCOME & Opening Remarks	
9.15 am	PLENARY Dr David I Smith "Hope, Understanding, and Practice: Joining Faith, Research, and Pedagogical Engagement"	
10.00 am	STRAND SESSION ONE: River View (5) and Meeting Room (6)	
11.15 am	MORNING TEA	
11.45 am	STRAND SESSION TWO: River View (5) and Meeting Room (6)	
1.00 pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2.00 pm	STRAND SESSION THREE: River View (5) and Meeting Room (6)	
3.15 pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
3.45 pm	PLENARY Dr Lynn Swaner "Research on Flourishing Schools: Telling a Bigger Educational Story"	
4.30 pm	THANK YOU & Closing Remarks	
4.45 pm	SYMPOSIUM CLOSE	

STRAND SESSIONS

Times	Room: River View (5)	Room: Meeting Room (6)
STRAND SESSION ONE 10.00AM	 Strand 1 Theme: Community and Connection Chair: Sam Burrows Presenters 1: Dr Susan Westraad & Assoc. Prof. David Hastie Enabling faithful and connected communities: A teaching school hubs approach. Presenter 2: Esa Hukkinen Building connected communities through heutagogical principles and practices. Presenters 3: Daniela Brown (also on behalf of Tracie Mafile'o) Developing a research agenda for collaborative and impactful Christian education research. 	 Strand 3 Theme: Whole-person Formation Chair: Fiona Partridge Presenter 1: Philip Taylor Distinctly Christian assessment practice. Presenter 2: Emily Shea Formation through induction. Presenter 3: Tom Mahoney Moving mountains: The value of transformational communities of practice as an important tool in supporting the vision of the Christian school.
STRAND SESSION TWO 11.45AM	 Strand 2 Theme: Biblical Love, Justice & Peace Chair: Chris Rayner Presenter 1: Tim Argall Emergent practices of shalom leaders in Christian schools. Presenters 2: Jo West & Dr. Lindsay Fish Reflecting the hope of God's peace: Examining the intersection of calling to vocation and wellbeing. Presenter 3: Sam Burrows The Christian school in a metamodern moment. 	 Strand 3 Theme: Whole-person Formation Chair: Charlie Justins Presenter 1: Natalie Bluhdorn The experiences and aspirations of women teachers in Christian education: Providing hope, purpose and Christ-centered identity in our dynamic and complex culture. Presenter 2: Tim White The impact a "Christ transformer of culture" vision for Christian education has had on the curriculum and educational practices of Christian Education National (CEN) schools. Presenters 3: Rachel Herweynen & Yangay Story-makers: Yolŋu-Jesus pattern of engagement in remote homelands woven with your story.
STRAND SESSION THREE 2.00PM	 Strand 1 Theme: Community and Connection Chair: Tom Mahoney Presenter 1: Dr Anne Knowles Al, Christian education and creativity: Avoiding Al quandaries by using student drawings to assess. Presenter 2: Daniel Symons Developing collective teacher efficacy through professional growth. Presenter 3: Rebecca Gibson Visions of education – complexity, change and Christian hope. 	 Strand 3 Theme: Whole-person Formation Chair: Jill Ireland Presenter 1: Sharon Garro Me, We and Us: Embracing a stance of humility in leadership to promote understanding and connection through times of change. Presenter 2: Dr. Hugh Chilton Formed for flourishing: Initial findings from a collaborative study of graduate outcomes seven years post-school. Presenter 3: Cassandra Pendlebury Spiritual well-being in the leadership of Australian Christian schools.

PLENARY SESSION ONE



Dr David I Smith Director, Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning

David earned his B.A. in Modern Languages (German and Russian) at Oxford University; a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Nottingham; an M.Phil. in Philosophy of Education/Philosophical Theology from the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto; and a Ph.D. in Education with a specialism in Curriculum Studies from the University of London.

David has written widely and worked extensively worldwide with educators at all levels of education on questions of how faith relates to the practice of teaching. His many books on Christian education include On Christian Teaching, which was awarded the 2021 Lilly Fellows Program Book Award, a biennial award for work focused on teaching and scholarship in the Christian intellectual tradition. A sequel, titled Everyday Christian Teaching, is due out in late 2024.

David is a passionate listener to a wide variety of musical genres and enjoys gardening, woodworking, and reading outside of his work-related fields.

Abstract

Hope, Understanding, and Practice: Joining Faith, Research, and Pedagogical Engagement

What does research have to do with hope? What might it mean for teaching and learning to be informed by hope and by research? And what happens when teaching is not grounded in hope? In this session I will explore examples of pious hopes appearing less certain in light of research, of faith and hope giving rise to research, and of hopeful and despairing approaches to the craft of teaching. These examples will range from studies of teacher burnout and demoralization to the dynamics of team science and the design of learning processes in the science classroom. I hope that dwelling on these examples will suggest that waiting in hope for the Lord is not a passive process, but one that can be fully engaged with empirical and pedagogical realities.

PLENARY SESSION TWO



Dr. Lynn Swaner

President, Cardus (US)

Dr. Lynn Swaner is the President, US at Cardus, a non-partisan think tank dedicated to clarifying and strengthening, through research and dialogue, the ways in which society's institutions can work together for the common good. She is the editor or lead author of numerous books, including Future Ready: Innovative Missions and Models in Christian Education (Cardus & ACSI, 2022); Flourishing Together: A Christian Vision for Students, Educators, and Schools (Eerdmans, 2021); and MindShift: Catalyzing Change in Christian Education (ACSI, 2019). She holds a doctorate in organizational leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University and previously served as a professor of education and a Christian school leader in New York.

Abstract

Research on Flourishing Schools: Telling a Bigger Educational Story

Most educational research over the past few decades has given primary attention to measuring and improving academic achievement in schools. While cognitive learning is certainly a paramount outcome of schooling, it is a poor proxy for everything that educators, students, and families might hope would result from education. This is true regardless of school sector, but particularly so for Christian schools, which ground instruction in a biblical worldview and are animated by Jesus' mission to bring "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10b, NCV). This plenary will explore how we can ask—and through research, answer—bigger questions about educational flourishing, which in turn can help us to tell a bigger, more meaningful story in our schools.



Timothy Argall

Executive Principal, Donvale Christian College

Tim Argall has been the Executive Principal at Donvale Christian College since 2016. He has held deputy or principal roles in four schools in two different states for three decades. Through the three degrees he has done research projects, he has covered topics in environmental physiology/ecology of echidnas, the challenges of teaching drama when you're not trained in it, and undocumented leadership paradigms. He loves writing, but is keener on conversations that lead to deeper learning through shared experiences.

Abstract:

The call to leadership in schools is more fraught than ever. The myriad of challenges faced by those who take up the leadership of Christian schools and/or Christian schooling networks are increasingly complex and nuanced. This calls the leader in "seeking first God's kingdom" to deeply examine those examples of leaders in the biblical narrative who sought God's "as it should be" - shalom in all its flourishing perfection - as a way of determining God's word and will for them as they undertake their leadership responsibilities.



Natalie Bluhdorn

Academic Head, Shire Christian School

Natalie has been teaching in Christian schools for 20 years and has appreciated the complexities and opportunities that working in distinctively Christian schools brings. She is the Academic Head P-12 at Shire Christian School in Sydney. Natalie also recently enjoyed several years teaching the Masters of Teaching students at the University of Sydney, where she is also completing her PhD. Her research interests include leadership identity of women in Christian education.

Abstract:

My research explored the experiences of mid-career women teachers in Christian schools, in particular, their aspirations and access to positions of leadership. A small case study considered the lived experiences and perceptions held by mid-career women. Their experiences were examined against the contextual and organisational factors that shape leadership in independent schools. Representations of leadership identities, together with normative discourses surrounding women in leadership added rich insights into the study, which concludes with suggestions for moving towards a more hopeful, Christ centered approach to women's working identity and role in the work place.





Daniela Brown

Program Lead & Lecturer, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, New Zealand

Daniela has been teaching in the performing and visual arts secondary sector. She is now a lecturer and programme lead in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) programme. Born in Romania, she explores decoloniality from the lens of Tauiwi (immigrant to Aotearoa, New Zealand). In her teaching, she values the intersection of faith, culture and diversity. She is passionate about teaching BTI's students about safe practice through creating an intentional space (physical, spiritual and emotional) that promotes equality and mutuality.

Abstract:

This qualitative study was undertaken to develop a research agenda for education and ministry. The study engaged 65 educators and ministers across Australia and New Zealand. The research identified research topics of importance to educators and how researchers and educators can collaborate for positive impact.

Daniela is presenting collaborative work also on behalf of Tracie Mafile'o (Avondale University), who is unable to attend in person.



Sam Burrows

Director of Professional Learning, Christian Education National

Sam has had a range of experience in education and church leadership, including teaching in Christian and state schools in New Zealand, a role as a deputy principal and working in young adults ministry. He has also been on staff at Saint Augustine's Anglican Church as part of the preaching team and youth ministry. Since 2020 he has worked as a lecturer at Laidlaw College in Auckland, teaching a mixture of theology and education subjects. Sam also completed a Masters of Theology in 2022, with a thesis that explored trends in current faith and spirituality. He is passionate about the way that theology can speak to pedagogy, epistemology, and culture, and is excited about this new role with CEN and the ways that he could contribute to the network in this next chapter.

Abstract:

Attitudes towards meaning and faith have changed significantly in the last 15 years. The postmodern critique no longer holds the same level of cultural capital it once did, and this presents Christian institutions with new opportunities, challenges and priorities in communicating their messages. This presentation will explore this shift, what it looks like and what might guide our thinking about it.





Hugh Chilton Head, ScotsX

Dr Hugh Chilton is Head of ScotsX at The Scots College, Sydney, an experimental learning lab aiming to create a new model of education for human formation. Hugh is Co-Founder of the Research-Invested Schools Network which brings together more than 60 schools committed to innovation and leadership in research. He has led a number of major projects and programs in character education, leadership and professional learning, including an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant exploring Indigenous education. In 2023 he was included in The Educator's list of Most Influential Educators. Hugh holds a PhD in history from the University of Sydney, and is the author of Evangelicals and the End of Christendom: Religion, Australia and the Crises of the 1960s (Routledge, 2020). He lives in the lower Blue Mountains with his wife and three children.

Abstract:

In conversation with the rapidly growing international field of research on human flourishing, the "Formed for Flourishing" Research Program explores the relational realities of early adulthood in Australia. A schools-university research partnership commencing with a one-year pilot project capturing the outcomes of a cohort of students aged 25, seven years after graduating, it aims to generate evidence of promise for developing a new longitudinal measure of school success. In this presentation we will share the background to the study, initial findings, and future directions, including opportunities for more schools to be involved.



Lindsay Fish

Senior Educator, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, New Zealand

Dr Lindsay Fish qualified as a secondary teacher in 2000 and has taught Years 5 to 13 focusing on language and literacies. Her most recent school role saw her leading a Faculty that included teachers of English, ESOL, te reo Māori, Lea Fakatonga and Pasifika. Following the completion of her doctoral work, Lindsay began working with pre-service teachers. Her research interests include teachers' understanding of their own cultural context, theorising learning communities, literacy education and community tutoring.

Abstract:

As a Christian educator, the relationship between sense of calling and wellbeing is often intertwined. It is reasonable to suggest that within education communities there is an intentionality towards reflecting the hope of God's peace to students. However, how is the hope of God's peace reflected for educators? This research presents an autoethnographic study capturing five critical moments across a teaching career. It uses Larking's theory of vocational praxis, with its three elements of renewal, liberation and shalom, to analyse and understand those moments. Through examining the intersection between calling to a vocation and wellbeing, the findings of this research reveal four key themes, alongside language that might enable Christian educators to effectively comprehend and communicate the intricate interplay at this intersection. This research increases our understanding and ability to reflect the hope of God's peace and wellbeing to ourselves and our communities.





Sharon Garro

Program Director, Graduate Studies and PhD Candidate, Alphacrucis University College

Sharon's career began as an educational and counselling psychologist. Her love of supporting the engagement of students in learning, motivated her to continue on a learning journey of her own for over 25 years. She has been a school psychologist and Head of Wellbeing at a Christian school in Victoria where she initiated whole school wellbeing and professional development frameworks. Sharon is currently a Program Director and PhD candidate at Alphacrucis University College and a wellbeing coach and facilitator.

Abstract:

Burnout and attrition are prevalent within the education system. It can affect anyone and although there are evidence-based practices to support wellbeing that can be implemented at the individual level, teachers' ability to implement these practices as part of their professional day, are influenced by the organizational culture they are part of. This research uses lived experience and collaborative ethnography to explore factors that enable teachers to implement the evidence-based strategies they learn through their school-based professional development. The goal is to uncover leadership qualities that can help reduce rates of burnout and attrition in Christian schools.



Rebecca Gibson

Lead lecturer, Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) at Laidlaw College, New Zealand.

Rebecca is the lead lecturer for the Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) at Laidlaw College, New Zealand. Her experience in the education sector has been diverse. Rebecca has been a teacher, deputy Principal, consultant, lecturer and education research and policy advisor for a Member of Parliament. She also has significant governance experience in both the education and not-for-profit sectors. Rebecca is a PhD candidate; her research seeks to understand how Christian educators can best navigate and respond to educational ideologies and philosophies in Australasia. She is married to Abraham and enjoys cooking, hospitality and exploring the beautiful outdoors.

Abstract:

In the last two decades, there have been significant shifts in education policies, practices, systems and curriculum. Underlying these changes and reforms are different visions of what education should look like in Australasia. These visions, which are often politically charged, are based on ideologies and philosophies that embody distinct beliefs about what it means to be human, the inherent nature of children, and the types of knowledge that should be prioritized. Where do these ideologies and philosophies align and conflict with a Christian vision of the world? How should Christian leaders respond and support teachers to be active, critical, constructive, and hope-restoring stewards of education?





David Hastie

Deputy Vice President Development, Alphacrucis University College

Associate Professor David Hastie is Deputy Vice President, Development of Alphacrucis University College (AUC), and Executive Director of the National Embedded Cross-Sector Teacher Education Pilot (NECSTEP). NECSTEP has attracted \$2.9 Million of unique NSW Government grants, for piloting three varieties of the teaching school model across independent, Catholic and state schools in regional NSW. David has also led the implementation of the Alphacrucis Teaching School model across networks of over 100 schools in five states since 2018. David was called as an expert witness into the NSW Parliament's 2022 inquiry into teacher shortages and the 2019 Commonwealth Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession. He was a previously a member of the NSW Council of Deans of Education, and served as Education Strategist for The Anglican Schools Corporation (TASC), and as an educator in four Independent schools since 1997.

Abstract:

Alphacrucis Unversity College has pioneered a model of embedded teacher training through teaching-school partnerships. This research focuses on the role of community in this model and how this enhances connection and classroom readiness.



Rachel Herweynen

Principal, Gawa Christian School (Elcho Islands)

Rachel is God's appointed Principal of Gäwa Christian School since 2017. She is led by Yahweh and her husband Cameron. Rachel embraces the guidance of the Holy Spirit, traditional Elders, and her homeland family in her leadership. Her passion is to see the image of the Triune God in all people and she is excited to share how her Yolŋu family reflects the ways of Jesus in teaching and learning. In 2023, Rachel completed her Master of Education (Leadership) through the National Institute for Christian Education, through the support of her employer, NT Christian Schools.

Abstract:

Jesus' ways of teaching his followers are reflected in the Yolŋu engagement pattern of 'mal'thun-nhäma-ŋäma-djäma-märram' (follow-watch-listen-work-take). The Yolŋu are the Indigenous peoples of northeast Arnhem Land, which includes Elcho Island, where the homelands of Gäwa, Naŋiny'burra and Ban'thula are located. Drawing from a situated ethnographic (story-telling) study in the above homelands, the research explores the local Yolŋu-Jesus epistemology and ontology of engagement (presence and participation) and agency (story-making). These understandings are rooted in wäŋa (country) and gurruṯu (kinship), which are foundational to Yolŋu learning, facilitating lived/embodied lessons and impacting the soul (Guthadjaka, 2010). In this presentation, educators who seek God's pattern in their own pedagogy have opportunity to recognise Yolŋu engagement as reflective of God's design and to ponder ways of weaving Yolŋu perspectives, principles, and practices with their own story-making.





Esa Hukkinen

PhD Candidate, Alphacrucis University College

Esa has worked as a Pastor/Senior Pastor for almost 30 years and has had much life coaching training and experience as well. For the last two years, he has been working towards developing a model of non-directive mentoring that utilizes heutagogical principles and practices to empower others to self-author and steward their faith growth in conjunction with the Spirit's leading. The model can be utilized in many areas including churches and Christian schools to

Abstract:

I have been researching the impact that heutagogical principles and practices can have on spiritual growth. I have done the literature review which has been published, conducted 9 months of research and am commencing the analysis and reporting of my findings this year.



Anne Knowles

Researcher, The Excellence Centre at Pacific Hills Christian School

Dr Anne Knowles has been involved with Christian Education since 1986 as a Biology/Science, PDHPE, Mathematics and Latin teacher including gifted students, and as a parent. She has a PhD (USYD) in Behaviour Genetics/Education and has taught at UQ, UTS and Excelsia College, and studied divinity at Regent and Morling Colleges. Anne's life-long interest in educational enquiry, statistics and Christian schooling has led to the position of Research Contractor with The Excellence Centre (TEC) at PHCS.

Abstract:

Being other-focused and inclusive is integral to glorifying God in Christian community and is epitomised in the Pacific Christian Schools Group's Personal Viewpoints Pedagogy (PVP) developed to supplement programming, with its aim to transform thinking towards concern for others, even at personal cost, to overcome culturally driven stereotyped, default attitudes and behaviours. Advances in AI have accentuated questioning of the integrity of assessment data. As beings, made in the image of a creative God, our research work suggests hand drawings may be a way to use creativity that overcomes or eschews the impact of AI on assessment, as it incorporates a degree of arbitrariness - a discounting of rules - the very thing on which machine learning relies. Student drawings in response to socially problematic situations provided evidence of curriculum impact on self-prioritisation following PVP augmented curriculums.





Tom Mahoney PhD Candidate, Deakin University

Tom Mahoney is a mathematics and psychology teacher with experience in Victorian Christian, independent and government secondary schools. At Deakin University, Tom completed both a BAEd and MEd (specialising in inclusive education). He is currently completing his PhD parttime through Deakin University, exploring the possible relationships between critical reflection on educational ideologies and teacher agency. Tom is an educational commentator, contributing regularly to the Teachers' Education Review podcast (titled Ideology in Education) and publishes monthly posts through his Substack blog, The Interruption.

Abstract:

Communities of Practice (CoP) are one of the dominant improvement initiatives that government schools in Australia employ to achieve school and state priorities for education. However, it is a practice that appears to have not been (at least explicitly) taken up by Australian Christian schools. In education settings, CoP involve a number of teachers with a common interest coming together to explore that interest in order to grow in their practice. In utilising CoP with the intent of transformation, Christian schools have the opportunity to enact CoP counter-culturally, which may serve as an important tool to support teacher agency and retention. This presentation seeks to provide a justification for Christian schools to intentionally engage in Communities of Practice as an important tool for the transformation of school staff, teaching practice and students.



Cassandra Pendlebury

Director Post Graduate Studies and Teaching School Partnerships, Alphacrucis University College

Cass Pendlebury has been a Christian educator and leader for over 20 years. She achieved her BA Dip Ed from Macquarie University in 1984 and her Masters in Leadership and Management in Education (University of Newcastle) in 2004. Cass is currently completing a PhD with Avondale University (2025 completion). She is currently in the role of Director of Postgraduate Studies and Teaching School Partnerships having previously been employed as the NSW Executive Officer for Christian Schools Australia.

Abstract:

This research investigates the perceptions of spiritual well-being and associated spiritual practices in the leadership of Australian Christian schools. The sample is drawn from principals in Christian schools from around Australia including members of CEN, CSA, and the Adventist schooling organisation, plus some independent representatives.





Tracie Mafile'o Research Professor, Avondale University

Prof Tracie Mafile'o is a Research Professor at Avondale University (NSW) and is committed to community-engaged research. Tracie is an experienced social researcher with completed research projects in social work, youth development, HIV prevention, cultural humility and Pacific peoples health and social care.

Abstract:

This qualitative study was undertaken to develop a research agenda for education and ministry. The study engaged 65 educators and ministers across Australia and New Zealand. The research identifed research topics of importance to educators and how reserachers and educators can collaborate for positive impact.

Tracie's collaborative work has been undertaken with Daniela Brown, who will present on behalf of them both.



Emily Shea

Teaching and Learning Leader, Palmerston Christian College

Emily has worked in both Christian education and public education over the past 17 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Education, a Graduate Certificate of Education and will complete her Master of Education (Leadership) this year. After her own growth in understanding Christian education practice through her study, Emily is passionate about teacher growth and formation that they may in turn be effective formational educators that invite students to meaningful Kingdom work.

Abstract:

Historically Northern Territory Christian Schools (NTCS) has onboarded significant numbers of new staff each year and the transience of the Northern Territory along with the current teacher shortage has significant impact on the ability to maintain culture in our schools. This research looks at formational induction practices to propose an induction model that both improves teacher self-efficacy as well as commitment to the school community in order to improve staff retention across our schools.





Daniel Symons

Deputy Principal, Plenty Valley Christian College

Dan is a passionate learner with particular interests in philosophy, literature, and wellbeing. He has served in a range of executive, pastoral, and pedagogical school leadership roles over the last eighteen years and holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Graduate Diploma in Education, and a Master of Education. Dan is enthusiastic about the intersection of personal development and organisational change, developing systems and cultures that empower students to make a difference in the world.

Abstract:

If collective teacher efficacy is understood as a way of building collective hope in a learning community's capacity to affect student outcomes, the challenge for school leaders is to create systems and circumstances that lead to this outcome. This research is based on measuring the affective outcomes of a newly developed Professional Growth Cycle, which is designed to build teacher confidence in their peers.



Philip Taylor

Head of Science, Rehoboth Christian School

Philip has been teaching for 10 years and is currently the head of science at Rehoboth Christian College. He specialises in teaching human biology and psychology and coordinates the year 10 bush mission program. He recently completed his Master of Educational (Leadership) through NICE and is passionate about Christian education and all things formational. Together with his wife and three kids, Philip worships at Redeemer Presbyterian church in Canning Vale.

Abstract:

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, and yet it is often identified as a point of significant tension for Christian teachers and their distinctly Christian purpose for education. This study sought to (1) understand how assessment can serve Christian formational purposes; (2) identify the current practices of a sample of teachers at Rehoboth Christian College; and (3) provide opportunity and direction for further developing practices in cooperation with God's Spirit.





Jo West

Graduate, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, New Zealand

Jo has been in primary education for 30 years, both within New Zealand and internationally. She has served in a diverse range of roles from; classroom teaching across years 1 - 6, specialist music teaching, special educational needs and most recently, senior leadership within a Yr 0 - 13 college. A recent graduate of the Masters of Professional Practice and Leadership program at BTI, her research interests focused on the intricate relationship between calling to a vocation and wellbeing.

Abstract:

As a Christian educator, the relationship between sense of calling and wellbeing is often intertwined. It is reasonable to suggest that within education communities there is an intentionality towards reflecting the hope of God's peace to students. However, how is the hope of God's peace reflected for educators? This research presents an autoethnographic study capturing five critical moments across a teaching career. It uses Larking's theory of vocational praxis, with its three elements of renewal, liberation and shalom, to analyse and understand those moments. Through examining the intersection between calling to a vocation and wellbeing, the findings of this research reveal four key themes, alongside language that might enable Christian educators to effectively comprehend and communicate the intricate interplay at this intersection. This research increases our understanding and ability to reflect the hope of God's peace and wellbeing to ourselves and our communities.



Sue Westraad

Head of School of Education, Alphacrucis University College

Associate Professor Sue Westraad has worked in senior leadership roles in not-for-profit and higher education. Her work has focused on providing innovative solutions and programs to meet key educational challenges in areas from literacy interventions to whole school transformation. She has been appointed to national curriculum development committees and standards bodies and has written several textbooks. The American Chamber of Commerce awarded her Ready for Success program the Highest Education Award and the overall Star of Star award for the best program.

Abstract:

Alphacrucis Unversity College has pioneered a model of embedded teacher training through teaching-school partnerships. This research focuses on the role of community in this model and how this enhances connection and classroom readiness.





Tim White

Teacher and Transformation by Design consultant, Kuyper Christian School

Tim is currently working one day a week at Kuyper Christian School while pursuing HDR through Alphacrucis University College. In the past, he has worked at and led school communities in NSW and the NT. He is currently on the Christian Teachers Journal editorial committee and has served on Christian Education National (CEN) boards and committees. His interest is curriculum and how CEN can continue to develop unique expressions of learning that honour God and ultimately impact society.

Abstract:

My research follows the path of the original founders of CEN, from early Kuyperian influence to the development of CEN philosophy and application of that developing vision. It references Niebuhr's typology of how Christian institutions view the relationship between Christ and culture. This research explores what has been understood by the term "transformation", and how this interpretation has been expressed in striving towards unique expressions of teaching, learning and resource development. I am still at the beginning of this research journey.



Yangay (Yäŋay)

Team member, Gäwa Christian School (Elcho Islands)

Yangay (Yäŋay) is a precious jewel, reflecting our Triune God in beautiful ways. A team member in Gäwa Christian School since 2019, Yäŋay leads with gentleness and grace and exemplifies the Yolŋu-Jesus principles of engagement in her own teaching. Yäŋay loves the whole community by praying and serving selflessly. She takes God's Word as truth, humbly changing her ways as the Holy Spirit guides her. Yäŋay is a learner at heart and is enrolled in Nungalinya College's Faith & Family course (Certificate II in Community Services). She is wife to Lionel Yangipuy and mother to Tianna, Muruwirri, Mirriny and Saraya.

Abstract:

Jesus' ways of teaching his followers are reflected in the Yolŋu engagement pattern of 'mal'thun-nhäma-ŋäma-djäma-märram' (follow-watch-listen-work-take). The Yolŋu are the Indigenous peoples of northeast Arnhem Land, which includes Elcho Island, where the homelands of Gäwa, Naŋiny'burra and Ban'thula are located. Drawing from a situated ethnographic (story-telling) study in the above homelands, the research explores the local Yolŋu-Jesus epistemology and ontology of engagement (presence and participation) and agency (story-making). These understandings are rooted in wäŋa (country) and gurruṯu (kinship), which are foundational to Yolŋu learning, facilitating lived/embodied lessons and impacting the soul (Guthadjaka, 2010). In this presentation, educators who seek God's pattern in their own pedagogy have opportunity to recognise Yolŋu engagement as reflective of God's design and to ponder ways of weaving Yolŋu perspectives, principles, and practices with their own story-making.





I thought Emeritus Professor Trevor Cooling was also speaking at the Symposium?

Unfortunately, Trevor had to withdraw from the conference for personal reasons. Professor Cooling was planning to speak with us on the following:

"Knowledge is the main object of trade in education. Recently the British Prime Minister said that his government would ensure that 'proper knowledge' not ideology is taught in schools. In this session I will explore the implications of the notion of proper knowledge for Christian schools drawing on the work of missiologist Bishop Lesslie Newbigin"

His presentation was going to draw from a recent (2024) article written by Trevor Cooling and published in the British Journal of Religious Education. It is titled "Knowledge in a religion and worldviews approach in English schools". Written for a British audience, this paper has relevance for the Australian context, and Trevor invites you to access this important work and read for yourself:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01416200.2024.2304693

What is included in my registration fee?

Your registration includes a full day experience at the Symposium. It includes access to the plenary sessions and any strand sessions you choose to attend (see program). Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are available as part of your registration fee at the times indicated on the program. These breaks are a great time to chat with speakers, talk about your own research, and get to know someone new.

How long are presentations?

Plenary sessions are 45 minutes each in length. There are two plenary sessions across the day. The strand speaker sessions include concurrent sessions in two rooms (RV5 & MR6). Based on the program abstracts, you will need to choose which room to attend. We encourage you to choose one room and stay for the whole session to reduce distractions for speakers. Each session will comprise 3 x 20-minute presentations, followed by 15 minutes Q&A for all speakers in the session.

Will the presentations be available online after the conference?

No. Unfortunately, sessions will not be recorded or streamed live.

Who can I contact with further questions?

There will be a number of National Institute staff available to talk to during the conference. Staff will be wearing NICE name-tags to identify them. Please do not hesitate to come and speak with us if you need assistance with anything during the day.











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