

Teacher Staffroom Episode 5: International research

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Thanks for downloading this episode of *Teacher Staffroom* – where we catch you up on the latest evidence, insight and action. I'm Rebecca Vukovic.

It's been an exciting month here at *Teacher* magazine and I have a whole lot of updates to share with you later in this episode. But before we get into any of that, let's kick things off by looking back over the research we've covered this month. And just a reminder, I'll be posing questions throughout the episode that will allow you to reflect on your practice, so if you need to, please feel free to pause the audio to give yourself a chance to consider them.

Okay! This month I interviewed Dr Jacqueline D'warte from Western Sydney University who has been researching multilingualism in schools by actively involving teachers and students as co-researchers. It's a fascinating study that has spanned four iterations. The research focuses on how language and literacy practices improve student confidence and enhance learning outcomes.

Of course, [you can read the full article](#) on the *Teacher* magazine website but here's a quick summary of what we cover. We talk about the value that each student brings to the classroom, how teachers can build on that knowledge, and how teachers can shift their thinking away from focusing on what is limited or lacking for students who are English as an Additional Language, Dialect Learners or from migrant and refugee backgrounds, to instead using students' knowledge and skill as a starting point for learning. When talking about the teachers involved in this study, Dr D'warte says this quote:

What they realise is that students are really engaging in quite complex communication outside of the classroom, that they've got rich experiences and they're doing all sorts of things. So their expectation of what students know and could do was incredibly increased as a result of this and all the teachers said that, "I was so surprised, I didn't understand, I didn't realise".'

Here's something to think about: In what ways do you seek to understand students' linguistic skills, experiences and knowledge? Do you specifically ask students about the other languages they speak and how they use that language outside of school?

Still on the topic of new research, this month the [OECD released the first results from TALIS 2018](#) – TALIS stands for Teaching and Learning International Survey, and essentially it's a large-scale survey of teachers and school leaders that generates internationally comparable information on the state of the teaching profession.

About 260 000 teachers from 15 000 schools across 48 countries and economies – including Australia – took part in this cycle. They were asked for their views on a whole range of topics, including how much time they spend on teaching and classroom management during a typical lesson, their assessment practices and their school's approach to innovation.

If you'd like to learn more and to take a closer look at the results, I'll pop a link to the report in the transcript for this podcast.

Another interesting piece of research this month came from the University of New South Wales. The research examines the career decision-making process of gifted students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Lead author of the report, Associate Professor Jae Yup Jung, told *Teacher* that it's important to understand the career choices of these students in order to better guide and support their career decisions.

Here's one of his quotes from the article:

Unfortunately, some of these learners do not make career choices that allow them to realise their tremendous potential. Some of the possible reasons for this may be a lack of access to educational opportunities, a lack of role models from similar backgrounds, or a lack of complete knowledge of the available career options.'

The report found the four most powerful factors that influence a gifted learner's career decision are: interest and enjoyment, expectancy for success in the career, intellectual stimulation and job stability.

Here's something to think about: Are students, particularly gifted learners at your school, encouraged to consider each of these factors when contemplating their career choices?

I was so excited this month to share with you my interview with [Dr Avivit Cherrington from Nelson Mandela University](#) in South Africa. She was visiting our offices in Melbourne so I sat down with her to record a podcast about the topic of hope – how children experience hope and what it means to be hopeful.

I have to be honest with you, the podcast we recorded for about 20 minutes, but we actually sat for close to an hour discussing the breadth of her work and the impact it's having on communities. If you haven't had a chance to listen to the podcast yet, I'd highly recommend it.

We covered what it means to be hopeful from an Afro-centric worldview, its emphasis on belonging, connectedness and community; and how children around the world experience hope in their own settings.

In this clip I'm about to play for you, Dr Cherrington is talking about one of the findings from the research where the children described what it meant to be a 'holder of hope'.

The children spoke about being a 'holder of hope'. So, they said that hope can never be gone completely but when you feel like you've lost a lot of your hope, you mustn't throw it all away, you must give it to someone to hold. And then you can go to places, like a police station or a clinic or a school, where they can help you rebuild your hope. And so when I further asked them, what is this holder of hope? And it was a very precise phrase they were using, and it kind of conjures up this image, of here's a keepsake, hold this for me, it's very valuable. And it's this responsibility of holding someone else's hope while they get their life together, so that they can have it back.'

Here's something to think about: How does understanding how children experience hope and wellbeing allow you, as an educator, to focus on the needs of the children you teach? Do you have any programs in place at your school that focus on building students' resilience and their sense of connectedness to the community?

And while we're on the topic of podcasts, I have some exciting news for you. *Teacher* magazine podcasts are already downloaded by nearly 25 000 educators each month on iTunes and SoundCloud, but we've also just [launched our channel on Spotify](#) as well, making it easier than ever to find us.

And, while on the topic of news, I thought I'd let you know that we've also now got a special section of our website dedicated to [Early Years educators](#). It's filled with articles, podcasts and videos aimed at those working with children in their first few years of education. You can find it by clicking on the link in the transcript for this episode.

Here at *Teacher*, we know how much our readers love infographics so we've branched out a little bit this month and [we've produced a video infographic](#). It takes a closer look the Oxford University Press wordlist of the 500 most frequently used words written by students in Australia in their first three years of schooling. My colleague Dominique Russell put this one together for you and it's proved to be the most popular piece of content this month. Make sure you check it out on our YouTube channel, which you can find at youtube.com/teacheracer

You're probably aware by now that ACER's 2019 Research Conference is taking place over two days in August. The annual event will be held in Melbourne and will highlight the latest national and international research in education. This year's theme is 'Preparing students for life in the 21st Century: Identifying, developing and assessing what matters'. We kicked off our coverage of the event with a [Q&A with our CEO, Professor Geoff Masters](#), who discussed this year's theme and some of the fundamental questions that will help to shape the conference program.

I also had the pleasure of sitting down with one of the conference presenters, [Professor Neil Selwyn from Monash University](#). He's working on some fascinating projects at the moment including writing on artificial

intelligence, automation and data-driven education.

In this interview, I picked his brain on what education will look like in the next decade. What will change? What will stay the same? What will classrooms look like? And what role will artificial intelligence have in changing the ways schools operate?

You can read the full article on the website. And if you'd like to learn more about the conference, its program or to register for the event, I'll also include a link to the [Research Conference website](#).

And finally, I know a lot of you are either on school holidays at the moment or gearing up for them in the coming weeks. It's really a perfect time to slow down, take a break and check in with yourself. With that in mind, I spoke to Associate Professor Craig Hassed from Monash University about one particular [technique to improve wellbeing – practicing mindfulness](#). He provides readers with some really practical strategies for introducing mindfulness into your busy lives as educators and the benefits you'll experience from doing so.

I'll leave you with a quote from Dr Hassed on the importance of making space in our day for mindfulness:

If we've got a lot on our plates, you know, we might be walking from one building in the school to another and we fill that two minute walk with worry about how much we've got to do and will I get through it all today? What am I going to cook for dinner tonight? Rather than just walking mindfully and having a two minute space in your day. We have to reduce that mental or cognitive load on a regular basis to give the mind space to then be able to engage with the next complex thing we need to do, like manage a classroom.'

Thanks for joining me today for this episode of *Teacher Staffroom*. We sure did cover a lot so make sure you check out the transcript at teachermagazine.com.au for links to all the stories I've mentioned here today. And while you're there, make sure you sign up to our email bulletin, so you never miss a story.

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