

PeCALE

Pedagogy, Curriculum, Assessment and Learner Engagement



Newsletter Edition 3

Winter 2020

The PeCALE research focus area seeks to understand curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and learner engagement within a variety of diverse formal educational contexts, as well as informal and community contexts. PeCALE researchers employ a multitude of research approaches and methodologies to explore the complex interrelationships between broad and specific curriculum contexts and approaches, quality of learning and teaching, assessment of learning, and impact on learning. These cover formal and informal educational settings and other contexts.

From the convenor

Welcome to the Winter newsletter of the Pedagogy, Curriculum, Assessment and Learner Engagement (PeCALE) research group in the school of Education. This edition highlights recent research achievements of PeCALE researchers, including research projects currently being undertaken within the group and published articles since July 2019.

On 24th July 2020, PeCALE researchers had a mid-year Get-together. As part of the research sharing session, three research teams reported their proposed projects, looking into the experiences of teachers and students, as well as the possibilities of new teaching practice in the current COVID-19 crisis. Sharing our concerns about how teachers and students are coping with the many constraints on, and changes to, their teaching and learning routines, we are seeking to facilitate research in response to the current pandemic. We welcome ideas from

colleagues and teachers that stimulate timely investigations into the opportunities and challenges in the way the education community operates in order to provide essential educational services.

Dr Hongming Ma

PeCALE convenor

PeCALE Research projects

Title: Pre-service teacher perceptions of LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Tests for Initial Teacher Education)

Researchers: Jenene Burke, Peter Sellings, and Naomi Nelson

This project seeks to collect student perceptions of their experience of a recently introduced

national testing system for initial teacher education candidates known as LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Testing: Initial Teacher Education). It will explore the feelings and beliefs of these pre-service teachers in relation to this test and what effect it has had on their thoughts towards their university studies and the teaching profession. Stage one of this project will survey participants through an electronic survey with questions relating to their experiences, feelings and beliefs in relation to the LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Testing: Initial Teacher Education). Stage two of this project will interview a group of participants to gain further insight into survey responses in stage one. The data obtained from the two stages of the project will be used to explore the following key research questions:

- 1. What experiences did students have when undertaking the LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education)*
- 2. What do students think of the introduction of the LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education).*

Title: An exploration of international students' online learning experience during COVID-19.

Researchers: Melania Pantelich, Mick Barrow, Dr Swapnali Gazula

This research project is designed to give international students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds an opportunity to share their experiences of online learning. Due to the restrictions on face-to-face teaching that

were introduced as a result of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, all tertiary students have had to adjust rapidly to a mode of teaching that they did not expect to be undertaking when they commenced their studies. While this has presented difficulties for all students, there is a possibility that international students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds may have been disadvantaged differently from domestic students and students from English-speaking backgrounds.

We anticipate potential that causes for this difference due to:

- unequal English language skills across all four dimensions (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening), which will not be the same for students from all countries or backgrounds*
- the range of educational styles that students bring to the classroom, which may or may not align with the demand for self-directed learning expected in Australia*
- unfamiliarity with technological demands of online study; and*
- insecurity with housing and finances*

Our study hopes to explore the student experience and use the findings to inform future online class design and delivery. Participants will be asked to complete a survey developed by the researchers, as well as a validated tool (The Online Student Connectedness Survey, Bolliger & Inan, 2012).

Title: Navigating changing times: Exploring teacher educator embodied experiences of resilience

Researchers: Lisa Pappatrainaou (CDU); Caroline Mansfield (Notre Dame); Sharon McDonough (Federation University Australia); Denise Beutel (QUT)

This is part two of a project that was awarded a AARE Strategic Research Grant in 2018 and includes a survey where we are inviting teacher educators to share their experiences of their work. This survey is divided into 3 sections with questions relating to:

Section 1: Your professional background

Section 2: Ten brief statements about your work

Section 3: A 'situation that has stayed with you' either sustaining or challenging.

Title: Teaching during a Pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on teacher work and workload

Researchers: Sharon McDonough (Federation University Australia) and Narelle Lemon (Swinburne University of Technology)

This project explores how in-service teachers are addressing the challenges of teaching in remote, flexible and blended modes during the COVID-19 pandemic and the coping strategies they are drawing upon in this context. The project seeks to identify what challenges and supports teachers identify in teaching remotely or in blended mode during a pandemic and the impact of this on their work and workload.

There are four key questions addressed in this project:

- 1) How has teachers work changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2) What are the challenges that teachers are experiencing in teaching in remote and blended forms during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 3) What impact has COVID-19 had on teacher workload?
- 4) What resources and supports do teachers call on to navigate the challenges of teaching in this context?

Title: Understanding and deconstructing a Victorian integrated year nine program (PhD project).

Researcher: Josh Ambrosy

Adolescence is defined as a societal construction in which behaviour maturation is observed in the individual and a transition from childhood to adulthood. Puberty is a term observed within scientific and medical discourses referring to the period in which gonadal maturation is experienced resulting in the preparation of the body for reproduction. Students in year nine are commonly considered to be concurrently experiencing adolescence and puberty. They have been described within discourses of policy, popular media, and educational research as presenting their own unique set of 'assets, wants and needs' Accordingly, many schools, with a noticeable epicentre being secondary schools in Victoria, have sought to implement specific programs varying in length, theoretical underpinnings and structure to cater to these students.

In this thesis, poetic inquiry is used within a methodology of tensions to explore a year nine program at a regional government secondary school. Found poetry informed by phenomenology is used to explore the first research question: What insights into curriculum structures and pedagogical approaches can be understood through examining the lived experience of teachers and school leaders of year nine programs?. Post-structural theories inform the second research question: What is present and what is not? What emerging lines of flight might year nine programs take to cater for the developmental needs of students now and into the future? This is explored through a combination of re-constructed and researcher voiced poetry.

Current completed PhD Project

Title: “If we were all, like, learning at the same time, we might have, like, the same experience”: An investigation into the development of physical subjectivities in early primary education

Researcher: Cameron Smee

There is growing consensus about the importance of physical activity and regular engagement is known to have a number of health and developmental benefits. Accordingly, research across a variety of fields has argued for the importance of laying the foundations for lifelong physical activity engagement in the early

years. The school plays a central role in this effort by impacting children’s initial relationships with physical culture. Within the school, PE is often the primary vehicle for the promotion of physical activity. However, the problems with PE and its failure to connect with all children has been widely reported. Concurrently, there has been a significant physical activity dropout rate in adolescence for girls, and some boys. Scholarly attempts to address these concerns have focused mainly on late primary or high school settings, specifically curriculum and pedagogy. To date, very little research has focused on the early (Year One/Two) years of PE, when many children are developing their initial physical subjectivities. Rather than a period which all children enter as a ‘blank slate’, early PE is defined by the differing levels of experience that children bring to class. How these differing levels of embodied experiences are valued mean the children are constantly engaging in a range of stratified interactions. The outcomes of these interactions can have a profound impact on how students engage in physical activity, both in PE and on the playground.

To examine how children are embodying and developing their physical subjectivities in these two spaces, a six-month ethnographic project was conducted at a primary school in Victoria. This allowed for the examination of the experiences of a Year 1/2 cohort through the implementation a variety of ethnographic and child-centred methods. Drawing on a theoretical approach, combining Bourdieu (1998) and Collins (2004), this thesis shows how the outcomes of PE activities, impacted the types of

activities that children chose to engage in on the playground. Additionally, the findings show how the children play a key role in reproducing the dominant elements of the field (including the 'naturalized' gender order inherent in sport/PE) and the hierarchies that contextualized each activity. This research offers an in-depth focus into the complex social processes, in the playground and PE, which continue to usher children along seemingly pre-determined physical paths. This thesis concludes with a call for a critical approach to early PE that incorporates the different experiences of the children to create curricula, with a particular focus on teaching children to be reflective of the impact of their embodied experiences. This also incorporates changes to the playground as a continuation of the PE space.

Current publications

Title: *The pedagogic moment: Enskilment as another way of being in outdoor education.*

Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning 20(1)

Authors: Prins, A & Wattchow, B.

Abstract

This theoretical paper aims to contribute to the debate about a perceived activity-environment tension in outdoor education. Tim Ingold's extensive writings on enskilment are used to explore what it means to be skilful in outdoor activities and how this can contribute to dwelling in outdoor places. Four 'threads' of enskilment—

taskscape, guided attention, storytelling and wayfinding—are each discussed in terms of how they contribute to the way that learners learn to become enskilled. Discussions of Ingold's ideas are coupled with van Manen's insights into the pedagogic moment to describe what is required of the educator to teach for enskilment. The authors' draw examples from their teaching experiences on coastal outdoor education programmes and conclude by suggesting some practices that favour an enskilment approach.

Title: *Pre-service teacher perceptions of LANTITE: Complexity theory in action?*

J. Fox, C. Alexander & T. Aspland (Eds.), *Teacher Education in Globalised Times: Local Responses in Action*, (pp. 139-157).

Authors: Burke, J., Sellings, P. & Nelson, N.

Abstract

The chapter reports on a study where the perceptions of a group of preservice teachers (PSTs) in Australia, regarding their experiences of the LANTITE, were captured and analysed using the lens of complexity theory. The authors argue that a change to one of the complex sub-systems involved in ITE appears to produce effects in other related sub-systems. A likely unexpected impact was on the formation of graduate teacher identities and capabilities as professional teachers. The potential impact on teaching for social justice and attending equitably to human difference when standards-based education is adopted is another theme that is considered in this chapter.

Title: Change agency and collective action in Gippsland: Understanding a region in transition through kitchen table conversations

Located research: Regional places, transitions and challenges. A. Campbell, M. Duffy & B. Edmondson (Eds). (pp. 223-251)

Authors: Green, M. & McClam, S.

Abstract

This chapter stems from a broader research initiative involving a collective of eight Australian and USA academics investigating the conditions that affect Education for Sustainability (EfS) educators' capacity for agency. As part of the wider collective, the two authors of this chapter (one Australian and the other American) collaborated on a small study that examined how sustainability and climate change advocates and educators in Gippsland, Victoria gain traction in effecting change. Study participants were recruited from two regional committees - RCE Gippsland (Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development) and the GCCN (Gippsland Climate Change Network), who each mobilise and disseminate sustainability and climate change information across the region. Using a narrative ethnographic methodology to explore participant perceptions of how they effect change in the region, the authors facilitated two conversational dialogues around two distinctive farmhouse kitchen tables in West Gippsland. Drawing on theories of new materialism and the concept of collective hope, this chapter engages with conversational vignettes generated via the agency of the kitchen tables and shared food.

Emergent themes explored in the chapter include the work of EfS change agents and the importance of 'the collective' to deal with the challenges and tensions associated with creating change in the regions.

Title: Possible Me: Inspiring Learning with the World of Work Experiences (Latrobe Valley Authority)

Authors: Fletcher, A., Plunkett, M., Glowrey, C., Levy, S. & Green, M.

Abstract

This literature review is the result of the collaboration between the Latrobe Valley Authority and senior educational researchers at Federation University Australia. The review is framed to address a specific focus, namely: What elements and frequency of world of work experiences inspire young people's purpose for learning? We define the term 'World of Work' (WoW) as diverse school-mediated activities designed to give children from an early age a wide range of experiences of and exposure to education, transitions and opportunities to identify preferred vocational interests, abilities and possible future selves. The aim of this review is threefold. First, to establish an evidence base, derived from a rigorous review of both policy and peer-reviewed research literature in the WoW field. Second, to provide a warrant, from the evidence base, for explicitly targeted work to be undertaken in this field. Third, and crucially, to apply the evidence base to a) guide future initiatives and b) evaluate the impact of WoW initiatives. The review of literature is organised into four sections. The first

section reviews recent policy and government reports, and then presents key findings for specific age groups ranging from early childhood and primary to senior secondary. Each section concludes with a dot point summary of the key messages from the literature, as a guide for the reader. Overall, twenty key messages are presented, which highlight the widespread gaps in application.

Title: Building and Sustaining a Teaching Career: Strategies for Professional Experience, wellbeing and mindful practice.

Authors: Lemon, N. & McDonough, S.

Abstract

This is a textbook rather than a research text (although it includes examples drawn from research). Professional experience in initial teacher education programs can be both a challenging and rewarding experience. As student teachers take their first steps in the classroom, they often encounter stresses that compromise their teaching and learning. Within this context, well-being, resilience and self-efficacy are critical to their success. Building and sustaining a teaching career introduces the coping strategies, informal and formal practices, time management and organisational skills, and positive psychology critical to self-care for professional experience. The text uses case studies, 'fill your bucket' strategy building solutions, reflection activities and discussion and journaling questions designed to build capacity and develop reader knowledge, while pre-service teacher voices highlight key elements through real-world perspectives and

experiences. Drawing upon a combination of teaching experience and education research, Narelle Lemon and Sharon McDonough present thoughtful, practical approaches that equip pre-service teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for embarking on a successful teaching career.

Title: Probability across the curriculum

Australian Mathematics Education Journal 2(2)

Authors: Ernst, H. & Morton, A.

Abstract

Probability is an important part of our lives. Learning probability increases relevance and engagement in mathematics, however students' understanding of it is often mixed with misconceptions. This article aims to share ideas about teaching probability from the current literature and our experiences as teachers of primary, secondary and university students. The problems of learning probability are summarised. Ideas for teaching probability are described, along with how it can be connected to other mathematics topics, the proficiencies, and cross-curriculum areas. An example of probability incorporating measurement is detailed, explaining how teachers can develop concepts to prepare younger students for probability in Year 11 and 12 mathematics.