Highlights from Teacher’s 2017 podcasts

AUDIO

Authors: Rebecca Vukovic (/authors/rebecca-vukovic), Jo Earp (/authors/jo-earp)

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It’s been a big year for Teacher magazine podcasts – we recently broke through the 100 000 listens milestone! To mark the end of another great 12 months, we have put together some clips from our favourite podcasts for 2017.

Jo Earp: Hello, you’re listening to a special Teacher podcast. I’m Jo Earp.

Rebecca Vukovic: And I’m Rebecca Vukovic.

JE: Welcome to this special edition where we take a look back at some of our podcast highlights for 2017.

RV: It really is such a great time of year – the perfect opportunity to look back at some of the interesting and insightful people we’ve spoken to over the last 12 months.

JE: It certainly is, and it’s been a memorable year in more ways than one – we recently broke through the 100 000 listens milestone! Thank you to all our listeners out there – from Melbourne to Massachusetts, Hobart to Helsinki, Sierra Leone to Singapore, to name just a few. Okay, I’ve think I’ve gone a bit geography teacher on you there, back to the highlights. We were so excited to kick off our brand new podcast series on Behaviour Management back in January. And who better to speak with than Dr Bill Rogers (https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/behaviour-management-episode-1-dr-bill-rogers-on-starting-the-new-year). We spoke about a whole range of things including behaviour management, effective teaching and teacher welfare – but in this particular clip, he’s talking about the importance of collegial support.

Bill Rogers: It really is important not to hold things in and think that you’re the only one that’s struggling – because there are natural struggles in our profession, particularly if we’re in more challenging schools. So, it’s crucial in those first few weeks, if things are not working out as well as you’d hoped and you know that there are issues with individual students or even the whole class that are not working well,
it’s absolutely crucial to ask your colleagues for support – both that moral support but also that practical support and guidance. Sometimes that might even mean teachers working together sometimes with more difficult classes.

RV: The next highlight we’d love to share with listeners is from an episode in our School Improvement series. I spoke with Tasmanian educator Cath Apanah about how her school has been using data (https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/school-improvement-episode-9-using-literacy-data-to-inform-strategic-planning) to inform their strategic plan.

JE: I loved this interview – You say ‘data’ I say ‘data!’ Anyway, this one is all about how the school’s use of data has allowed them to track student strengths and weaknesses, and how it has also become a powerful tool for teachers to better understand their impact on student learning.

RV: That’s right, it was such an interesting discussion. In this clip, Cath is talking about what the school was using to inform their strategic plan before they began using data.

Cath Apanah: Look we were absolutely using data before, the problem was there was too much and we weren’t necessarily getting any traction with the data we were using. We weren’t using it in a smart or cohesive planned-for way. So, what we needed to do was work out which set to use, which one would be the most useful or give us the most leverage and then filter it to work out how we would present it to staff so it would actually be used rather than just sitting in a pile on a desk. So we went through that process of filtering down and that’s how we ended up determining that our literacy data, and particularly around writing, would probably be the focus for us.

RV: It’s hard to argue that fake news or #FakeNews has been an issue that’s remained topical all year. But this was actually something we covered right at the beginning of the year, in January I believe?


RV: Here, Sarah offers some advice on what individual teachers can do to help their students to become more literate online.
Sarah McGrew: The first thing I would say is don’t make assumptions about what students do and don’t know or can and can’t do online. The premise of our report, I think it’s easy to assume that young people are really fluent online and maybe even more fluent than we are which is scary to take on as a teacher. But I think this report shows that’s not necessarily true and that teachers should have some way of checking where their students are before they take on teaching this.

And then I would say focus on just a few of the most important questions or ways of thinking that you want students to acquire. So, at least in the US, a common way of teaching website evaluation is these long checklists with 20-30 ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions that students answer as a means to evaluating. [I think] it’s problematic to ask students to go through such an exhaustive evaluation process that they won’t necessarily replicate on their own. So, we’re just trying to think about just a few things – what are the key questions that you’d want students to ask, just if they’re going to take a few extra seconds to evaluate something before they retweet it or post it on Facebook. What would you want them to ask?

JE: Now we don’t spend all our time cooped up in an office. Every once in a while the Teacher team ventures out into the wild. We had the pleasure of travelling to the Gold Coast earlier this year to attend ACER’s Excellence in Professional Practice Conference. It’s always really great to catch up with readers face-to-face and we get to hear about the exciting action research projects they’re working on.

RV: Yeah, it was a great conference this year. This next clip comes from Nan Bahr (https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/podcast-special-the-hidden-qualities-of-quality-teaching) who was one of my favourite speakers at the event. Her keynote examined the concept of quality in teaching and the personal attributes of teachers that are central to the teacher-learner relationship. In this next clip, she’s discussing the range of competencies that educators need to develop and implement in their role as teachers.

Nan Bahr: It’s not just competencies. They’re in there but it’s not enough. It’s not just the knowledge and the worldly characteristics. It’s not just that purpose for teaching, because we’ve picked out how to assess people with the right appropriate purposes. The thing that makes a difference between someone that’s okay and adequate as a teacher and someone who is the best teacher for a child to set them up for the rest of their life as a learner, is one that can bring to bear their personal qualities in a professional way. And I think we have an obligation as a community of professionals to shine a light on that and find ways of actually developing it, because I think they’re things that can be taught and developed and shown and demonstrated and modelled. Some of those things you only learn vicariously by
watching other people.

RV: When Simone Reinhold, a Professor for Primary Mathematics Education at Leipzig University in Germany (https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/teaching-methods-inquiry-based-learning-with-professor-simone-reinhold) was in Melbourne earlier this year at Monash University to deliver a Dean’s Lecture on the topic of inquiry based learning, Jo, you caught up with her afterwards to hear more about it.

JE: Yep, it was great to meet Simone and hear about her research into inquiry based learning in a primary school context. We talked about a lot of things, including the importance of ‘staying curious’ and setting challenging tasks for students, but in this clip that we’ve chosen, Simone is discussing the importance of preparing pre-service teachers for inquiry based learning by sparking their own curiosity.

Simone Reinhold: Actually that’s the reason why I became a researcher, because I’m so curious about how children are learning, how they acquire knowledge, and how they develop throughout this special period of time in their life. This is so fascinating to see and I wish we could get young teachers to find this way of looking at children’s learning so fascinating as well. … You have to stay curious about what kids are doing, otherwise you will miss finding out where they have misconceptions or if they have improved in a special way, you will miss all this and just go for the assignment or the assessment at the end of class and say ‘well, this went wrong’ and ‘that went wrong’ but you’ll never know why.

RV: Towards the end of this year, in fact only a few weeks ago, you spoke to two educators about the student wellbeing and fitness programs they’ve developed. The first guest was Dr Jordan Smith from the University of Newcastle who discussed the Burn2Learn program he’s been working on.

JE: Yep, we’ve had some fantastic guests this year. I also caught up with retired Scottish head teacher Elaine Wyllie who’s the founder of The Daily Mile (https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/the-research-files-episode-36-student-fitness-and-wellbeing). Now, it’s a simple exercise program that’s having a positive impact on primary students. In this final clip for this episode, Elaine is explaining why the program is so easy for any teacher to implement (and I love this idea).

Elaine Wyllie: There’s no workload at all for teachers, there’s no assessment, moderation, there’s no planning, nothing. The children simply go out. In fact, one head teacher said the class teacher simply opens the classroom door and takes the
children out, and thereafter of course motivates and works with the children, but there is no workload or preparation for staff. No equipment, no setup, no tidy up, no kit – and that’s really, really vital. Children from the least and most deprived backgrounds are out there – there’s no fancy cool kit, or uncool kit, there’s no unwashed or forgotten kit, there’s no time spent changing. There’s no revealing your body, no body image issues, you’re just out in what you’re wearing. All these things are really, critically important …

RV: That was so interesting and definitely one of my favourite podcasts of the year! I want to remind listeners that these are just a sample of some of the podcasts we’ve done this year, but all Teacher podcasts can be found at our website teachermagazine.com.au (http://teachermagazine.com.au).

JE: That’s right, so if you have missed out on an episode of The Research Files which is our monthly series, or Global Education, School Improvement, Behaviour Management, we’ve also done a series on Action Research and of course the ever popular Teaching Methods series, then it’s really easy to get up to date.

RV: And remember you can also download all of our podcasts for free, just visit acer.ac/teacheritunes (http://acer.ac/teacheritunes) or head to www.soundcloud.com/teacher-acer (http://www.soundcloud.com/teacher-acer).

JE: Finally, thanks to anyone who has listened this year. For now though, it's goodbye from the Teacher editorial team!

Do you have a favourite Teacher podcast from 2017? We’d love you to share your thoughts with us via our social media channels or by emailing us at teacher@acer.org (mailto:teacher@acer.org).